Université Paris Nanterre

200 av. de la République
92001 Nanterre Cedex
www.parisnanterre.fr

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Timothy Deane-Freeman

# Le Dehors Numérique

*Deleuze et l'écran contemporain*

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| Rapporteur·e : | M. Dork Zabunyan | PR, Université de Paris 8 |
| Rapporteur·e : | | |
| Membre du jury : | Mme Anne Sauvagnarges | PR, Univeristé Paris Nanterre |
| Membre du jury : | M. Sean Bowden | PR, Deakin University |
| Membre du jury : | M. Robert Sinnerbrink | PR, Macquarie University |

# Le dehors numérique : Deleuze et l'écran contemporain

## Résumé de la thèse

Le problème que cette thèse se propose d'aborder est celui d'un décalage entre la philosophie du cinéma de Gilles Deleuze et la condition de l'image cinématographique contemporaine, qui, depuis l'analyse de Deleuze, a été radicalement modifiée par le numérique. Mon argument principal est qu'une relation productive entre cette philosophie et les cultures contemporaines de l'écran est en effet possible et potentiellement très utile, à condition que nous puissions relire et étendre certains concepts-clés de la pensée deleuzienne.

Les arguments principaux défendus dans cette thèse sont les suivants. Premièrement, à partir d'un concept utilisé dans *Cinéma II : l'image-temps* (1985), je soutiens que les images numériques peuvent engendrer des relations uniques avec un « dehors » - une présence non articulée au-delà du cadre, qui sert à fonder et à problématiser la pensée. Le « dehors » - développé à partir de la philosophie littéraire de Maurice Blanchot - constitue une condition génétique de la pensée, selon laquelle le penseur est confronté à ce qui est fondamentalement impensé, un terrain inconnu auquel la pensée doit répondre par des solutions novatrices et créatives. Je soutiens que ce modèle de pensée nous éloigne des habitudes et des orthodoxies, nous obligeant à nous ouvrir radicalement à la contingence et au changement - un mouvement à la mesure, de ce que je qualifierais, d'orientation politique fondamentale de la philosophie de Deleuze.

En défendant cette position, j'atténue certains arguments avancés par Deleuze lui-même, et plus récemment par Gregory Flaxman, selon lesquels les images numériques conçues comme des « informations » sont fondamentalement imbriquées dans une logique de «représentation » contraire à cette modalité problématisante et anti-représentative du dehors. Pour Deleuze, l'information désigne une opération de contrôle, visant principalement à imposer un ensemble d'impératifs prédéterminés dont la fonction s'oppose à l'art tel qu'il le définit tout au long de son œuvre. Cependant, dans ce contexte, je soutiens que Deleuze a peut-être négligé certaines caractéristiques virtuelles et différentielles que nous pourrions identifier dans la structure même de l'information, conçue dans ses aspects « techniques » ou « ontologiques ».

A la suite de Luciano Floridi – qui conçoit les « données » d'information, au sens fondamental, comme une instanciation de la différence – je confronte ces conceptions « techniques » ou « ontologiques » de l'information avec une définition « sémantique » - peut-être exclusivement privilégiée par Deleuze . Dans ce contexte, en développant les distinctions établies par Claude Shannon et Warren Weaver, je soutiens que la seule façon de distinguer de manière rigoureuse les informations « utiles » et des formes d'information « non désirées » - que j'appelle « bruit » - consiste à recourir à des structures sémantiques prédéterminées. Mais l'art, en englobant les formes de bruit, a souvent servi à problématiser de telles structures et un « art informationnel » pourrait bien nous permettre de repenser l'information, non plus comme un mécanisme de contrôle, mais comme une

ouverture sur les virtualités sous-représentatives qui provoquent la pensée – conformément au modèle deleuzien.

En d'autres termes, je soutiens que, bien que Deleuze ait raison d'identifier les images « informatiques » et « communicationnelles » aux fonctions imbriquées du contrôle socialet du capital, ces images doivent également (dans l'esprit de sa propre philosophie) être comprises comme contenant certaines potentialités immanentes de résistance à ces fonctions. C'est pourquoi je discute une série d'opérations au sein de l'image numérique - principalement celle du *bruit* - qui indiquent les limites du contrôle informatique et son ouverture à un « dehors » anti-représentationnel. Car c'est une tâche que la philosophie et de l'art partagent : celle d'identifier, d'exacerber, et d'exploiter ces tendances afin d'ouvrir à la fois le contrôle et le capital à la possibilité d'alternatives radicales, ouvertes au sein du numérique.

En défendant ces positions, je définis d'abord la notion de « dehors », non pas en tant que concept-clé ou concept-maître dans l'œuvre de Deleuze, mais en tant qu'outil particulièrement efficace dans le cadre de la théorisation de l'image numérique. Ensuite, je définis certains concepts de base des cultures contemporaines de l'écran – ceux de numérisation, d'information et de bruit – afin d'identifier au sein de ces cultures les forces qui pourraient ouvrir et celles qui pourraient fermer un « dehors » de la pensée. Je termine la thèse par une analyse de ces fonctions telles qu'elles émergent dans une œuvre contemporaine du cinéma « numérique », *Inland Empire* de David Lynch (2006), qui met en valeur la matérialité numérique « bruyante » pour souligner les limites et les indéterminations inhérentes à l'image numérique, constituant ainsi ce que nous pourrions décrire comme un « dehors numérique ».

Mots-clés: cinéma, numérique, esthétique, politique, Deleuze

Key words : cinema, digital, aesthetics, politics, Deleuze

# Précis de la thèse

## Introduction – Une machinerie de l'invisible

Le cinéma, paradoxalement peut-être, nous fournit une machinerie de l'invisible. Nous pourrions penser d'abord à un exemple simple de Chaplin. Dans *L'Opinion publique* (1923), un train arrive à quai, mais on ne voit que les ombres et la luminosité de ses fenêtres, tracées sur le visage de la femme qui attendait. Nous ne voyons pas réellement le train - il n'existe pas, en effet - mais sa présence implicite détermine le contenu même de l'image. Ainsi, par un exercice de « cadrage », nous obtenons une image conditionnée autant par ce qui est « en dehors » du cadre – c'est-à-dire ce qui dépasse son contenu visuel explicite - que ce que nous voyons articulé devant nous en mouvement et en geste.

Bien sûr, on retrouve cette technique dans d'autres arts. La peinture a longtemps utilisé des dispositifs similaires pour projeter un « hors champ » qui implique souvent le spectateur.[1] Cependant, les capacités du cinéma à exprimer à la fois le mouvement et le temps lui confèrent des pouvoirs uniques dans cet espace. En mettant ses images en mouvement - ou plutôt en créant des images *avec* le mouvement - le cinéma met également cet « invisible » en mouvement ; le rendant dynamique, fluide et multiple.

On pourrait penser, par exemple, à l'horreur progressive des trajets en tricycle de Danny dans *The Shining* (1980) de Stanley Kubrick. Ici, la caméra suit Danny par derrière alors qu'il explore les couloirs labyrinthiques de l'hôtel Overlook. Nous savons déjà que l'hôtel est maudit et que les pouvoirs psychiques de Danny le destinent à être le premier à entrer en contact avec ces horreurs. En tant que tel, ses lentes trajectoires sont imprégnées d'une terreur d'anticipation : alors que Danny et la caméra tournent à chaque coin de couloir, nous savons que ce n'est qu'une question de temps avant qu'il ne fasse face à une vision macabre restée jusque-là invisible. Ici, dans une structure parfaitement filmique, « l'invisible » devient spatio-temporel, cumulatif, qualitativement évolutif, impliqué dans un récit mais irréductible à celui-ci.

Ce genre d'incertitude et de mystère n'est pas seulement la fonction des films « d'horreur » compris dans le sens conventionnel du terme. *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (1961) d'Alain Resnais et Alain Robbe-Grillet forge un mystère de la perception elle-même, en utilisant un montage disjonctif pour créer un espace « irrationnel » dans lequel les réglages composés à l'aide des champs et contrechamps n'ont aucun sens en termes de topologie réaliste, dans laquelle les personnages parlent sans émettre de son, et où des voix désincarnées flottent

[1] Les analyses de Michel Foucault sur la peinture constituent peut-être la discussion la plus riche sur ces fonctions et sur leurs implications philosophiques. Dans son traitement de *Les Ménines* de Velázquez, par exemple, il pose le tableau comme révélateur d'une nouvelle épistémè, un schéma de représentation moderne centré sur le fait de la représentation elle-même. Comme l'écrit Foucault : « …nous regardons un tableau d'où un peintre à son tour nous contemple. Rien de plus qu'un face à face, que des yeux qui se surprennent, que des regards droits qui en se croisant se superposent. Et pourtant cette mince ligne de visibilité en retour enveloppe tout un réseau complexe d'incertitudes, d'échanges et d'esquives. » (Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, Paris, Éditions Gallimard, 1966, p. 20)

au-dessus de scènes sans relation claire avec l'image. L'horreur de l'hôtel de Resnais n'est pas celle des fantômes ou des psychopathes, mais celle des fonctions incertaines et changeantes de la perception elle-même, qui cesse ici de servir une action ou un récit cohérent, mais ouvre au contraire une perspective sur des mouvements irrationnels et inexplicables de l'espace et du temps. Ici, l'invisible devient le non-pensé, l'impensable, une multiplicité d'espace-temps qui existent au-delà des habitudes perceptuelles du sujet humain, dans une fonction qui nous fait prendre conscience des intérêts et de la contingence de ces mêmes habitudes.

C'est cette tendance du film, c'est-à-dire du contact avec ce qui est « au-delà » du contenu explicite de l'image et, ainsi, avec ce qui est au-delà de la perception habituelle de l'être humain, que Gilles Deleuze a vue comme une contribution unique du cinéma à la philosophie. Ses deux livres *Cinéma I : L'image-mouvement* (1983) et *Cinéma II : L'image-temps* (1985) explorent cette ouverture de l'image en identifiant la signification philosophique d'une relation cinématographique avec le « dehors ».[2]

Le concept du « dehors », initialement exprimé par Deleuze comme le « hors-champ »,[3] et plus tard comme « l'impensé dans la pensée »[4], cristallise sa thèse depuis longtemps : à savoir que la pensée philosophique, lorsqu'elle n'est pas mésinterprétée comme *doxa* ou habitude, émerge d'une rencontre rare et créative avec ce qui reste fondamentalement impensé. Par divers moyens cinématographiques, le cinéma, affirme-t-il, « …exprime un nouveau rapport de la pensée avec le voir, ou avec la source lumineuse, qui ne cesse de mettre la pensée hors d'elle-même, hors du savoir, hors de l'action. »[5]

Keith Ansell-Pearson a plus généralement décrit la philosophie de Deleuze comme une pensée du « dehors », une pensée qui tente de « philosopher de la manière la plus radicalement concevable, faisant violence à l'esprit en rompant à la fois avec le penchant naturel de l'intellect et avec les habitudes de la praxis scientifique. »[6] C'est bien ce genre de philosophie qui amène Deleuze à se tourner vers le cinéma, utilisant son ensemble de relations puissantes avec le « dehors » de l'image comme véhicule d'une profonde « déterritorialisation » de la pensée.

Nous devons noter que cette approche noétique est également métaphysique, conformément à la volonté constante de Deleuze d'établir la « pensée » non pas comme un exercice transcendant au-dessus du flux et des aléas de la vie, mais comme une réponse située et catalytique à ses changements et à ses mouvements. En tant que tels, ses livres sur le cinéma poursuivent l'élaboration progressive d'une métaphysique changeante, qui résiste toute systématisation par une différenciation constante, en modifiant le vocabulaire et la structure de son expression dans ses autres œuvres. Dans le cas des volumes sur le cinéma, Deleuze reprend ses discussions antérieures sur Henri Bergson,[7] en soulignant sa conception

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[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2 : L'image-temps*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1985, p.228.
[3] Ibid., p.73.
[4] Ibid., p.228.
[5] Ibid., p.230.
[6] Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Deleuze and Philosophy : The Difference Engineer*, Londres, Routledge, 2002, p.2. (Ma traduction).
[7] En particulier dans Gilles Deleuze, *Le Bergsonisme*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1966.

de la temporalité comme relation réciproque entre l'actuel et le virtuel, suggérant que le cinéma constitue un laboratoire puissant pour la production d'images exprimant cette relation.

Le projet de Bergson vise à rendre compte de la temporalité en tant que changement qualitatif par opposition à une conception spatiale selon laquelle le temps est une interchangeabilité d'instants discontinus. Le temps, pour Bergson, est le changement, « l'évolution créatrice » de formes nouvelles, un état de fait obscurci par des conceptions mécanistiques dans lesquelles le temps est modélisé comme une distribution spatiale et uniforme de moments - les trajectoires réversibles de la physique newtonienne, les unités homogènes du « temps d'horloge. » Le virtuel émerge au service de cette entreprise en tant que catégorie de potentialités différentielles et non-actuelles (mais parfaitement réelles) possédées par les situations actuelles, garantissant leur ouverture au changement temporel, leur caractère processuel d'une différenciation constante. Le virtuel n'a pas d'identité concrète, mais constitue la condition génétique des individus concrets actuels qui constituent des « résolutions » temporaires à ses tensions et ses flux.

Nous reviendrons sur ces difficiles problèmes métaphysiques, mais il suffit maintenant de dire que pour Deleuze, comme pour Bergson, le virtuel nous fournit une catégorie avec laquelle concevoir la différence et le changement dans des situations concrètes sans avoir besoin de recourir à un schéma mécanistique, déterministe ou transcendant. Le virtuel est, selon la formule bien connue de Deleuze, empruntée à Proust : « réels sans être actuels, idéaux sans être abstraits »,[8] une génétique différentielle et immanente aux choses, accumulée à travers des états passés, qui garantit que l'actuel et le réel ne deviennent pas équivalents – que les situations actuelles restent des résolutions contingentes d'intensité virtuelle.

Le cinéma, pour Deleuze –si ce n'est pour Bergson–[9], ou au moins un certain type de cinéma, fonctionne comme une machine qui ouvre l'actuel, formant des cristaux et des circuits entre le virtuel et l'actuel, sous la forme d'images à cheval entre la réalité, le rêve, la mémoire, la vérité, le mensonge, l'illusion et la temporalité non linéaire- mélangé comme un « fait » perceptuel dans l'image cinématographique, comme nous l'avons déjà

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[8] Gilles Deleuze, *Différance et Répétition*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, p.269.

[9] Dans *L'évolution créatrice,* dans un chapitre intitulé « La mécanisme cinématographique de la pensée et l'illusion mécanistique », Bergson soutient que le cinéma constitue une analogie pour le type d'activité intellectuelle « spatialisante » qu'il rejette, négligeant le changement qualitatif pour une abstraction qui cause le temps et le mouvement à devenir quantitatif, général et réversible. Comme il l'écrit : « Tel est l'artifice du cinématographe. Et tel aussi celui de notre connaissance. Au lieu de nous attacher au devenir intérieur des choses, nous nous plaçons en dehors d'elles pour recomposer leur devenir artificiellement. Nous prenons des vues quasi instantanées sur la réalité qui passe, et, comme elles sont caractéristiques de cette réalité, il nous suffit de les enfiler le long d'un devenir abstrait, uniforme, invisible, situé au fond de l'appareil de la connaissance, pour imiter ce qu'il y a de caractéristique dans ce devenir lui-même. » (Henri Bergson, *L'évolution créatrice*, Paris, Librairie Félix Alcan, 1937, p.366). Deleuze rejette toutefois cette position, arguant que Bergson a mal compris la fonction du cinéma, qui ne nous donne en réalité pas une série d'images statiques auxquelles le mouvement est « ajouté », mais une image-mouvement immédiate, qui, tout comme l'image temporelle qu'il va également identifier, constitue une multiplicité qualitative ou « durée » - irréductible à ses composantes. (Voir Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 1 : L'image-mouvement*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1983, pp.10-12).

brièvement rencontré chez Resnais. Dans ce que Deleuze décrit comme le « cinéma d'après-guerre » – à savoir le néoréalisme italien, les nouvelles vagues européennes et américaines, le cinéma « minoritaire » de l'Afrique et du Québec –, nos formes de pensée habituelles, prédisposées aux objets et aux situations « actuelles », sont ainsi ouvertes à la virtualité – qui ne doit pas être confondue avec le « dehors » comme impensé auquel la pensée est confrontée, comme bien comme condition de son émergence.

Mais cette thèse est dédiée à une problématique qui émerge à *la fin* du travail de Deleuze sur le cinéma, lorsqu'il identifie des développements techniques et politiques imbriqués qui pourraient menacer cette potentialité unique du cinéma. Deleuze termine son deuxième livre sur le cinéma en réfléchissant à une diminution potentielle de ce pouvoir, en préparant le terrain pour une confrontation entre l'art cinématographique et les systèmes informatiques d'écran, en affirmant que : « La vie ou la survie du cinéma dépend de sa lutte intérieure avec l'informatique. »[10]

Deleuze emploie le terme d'informatique dans les mêmes pages où il parle de « l'image électronique, c'est-à-dire l'image télé ou vidéo, l'image numérique naissante, » qui va « bien transformer le cinéma, ou bien le remplacer, en marquer la mort. »[11] Il semble donc clair que Deleuze parle de quelque chose comme l'image numérique qui a proliféré dans tous les domaines de la vie au cours des années qui se sont écoulées depuis son analyse.

Le terme « informatique » est né des travaux de l'informaticien Philippe Dreyfus[12] qui mélange les mots « information » et « automatique ». Ce couplage est clairement central dans la pensée de Deleuze puisqu'il l'utilise pour théoriser la possible supplantation du cinéma par les « automates de calcul et de pensée, automates à régulation et feed-back. »[13] En évoquant cet « automatisme » à côté des concepts de contrôle et de feed-back, Deleuze aborde également le travail de cybernéticiens comme Norbert Wiener, pour qui les processus automatiques de transmission et de diffusion de « l'information » constituaient le moyen par lequel se poursuit l'organisation idéale des sociétés humaines. Mais, comme nous le verrons, pour Deleuze, l'optimisme de la conception cybernétique de l'information émerge avec un sous-texte sinistre : l'association explicite, au sein du projet cybernétique entre l'information et les fonctions de « contrôle ».[14]

« L'information », notons-le ici, constitue une désignation aussi conflictuelle que les termes philosophiques perpétuellement contestés d'« être », de « réalité » ou de « savoir ». En fait, Claude Shannon, mathématicien et ingénieur électricien souvent cité comme le « père de la théorie de l'information », doutait qu'un concept aussi général puisse jamais « *rendre compte de manière satisfaisante des nombreuses applications possibles de ce domaine général* ».[15] Sans tomber dans de longues définitions ici, nous pourrions dire que, alors

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[10] Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p.354.
[11] Ibid., p.346.
[12] John Gammack, Valerie Hobbs & Diarmuid Pigott, *The Book of Informatics*, Melbourne, Thompson, 2007, p.2.
[13] Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p.346.
[14] Norbert Wiener, *The Human use of Human Beings : Cybernetics and Society*, Londres, Free Association Books, 1989, p.16.
[15] Cité dans Luciano Floridi, *The Philosophy of Information*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, p.81 (Ma traduction).

qu'un concept d'information comme un principe opérationnel im-ou-quasi-matériel qui « in-forme » la matière est présent dans la philosophie depuis au moins l'hylémorphisme d'Aristote,[16] le sens populaire du terme retient le plus souvent celui que Luciano Floridi qualifie de « sémantique »,[17] : l'« information » comme « un ensemble de faits » qui visent à orienter nos actions ou nos possibilités d'action.

Le terme a toutefois adopté un sens nouveau, et plutôt technique, au milieu du 20e siècle, après son utilisation en cybernétique, en informatique et en ingénierie des télécommunications pour faire référence à certains éléments processuels dans leurs systèmes et théories. L'information devient ici une catégorie statistique, indépendante de toute signification sémantique, qui fait plutôt référence à la capacité d'un système de communication à transmettre du contenu fondamentalement variable. Mais, comme nous le verrons, les diverses définitions « rigoureusement » techniques de l'information utilisées par ses théoriciens continuent à évoquer et à se mélanger avec le sens « sémantique » et plus populaire expliqué ci-dessus.

Deleuze parle d'information dans ces deux sens, la décrivant dans plusieurs de ses dernières œuvres non seulement comme un phénomène sémantique à laquelle « vous êtes censé devoir croire »,[18] mais également comme opération processuelle et non-signifiante au sein des systèmes de calcul et de communication. Ces deux sens se rejoignent à la fin de *Cinéma II* où Deleuze formule l'une de ses critiques les plus concertées du concept d'information. Pour Deleuze, au moment de la rédaction des livres sur le cinéma, une époque au cours de laquelle il commençait à réfléchir sérieusement sur le thème du « contrôle »,[19] le monde contemporain est celui dans lequel « l'information remplaçant la Nature », celle dans laquelle « sa nullité même, son inefficacité radicale »,[20] contribue à son ascendance au service de certains objectifs politiques. Selon lui, l'information, au sens sémantique et technique, est donc profondément imbriquée dans les formes contemporaines de contrôle social, imposant des impératifs disciplinaires et la fermeture d'espaces indéterminés dans lesquels notre capacité à être « efficace » -politiquement, artistiquement, philosophiquement –émerge.

Pour Deleuze, comme nous l'avons vu, la pensée, c'est-à-dire une invention concomitante de nouveaux modes de vie, émerge de notre rencontre en pensée et sensibilité avec ce qui se trouve « en dehors » d'un statu quo pré-distribué (ou « actuel »). Dans le contexte de cette rencontre –avec ces différences intensives et virtuelles qui n'avaient pas jusque-là été envisagées- nous sommes contraints de produire de manière créative et potentiellement révolutionnaire de nouveaux modes de vie. Mais l'information, selon lui, fonctionne par une pré-distribution conservatrice de termes – la « communication » des impératifs de contrôle

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[16] Kane Faucher, *Metastasis and Metastability: A Deleuzian Approach to Information*, Rotterdam, Sense Publishers, 2013, p.25.
[17] Voir Floridi, *Philosophy of Information*, ch. 4-5.
[18] Gilles Deleuze, « Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création ? » dans *Deux régimes de fous : textes et entretiens 1975-1995*, (préparée par David Lapoujade) Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2003, p.298.
[19] Voir, en particulier, Gilles Deleuze, « Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle », dans *Pourparlers : 1972-1990*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2013, pp.449-464.
[20] Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p.347.

c'est-à-dire par une opération qu'il considère comme antithétique à l'art, la politique et la philosophie, telles qu'elles sont définies tout au long de son œuvre.

« La nature », alors, doit être comprise non pas comme une catégorie essentielle ou statique, mais comme la relation des états « actuels » avec la « virtualité » aléatoire et différentielle sur laquelle ils sont ouverts. Comme nous l'avons vu, c'est cette relation, toujours assombrie tant par la philosophie que par la pensée populaire, qui empêche la clôture de notre conceptualisation, empêchant une sorte de pensée selon laquelle le « réel » et « l'actuel » deviennent inextricables –et où des alternatives radicales au statu quo sont donc inconcevables.

Pour Deleuze, le paradigme de cette suprématie contemporaine de l'information est la vision du monde cybernétique selon laquelle « l'information » -conçue comme une mesure statistique de la probabilité- pourrait également être utilisée pour modéliser les fonctions des machines, de la vie organique et de la pensée. Comme l'écrit Norbert Wiener dans *Cybernetics : or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, s'inspirant de la postulation leibnizienne d'un « symbolisme universel » mathématique capable théoriquement de représenter et de modéliser le fonctionnement de tous les phénomènes possibles : « Il n'est pas du tout surprenant que la même impulsion intellectuelle qui a conduit au développement de la logique mathématique ait en même temps conduit à la mécanisation idéale ou réelle des processus de la pensée. »[21]

Ou encore, faisant référence aux séminaires interdisciplinaires qui ont donné naissance à la recherche cybernétique au MIT dans les années 40 :

> À partir de ce moment-là, il nous est apparu clairement que la machine à calculer ultrarapide, dépendant d'appareils de commutation consécutifs, devait représenter presque un modèle idéal des problèmes survenant dans le système nerveux… la synapse n'est qu'un mécanisme [qui] doit avoir son analogue exact dans la machine informatique.[22]

En d'autres termes, en déployant la représentation « symbolique » apparemment universelle de la logique mathématique –la probabilité statistique en particulier- pour modéliser les fonctions de la pensée, nous nous retrouvons avec une vision de la pensée conçue comme, selon les termes de Bergson, un « système isolé »[23], un circuit mécaniste

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[21] Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics : or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 1985, p.12 (Ma traduction).

[22] Ibid., p.14.

[23] Selon Bergson, la matière et la méthode scientifique sont détermines toute les deux par leur « tendance » à former des systèmes relativement isolés ou « fermés », ce que nous pourrions lire ici leur situation dans le registre d'actuel contre celui du virtuel. Ainsi, un objet matériel –par exemple une pierre sur le lit d'une rivière– constitue un « système isolé » dans la mesure où, d'un certain point de vue temporel, ses éléments constitutifs –des composés chimiques minéraux– restent cohésifs, résistant à la subsomption à son milieu environnant. Cependant, comme nous le savons bien, une pierre dans l'eau changera progressivement de forme, et finira par se dissiper en raison de facteurs environnementaux (plus spécifiquement à cause de l'écoulement des eaux dans lesquelles elle est submergée). C'est pour cette raison que Bergson soutient que si la matière a tendance à former des systèmes isolés, « ce n'est qu'une tendance. La matière ne va pas jusqu'au bout, et l'isolement n'est jamais complet. » (Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice*, p.21) Bergson suggère qu'en se

d'actions et de réactions, situé sur un registre uniformément « actuel », et éludant les forces qualitativement différentes et différentiantes du virtuel. Un tel modèle, dont le cognitivisme et les neurosciences contemporains sont peut-être les héritiers,[24] voit l'esprit comme un « ordinateur » électrochimique et « la pensée » comme le nom d'une ou plusieurs de ses fonctions algorithmiques.

Pour Deleuze, le problème avec un tel modèle n'est pas qu'il rejette l'idée de la pensée comme une sorte d'intériorité humaine privilégiée, ni même qu'elle soit conçue comme « machinique » -terme à connotations riches pour Deleuze dans son travail avec Félix Guattari-[25] mais qu'il est fondamentalement imbriqué dans des projets technocratiques, capitalistes et étatiques, visant à consolider le contrôle et à produire des formes spécifiques de subjectivité. Comme le dit Deleuze dans la conférence de 1987 intitulée « Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création ? » : « une information est un ensemble de mots d'ordre. Quand on vous informe, on vous dit que vous êtes censé devoir croire. En d'autres termes, informer, c'est faire circuler un mot d'ordre. »[26]

En d'autres termes –peut-être moins polémiques-, dans l'acte apparemment neutre de description d'un phénomène comme « la pensée » via le recours à un champ de probabilité statistique Deleuze perçoit une profonde limitation de ses potentialités, une distribution de « possibilités » modelées rétroactivement sur l'actuel, déterminant en fait les voies mêmes que la pensée pourrait être autorisée à poursuivre. Dans les termes de *Différence et Répétition*, on pourrait dire que toute « image » de pensée à laquelle nous pourrions souscrire formalise ses fonctions de manière à les limiter, en déterminant le potentiel de la pensée en accord avec les conditions du statu quo culturel, social et politique. Il s'agit d'une

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consacrant à l'analyse de tels « systèmes isolés » –qui peuvent bien être une pierre, une société ou un système solaire, tout ce qui est compris dans son aspect rigoureusement actuel– la science moderne néglige donc la contingence de ses résultats, conclusions apparemment universelles de ce qui ne sont que des systèmes isolés de manière abstraite. Pour appréhender pleinement l'univers comme l'interaction des systèmes isolés et le « Tout » virtuel-actuel sur lequel ils sont ouverts, la science, déclare-t-il, ne doit pas exclure les pouvoirs métaphysiques et spéculatifs de la philosophie. Pour plus de détails sur cette position, voir, en particulier, le premier chapitre de *L'Évolution créatrice*.

[24] Dans le contexte de la théorie du cinéma, on pourrait penser aux travaux de Nöel Carrol et David Bordwell, qui, à la fin des années 1980 et dans les années 1990, ont popularisé l'utilisation des théories « cognitiviste » et « neuroscientifique » dans l'analyse de film. Leur travail porte systématiquement sur des motifs de «cognition réussie » (« successful cognition ») et de fonctions électrochimiques dans le contexte du spectateur, héritant non seulement du modèle cybernétique du cerveau comme centre de calcul, mais également du récit étrangement sans contexte dans lequel la « cognition réussie » peut ne pas nécessiter de définition. Bien qu'il soit difficile de trouver un véritable « cybernéticien » aujourd'hui, de tels travaux ont une dette théorétique évidente envers les conceptions cybernétiques de la cognition. Voir, en particulier, « l'énoncé de mission » de Bordwell, "A Case for Cognitivism," dans *Iris: A Journal of Theory on Image and Sound*, No. 9 (Spring 1989), pp.11-33.

[25] En fait, leur première rencontre été fondée sur la réponse de Guattari à *Différence et Répétition* et *Logique du Sens*, l'essai « Machine et Structure », écrit en 1969 –et infâmement torpillé par Lacan– dans lequel Guattari postule un modèle « machinique » de l'inconscient qui pourrait résister à certaines des rigidités de l'analyse structurale. La machine, dans sa « productivité » fondamentale, et (d'après Lewis Mumford) sa situation au sein d'agencements liant d'autres mécanismes sociaux, techniques et culturels, semblaient à Deleuze et Guattari un moyen d'ouvrir le structuralisme à une analyse fondamentalement générative –en évitant la superposition rétroactive de cadres d'analyse structurales sur leurs objets d'étude– et en imbriquant la totalité de leur projet (qu'il soit noétique, psycho-schizo-analytique, esthétique, etc.) avec une analyse des modes concrets de production capitaliste.

[26] Deleuze, *Deux Régimes*, p.298.

fausse image de la pensée qui masque le rôle fondamental joué par la différence dans la genèse de la pensée, argument sur lequel nous reviendrons plus longuement dans la thèse elle-même.

Ici, il suffit de dire que pour Deleuze « l'information » -et son concept associé de « communication » - offre une « image de la pensée » particulièrement néfaste en raison des présuppositions de « neutralité » les deux termes dérivant de leurs fonctions scientistes et « descriptives ». En d'autres termes, l'information et la communication –toutes deux valorisées sous le capitalisme contemporain - agissent comme des chevaux de Troie qui masquent une fonction par laquelle les croyances actuelles (doxiques) sont reproduites, présentées comme naturelles, plutôt que comme les productions contingentes d'un statut quo culturel et politique. Ce fonctionnement conservateur se déroule dans le contexte d'une apparente neutralité ou « factualité » garantie par l'enracinement de l'information dans des axiomes mathématiques.

Dans ce contexte, nous pouvons constater que les remarques brèves et circonscrites de Deleuze sur la nouvelle matérialité « informationnelle » du cinéma ont des implications philosophiques et politiques qui dépassent de loin les salles de cinéma. Il est clair que les « images numériques » auxquelles Deleuze fait référence –celles stockées, transmises et produites à l'aide des technologies de l'information et de la communication[27] et qui prennent pour matérialité fondamentale cette désignation glissante, *l'information* – lui semblaient présager un changement profond, non seulement de l'image cinématographique, mais également de l'image contemporaine de la pensée et donc de la gamme de ses potentialités.

C'est dans ce contexte que nous devons lire les déclarations de Deleuze, à la fin de *Cinéma II*, que « les nouvelles images n'ont plus d'extériorité (hors-champ), pas plus qu'elles ne s'intériorisent dans un tout : elles ont plutôt un endroit et un envers, réversibles et non-superposables, comme un pouvoir de se retourner sur elles-mêmes. »[28] De même, en posant « l'image informatique » comme un système fermé qui se consacre à certaines fonctions circonscrites de l'actuel, nous pourrions commencer à comprendre le but politique de son énigmatique remarque que « *nulle information, quelle qu'elle soit, ne suffit à vaincre Hitler*. »[29] Ou, comme il le récapitule dans « Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création ? » : «

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[27] Il semble clair que Deleuze ne pense pas seulement aux images « électroniques » de la télévision, qu'il traite peut-être le plus en profondeur dans un texte auquel je reviens dans la thèse, « Lettre à Serge Daney : Optimisme, Pessimisme et Voyage », mais également au système naissant « Minitel », un service numérique à base de textes, accessible via des lignes téléphoniques et déployé à travers la France en 1982 par l'administration des télécommunications et des postes de l'État. Ce système, qui fournissait à chaque domicile en France un petit écran via lequel on pouvait accéder à diverses bases de données et services informatiques – l'annulaire téléphonique, par exemple, les résultats scolaires et les horaires de train– était l'un des systèmes numériques pré-internet le plus largement adaptés. Mais il fut finalement remplacé par le modèle américain « APRANET » dans les années 1990 et complétement abandonnée en 2012. Ses fonctions explicitement « informationnelles », ainsi que sa direction centralisée par l'État français, ont clairement influencé la conception de « l'image numérique » de Deleuze. Pour un bon traitement du système Minitel et de son histoire, voir Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society (2nd Edition)*, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, chapitre 5.

[27] Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p.272.

[28] Ibid., p.347.

[29] Ibid., p.352

L'œuvre d'art ne contient strictement pas la moindre information. En revanche, il y a une affinité fondamentale entre l'œuvre d'art et l'acte de résistance. »[30]

Je reviens sur ces arguments et essaie d'y répondre tout au long de la thèse. Mais avant de les traiter plus en profondeur, nous devons clarifier ce que signifie parler d'information dans le contexte du cinéma et ce que signifie parler d'un « cinéma numérique » qui serait venu supplanter les formes « analogiques » de 20e siècle auxquelles Deleuze consacre son étude.

## Le Cinéma numérique

Dans les termes les plus fondamentaux, la « numérisation » fait référence à un changement dans la matérialité des images cinématographiques à la suite de la prolifération des technologies de l'information dans la sphère publique au cours de la seconde moitié du 20e siècle. À l'origine, le film était une technologie analogique – au sens de la communication d'une empreinte directe faite par un objet sur un substrat physique – consistant dans un processus photochimique qui capture et reproduit les empreintes produites par des ondes de lumière. L'image « en mouvement » du cinéma analogique est ainsi constituée de chaînes d'images discrètes qui capturent une impression physique produite par exposition à la lumière d'une bande d'émulsion de gélatine et de cristaux d'halogénures d'argent.

Cette technologie prend le nom de relation « indexicale », bien connue, du critique français André Bazin,[31] qui consiste à « indexer » l'image cinématographique à l'objet filmé à partir d'un lien de causalité directe qui, pour Bazin comme pour Walter Benjamin[32] et bien d'autres, impliquent une « objectivité » aux conséquences politiques. La perception devenant automatique, ces penseurs ont estimé que le cinéma pourrait supplanter l'intervention de certains schémas idéologiques apparaissant dans la représentation picturale antérieure –typiquement l'intervention culturelle-psychologique de l'artiste « bourgeois » de la peinture ou de la sculpture –une situation illustrée, pour Bazin par exemple, dans « l'image fait »[33] du néoréalisme italien.

Cependant, au cours des années 1980, 1990 et 2000, cette technologie « analogique » a été progressivement remplacée par le codage « numérique », l'image filmique étant plutôt constituée d'un capteur électronique qui divise la lumière entrante en millions de pixels, unités discrètes mesurées par leur luminosité et couleur et stockées sous forme de chaînes de chiffres. Lors de la (re)production de l'image pour l'œil humain, ces nombres sont ensuite décodés et l'image réassemblée pour la projection. Et, bien que cela puisse sembler être un changement technique spécifique d'intérêt limité au-delà du domaine de la production cinématographique, nous devons garder à l'esprit que la « numérisation » désigne bien plus que ce simple changement de matérialité.

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[30] Deleuze, *Deux Régimes*, p.300.
[31] Voir la formulation originale dans André Bazin, « Ontologie de l'image photographie », dans *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma ? – Vol. I : Ontologie et langage,* Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1958, pp.11-19.
[32] Voir Walter Benjamin, *L'œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproductibilité technique*, traduit par Frédéric Joly, Paris, Éditions Payot & Rivages, 2013.
[33] André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma ? – Vol. IV : Une esthétique de la réalité : le néo-réalisme*, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1958, p.34.

La « numérisation », même dans la mesure où elle ne s'applique qu'au cinéma, constitue un terme fourre-tout, désignant les effets spéciaux fabriqués numériquement, l'enregistrement et la présentation numériques de films autrement tournés en direct, et des pratiques techniques telles que la projection, le montage et le stockage de matériaux filmiques utilisant les technologies numériques. Il est clair que la terminologie du « cinéma numérique » englobe donc les pratiques de tous ces registres, étant donné que les développements concernant l'un d'eux influent sur la totalité de l'écologie cinématographique. Comme l'expliquent André Gaudreault et Philippe Marion, dans leur livre *The End of Cinema ? : a Medium Crisis in the Digital Age* :

> Il serait naïf de penser que la numérisation pourrait limiter ses effets au seul encodage des données. Le codage ne peut pas simplement être limité à une opération technologique isolée ; cela affecte nécessairement la langue, pour laquelle l'encodage est précisément le principe fondamental. Et lorsque ce principe fondamental devient universel, il affecte tous les langages médiatiques, puis tous les médias qui transmettent –c'est-à-dire co-construisent– ces langages. Plus simplement, le codage numérique est le processus de numérisation de nos médias de haut en bas…[34]

Laissant de côté ce qui, comme nous le verrons, est peut-être une application problématique du modèle linguistique au cinéma, le caractère imbriqué de ces développements s'illustre par le recours à un bref résumé des « grands moments » de la numérisation du cinéma.

Suite à une utilisation limitée des effets numériques dans son film *Star Wars* en 1977, George Lucas a créé une division de recherche au sein de sa société de production, Lucas Film, entièrement consacrée à la recherche sur les techniques numériques.[35] En 1982, *Star Trek 2 : La Colère de Khan* et *Tron* présentait pour la première fois un contenu numérique significatif à un large public.[36] À la fin des années 1980, les « systèmes de montage numériques non linéaires » ont commencé à remplacer leurs homologues mécaniques en tant que norme industrielle.[37] En 1993, Jurassic Park, de Steven Spielberg, a été l'un des premiers films à générer des images numériques « crédibles » en termes de continuité apparente avec des images de fond capturées « photographiquement ».[38] En 1995, Toy Story constitue le premier film entièrement synthétisé à l'aide de la technologie numérique, tandis qu'au début des années 2000, les négatifs de film étaient numérisés pour être retravaillé en post-production.[39] Dans la deuxième décennie du 21e siècle, voir un film dans un cinéma consiste généralement à visionner un film enregistré numériquement, souvent remplis d'effets spéciaux numériques, et distribués aux cinémas sous forme numérique et projetés de la même manière.

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[34] André Gaudreault & Philippe Marion, *The End of Cinema ?: A Medium Crisis in the Digital Age*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2015, p.45 (Ma traduction).
[35] David Norman Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2007, p.7.
[36] Stephen Prince, *Digital Visual Effects in Cinema: The Seduction of Reality*, Nouveau-Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2012, p.4.
[37] Rodowick, *Virtual Life*, p.7.
[38] Gabriele Balbi & Paolo Magaudda, *A History of Digital Media : An Intermedia and Global Perspective*, New York, Routledge, 2018, p.169.
[39] Rodowick, *Virtual Life*, p.8.

Comme nous pourrions le déduire des types de films énumérés ici, et comme l'a noté D.N. Rodowick,[40] ces développements ont été marqués tout autant par l'efficience économique offerte par la production et la distribution numériques que par la menace « existentielle » posée au cinéma par l'apparition d'autres formes d'écrans- vidéos, télévisuels et numériques. En cherchant à se différencier des formes dominantes de divertissement sur petit écran, et à résister à la tendance à la diminution progressive de la vente de billets, le cinéma s'est progressivement tourné vers une production du « spectaculaire », utilisant les technologies numériques –notamment des effets spéciaux élaborés- pour capitaliser sur les grands budgets disponibles pour les studios hollywoodiens ainsi que sur l'environnement visuel et sonore impressionnant du cinéma.

Ce développement a également eu des implications dépassant l'expérience d' « aller au cinéma ». La distribution numérique, présidée par les images « électroniques » de la télévision, a eu pour conséquence l'envahissement des frontières mêmes du domaine filmique par d'autres formes, s'étendant de manière symbiotique vers des territoires extérieurs. D'une part, l'évolution socio-techno-économique de la production et de la consommation de cultures de l'écran a conduit le « cinéma », au sens où Deleuze l'entend (c'est-à-dire 70 à 300 minutes, destiné au moins à une première projection en grand écran, produit avec au moins une intention artistique marginale), à perdre sa position centrale au cœur de la culture des images en mouvement qu'elle a pourtant occupée sans rival tout au long du 20e siècle. Cette place a été usurpée par la télévision et la vidéo, et plus récemment par les soi-disant « nouveaux médias »,[41] y compris -sans toutefois s'y limiter- la diffusion en ligne, les jeux vidéo, les réseaux sociaux, le contenu interactif et généré par l'utilisateur.

Ces changements ont été la source d'une certaine consternation dans le monde de la théorie du film, qui a eu du mal à conserver simultanément le sentiment de son identité et de ses objectifs face à la déstabilisation de ses objets d'étude.[42] Rodowick cristallise bien ces angoisses quand il écrit :

> La bande de celluloïd avec son rassurant passage physique d'images visibles, le démarrage bruyant et encombrant du projecteur de film mécanique ou de la table de montage Steenbeck, l'imposante masse de la cartouche de film disparaissent un à un dans un espace virtuel, avec les images ils ont si magnifiquement enregistré et présenté. Que reste-t-il donc du cinéma, remplacé, partie par partie, par la numérisation ? Est-ce la fin du film et donc la fin des études de cinéma ? Les études de cinéma ont-elles un avenir au 21e siècle ?[43]

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[40] Ibid., p.5.

[41] J'ai utilisé ici le terme tel qu'il est développé dans *The Language of New Media*, qui déterminait bien les paramètres de l'étude académique des médias après l'informatisation. Notons que Manovich, et d'autres comme Rodowick, soutiennent en fait que le terme « nouveaux médias » constituent une sorte d'illusion, suggérant une rupture idéaliste à la place de diverses continuités techniques et culturelles. Voir Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 2001.

[42] Gaudreault & Marion, p.11.

[43] Rodowick, *Virtual Life*, p.8.

Même si nous pouvons nous sentir spectateurs d'un débat portant sur « l'esthétique du film » –coloré, peut-être, par une certaine nostalgie, plutôt que par une position critique prononcée– les implications de cette transition, comme je l'ai suggéré, s'étendent au-delà des simples conditions de spectateurs ou de la crise existentielle d'une discipline académique particulière.

Gregory Flaxman[44] et Markos Hadjioannou[45] ont bien noté la tentation de concevoir ce changement et ses implications dans les termes de la thèse de « l'indexicalité » que propose Bazin, arguant que la traduction de l'image du film en paquets discrets de « données » codées casse la relation jusqu'alors « causale » entre objet et image, interposant un nouvel interlocuteur potentiellement idéologique. Mais, comme le notent les deux penseurs susmentionnés, l'index a toujours constitué une ligne de défense fragile dans les débats autour de la soi-disant « spécificité » du film. Par quelle catégorie ontologique, après tout, pourrions-nous revendiquer une relation de cause à effet plus « correcte » entre la pellicule exposée et la couleur et le mouvement codés sous forme de chiffres ?

A la suite de Flaxman, je soutiens qu'un problème plus fondamental, comme nous l'avons brièvement abordé dans sa formulation deleuzienne, vient de ce que de telles images risquent d'éliminer les potentialités d'ouverture vers le « dehors » d'une image donnée, potentialités que ce dernier avait identifié dans le cinéma. Pour rappel, selon les termes de Deleuze, les nouvelles images électroniques « n'ont plus d'extériorité (hors-champ) » et, bien que cette affirmation puisse sembler obscure, nous pouvons penser, par exemple, à certaines images en mouvement caractéristiques du début du 21e siècle comme les mondes immersifs du jeu vidéo ou l'espace d'image en réseau de YouTube. De tels systèmes d'images basés sur l'ordinateur semblent supprimer littéralement tout « dehors », construit de manière immersive ou imbriqué avec les technologies de télécommunication, de manière à créer des espaces d'images à travers lesquels nous pourrions nous déplacer multilatéralement, échappant ainsi aux dimensions spatio-temporelles circonscrites d'une œuvre filmique particulière.

Même dans le cinéma conçu traditionnellement, tourné pour être vu séquentiellement dans les salles de cinéma, cette tendance à la « fermeture » de l'image par certains processus techniques et esthétiques totalisants est venue remplacer les styles de cadrage cinématographique qui reposent autant sur ce qui se trouve dans et « au-delà » de l'image. Flaxman, par exemple, identifie cette fonction en marche dans l'esthétique numérique et « surdéterminée » d'*Avatar* (2009), le film de science-fiction de James Cameron qui, au moment de l'écriture, était le film le plus rentable et le plus cher jamais réalisé. Selon Flaxman, en utilisant des techniques de capture de mouvement à 360 degrés et de rendu numérique, *Avatar* efface le « plan » filmique en faveur d'un espace d'information à angles multiples dont les « limites » sont conçues comme de simples limitations techniques que l'on peut surmonter. Comme il l'explique, dans *Avatar* :

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[44] Gregory Flaxman, "Out of Field: The Future of Film Studies," dans *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 17, no. 4 (December 2012), Routledge, p.120.

[45] Markos Hadjioannou, "In Search of Lost Reality: Waltzing with Bashir," dans David Martin-Jones & William Brown eds., *Deleuze and Film*, Édinbourg, Edinburgh University Press, 2012, pp.104-120.

> La grande majorité de la « performance » se déroule dans ce que le réalisateur et son équipe ont surnommé « le volume », une immense scène de capture de mouvement contenant jusqu'à 80 ou 90 caméras numériques entourant les acteurs. La technologie de performance de mouvement n'existe plus pour une caméra donnée : les performances sont capturées à partir de n'importe quelle perspective dans la gamme à 360 degrés. Cela signifie que, avec les images initiales enregistrées, Cameron peut revenir en arrière et reprendre la scène virtuelle sous n'importe quel angle ou perspective. À ce stade, le réalisateur ne tourne pas le film, ne retourne pas les plans, mais manipule les données. Il n'y a pas de plan à proprement parler, juste des informations nécessaires au rendu de l'image…[46]

Et ce changement - du « plan » cadré à l'image « 3D » déterminé par des fonctions algorithmiques et de calcul - est inexorablement lié, pour Flaxman, aux « dépenses interminables de capital »[47] grâce auxquelles le cinéma hollywoodien contemporain cherche à se différencier du petit écran. Ainsi, il continue :

> …Le spectacle du cinéma numérique, en particulier dans *Avatar*, se déroule en une série interminable de « *money shots* ». En effet, la pornographie n'est pas la pire façon de penser à l'écran, car le cinéma numérique du spectacle suit la même inclination à « tout montrer », à révéler chaque dernier geste d'action extatique, et à ne rien laisser invisible (pensons à Michael Bay, par exemple). Bien sûr, je me réfère ici à un orgasme cinématographique extrêmement coûteux pour décrire cette inclination, mais je pense que les excès exorbitants du film de Cameron révèlent un impératif, à la fois esthétique et économique, qui détermine la nouvelle idée du cinéma : *il faut être représenté*.[48]

Certes, on peut objecter que tous les films contemporains ne montrent pas cette tendance, mais l'intervention de Flaxman offre un diagnostic convaincant concernant cette tendance majeure des cultures contemporaines de l'écran, tendance que Deleuze lui-même avait semblé prédire avec ses observations à la fin de *Cinéma II*. Nous pourrions bien soutenir qu'en « devenant numérique » les pyrotechniques hyper-représentationnelles du cinéma numérique contemporain ont oublié la « mécanique de l'invisible », le dehors, l'impensé qui a fait du cinéma le grand « septième art »[49] du 20e siècle. Dans ce contexte, Flaxman revient à Deleuze, et au concept de « dehors », en écrivant que :

> Aujourd'hui, plus que jamais, nous devrions revendiquer le concept de dehors comme description la plus rigoureuse du cinéma, et comme la critique la plus implacable des moyens et médias numériques qui prétendent l'avoir dépassé.[50]

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[46] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.129 (ma traduction).
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Le terme est celui de Ricciotto Canudo, théoricien italien du cinéma, qui publié en 1911 le manifeste « La naissance du sixième art », dans lequel il affirmait que le cinéma synthétisait les cinq arts majeurs énumérés dans « *l'Esthétique* » de Hegel (architecture, sculpture, peinture, musique et poésie). Canudo ajoute ensuite la danse à cette liste, le cinéma devenant alors le septième art. Voir Ricciotto Canudo, "The Birth of a Sixth Art" (1911), et "Reflections on the Seventh Art" (1923), dans Richard Abel ed., *French Film Theory and Criticism – 1907-1939, Vol. I: 1907-1929*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988.
[50] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p. 134.

Le travail de Flaxman dans ce domaine est sans aucun doute le point de départ du mien. Cette thèse s'accorde avec Deleuze et Flaxman en ce qui concerne un ensemble unique de relations cinématographiques avec le dehors et le danger posé par la numérisation et l'orientation « informatique » contemporaine des formes d'écran. Cependant, j'espère au contraire ajouter une note d'optimisme, dans l'esprit des livres de Deleuze sur le cinéma eux-mêmes qui revendiquent les catastrophes de la deuxième guerre mondiale comme le point de départ de nouvelles images cinématographiques-philosophiques profondes.

Bien que cette tendance « informationnelle » ait des implications plus larges, dépassant de loin l'art, et que le malaise contemporain du cinéma –s'il en existe bien un– est intimement lié à toute une écologie d'autres formes d'écran, il me semble, à la suite de Rodowick et Flaxman, que le cinéma fournit un champ de bataille circonscrit dans lequel on pourrait penser ces changements et leurs implications. Le cinéma pourrait bien être le signe avant-coureur –un « art », nous pouvons enfin convenir, après les grands débats du 20e siècle–[51] qui, de par ses dimensions technique et économique, est peut-être uniquement sensible aux toxines d'une nouvelle organisation sociale. Mais le cinéma, je dirais, comme art, pourrait bien être doté de ses propres pouvoirs immanents de résistance.

## Reformulation de l'information

En m'interrogeant sur ces pouvoirs, je propose un détour par les cadres conceptuels de la théorie de l'information elle-même qui, selon moi, nous fournissent involontairement des outils pour poursuivre des objectifs philosophiques antithétiques au modèle de contrôle cybernétique. Dans des passages souvent cités, Deleuze décrit son projet philosophique comme « une sorte d'enculage », par lequel il envisage son écriture comme un processus qui consiste à « arriver dans le dos d'un auteur, et lui faire un enfant, qui serait le sien et qui serait pourtant monstrueux. »[52] Dans ce contexte, écrit Deleuze :

> Que ce soit bien le sien, c'est très important, parce qu'il fallait que l'auteur dise effectivement tout ce que je lui faisais dire. Mais que l'enfant soit monstrueux, c'était

[51] Le statut du cinéma comme « forme d'art » n'a en fait pas été établi pour de nombreux penseurs au cours du 20e siècle. Depuis ses débuts, les interventions de Hugo Münsterberg, Sergei Eisenstein, Erwin Panofsky, André Bazin, Rudolf Arnheim et al., et les enquêtes philosophiquse sur la nature du film –animée par le désir de faire du film une forme d'art de même envergure que la littérature, peinture et théâtre– ont toujours été aux prises avec des questions relatives aux implications ontologiques, métaphysiques et épistémiques du film, toujours sous les auspices de son statut technique et esthétique. En effet, la volonté de prouver que le film était un art légitime (peut-être malgré sa popularité auprès du grand public) a été un moteur essentiel des premiers écrits sur le cinéma, qui ont abouti à une série de tentatives incroyablement fertiles pour exprimer exactement ce qui était unique sur le cinéma. Voir, par exemple, Hugo Münsterberg, *The Photoplay – A Psychological Study,* New York, D. Appleton & Company, 1916, Rudolf Arnheim, *Film as Art*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1957, Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, trans. J. Leyda, New York, Harvest & Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977. Pour une contre-position, selon laquelle l'automatisme du film et de la photographie les différencie des formes véritablement « créatives » ou « artistiques », voir Roger Scruton, "Photography and Representation," dans *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Spring, 1981), pp.577-603.

[52] Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, p.18.

> nécessaire aussi, parce qu'il fallait passer par toutes sortes de décentrements, glissements, cassements, émissions secrètes qui m'ont fait bien plaisir.[53]

Cette approche, loin d'être simplement polémique ou enjouée –bien qu'elle soit certainement les deux–, permet à Deleuze d'échapper à la tendance de la philosophie à proposer des systèmes, c'est-à-dire des structures conceptuelles complètes et autonomes en faveur de l'identification d'éléments différentiels et indéterminés au sein d'une structure théorétique ou œuvre particulière.

En transformant Nietzsche en métaphysicien,[54] Platon en penseur d'immanence,[55] ou bien Freud en répresseur des désirs inconscients,[56] Deleuze est capable non seulement de pointer des présuppositions et des limites immanentes à un schéma théorique, mais également d'exploiter les défauts, les torts et les lacunes qui pourraient faire avancer un style de pensée non pas comme « critique » ou « clarification », mais comme processus mobile et créatif capable d'ouvrir de nouvelles « lignes de fuite .»[57]

C'est peut-être révélateur de son mépris pour la cybernétique et pour la « théorie de l'information », ainsi que du style plus « mature » et « austère » de ses travaux ultérieurs, que ces concepts échappent à ce traitement en faveur du ton prudent du dernier chapitre de *Cinéma II* ou de la brève critique avec laquelle il ouvre avec Guattati *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie ?*[58] Il est également possible que le récit largement « moderniste » de l'art

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Voir Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1965.

[55] Voir Deleuze, *Différance et Répétition*, p.83.

[56] Voir Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Œdipe : Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1972.

[57] La « ligne de fuite » est un concept qui a émergé de la collaboration de Deleuze avec Félix Guattari. Deleuze et Guattari introduisent le concept dans leur élaboration du « rhizome », multiplicité a-hiérarchique et qualitative qu'ils posent comme modèle de pensée créatrice, imbriqué dans le flux de la vie. Dans ce contexte, ils expliquent : « Les multiplicités se définissent par le dehors : par la ligne abstraite, ligne de fuite ou déterritorialisation suivant laquelle elles changent de nature en se connectant avec d'autres… » ou encore, « Il y a rupture dans le rhizome chaque fois que des lignes segmentaires explosent dans une ligne de fuite, mais la ligne de fuite fait partie du rhizome… » (Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux : Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980, p.15). En tant que tel, nous pourrions penser à la ligne de fuite comme l'ouverture par laquelle une multiplicité –par exemple, un concept ou un système philosophique– change au contact de ce qu'elle n'est pas, un élément de fuite ou de disparation de l'identité cohérente d'une multiplicité qui néanmoins réfracte dans ladite multiplicité, provoquant la reformation et le remodelage de ses dimensions constitutives.

[58] Ici, dans l'une de leurs critiques les plus fermes et les plus circonscrites à la fois des concepts « d'information » et de « communication », Deleuze et Guattari nous mettent en garde de leur émergence en tant que « rivaux de plus en plus insolents, de plus en plus calamiteux » à la philosophie. Comme ils l'écrivent : « Enfin le fond de la honte fut atteint quand l'informatique, le marketing, le design, la publicité, toutes les disciplines de la communication, s'éparèrent du mot concept lui-même, et dirent : c'est notre affaire, c'est nous les créatifs, nous sommes les *concepteurs* ! C'est nous les amis du concept, nous le mettons dans nos ordinateurs. Information et créativité, concept et entreprise : une abondante bibliographie déjà… mais voilà que le concept est devenu l'ensemble des présentations d'un produit (historique, scientifique, artistique, sexuel, pragmatique…) […] et les seuls concepts, des produits qu'on peut vendre. » (Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie ?,* Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991, p.15). Alors que dans le reste de *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie ?* laissede côté les termes explicites de cette critique, la définition de la philosophie avancée comme « création de concepts » sur un « plan d'immanence » peut être lue comme une réponse prolongée à

proposé par Deleuze –en particulier dans les œuvres ultérieures–[59] émerge de l'espoir que la subsomption « informatique » du « concept » et l'apparition de modèles informatiques de pensée et d'art pourraient finalement être évités.[60]

Cependant, au 20e siècle, avec les « révolutions » de la communication et de l'information pleinement consacrées, il semble que nous ne puissions plus nous permettre de critiquer leur fonctionnement à partir d'un terrain extérieur privilégié puisque nous nous retrouvons déjà imbriqués avec et constitués par leurs relations et leurs réseaux. En tant quel tel, je propose une manœuvre à la mesure de la description que Deleuze donne de sa propre philosophie, en m'appuyant sur la « théorie de l'information » elle-même, afin d'exploiter certains des sous-textes et des glissements qui constituent son tissu. En d'autres termes, j'espère identifier les pratiques par lesquelles le cinéma numérique, du point de vue de la théorie de l'information, pourrait incorporer le « bruit » étranger comme présence aléatoire dépassant les fonctions initialement prévues par les systèmes numériques.

Le « bruit » est un concept de longue date dans la théorie de l'information ainsi que dans les riches commentaires des sciences humaines et sociales qui y ont répondu. Bien que clarifié dans les chapitres correspondants de la thèse, j'introduirai ici mon utilisation du terme dans ses grandes lignes. Émergeant du latin « *nausea* » -avec une connotation du moyen anglais de « *quarreling* » ou dispute– ce terme désigne un certain « défaut de communication »,[61] résultant d'un contenu sémantique non intentionnel ou indésirable présent dans un « message » ou « signal » (compris dans le sens le plus large possible). Alors que le « bruit »

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cet état contemporain, et comme une défense rigoureuse de la spécificité et du radicalisme du projet philosophique.

[59] Le « modernisme » artistique de Deleuze constitue un élément de tension dans son œuvre. Alors que lui et Guattari –dans leur plaidoyer en faveur de littératures « mineures » pouvant s'opposer à l'art canonique et institutionnel– offrent des outils pour réfléchir à certaines formes d'expression culturelle « basses » et « populaire » en termes de radicalisme, leur ultime identification de l'œuvre d'art avec un processus qui produit « un bloc de sensations, […] un composé de percepts et d'affects […] un être de sensation, et rien d'autre… » (Ibid., pp.154-155) semble orienter leur philosophie esthétique vers les formes modernistes de la peinture, de la sculpture et de la littérature, négligeant des formes plus contemporaines de « créativité » comme la production télévisuelle, les jeux vidéo, l'art conceptuel et la montée du formes « post-modernes » de spectateurs créatifs et ironiques. Dans ce contexte, comme l'a noté Steven Zepke, le problème réside peut-être dans le fait que le moment fondamental de la philosophie esthétique de Deleuze est la discussion de Kant sur les expériences dépassant toute compréhension (le sublime), relu par Deleuze comme une rencontre « violente » dans lequel nos structures intellectuelles sont problématisées par la sensation –un état qui mène à une déconnexion entre la notion d'art de Deleuze (et de Guattari) et lest pratiques artistiques « conceptuelles » et « post-conceptuelles » contemporaines. De telles pratiques, qui reposent largement sur la participation « intellectuelle » des spectateurs, semblent un mauvais accord avec un vocabulaire de « sensation », et le travail visant à combler cette déconnexion reste un domaine de recherche post-deleuzien pressant. Voir Steven Zepke, « A work of art does not contain the least bit of information : Deleuze and Guattari and Contemporary Art, » dans Sjoerd van Tuinen & Steven Zepke eds., *Art History after Deleuze and Guattari,* Louvain, Leuven University Press, 2017, pp.237-254.

[60] Bien sûr, Deleuze ne se contente pas de « rejeter » de nouvelles formes d'image populaire. Cependant, il est prudent de dire qu'il y a une tension dans sa pensée sur les médias comme la télévision ou la radio, et parfois il en parle avec dédain. Pour un traitement convaincant d'une certaine potentialité, selon Deleuze, du « retournement » des « arts du contrôle » contre le pouvoir, voir Dork Zabunyan, « Le cinéma comme ' art du contrôle ' : stratégies du retournement » dans Anne Querrien, Anne Sauvagnargues & Arnaud Villani eds., *Agencer les multiplicités avec Deleuze*, Paris, Éditions Hermann, 2019, pp.319-330.

[61] Mark Nunes, "Error, Noise, and Potential : The Outside of Purpose," dans Mark Nunes ed., *Error: Glitch, Noise and Jam in New Media Cultures*, New York, Continuum, 2011, p.3 (Ma traduction).

était ainsi invariablement compris comme indésirable ou déplaisant, certaines fonctions esthétiques et noétiques du « bruit » ont commencé à être valorisées dans les conditions de la modernité.

Paradigmatique ici est le manifeste « L'Art des bruits » de Luigi Russolo, publié en 1913, dans lequel, opposant le monde prémoderne du « silence » et des « sons » occasionnel avec la cacophonie de l'industrialisation, il préconise une nouvelle musique qui peut « rompre à tout prix de ce cercle restrictif de sons purs et conquérir l'infinie variété de sons-bruits. »[62] Il poursuit, en termes peut-être deleuziens :

> Le bruit […] a le pouvoir d'évoquer la vie elle-même. Le son, étranger à notre vie, toujours musical et chose en soi, élément occasionnel mais inutile, est devenu à nos oreilles ce que le visage trop familier est à nos yeux. Le bruit, cependant, qui nous parvient de manière confuse et irrégulière à partir de la confusion irrégulière de notre vie, ne se révèle jamais tout à fait à nous, et garde d'innombrables surprises en réserve.[63]

La formulation de Russolo du bruit comme une sorte d'extériorité inimitable aux pratiques « sémantiques » humaines telles que la musique n'est pas si loin de la valorisation par Deleuze des « rencontres » qui pourraient forcer la pensée à devenir inhumaine, inconnue ou errante. Et bien que Russolo ait longtemps fourni un vocabulaire par lequel les compositeurs et les musiciens expérimentaux ont pu concevoir leurs projets qui, dans les termes de John Cage, « envahissaient [des] régions où rien n'était défini »,[64] il est intéressant de noter à quel point sa conception de bruit reflète celle avec laquelle la théorie de l'information viendrait à s'appliquer au milieu du 20e siècle.

Claude Shannon et Warren Weaver, dont les travaux aux Bell Telephone Laboratories dans les années 1940 ont inspiré nombre des concepts clés de la théorie de l'information, pourraient apparaître comme des alliés improbables pour tenter de penser contre le contrôle informatique, encore plus dans le contexte du cinéma. Cependant, leurs travaux, initialement consacrés à l'optimisation des technologies de transmission des signaux de télécommunication, ont non seulement jeté les bases techniques de la numérisation éventuelle de l'image cinématographique, mais ont également fourni des outils intéressants pour penser le rôle que le « bruit » pourrait jouer dans la poursuite de ces expériences plus radicales.

Ceci est dû au fait que dans leur texte de 1949, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (abrégé MTC), Shannon et Weaver (qui a donné corps au travail plus technique de Shannon pour un public populaire) posent l'information en termes quantitatifs, non pas en tant que catégorie sémantique, mais comme émergence d'un champ de probabilité à maximiser pour

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[62] Luigi Russolo, "The Art of Noises" (extraits), trad. en anglais par Caroline Tisdall, dans U. Appollonio ed., *Futurist Manifestos*, Londres, Tate Publishing, 2009, p.76 (ma traduction).
[63] Ibid., p.85.
[64] John Cage, *A Year from Monday : New Lectures and Writings by John Cage*, Middletown CA, Wesleyan University Press, 1967, p.27 (ma traduction).

obtenir le « potentiel » le plus grand possible de messages non encore connus.[65] Très brièvement, l'information, dans les termes statistiques de Shannon, fait explicitement référence à la quantité d'incertitude qui est retirée de la compréhension d'un « *informee* », d'une situation qui, néanmoins, nécessite un niveau d'incertitude initiale pour que l'information puisse être transmise. Les technologies de l'information basées sur le MTC aspirent donc à maximiser ce « déficit de données » initial (la potentialité maximale des messages) de sorte que la quantité d'informations (ou la réduction du déficit de données) puisse également être maximale. Ainsi, alors que cette définition « technique » pointe vers une certaine aspiration « totalisante » de la théorie de l'information, de telle sorte que tous les « messages » possibles pourraient être capturés par les mêmes logiques de codage et de transmission, l'association directe de la quantité d'incertitude par Shannon et Weaver d'informations dans une transmission suggère que les systèmes d'information sont peut-être plus compatibles avec la formulation deleuzienne du dehors qu'il le semblait initialement.

Il est essentiel que Shannon et Weaver introduisent le concept de « bruit » c'est-à-dire de présence de données non désirées dans une transmission augmentant le niveau d'incertitude sans réduction correspondante du déficit de données. Cette présence empirique inévitable –de radios statiques, de « *glitches* », de poussière, de saleté et de vent, des résidus cinétiques de fonctionnement de la machine et du décalage de distance accumulé –s'insère toujours dans les technologies de l'information. Recueilli et transmis sous forme de données, il constitue, selon les termes de Wiener, le « mal augustinien »[66] avec lequel les technologies cybernétiques et de l'information doivent lutter continuellement : la présence chaotique et entropique d'une « nature » désordonnée que l'information doit s'efforcer de contrôler correctement.

Cependant, en insistant sur le caractère essentiellement non-signifiant et processuel d'une information conçue techniquement, Shannon et Weaver ouvrent la voie à une conception philosophique de l'information pouvant inclure du bruit, l'information ne devenant plus une désignation statique ou prédéterminée, mais une potentialité différentielle et différentiante opérant au niveau métaphysique. Luciano Floridi, par exemple, a plus récemment forgé une philosophie convaincante de l'information qui, issue des travaux de Shannon, Weaver, Wiener et bien d'autres, développe la distinction entre informations « sémantiques » et « techniques », en affirmant, selon la formule bien connue de Gregory Bateson, que le caractère fondamental des « données » au niveau pré-ou-hors-sémantique est simplement celui d'une « différence qui fait une différence. »[67]

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[65] Claude Shannon & Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1964, p.8.

[66] Wiener, *The Human Use*, p.34.

[67] Comme l'explique Bateson, « …nous pouvons affirmer que tout ensemble d'événements et d'objets en cours possédant la complexité appropriée de circuits causaux et les relations d'énergie appropriées affichera sûrement des caractéristiques mentales. Elle comparera, c'est-à-dire réagira à la différence… elle « traitera l'information » et se corrigera elle-même automatiquement vers des optima homéostatiques ou vers la maximisation de certaines variables. Un « bit » d'information peut être défini comme une différence qui fait une différence. » (Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, New York, Ballantine Books, 1978, p.315 (ma traduction)).

Bien sûr, Shannon et Weaver, qui se consacrent au fonctionnement optimal des technologies de communication dédiées à la consolidation des systèmes de commandement et de contrôle après la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, identifient le « bruit » comme une présence indésirable dans une transmission. Et si Shannon est capable de déterminer statistiquement la quantité d'incertitude (ou d'information) « indésirable » contre ce qui est « désirable » dans le cas de « signaux connus », le fait que les canaux d'information génèrent toujours une certaine quantité de bruit –en raison de leurs dimensions temporelle, cinétique et spatiale– et le fait que ce bruit ne peut être différencié que par des informations sémantiquement utiles selon des critères prédéterminés (et sémantiques- les intentions et les exigences de l'émetteur et le paramètres de la système de communication) suggèrent que l'information est toujours aux prises avec l'information au sens « ontologique » de Floridi, c'est-à-dire avec des « données » non signifiantes et imprévues, ou des différences.

Comme nous le verrons dans la thèse, cette dernière formulation pourrait bien être transposée en termes deleuziens lorsque nous rappelons que le « dehors » est une condition génétique et différentielle qui sert à la fois à engendrer et à problématiser une structure « actuelle ». Comme David Lapoujade l'a écrit, dans le cadre d'une approche deleuzienne de la langue :

> Il ne s'agit pas de « sortir » du langage en invoquant une expérience des limites qui serait silence, cri ou musique – comme s'ils étaient en dehors du langage –, mais plutôt de voir qu'ils constituent *le dehors* du langage, un dehors qui le travaille du dedans. Ils sont l'autre versant du langage, un matériau non-linguistique dont les variations intensives, chromatiques le travaillent du dedans et le désarticulent.[68]

Et cette fonction immanente d'un dehors, comme le note Lapoujade, qui est à la fois la condition génétique d'une structure donnée pourrait bien être celle par laquelle nous dépassons les possibilités circonscrites du contrôle informatique.

En d'autres termes, j'espère identifier une faille dans l'armure de la théorie et des technologies de l'information à travers laquelle l'art et la philosophie, comprises en terme de « co-création » telle que Deleuze l'envisage, pourraient continuer à reproduire et à développer les espaces d'indétermination et de chaos qui sont leur grain. Si l'information, dans ses propres termes fondamentaux, opère en raison d'incertitudes –bien que ces incertitudes probabilistes soient indexées rétroactivement sur l'actuel– et de différence, pourrait-on imaginer des « images-informations » qui remplissent des fonctions similaires aux images mouvement-et-temps que Deleuze identifie comme problématisant les habitudes et orthodoxies intellectuelles ? Pourrions-nous être en mesure de penser une « incertitude » informationnelle qui n'est plus probabiliste ni indexée sur l'actuel, mais avec laquelle nous pourrions plutôt exprimer des potentialités virtuelles ? Les œuvres numériques « bruyantes », le bruit au sens extra-sémantique de Shannon, Floridi *et* Russolo, Cage et al., pourraient-elles continuer à mettre la pensée en contact avec un dehors, un dehors immanent à l'information elle-même ?

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[68] David Lapoujade, *Deleuze, Les Mouvements Aberrants*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2014, p.269.

C'est avec ces questions en tête que je termine la thèse en analysant les fonctions du « bruit » sémantique et technique (ou ontologique) au travail dans un film contemporain, *Inland Empire* (2006), de David Lynch. Ici, contre Deleuze, je soutiendrai que l'on peut trouver une relation productive avec le dehors dans la matérialité numérique, introduite comme une présence aléatoire et inhumaine tout au long du film combinée à des circuits du temps « incompossibles » ou non chronologiques qui ouvre la structure du film sur une problématisation radicale de la pensée habituelle.

Je soutiens qu'Inland Empire, « l'adieu au film »[69] de Lynch, fournit l'exemple d'un cinéma numérique qui engendre de nouvelles relations problématiques avec un « dehors » immanent à la matérialité informatique. Premièrement, Lynch utilise une technologie numérique intrinsèquement « limitée » (une caméra portable Sony PD-150) qui lutte constamment contre la série d'exigences empiriques qui sont imposées, s'efforçant de se focaliser automatiquement sur les visages des acteurs trop proche, de s'adapter aux changements radicaux de l'éclairage, de suivre les mouvements rapides de l'action du film– créant une esthétique pixélisée et « bruyante ». Ainsi, non seulement nous sommes toujours conscients de la matérialité numérique du film, qui devient un élément esthétique central, mais nous rencontrons également un espace numérique dédié non pas à la communication claire, mais à la production de cet autre type d'information, les données asémantiques et chaotiques, qui encourage activement une multitude de réponses sémantiques disparates. De même, au niveau de la « narration » du film –terme que nous ne pouvons peut-être pas finalement appliquer après tout–, *Inland Empire* attire l'attention sur la contingence et la détermination sociale de ces réponses, faisant du complexe industriel-hollywoodien producteur et contrôleur de l'information un thème clé du film.

En effet, comme nous le verrons, l'un des moyens par lesquels Deleuze soutient que nous pourrions échapper au contrôle de l'information consiste à refuser de prendre au pied de la lettre la « neutralité » de la communication et de la transmission d'information. Au lieu de cela, il suggère que, pour aller au-delà de l'information, nous devons poser des questions fondamentalement politiques sur sa source et ses intentions. Comme il l'écrit : « …dépasser l'information se fait de deux côtés à la fois, vers deux questions : quelle est la source, et quel est le destinataire ? »[70] Dans le modèle de Shannon et Weaver, cette neutralité est présentée comme la fonction rigoureusement technique et statistique de l'information, quel que soit son contenu, à condition qu'elle soit transmise entre un « *informer* » et un « *informee* » avec un « alphabet » symbolique partagé avec lequel coder et décoder chaque message.[71] Cependant, cet « alphabet partagé » n'est jamais qu'une abstraction prédéterminée et inflexible étant donné qu'il n'y a aucune garantie que *l'informer* et *l'informee*, quand ils se trouvent branchés sur des ensembles sociaux, politiques et épistémiques concrets plus larges, « communiquent » de manière strictement neutre ou équitable.

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[69] Michael Idato, « David Lynch on the return of *Twin Peaks* and why he will never make another film, » *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Online), 16 Avril 2007 (mis à jour Mai 5, 2017), <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-and-radio/david-lynch-on-the-return-of-twin-peaks-and-why-he-will-never-make-another-film-20170416-gvlr60.html> accédé 19 Avril 2019.

[70] Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p.353.

[71] Luciano Floridi, *Information: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, p.37.

En demandant exactement qui ou quoi constitue ces émetteurs « anonymes » –un ordinateur peut-être, mais utilisé pour quoi ? et calibrés en fonction de quels schémas prédéterminés ou idéologies souterraines ? – nous ouvrons le système de transmission de l'information « isolé » sur des questions politiques et éthiques qui relèvent de la philosophie et de l'art. En effet, c'est ce que fait le film de Lynch en se référant aux structures capitalistes et misogynes d'Hollywood qui produisent des flux d'informations extrêmement intéressés, qui, loin de « communiquer » de manière quelconque, « communiquent » au sens de transmettre physiquement la force d'un mot d'ordre ou un impératif.

Cet élément thématique, associé aux dispositifs techniques et esthétiques susmentionnés (et d'autres, sur lesquels nous reviendrons dans le chapitre correspondant), détermine un film qui, contrairement à la conception de Deleuze de l'informatique comme contrôle, nous fournit un exemple de l'informatique comme résistance– du moins comme résistance aux habitudes du spectateur cinématographique. Une telle œuvre n'aurait pas pu être réalisée sans l'utilisation de la technologie « informatique », ni sans évoquer certains concepts clés de l'information, de sorte qu'elle nous oblige à reconsidérer la position de Deleuze sur l'incompatibilité fondamentale entre l'art et de l'information dans la mesure où nous sommes disposés à redéfinir, peut-être, ce que ces termes désignent.

Avant de poursuivre, permettez-moi d'anticiper certaines objections potentielles. Tout d'abord, il convient de noter ici que ma discussion sur une « certaine idée du cinéma » –les productions hollywoodiennes numériques à gros budgets– risque de reproduire un effacement familier dans l'écriture d'histoires culturelles– celle des voix non occidentales. L'Inde reste un producteur de films beaucoup plus prolifique que les États-Unis. Son industrie multilingue (souvent regroupée à tort sous le titre « Bollywood » qui fait principalement référence au système de studios de Bombay) produit environ 1000 films par an.[72] Entre-temps, l'industrie cinématographique nigérienne, tirée par un marché vorace du « straight to video » à la fin des années 90 et au début des années 2000, a produit près de 50 films par semaine en 2010,[73] les projetant devant un large public sur le continent africain.

Il y a beaucoup à dire sur le sujet des pratiques filmiques non-occidentales ainsi que sur l'euro-et-américanocentrisme de la théorie et de la philosophie cinématographiques. Cependant, ce n'est pas l'axe analytique fondamental du présent travail, qui reste consacré à un développement technologique de l'image –un phénomène qui touche quand même le cinéma dans les contextes occidentaux et non-occidentaux. J'aborde brièvement certaines des implications potentielles de cette approche dans les contextes postcoloniaux au chapitre trois de la thèse.

De plus, on peut se demander pourquoi, si le cinéma *occidental* est devenu tellement marginalisé par les nouvelles formes « informatiques » de l'image, cette thèse est dédiée à une œuvre cinématographique qui ressemble si étroitement aux œuvres « d'auteur » de l'époque de l'image-temps de Deleuze ? Une étude consacrée à Deleuze et à la problématique de l'information n'aurait-elle pas mieux fait référence à une multitude d'images numériques contemporaines –celles de YouTube, Snapchat, Tinder, et des réseaux

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[72] Tejaswini Ganti, *Bollywood : A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema*, Hoboken, Taylor and Francis, 2013, p.3.
[73] Voir l'étude approfondie en Jonathan Haynes, *Nollywood : The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2016.

sociaux, etc. ? Ou mieux encore, étant donné que j'espère parler de « contrôle » à l'ère de l'information, pourquoi ne pas faire une étude plus sociologique, en utilisant les travaux de Alexander Galloway, Matthew Fuller ou Manuel Castells pour identifier les logiques et les fonctions d'une « société en réseau » exprimée dans des domaines de la vie qui dépassent de loin les mondes du « divertissement » ou de « l'art » ?

Peut-être pourrions-nous répondre à ces questions en reprenant la notion unique de « cadrage » que nous offre Deleuze dans ses livres sur le cinéma. Comme nous le verrons dans la thèse, toute perception constitue un exercice de cadrage déterminant à la fois un cadre et un hors-cadre. C'est dans ce contexte que j'ai centré ma propre intervention sur un changement techno-esthétique particulier exprimé dans l'image cinématographique. Mais il est clair que le « hors champ » pose une pluralité d'autres problèmes, qui non seulement informent et traversent cette thèse, mais auxquels j'espère qu'elle pourra modestement contribuer. Le passage à une « société informatique » ou une « société de contrôle » est vaste et complexe, les implications dépassant le cadre de n'importe quelle intervention isolée. Mais, en me concentrant sur une instanciation précise de ce développement, j'espère contribuer à la vaste littérature qui se débattra avec toutes ces multiples dimensions.

Cela nous amène à une autre objection potentielle à laquelle je suis, au moins, régulièrement confrontée. Est-il naïf, trop optimiste ou même prétentieux de penser que les concepts d'information et de contrôle socio-politique pourraient être traités de manière significative par une œuvre philosophique consacrée à « l'esthétique » du cinéma ? La réponse la plus simple à cette accusation est peut-être un simple « oui ». Cependant, ce qui m'a d'abord attiré dans la philosophie de Deleuze, c'est sa conviction, si bien articulée dans le travail d'Anne Sauvagnargues,[74] que l'art revêt une importance capitale non seulement pour la façon dont nous « réfléchissons sur » le monde, mais également pour la formulation de moyens par lesquels nous pourrions y participer, pourrions changer le monde. Un coup d'œil sur l'horizon d'influence du Corbusier sur une métropole ou sur les contours Bauhaus des objets les plus quotidiens semble indiquer suffisamment la prescience de Deleuze. Cette pénétration de l'art dans le quotidien trouve peut-être son apogée avec le cinéma, qui, comme l'a écrit Paola Marrati, est un « art *moderne* – au moins puisqu'il a réussi à être, comme aucun autre art dans le siècle, une partie de notre vie à tous. »[75] En effet, l'art a le potentiel de changer le monde de manière concrète et le fait que cela n'a pas toujours été positif ne devrait pas immédiatement nous inciter à l'abandonner.

Laissant de côté ces rationalisations quelque peu grandioses, nous pourrions enfin nous opposer à un certain mouvement structurel. Pourquoi se concentrer uniquement sur *un* film comme emblématique de l'appareil conceptuel que j'espère fabriquer et défendre ? Pourquoi, comme Deleuze, ne pas évoquer une pluralité d'œuvres pour appuyer mes

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[74] Comme elle l'explique : « L'art n'existe pas en dehors du corps social qu'il transforme, et la création a tojours un sens politique. Cette thèse du philosophe Gilles Deleuze ne cautionne pourtant pas une explication sociologique de l'art, laquelle rendrait compte de la production, de la réception et du statut des arts par les conditions effectives de la société. » (Anne Sauvagnargues, « Art mineur – Art majeur : Gilles Deleuze, » dans *Espace Temps*, 78-79, 2002, p.121).

[75] Paola Marrati, *Gilles Deleuze : cinéma et philosophie*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2003, p.13.

arguments etréfuter « l'énorme proportion de nullité »[76] numériques qui, selon lui sûrement, nous submergerait aujourd'hui.

Premièrement, il me semble que cela devrait suffire à fournir un contre-exemple cohérent et bien défendu à certains des arguments avancés par Deleuze lui-même sur la relation entre art et information, un contre-exemple qui pourrait nuancer des comptes-rendus (deleuziens) ultérieurs de celui-ci. Deuxièmement, en termes pragmatiques, j'ai eu du mal à trouver de nombreux autres exemples du type de pratique à laquelle j'identifie le film. Le fait est que je suis d'accord avec les thèses fondamentales de Deleuze sur « la vie ou la survie » du cinéma qui est en effet devenu une image rétrécie et appauvrie de son état au 20e siècle (même si on n'a jamais autant tourné de films). Deleuze a raison, la « nullité » a peut-être gagné, mais il ne s'ensuit pas que nous devrions accepter la défaite et abdiquer, laissant ainsi une certaine « image » de l'informatique gagner sans remise en question. À une époque où la résistance devient plus difficile, ses moments mineurs et singuliers deviennent de plus et plus audacieux, de plus et plus précieux, ce qui, à mon avis, serait une position avec laquelle Deleuze donnerait sa sympathie.

De plus, je dois dire que je n'ai aucun investissement particulier dans la continuation de la forme cinématographique du 20e siècle. Comme je l'ai noté, elle est déjà impliquée dans un processus de déterritorialisation profond au cours duquel ses fonctions s'infiltrent et se dissipent en une profusion d'autres pratiques. On pourrait en dire autant de l'art en général, qui apparait souvent chez Deleuze sous un aspect résolument moderniste, mais qui a été problématisé à l'ère des citations, des échantillonnages et de la participation massive du publique. Cela ne doit pas être naïvement accueilli comme une « démocratisation », mais la perte d'un modèle bourgeois du 18e siècle, de créateurs de génie et d'objets réifiés ne saurait être une source de grande tragédie non plus. Comme Foucault l'a dit, au cours d'une discussion avec Paul Rabinow et Hubert Dreyfus, « je ne cherche pas à dire que tout est mauvais, mais que tout est dangereux »,[77] et je crois que ce sentiment nous fournit une éthique solide pour aborder certains de ces changements.

Il se peut bien que le « cinéma », dans les termes parfois essentialistes avec lesquels Deleuze y fait allusion, soit une chose du passé et cette thèse ne doit pas être confondue avec la tentative de lui suggérer un avenir prometteur (ou de le maintenir en vie). Au lieu de cela, à la suite de Lev Manovich, Rodowick et Flaxman, j'ai le sentiment que la « théorie du film », et également les œuvres cinématographiques, nous fournit un ensemble d'outils pour réfléchir aux développements contemporains de la culture de l'image (et de la culture en général). Non, comme Rodowick l'a expliqué, parce qu'elle propose une discipline « mature » avec un ensemble rigoureux de concepts et de critères, mais, à mon avis, en raison d'un certain « décalage » de son discours qui pourrait mettre en mouvement et réfléchir au milieu techno-social contemporain de l'image.

Enfin, je terminerai ici en disant que la portée plus large de ce projet découle d'un problème auquel la philosophie se trouve confrontée aujourd'hui sans équivoque : celui de la relation entre la pensée et la technologie. À mesure que nos vies deviennent de plus et plus «

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[76] Deleuze, *Cinéma 1*, p.8.
[77] Michel Foucault, *Dits Et Écrits - Vol. IV : 1980-1988*, Paris, Éditions Gallimard, 1994, p.386.

techniques » –en ce sens que nos relations, art, travail, politique et même nos modes de pensée se nouent avec les technologies de l'information de manière inimaginable il y a un siècle – il nous incombe de fabriquer de nouveaux concepts qui non seulement nous aident à comprendre ces changements, mais aussi à les différencier, en identifiant ceux qui aident et ceux qui entravent la cause de la pensée créatrice. Ainsi, même si je reste dans l'espace relativement restreint d'un « débat » spécifique –celui du statut de l'image cinématographique après son passage à la matérialité numérique– c'est bien dans ces termes plus larges que je conçois finalement mon projet et son importance. Comment pouvons-nous penser la technologie ? Comment pouvons-nous penser avec et, le cas échéant, contre ? C'est en me tournant vers le cinéma numérique et ses relations avec certains des concepts les plus fondamentaux de la technologie contemporaine –ceux du *bruit*, de la *communication*, et de *l'information*– que j'espère ici apporter une réponse.

## Structure

J'ai commencé par suggérer que mon objectif était de placer la philosophie cinématographique de Deleuze en dialogue avec les cultures contemporaines de l'écran qui ont profondément changé au cours des années écoulées depuis son travail. Ce changement –la numérisation–, que Deleuze anticipe dans ses remarques autour de l'apparition de nouvelles images « électroniques », « numériques » et « informatiques », a vu l'image cinématographique non seulement altérée dans sa matérialité, mais également dans son contenu narratif et esthétique, sa situation économique et culturelle, et dans les conditions et les pratiques de son public.

Comme nous l'avons vu, Deleuze se méfiait de ces développements (alors naissants), affirmant que les nouvelles images « électroniques » « n'ont plus d'extériorité. »[78] Selon mon interprétation, cela est dû au fait que, considérées comme relevant de l'information, elles ne sont plus « ouvertes » aux forces esthétiques et noétiques d'indétermination et de virtualité, mais plutôt « communiquent » un contenu actuel déterminé par un régime de sensibilité culturelle pré-distribué. Comme nous l'avons vu cet argument est repris par Gregory Flaxman qui a soutenu que :

> Aujourd'hui, plus que jamais, nous devrions revendiquer le concept de dehors comme description la plus rigoureuse du cinéma et comme critique la plus implacable des moyens et médias numériques qui prétendent l'avoir dépassé.[79]

C'est en réponse à cette affirmation centrale que cette thèse a été poursuivie, en tentant, au contraire d'identifier un « dehors numérique », une méthode conforme aux contours affirmatifs et « optimistes » de la propre philosophie de Deleuze.

## Chapitre 1

Avec cet objectif, dans le premier chapitre, je développe une cartographie du concept de « dehors » en le retraçant à travers les travaux de Blanchot, Foucault et Deleuze. Pour Blanchot, le dehors est la condition de la littérature, un espace « impersonnel » que nous pourrions entrevoir non seulement à travers la matérialité du langage, mais dans une fonction par laquelle le « sujet » de la littérature cesse de dire « je », devenant plutôt un effet d'agencement de langage pré-personnel. De cette situation littéraire, Blanchot écrit :

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[78] Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p.347.
[79] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.134.

> Là où je suis seul, je ne suis pas là, il n'y a personne, mais l'impersonnel est là : le dehors comme ce qui prévient, précède, dissout toute possibilité de rapport personnel… « On » appartient à une région qu'on ne peut amener à la lumière, non parce qu'elle cachait un secret étranger à toute révélation, ni même parce qu'elle serait radicalement obscure, mais parce qu'elle transforme tout ce qui a accès à elle, même la lumière, en l'être anonyme, impersonnel, le Non-vrai, le Non-réel et cependant toujours là.[80]

Dans *La pensée du dehors*, Foucault reprend ce concept d'un espace radicalement hors de toute discours de « vérité » ou « réalité » en le formulant explicitement en termes ontologiques et en posant le dehors comme « la cache essentielle de tout être », un espace où « l'image, le langage n'est ni la vérité ni le temps, ni l'éternité ni l'homme, mais la forme toujours défaite du dehors… »[81]

Dans ce contexte, le dehors, en tant que présence littéraire radicalement irréductible aux catégories discursives intéressées comme celles de la « vérité », de la « fausseté », de la « loi » et de la « réalité », suggère à Foucault les moyens de repenser les fonctions prescriptives de ces catégories et de jouer avec des modes de vie différents et contre-hégémoniques. Deleuze hérite de ce même concept du dehors dans ses travaux sur Foucault suggérant que la figure nietzschéenne du « surhomme » pourrait émerger de composés formels entre des êtres humains et diverses forces matérielles et virtuelles du « dehors » d'eux-mêmes.[82]

Dans ce même chapitre, je relie ces observations deleuziennes à sa critique noétique bien connue, à sa postulation d'une « image dogmatique de la pensée » et tente d'identifier une « pensée sans image. »[83] L'image dogmatique, rappelons-le, élève un ensemble de postulats au niveau des principes philosophiques en prenant un modèle réactif et conservateur de « recognition » et de « représentation » pour la totalité de la pensée. Mais ce modèle, affirme Deleuze, n'est cependant pas philosophique dans la mesure où il ne parvient pas à réaliser le projet de la philosophie qui consiste à rompre avec la *doxa* et à créer de nouveaux modes de pensée et de vie.

Pour accomplir cette dernière tâche, la pensée philosophique doit plutôt être créative. C'est pour cette raison que Deleuze évoque la philosophie esthétique de Kant (le sublime) en suggérant que la condition de la pensée philosophique n'est pas de l'ordre de la « recognition », mais plutôt d'un choc ou d'une confusion, d'une rencontre avec un « signe » qui nous oblige à produire de manière créative de nouvelles idées et de nouveaux concepts. Dans ce contexte, je soutiens que la « rencontre » est double : elle est une confrontation non seulement avec l'impensée en tant qu'objet externe qui ne peut pas être bien perçu, mais aussi avec « l'impouvoir »[84] fondamental de la pensée c'est-à-dire avec l'impossibilité de penser de n'importe quelle manière pré-ordonnée.

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[80] Maurice Blanchot, *L'espace littéraire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1955, p.22.
[81] Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits : 1954 – 1988, Vol. I : 1954-169*, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, p.539.
[82] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2004, p.140.
[83] Voir Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition*, chapitre III, « L'image de la pensée », pp.169-217.
[84] Ibid., p.192

Avec ce récit noétique, dans ce premier chapitre, j'explique la postulation deleuzienne des trois « synthèses » du temps. D'abord, une contraction de la temporalité telle qu'elle constitue la répétition habituelle dans le présent. Deuxièmement, la synthèse qui sert de condition à la première –le passé en général– dans lequel les présents différents « passent » et qui sert de réservoir virtuel à des contre-actualisations dans le présent. La troisième synthèse, celle du futur, constitue non seulement une distribution sérielle du passé, du présent et du futur, mais voit le sujet « fêlé »[85] par le temps, fonction de sa rencontre avec des « événements » qui appellent à le devenir autrement que c'est. Cette troisième synthèse nécessite une éthique de l'affirmation, telle que le penseur embrasse les forces qui précipitent sa propre fêlure, en tirant parti des forces du « dehors » pour devenir l'auteur de son avenir. Je soutiens donc que la philosophie noétique de Deleuze appelle non seulement à une rénovation de la pensée, mais à l'identité même du penseur.

Cependant, comme je le dis à la fin de ce chapitre, Deleuze reste sceptique sur la capacité de la philosophie à réaliser de telles « rencontres » noétiques car elle est profondément imbriquée dans le modèle dogmatique et « officiel » de recognition et de représentation. Pour cette raison, dans *Différence et Répétition*, Deleuze suggère que, pour poursuivre son renouveau, la philosophie pourrait participer aux rencontres avec les matériaux « de certains autres arts, par exemple le théâtre ou le cinéma, »[86] pour trouver des moyens de nous confronter avec de nouveaux arrangements de sens et de matière. C'est dans ce contexte, bien que vingt ans plus tard, que Deleuze consacre son intérêt de longue date pour le cinéma se tournant vers ses formes et ses fonctions dans une série de « commentaires » sur Bergson.

## Chapitre 2

Mais pourquoi, après avoir reproché à la philosophie d'avoir adopté une certaine « image » de la pensée, Deleuze se tournerait-il vers le cinéma, l'art des images en mouvement, pour sortir de l'impasse ? Dans le deuxième chapitre, je soutiens que la réponse à cette question réside dans la conception idiosyncratique de l'image que Deleuze reprend, dans les livres sur le cinéma, à Henri Bergson et qui change fondamentalement de forme. N'étant plus une « représentation » de la matière ou de la mémoire, produit d'une réduction intéressée et orthodoxe, l'image devient, à la suite de Bergson, l'identité même de la matière et de la mémoire, une catégorie métaphysique à travers laquelle nous pourrions surmonter les dualismes au cœur de la philosophie ; les dualismes qui étaient devenus de plus et plus problématiques face aux développements de la science, de la psychologie et de l'art. Tandis que Bergson, selon lui, avait mal interprété l'image cinématographique comme emblématique des tendances à la spatialisation d'un scientisme égaré, Deleuze considère que les expérimentations uniques d'espace et de temps réalisées par l'image cinématographique nous offrent des ouvertures uniques sur le virtuel et le dehors.

En d'autres termes, en développant le compte-rendu de Bergson sur l'image en tant que catégorie métaphysique, l'image cinématographique pourrait donc constituer un laboratoire

[85] Ibid., p.220.
[86] Ibid., p.4.

dédié à l'expérimentation non seulement de la pensée et de la perception, mais avec les relations virtuelles-actuelles, différentielles et productives, obscurcies par leurs exercices « dogmatiques » ou, selon la formulation de Bergson, « sensori-moteurs ».[87] Dans *Cinema 1,* Deleuze décrit l'image encadrée fonctionnant comme un « système informatique » dirigé vers le spectateur.[88] Cependant, en raison de la production simultanée d'un « hors champ », cette fonction de la communication informatique est systématiquement problématisée par « l'ouverture » de l'image à un *tout* ou *l'Ouvert*, qualitativement évolutif dans lequel elle se situe.[89]

Mais, dans ce même chapitre, je montre comment Deleuze soutient que cet « ensemble » disparaît dans le contexte du cinéma d'après-guerre, laissant la place à un « dehors ». Tandis que le « tout » ou « l'Ouvert » pourrait encore être pensé selon le paradigme sensori-moteur, condition des trajectoires du récit ou de l'action, le bouleversement profond du schéma sensori-moteur qui suit les horreurs de la deuxième guerre mondiale (au cinéma comme dans la vie en général) préempte l'émergence d'une « image-temps » inhumaine, composée de situations optiques et sonores « pures », qui n'est plus attachée aux exigences de l'action. Dans ce contexte, comme l'explique Deleuze :

> …le personnage est devenu une sorte de spectateur. Il a beau bouger, courir, s'agiter, la situation dans laquelle il est déborde de toutes parts ses capacités motrices, et lui fait voir et entendre ce qui n'est plus justiciable en droit d'une réponse ou d'une action. Il enregistre plus qu'il ne réagit.[90]

Ce développement, d'une perception cinématographique pure qui évite l'action, soutient Deleuze, offre au cinéma une ouverture sur la virtualité, condition génétique des états actualisés auxquels l'action sensori-motrice est orientée, qu'il tend à obscurcir par ses opérations. Je montre ici comment, dans les images-temps d'après-guerre comme celles de *La Jetée* de Chris Marker, le cinéma mélange les aspects virtuels et actuels de l'image en des formes cristallines, indéterminées et catalytiques, de telle sorte qu'il produit des images nouvelles et fondamentalement problématiques du temps et mouvement, nous poussant vers une « pensée du dehors », au-delà de toute cognition habituelle.

## Chapitre 3

Dans le troisième chapitre, je soutiens que Deleuze identifie cette opération cinématographique comme ayant de profondes fonctions politiques, de sorte que le contact avec le « dehors » de l'image (et donc la pensée) nous incite à repenser nos relations avec tout « monde » prédéterminé. Je soutiens également que les brèves remarques de Deleuze sur la relation entre le capital et le cinéma, sa conspiration « temps-argent »[91], s'accordent avec un marxisme que l'on pourrait tracer tout au long de son travail –en particulier dans sa

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[87] Bergson, *L'Evolution Créatrice*, p.157.
[88] Deleuze, *Cinéma 1*, p.23.
[89] Ibid., p.29.
[90] Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p.9.
[91] Ibid., p.104.

collaboration avec Félix Guattari–[92] selon lequel les forces productives susceptibles de provoquer une altération qualitative des structures du capitalisme doivent être conçues comme immanentes au capitalisme même. Cette affirmation oriente ma détermination à découvrir les forces qui pourraient « résister » au « contrôle » informatique au sein même des images produites par les technologies de l'information et de la communication.

Je soutiens également dans ce chapitre que les spéculations « politiques » de Deleuze dans les volumes sur le cinéma, sa postulation d'une situation contemporaine où « *le peuple manque* »[93] et où « nous ne croyons plus en ce monde», sont liées à ses interventions précédentes concernant les opérations de la pensée et son évocation du « dehors ». Ce n'est qu'en dépassant les catégories pré-distribuées d'un statu quo sensori-moteur –en plongeant dans la virtualité et l'imprévisible– que pourraient émerger de nouvelles idées et, conformément à la pragmatique et l'immanence de la philosophie deleuzienne, de nouvelles façons de vivre. Encore une fois, la provocation d'une telle créativité est une « rencontre » –cette fois avec les situations « intolérables » et « impossibles » du monde d'après-guerre, telles que dépassées par les réponses sensori-motrices.

## Chapitre 4

Dans le quatrième chapitre, je passe à la problématique plus contemporaine du « numérique » en concentrant ma discussion sur la critique du concept d'information, tel qu'il apparaît dans les œuvres finales de Deleuze. En présentant cette critique, et ses relations avec le concept du dehors, j'explique l'argument de Gregory Flaxman et son utilisation convaincante de l'exemple d'*Avatar* de James Cameron pour étendre certaines des affirmations de Deleuze autour des nouvelles technologies de l'image « électroniques » et « numériques ».

Nous avons vu que Flaxman soutient qu'*Avatar* est emblématique d'une « nouvelle idée du cinéma »[94] en tant qu'il embrasse une forme « spectaculaire », hyper-représentationnelle, qui utilise une nouvelle technologie puissante pour la fabrication d'images afin de faire disparaître les espaces d'indétermination et d'errance (l'invisible) avec lesquels Deleuze identifie le cinéma de l'image-mouvement et de l'image-temps. En cherchant à se différencier des formes de petit écran, l'image filmique numérique contemporaine devient ainsi « surdéterminée »,[95] tant en termes de manipulation algorithmique et de capital, dans un modèle cinématographique selon lequel tout contenu « doit être représenté ».[96]

Je retiens ici de l'argumentation de Flaxman une idée clé à savoir que cette nouvelle technologie de fabrication d'images échange le « plan » cinématographique en faveur d'un espace de données immersif, d'un espace d'information. Ensuite, j'élargis ma discussion en

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[92] Pour un traitement approfondi et convaincant de la possibilité d'un marxisme deleuzo-guattarien, voir Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc, *Politique et État chez Deleuze et Guattari : Essai sur le matérialisme historico-machinique*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2013.
[93] Deleuze, *Cinéma 2*, p.282.
[94] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.129.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.

traçant le concept de « l'information » dans l'ensemble du travail Deleuze, plus particulièrement dans le chapitre final de *Cinéma 2* et dans la conférence « Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création ? ». Ici, Deleuze est explicite dans l'identification qu'il fait entre information et modèle de « contrôle » cybernétique, suggérant que l'information, loin d'être un assemblage neutre de « faits », est un moyen par lequel « vous êtes censé devoir croire »,[97] un ensemble de « mots d'ordre » qui structurent et garantissent certaines formes sociales (conservatrices).

Bien que cette conception, à mon avis, semble évoquer ce que Luciano Floridi décrit comme « l'information sémantique » –à savoir les données utiles ou « informatives » –, je signale que Deleuze parle aussi de l'information au sens d'information technologique, c'est-à-dire de systèmes d'informatique et de communication, en particulier dans son « Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle. » Pour Deleuze, de tels systèmes apparemment « neutres » sont également impliqués dans le contrôle, en particulier dans le processus de subjectivation qui produit des sujets néo-libéraux, par le biais de (l'auto) surveillance et de la collection algorithmique de données.

## Chapitre 5

Dans le cinquième chapitre, je soutiens cependant que cette lecture de la théorie et de la technologie de l'information rompt peut-être avec la méthode philosophique plus générale de Deleuze, que j'ai caractérisée à la fois comme une sorte d'approche « marxiste immanente » des nouvelles forces techno-sociales et en termes d'« éthique affirmative » selon laquelle nous devons déployer de nouvelles forces apparemment hostiles dans le processus de « maîtrise » de celles-ci. Dans ce contexte, je suggère que la philosophie s'orientait déjà vers une telle tâche et m'inspire des travaux de Floridi et d'Ashley Woodward pour suggérer l'émergence d'un « tournant informationnel » dans la pensée contemporaine qui cherche à penser la structure et le fonctionnement de l'information *dans ses propres termes*.

Dans le même esprit, je passe à divers concepts « probabilistes », « statistiques » et « techniques » de l'information, issus de la théorie de l'information, de la communication et de la cybernétique. En particulier, j'explore certaines des implications de la « théorie mathématique de la communication » de Shannon et Weaver selon laquelle l'information doit être radicalement indépendante de toute catégorie sémantique pour devenir plutôt la mesure de « l'incertitude » soustraite dans le contexte d'une distribution d'espace de probabilités.

Mais cette « incertitude », selon moi, condition d'un maximum de messages potentiels – mais encore inconnus– dans un système de transmission d'information, utilise involontairement certains critères sémantiques et intéressés pour définir les formes d'incertitude « désirées » et « non désirées », ces dernières émergeant sous forme de *bruit*. Oui, les travaux de Shannon visent en effet à réduire la présence de « bruit » empirique et environnemental dans la transmission d'information. Cependant, comme nous l'avons vu en nous tournant vers les travaux de Floridi et de Bateson, cette manœuvre trahit une

[97] Deleuze, *Deux Régimes*, p.298.

conception radicalement non-sémantique de l'information, conçue comme une production entropique de différences au niveau ontologique.

Selon ce dernier modèle, le bruit est aussi l'information, un tissu de « différences » reprises et transmises sous forme de données par un système d'information. En adoptant une telle conception de l'information, « l'incertitude » n'est plus indexée sur le « possible » (et sur une réduction du déficit de données), mais plutôt sur une incertitude productive, une disparité énergétique qui pourrait créer les conditions de nouveaux signaux radicalement imprévisibles. C'est dans ces derniers termes que Gilbert Simondon pose l'information comme une catégorie ontogénétique, une ouverture par laquelle des individus stables sont en contact avec les variations aléatoires des états métastables (pré-individuels). Ce chapitre contient une brève explication de la philosophie de l'information de Simondon ainsi que des hypothèses quant à la raison pour laquelle Deleuze choisit de ne pas s'en inspirer dans sa propre discussion du concept.

En tant que tel, il semble que l'information, conçue à la fois techniquement et ontogénétiquement, ne doit pas nécessairement être impliquée dans les opérations conservatrices de contrôle et de commande. Plutôt, si nous affirmons la présence de bruit dans les systèmes d'information, nous pourrions concevoir que ces systèmes produisent de nouveaux « individus » –signaux, messages, idées– au-delà des termes pré-distribués du modèle émetteur-récepteur « neutre ». Dans ce contexte, je reviens à la notion de bruit, telle qu'elle émerge dans le contexte de l'art, en traçant une filiation généalogique dans laquelle, comme dans la théorie de l'information, le terme désigne un certain « échec de la communication ». Cependant, dans la théorie de l'information, « l'échec » est un problème à résoudre alors que dans le contexte de l'art –comme nous l'avons vu en évoquant Russolo, Cage, et Eco– il est valorisé comme la condition même de la production de formes nouvelles, comme le « matériel » désordonné, entropique et indéterminé qui constitue un « dehors » aux systématisations artistiques.

## Chapitre 6

Équipé de ce modèle d'information « productif », je reviens ici au cinéma numérique et à une discussion sur le « bruit » tel qu'il apparaît dans le film *Inland Empire* de David Lynch. Je soutiens que, dans divers registres –sémantique, technique, en termes de conception et de réalisation de scènes– Lynch interpose des présences aléatoires, impersonnelles et « bruyantes » qui déterminent le contenu et la structure même du film. En utilisant une caméra portable bon marché qui a du mal à suivre les exigences empiriques du tournage, en déployant une technologie de montage largement disponible et en utilisant un logiciel de traitement d'images peu sophistiqué qui rend « imparfaitement » l'image, Lynch met en avant la matérialité technique du numérique, de manière à attirer notre attention sur sa présence impersonnelle et omniprésente. J'identifie ces aspects du film de Lynch non seulement avec certaines dimensions matérielles et impersonnelles du « dehors » littéraire de Blanchot, mais également avec le dehors noétique, tel que Deleuze l'avance dans *Différence et Répétition* ainsi que dans les deux livres sur le cinéma.

Nous pourrions en particulier examiner une scène à la fin du film, la sélectionnant presque au hasard, conformément à la texture aléatoire et chaotique du film. Ici, la protagoniste – Nikki Grace, une actrice hollywoodienne interprétée par Laura Dern– et la caméra portative se déplacent lentement dans un couloir, si faiblement éclairé qu'ils ne fournissent que des indices de contenu visuel déchiffrables. Nous entendons doucement le son aigu, presque ineffable, de la mécanique de la caméra numérique. Les lampes dispersées dans le couloir sont prises de si près que les fonctions de le camera sont submergées, devenant ainsi des formes abstraites et des flaques de couleurs. Nikki, son visage filmé par un gros plan inquisitoire, est soudainement approchée par un agresseur –« le fantôme »– un personnage masculin sinistre qui apparaît sporadiquement tout au long du film. Sortant un pistolet, elle tire sur son agresseur, dont le visage est soudainement éclairé par des torches dont la luminosité submerge à nouveau les fonctions d'aspect de la caméra - ce qui construit un flou de lumière pixélisé. Nikki tire à nouveau et le visage de son agresseur, par un effet de superposition peu coûteux, devient le sien, contrarié par un sourire cauchemardesque. Enfin, le visage devient une mosaïque numérique bizarre, centrée autour de l'unique caractéristique discernable, une bouche caverneuse ouverte dont jaillit une substance ressemblant à du sang.

La scène est tour à tour vaguement comique et clairement désagréable. A aucun moment nous ne « comprenons » ce qui se passe en termes de progression logique du « récit ». En effet, cela illustre le refus constant et performatif du film de communiquer des informations « significatives » ou « probables » –que ce soit au niveau narratif ou perceptif de la « vision » compréhensible– de manière claire ou déterminée, produisant plutôt des flux d'information-comme-bruit qui submerge toute structure interprétative prédéterminée. La pixellisation et le mouvement de la caméra numérique pas chère constituent donc une « résistance » profondément immanente à la matérialité numérique, un « être pur » de l'objet technique, dépassant toute tentative de communication subjective ou humaine.

Les effets spéciaux de cette séquence-là, à savoir le « sourire » cauchemardesque du personnage de Dern suivi du collage terrifiant et sanglant du visage du fantôme, offrent un contrepoint distinct aux « excès » que Flaxman a bien identifié dans *Avatar*. Ici, les effets ne vont pas vers une « réalité virtuelle », idéalisée ou totale, mais sont excessifs au sens où ils sont hyperboliques, trop nettement *irréels*. Dans le même temps, nous rencontrons une esthétique spécifiquement numérique –bloquée, déformée et ravie dans la « vallée dérangeante »[98] entre le contenu « humain » et les algorithmes maladroits de la numérisation. Le visage de Dern, avec sa bouche trop grande et ses yeux pincés et tendus, est clairement altéré par les effets de post-production rudimentaires qui mettent en avant leurs déterminations algorithmiques.

[98] Le terme fait référence à une hypothèse concernant les relations humaines avec des objets techniques robotiques ou autrement humanoïdes. Selon la théorie, plus un tel objet anthropomorphique ressemble à un être humain, plus l'observateur est inconfortable et potentiellement révolté. Selon le professeur de robotique Mashahiro Mori, concepteur du terme, ce rapprochement et cette imperfection simultanés sont à l'origine d'un malaise bien plus puissant que dans le cas d'un simulacre moins sophistiqué (un robot qui est clairement un robot). Surmonter cette « vallée dérangeante » est donc l'un des principaux obstacles potentiels de la robotique et des technologies de réalité virtuelle à la production « d'êtres » avec lesquels les humains peuvent interagir confortablement.

Dans cette image, Lynch a ouvert un espace anti-représentationnel, tel que nous le retrouvons dans l'art abstrait et non-figuratif plus généralement. Cependant, malgré sa continuité avec de telles formes, l'image atteint ici des forces productives appartenant seulement à la nouvelle image numérique et informatique. Le visage de Dern ressemble tout autant aux peintures de Munch qu'aux logiciels peu coûteux de retouche faciale déployés sur les applications pour smartphones, conçues pour « vieillir », « embellir » ou altérer de façon humoristique la photographie de l'utilisateur. Le déploiement de cette image dans le contexte d'une œuvre du cinéma « artistique » –de même que sa soumission aux algorithmes de contrôle esthétique ou d'intentionnalité de l'auteur– suggère une démocratisation de certaines fonctions « problématiques » de l'image qui pourraient constituer un modèle de créativité allant vers l'ère numérique. Ces glissements « bruyants » du fonctionnement numérique, ces ouvertures informatiques sur des matériaux impensé et impensable, semblent, dans le contexte de la participation culturelle du grand public aux médias numériques, proliférer en tant qu'expérience publiques toujours plus grandes. Comme l'image-temps de Deleuze, ces événements « problématiques » au niveau de la matérialité numérique pourraient constituer une production « populaire », « industrielle », de rencontres noétiques, à condition que nous puissions correctement identifier les tendances de l'image qui échappent au « contrôle » prédéterminé.

Il suffit ici de dire que Lynch met en avant le numérique comme numérique c'est-à-dire non pas au service d'un schéma de représentation d'images spectaculairement « crédibles », mais plutôt comme une présence technique irréductible, dotée d'opérations propres, au-delà des intentions initiales de l'auteur. Il évoque ainsi la « matérialité » et l'« impersonnalité » du langage avec lesquelles Blanchot commence à décrire « l'espace de la littérature ». Tout comme le travail de Blanchot sur le langage, la portée de cette intervention découle du fait que cette modalité technique imparfaite, bruyante, est ce qui mène nos vies mêmes. En résistant à la communication « pure » ou déterminée d'informations perceptuelles, et en intercalant sa propre matérialité technique, souvent de manière aléatoire ou contingente, le film introduit les opérations fondamentalement inhumaines des techniques numériques, qui, dans leur imperfection et leur excès contribuent à effacer le « je ».

Mais le dehors, je suggère, a des fonctions au-delà de ces dimensions purement techniques et esthétiques. Le dehors est aussi politique, c'est-à-dire qu'il est impliqué dans le processus par lequel le présent devient problématique tant et si bien que notre pensée doit rechercher des forces virtuelles et différentielles avec lesquelles elle pourrait produire du nouveau dans la pensée et, donc, dans la vie. De même, *Inland Empire* avance une problématique « politique » du présent en attirant l'attention sur les forces technologiques, économiques et culturelles qui produisent certaines formes d'information. Dans son portrait sombre d'Hollywood, comme lieu pour la distribution et la rétention sélective d'informations ainsi que pour la communication des impératifs de performance et de certaines formes de subjectivisation –le personnage Nikki Grace se fêle en identités multiples et interférentes–, le film propose une sorte d'autocritique non seulement de la production cinématographique contemporaine, mais de toute une écologie des technologies de l'enregistrement qui participent à la construction de la subjectivité du 21e siècle.

Cependant, cette « critique », comme celle de Deleuze, est également productive, suggérant de nouveaux modes de vie qui pourraient dépasser les limites et les impératifs d'un milieu culturel donné. Lors de la confrontation simultanée de Nikki avec sa structuration dans l'espace numérique malveillant du film, je soutiens que nous entrevoyons une « éthique affirmative » de la rencontre, comme celle que nous trouvons chez Deleuze. Dans ce que j'ai surnommé le « devenir-numérique » de Nikki, nous rencontrons un modèle de subjectivité contemporaine qui, structuré par des réseaux informatiques de contrôle et de capital, pourrait englober leur productivité ruineuse, en la déployant de nouveau pour créer de nouveaux modes de vie. Je reviens ici sur l'insinuation de Deleuze selon laquelle le dehors est lié avec l'émergence d'un surhomme et développe son affirmation selon laquelle :

> Les forces dans l'homme entrent en rapport avec des forces du dehors, celles du silicium qui prend sa revanche sur le carbone, celles des composants génétiques qui prennent leur revanche sur l'organisme, celles des agrammaticaux qui prennent leur revanche sur le signifiant… Qu'est-ce que le surhomme ? C'est le composé formel des forces dans l'homme avec ces nouvelles forces.[99]

Je soutiens que le devenir-numérique destructif de Nikki tout au long du film, la scission violente de sa personnalité, constitue exactement un tel processus. Le film montre clairement que, grâce à une participation affirmative et créative à cette même scission, nous pouvons parvenir à de nouvelles formes de vie puissantes et résistantes.

En d'autres termes, je soutiens que pour surmonter les processus subjectivant de « contrôle » et de marchandisation immanents aux techniques de l'image numérique contemporaine (je passe ici brièvement à l'exemple des réseaux sociaux), notre stratégie ne peut être un « retour » à un modèle pré-numérique et prédéterminé de « l'humain ». Nous devons plutôt explorer les éléments des techniques de l'information qui ne sont pas complètement déterminés –leurs dimensions bruyantes, matérielles et aléatoires– afin de créer de nouveaux devenirs radicalement imprévisibles. Je soutiens que cette approche est peut-être plus proprement deleuzienne que la pensée même de Deleuze sur l'information, qui reste largement dédiée à une critique de ses formes et fonctions à partir d'une conception moderniste et pré-numérique de l'art, de la pensée et du sujet.

## Importance de la recherche

Comme je l'ai dit, cette approche nous aide à intégrer la philosophie de Deleuze à un dialogue plus complet avec la « révolution numérique » qui a explosé au cours des années qui se sont écoulées depuis sa mort. Deleuze, ai-je suggéré, après Stephen Zepke,[100] Matthew Fuller[101] et autres, reste subtilement attaché à un concept d'art « moderniste » au sens large, selon lequel il s'agit d'un site d'expérimentation, culturellement privilégié, avec des percepts, des affects et des sensations concrétisés. Comme je l'ai suggéré aussi, ce vocabulaire ne nous oriente pas nécessairement vers l'étude la plus efficace des formes

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[99] Deleuze, *Foucault*, p.140.
[100] Voir Zepke, "A work of art," p.237.
[101] Voir Matthew Fuller, "Art Methodologies in Media Ecology," dans Simon O'Sullivan & Stephen Zepke eds., *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, Londres, Continuum, 2008, pp.45-55.

contemporaines d'art ou, puisque les frontières entre l'art et le non-art deviennent de plus en plus insaisissables, de certaines formes de vie esthétisées.[102]

Cela ne veut pas dire que la philosophie sophistiquée de Deleuze sur l'image n'a pas grand-chose à nous dire dans ces contextes, en particulier dans un monde où les « images » techno-esthétiques prolifèrent dans une mesure toujours plus déconcertante. C'est pour cette raison que mon travail a cherché à relire certains concepts clés deleuziens –en particulier celui du dehors– dans le contexte de l'écologie des médias numériques, en reprenant certains des fils qui semblent avoir été laissés inexplorés dans la pensée de Deleuze lui-même.

Un tel projet est significatif à plusieurs titres. Premièrement, il aide les personnes engagées dans l'étude du travail cinématographique de Deleuze à y puiser plus facilement dans le contexte d'un cinéma qui est aujourd'hui presque totalement « informatique ». Le concept que j'ai essayé de fabriquer et de défendre - le « dehors numérique » - est un concept auquel les chercheurs travaillant sur Deleuze et le cinéma, mais aussi à l'intersection de la philosophie de la technologie de Deleuze, des nouveaux médias et de l'esthétique contemporaine, pourraient recourir pour tenter de surmonter une discussion potentiellement limitée sur l'information dans les propres travaux de Deleuze.

De même, mes arguments autour de certaines dimensions politiques de ces concepts - son implication dans les notions deleuziennes de « un peuple à venir » et de « la croyance au monde » - seront utiles dans le cadre d'une étude consacrée à la philosophie deleuzienne et à la politique contemporaine d'un « capitalisme tardif » profondément imbriqué dans les technologies globalisées de l'information et de l'écran.

Enfin, malgré les réticences de Deleuze sur ce point, je suis convaincu que les travaux théoriques sur l'art sont très utiles dans le contexte de la production artistique. J'espère avoir fourni, à ma modeste façon, une ressource à laquelle les personnes impliquées dans la « production d'images » –comprise au sens le plus large possible– pourrait s'inspirer pour la production de nouvelles œuvres. La « co-création » possible entre art et philosophie me semble un fait des plus tangibles. En fournissant un vocabulaire conceptuel aux artistes en prises avec les thèmes, l'esthétique ou la technicité du numérique, j'espère avoir apporté une ressource à laquelle ils pourraient, à tout le moins, réfléchir pour penser certaines des implications de leur pratique.

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[102] Comme l'explique Fuller, une prolifération de technologies d'auto-observation, ainsi qu'un tournant généralisé vers la production esthétique et médiatique dans le capitalisme tardif, suggère que « l'art » n'est plus l'apanage seulement des artistes : « …on peut voir la circulation des méthodologies de l'art en tant qu'intersection et reflet d'un réflexivité plus générale, l'observation de soi est tissée dans les actions du soi : ici, l'entité fonctionnant en tant que soi peut aller d'un processus de production à un mouvement de danse, sa stabilité et sa variation, la répertoire d'une sous-culture érotique, au niveau de sous-individu jusqu'au niveau de massification, ou un corpus national auto-surveillant cybernétiquement ou un programme conditionnement physique personnel. » (Ibid., p.46, traduction est la mienne).

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# The Digital Outside: Deleuzian film philosophy and contemporary screen cultures

by

Timothy Deane-Freeman
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**Abstract**

The problem this thesis intends to address is that of a certain disconnect between the cinematic philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and the condition of the contemporary moving-image, which, in the years since Deleuze wrote on film, has been radically altered by its transformation into digital format(s). It is my central contention that a productive relationship between this philosophy and contemporary screen cultures is indeed possible, and potentially of great value, provided we can reread and extend certain key Deleuzian concepts.

As such, the main claims defended in this thesis are the following. Firstly, drawing on a concept deployed throughout Deleuze's *Cinema II: The Time-Image* (1985), I argue that digital images can engender certain unique relations with an "outside" –an unarticulated presence beyond the frame, which serves to unground and problematise thought. The "outside" –developed from the literary philosophy of Maurice Blanchot– constitutes a genetic condition of thought, which sees the thinker confronted with that which is fundamentally *un-thought*, an unrecognisable terrain to which she must respond with creative, novel solutions. This model of thought, I argue, impels us away from habitudes and orthodoxies, forcing us to become radically open to contingency and change –a movement commensurate with what I will claim is the fundamental political orientation of Deleuze's thought.

In defending this claim, I reject certain arguments made by Deleuze himself, and more recently by Gregory Flaxman, that digital images conceived as "information" are fundamentally imbricated with a logic of "representation," antithetical to this problematising, anti-representational modality. For Deleuze, information designates an operation of control, dedicated primarily to imposing a set of pre-determined imperatives in a function opposed to art as it is defined across his oeuvre. However, in this context, I claim that Deleuze has perhaps been too hasty in his conception of information, neglecting certain virtual and differential characteristics we might identify within the very structure of information, as conceived in its "technical" or "ontological" guises.

Following Luciano Floridi, I will extricate such "technical" or "ontological" conceptions of information from a "semantic" definition –such as Deleuze perhaps evokes– conceiving of "data" in its most fundamental sense as an *instantiation of difference*. In so doing, and developing the distinctions made by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, I claim that the only way in which we might rigorously distinguish between "useful" information and "unwanted" forms of information –paradigmatically "noise"– is via recourse to pre-determined semantic structures. But art, in embracing forms of noise, has often served to problematise such structures, and an "informational art," I argue, may well afford us a means of re-thinking information, not as a mechanism of control, but as opening onto the sub-representational virtualities which provoke thought, according to the Deleuzian model.

In other words, I argue that while Deleuze is right to identify "informational" and "communicational" images with the entwined functions of control and of capital, these images must also (in the spirit of Deleuze's own philosophy) be understood to contain certain immanent potentialities for resistance to these functions. As such, I discuss a series of errant operations within the digital image –paradigmatically that of *noise*– which indicate the limits of informational control, its openness to an anti-representational "outside." It is, I claim, a shared task of philosophy and of art to identify, exacerbate and exploit these tendencies, opening both control and capital to the possibility of radical alternatives.

In defending these claims, I first define the notion of the "outside," not as a key or master-concept in Deleuze's work, but as a tool, of particular use in the context of theorising the digital. Following this, I will define certain core concepts with which we engage contemporary screen cultures –*digitisation*, *information* and *noise*– identifying within each those forces which might open onto, and those which might elide an "outside" of thought. I close the thesis with a close analysis of these functions as they emerge in a contemporary work of "digital" cinema, David Lynch's *Inland Empire* (2006), which makes a virtue of its "noisy" digital materiality to foreground the limitations and indeterminacies immanent to the digital image, thereby constituting what we might describe as a "digital outside."

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# Introduction – A Mechanics of the Unseen

The cinema, paradoxically we might feel, provides us with a mechanics of the unseen. We might think first of a simple example from Chaplin. In *A Woman of Paris* (1923), a train arrives at the platform, but all we see are the shadows and luminosity of its windows, traced across the waiting woman's face. We don't actually *see* the train –it doesn't, indeed, exist– yet its implied presence determines the very content of the image. In this way, through an exercise of "framing," we are afforded an image conditioned as much by what is "outside" the frame –that which is beyond its explicit visual content– as that which we see articulated before us in movement and in gesture.

Of course, we find this device in other arts. Painting has long used similar devices for projecting an "out-of-frame" –such as often implicates the spectator.[1] However, cinema's capacities for the expression of both movement and of time afford it unique powers in this space. By putting its images in motion –or rather by making its images *out of* motion- cinema likewise puts this "unseen" into motion, causing it to become dynamic, fluid and multiple.

We might think, for example, of the gradually accumulating horror of Danny's tricycle rides in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980). Here, the camera follows Danny from behind as he explores the labyrinthine hallways of the Overlook Hotel. We know already that the hotel is cursed, and that Danny's unique psychic powers destine him to be the first to come into contact with its horrors. As such, his slowly unfurling trajectories are infused with a terror of anticipation, as Danny, and the camera, swing around each corner, we know it's only a matter of time before he confronts a gruesome –but as yet unseen– vision. Here, in a perfectly cinematic structure, the "unseen" becomes spatial-temporal, cumulative, qualitatively evolving, implicated with narrative yet irreducible to it.

And this is not only the remit of "horror" films understood in the conventional sense. Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) makes a mystery of perception itself, using disjunctive editing to create an "irrational" space in which the settings composed through shot and counter-shot make no "sense" in terms of realistic topology, in which characters speak without making a sound, and disembodied voices float over scenes with no clear relation to the visual image. The horror of Resnais' hotel is not one of ghosts or psychopaths, but of the uncertain, shifting functions of perception itself, which here ceases to serve coherent action or narrative, instead opening onto a vista of irrational and inexplicable movements of space and of time. Here, the unseen becomes the *un-thought*, the *unthinkable*, a multiplicity of space-times which exist beyond the perceptual habits of the human subject, in a function which in turn makes us cognisant of the interests and contingency of these very habits.

[1] Michel Foucault's analyses of painting constitute perhaps the richest discussion of these functions, and of their philosophical implications. In his magisterial treatment of Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, for instance, he posits the painting as indicative of a new *episteme*, a modern representational schema which centres upon the fact of representation itself. As he writes: "we are looking at a picture in which the painter is in turn looking out at us. A mere confrontation, eyes catching one another's glance, direct looks superimposing themselves one upon another as they cross. And yet this slender line of reciprocal visibility embraces a whole complex network of uncertainties, exchanges, and feints." (M. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. A. Sheridan, Routledge, London, 2005, p.5.) See also his analyses in M. Foucault, *Manet and the Object of Painting*, trans. M. Barr, Tate Publishing, London, 2009.

And it is in this tendency of film, toward constant contact with that which is "beyond" the explicit content of the image, and as such, beyond the habitual perception of the human being, which Gilles Deleuze saw as marking a uniquely cinematic contribution to philosophy. His two volumes dedicated to film, *Cinema I – The Movement Image* (1983) and *Cinema II – The Time Image* (1985), explore this openness of the image, identifying the philosophical significance of a cinematic relationship with the "outside" (*dehors*).[2]

Deleuze's concept of the "outside," initially expressed as the "out-of-field,"[3] and later as the "un-thought within thought,"[4] crystallises his longstanding contention that philosophical thought, when it is not misconstrued as *doxa* or as habitude, emerges from a rare and creative encounter with that which is fundamentally *un*-thought.[5] Through a variety of cinematic means, film, he therefore claims, "expresses a new relation between thought and seeing, or between thought and the light source, which constantly sets the thought outside itself, outside knowledge, outside action."[6]

Keith Ansell-Pearson has described Deleuze's philosophy more generally as a thought of the "outside." A thought which intends to "philosophize in the most radical manner conceivable, doing violence to the mind by breaking both with the natural bent of the intellect and with habits of scientific praxis."[7] And it is indeed pursuant to this kind of philosophy that Deleuze turns to the cinema, taking its powerful set of relations with the "outside" of the image as the vehicle for a profound "deterritorialisation" of thought.

And this noetic account, we must carefully note, is simultaneously metaphysical, given Deleuze's consistent determination to establish "thought" not as a transcendent exercise above the flux and contingencies of life, but as a situated and catalytic response to its flows and movements. As such, the cinema books continue the gradual elaboration of a shifting metaphysics, which resists systematisation through constant differentiation, changing vocabulary and structure in its expression across his different works. In the case of the cinema volumes, Deleuze reconvenes his earlier discussions[8] of Henri Bergson, foregrounding the latter's conception of temporality as a play of the *actual* and the *virtual*, and suggesting that cinema constitutes a powerful laboratory for the production of images which might express this relation.

Bergson's project, we may recall, is dedicated to giving an account of temporality as qualitative change, rather than as a spatially conceived interchangeability of discreet instants. Time, for Bergson, *is* change, the "creative evolution" of new forms, a state of affairs elided by mechanistic conceptions in which time is modelled as a uniform spatial distribution of moments –the reversible trajectories of Newtonian physics, the homogenous units of "clock time." The virtual emerges in the service of this endeavour, as a category of non-actual (yet perfectly real) differential potentiality possessed by actual states of affairs, which guarantees their openness to temporality-as-change, their processual character as constant differentiation. The virtual is without concrete identity, but is the genetic condition for actual –concrete–

[2] G. Flaxman, "Out of Field: The Future of Film Studies," in *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 17, no. 4 (December 2012), Routledge, p.124.
[3] G. Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson & R. Galeta, Bloomsbury, London, 2013, p.242.
[4] D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, Duke University Press, Durham & London, 1997, p.180.
[5] G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994, p.140.
[6] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.182.
[7] K. Ansell-Pearson, *Deleuze and Philosophy: The Difference Engineer*, Routledge, London, 2002, p.2.
[8] See in particular, G. Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Zone Books, New York, 1991.

individuals, which constitute temporary "resolutions" of its tensions and flux: *actuel* in French carrying a strong temporal connotation, the "real" but also the "now."

We will return to this difficult metaphysics in the body of the dissertation, suffice it to say that for Deleuze, as for Bergson, the virtual provides a category via which we might conceive of both difference and change in concrete states of affairs without recourse to any transcendent scheme, mechanism or determinism. The virtual is, according to the well-known Deleuzian adaptation of Proust, "real without being actual, ideal without being abstract—"[9] an immanent differential genetics in things, accumulated through past states, which acts as guarantor that the "real" and the "actual" do not become equivalent– that actual states of affairs remain contingent resolutions of virtual intensity.

The cinema, for Deleuze –if not for Bergson–[10] or at least a certain *kind* of cinema, functions as an engine for the opening-up of the actual, forming crystals and circuitries between the virtual and the actual, in the form of overlapping images of reality, dream, memory, truth, falsehood, illusion and non-linear temporality –enrobed as a uniform perceptual "fact" within the *film* of the cinematic image, such as we have already briefly encountered in Resnais. In what Deleuze describes as the "post-war cinema" –Italian neorealism, the European and American New Waves, the "minority" cinema of Africa and of Quebec– habitual forms of thought, predisposed toward "actual" objects and states of affairs, are thus thrown open to virtuality –which, not to be confused with the "outside" as the un-thought with which thought is confronted– is nevertheless its condition or seed.

This thesis is, however, dedicated to a problematic which emerges at the *close* of Deleuze's work on film— whereby entwined technical and political developments come to menace this unique cinematic potentiality. Deleuze ends the second of the cinema volumes by musing on a potential diminution of this power, setting the stage for a confrontation between film art and screen based information systems, and claiming that, "the life or the afterlife of cinema depends on its internal struggle with informatics."[11]

"*L'informatique*" –here rendered the slightly more obtrusive "informatics" in English— is a term Deleuze uses in discussing "the electronic image, that is the tele and video image, the numerical image coming into being."[12] As Gregory Flaxman has noted, the oddness of this latter designation –of "numerical images" rather than "digital images," reflects the fact that this terminology did not yet exist when the cinema books were first translated into English in

[9] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.208.
[10] In *Creative Evolution*, in a chapter entitled "The Cinematographical Mechanism of Thought and the Mechanistic Illusion," Bergson will claim that cinema constitutes an analogy for exactly the kind of "spatialising" intellectual activity he rejects, neglecting qualitative change in favour of an abstraction which causes time and movement to become quantitative, general and reversible. As he writes: "...such is the contrivance of the cinematograph. And such is also that of our knowledge. Instead of attaching ourselves to the inner becoming of things, we place ourselves outside them in order to recompose their becoming artificially. We take snapshots, as it were, of the passing reality, and, as these are characteristic of the reality, we have only to string them on a becoming, abstract, uniform and invisible, situated at the back of the apparatus of knowledge, in order to imitate what there is that is characteristic in this becoming itself." (H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Mitchell, Dover, Mineola, 1998, p.306) Deleuze however will reject this claim, arguing that Bergson has misapprehended the function of cinema, which in reality gives us not a series of static images to which movement is "added," but an immediate *movement-image*, which like the *time-image* he will also postulate, constitutes a qualitative multiplicity or "duration"- irreducible to its component sections. See G. Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Bloomsbury, London, 2013, pp.3-4.
[11] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.277.
[12] Ibid, p.272.

1989.[13] Yet it seems clear that Deleuze is referring to something like the "digital image" as we know it today.

In French, the term "*informatique*" first emerged from the work of computer scientist Philippe Dreyfus,[14] and is a portmanteau of the words "*information*" and "*automatique*" —a coupling clearly at the forefront of Deleuze's thinking, given that he uses it in warning of the potential supplantation of cinema by an "automata of computation and thought, automata with controls and feedback."[15] In evoking this "automatism" alongside concepts of control and of feedback, Deleuze is also clearly addressing the work of cyberneticists like Norbert Weiner, who was dedicated to the proposition that automatic processes for the transmission and dissemination of "information" constituted the means by which we might pursue the ideal organisation of human societies. But, as we shall see, for Deleuze, the optimism of the cybernetic conception of information emerges with a sinister undercurrent, given the cybernetic project's explicit association of information with functions of "control."[16]

"Information," we must here note, constitutes as slippery a designation as perennially contested philosophical terms like "being," "reality" or "knowledge." Indeed Claude Shannon, the mathematician and electrical engineer often cited as the "father of information theory" was dubious that so general a concept could ever "*satisfactorily account for the numerous possible applications of this general field*."[17] Without lapsing into lengthy definitions here, we might say that while a concept *like* information as a kind of *im*-or-*quasi*-material operative principle "*in*-forming" matter has been present in philosophy at least as early as Aristotle's hylomorphism,[18] the popular sense of the term has invariably been that which Luciano Floridi will describe as "semantic,"[19] equating "information" with something like "a collection of facts," specifically those which might *in-form* our courses or potentialities for action.

The term, however, adopted a new and rigorously technical sense in the mid 20th century, following its usage in cybernetics, computing and telecommunications engineering to refer to certain processual elements operative in their systems and theories. Paradigmatically, information here becomes a *statistical* designation, untethered from semantic meaning, referring instead to the measure of a communications system's capacity for the transmission of (fundamentally variable) content. But, as we shall see, the various "rigorously technical" definitions of information deployed by both information theorists and their critics alike, continue to evoke and intermix with the more popular, "semantic" sense outlined above.

Deleuze will speak of information in *both* of these senses, sketching it across a series of later works not only as a semantic designation according to which "you are told what you are supposed to believe,"[20] but also pointing to its deployment in computation and

[13] G. Flaxman, "Cinema in the Age of Control," in F. Beckman ed., *Control Culture: Foucault and Deleuze after Discipline*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2018, p.123.
[14] J. Gammack, V. Hobbs & D. Pigott, *The Book of Informatics*, Thompson, Melbourne, 2007, p.2.
[15] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.272.
[16] N. Weiner, *The Human use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*, Free Association Books, London, 1989, p.16.
[17] L. Floridi, *The Philosophy of Information*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, p.81.
[18] K. Faucher, *Metastasis and Metastability: A Deleuzian Approach to Information*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, 2013, p.25.
[19] See Floridi, *Philosophy of Information*, ch. 4-5.
[20] G. Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness, Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, D. Lapoujade ed., trans. A. Hodges & M. Taormina, Semiotext(e), New York, 2006, p.320.

communications systems as an a-signifying, processual operation. These dual senses coalesce at the end of *Cinema II*, in which Deleuze mounts one of his most concerted critiques of the concept of information. For Deleuze, at the time of writing the cinema books, a time during which he was beginning to lucubrate seriously on the theme of "control,"[21] the contemporary *milieu* had become one in which "information replaces nature,"[22] one in which the very "nullity," a "radical ineffectiveness" of information, contributed to its ascendancy in the service of dubious political ends.[23] In Deleuze's terms, information, in both its semantic and its technical sense, is thus profoundly imbricated with contemporary forms of social control, imposing disciplinary imperatives and dedicated to closing down spaces of indeterminacy and errance from which our ability to be "effective" –politically, creatively, philosophically– emerges.

For Deleuze, as we have suggested, thought, which is to say a concomitant invention of new modes of *life*, emerges from our encounter with that which lies "outside" of a pre-distributed (or "actual") *status quo,* in thought and sensibility. In the context of such an encounter –with those intensive and virtual differences which have hitherto been *unthought*– we are forced into a creative and potentially revolutionary production of new modes of life. But information, Deleuze will claim, operates by virtue of a conservative pre-distribution of terms —the "communication" of control functions between ostensibly neutral "transmitters," in an operation he sees as antithetical to art, politics and philosophy as they are defined throughout his *oeuvre*.

"Nature," in these terms, must therefore be understood not as any essential or static category, but as the relation between "actual" states of affairs and the aleatory and differential "virtuality" onto which they lie open. As we have seen, it is this relation, so consistently elided by philosophy and popular thought alike, which mitigates against the closure of our conceptualisation, such that the "real" and the "actual" do not become interchangeable– and radical alternatives to the *status quo* become inconceivable.

Paradigmatic of this ascendancy of information, for Deleuze, is the cybernetic worldview, in which "information" –conceived as a statistical measure of probability– might equally be used to model the functions of machines, organic life and of thought. As Norbert Weiner writes, in *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, drawing on the Leibnizian postulation of a mathematical "universal symbolism" theoretically able to represent and model the functioning of *all* phenomena: "It is […] not in the least surprising that the same intellectual impulse which has led to the development of mathematical logic has at the same time led to the ideal or actual mechanization of processes of thought."[24] Or again, referring to the interdisciplinary seminars which birthed cybernetics research at MIT in the 1940s:

> From that time, it became clear to us that the ultra-rapid computing machine, depending as it does on consecutive switching devices, must represent almost an ideal model of the problems arising in the nervous system… the synapse is nothing but a mechanism for determining whether a certain combination of outputs from other selected elements

[21] See, in particular, G. Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," in *October*, Vol. 59 (Winter 1992), MIT Press, pp.3-7.
[22] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.276.
[23] Ibid.
[24] N. Weiner, *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1985, p.12.

> will or will not act as an adequate stimulus for the discharge of the next element, and must have its precise analogue in the computing machine.[25]

Put another way, in deploying the ostensibly universal "symbolic" representation of mathematical logic –specifically statistical probability– to model the functions of thought, we find ourselves with a vision of thought conceived as, in Bergson's terms, a "closed system,"[26] a mechanistic circuitry of actions and re-actions, situated on a uniformly "actual" register, and eliding the qualitatively different and differentiating forces of virtuality. Such a model, of which contemporary cognitivism and neuroscience are perhaps the inheritors,[27] sees the mind become an electro-chemical "computing machine," with "thought" the name for one or several of its algorithmic functions.

For Deleuze, the problem with such a model is not that it effaces thought as some kind of privileged human interiority, or even that it is conceived as "machinic" –a term with rich connotations for Deleuze in his work with Félix Guattari—[28] but that it is fundamentally imbricated with capitalist and technocratic State projects for the consolidation of control and the production of specific forms of subjectivity. As Deleuze will claim, in the 1987 lecture "What is the Creative Act?": "Information is a set of imperatives, slogans, directions –order words. When you are informed, you are told what you are supposed to believe."[29]

[25] Ibid., p.14.

[26] According to Bergson's account, both matter and scientific method are determined by their "tendency" to form relatively isolated or "closed" systems –which for brevity we might here read as their situation on the register of the actual as opposed to that of the virtual. Thus, a material object –for instance a stone on the bed of a river- constitutes a "closed system" insomuch as from a certain temporal perspective its constitutive elements –in this case mineral or mineraloid chemical compounds— remain cohesive, resisting subsumption within their surrounding milieu. However, as we well know, a rock in water will gradually change shape and ultimately dissipate as a result of environmental factors (most obviously the flowing water within which it is submerged). It is for this reason Bergson will claim that while matter has a *tendency* to form closed systems, "it is only a tendency. Matter does not go to the end, and the isolation is never complete." (Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.10) Bergson will suggest that in dedicating itself to an analysis of such "closed systems" –which may well be a rock, a society, or a solar system, anything understood in its rigorously *actual* aspect— modern science therefore neglects the contingency of its findings, drawing apparently universal conclusions from what are only abstractly isolated systems. In order to fully apprehend the universe as the interplay of closed systems and the virtual-actual whole onto which they are open, science, he will claim, must not dismiss the metaphysical and speculative powers of philosophy. For more on this position, see, in particular, the first chapter of *Creative Evolution*.

[27] In the context of film theory, we might think of the work of Nöel Carrol and David Bordwell who, in the late 1980s and 1990s, popularised the use of "cognitivist" and "neuroscientific" theories in film analysis. Their work focusses consistently on motifs of "successful cognition" and electro-chemical functions in the context of spectatorship, inheriting not only the cybernetic model of the brain as a computational centre, but also the strangely context-less narrative in which "successful cognition" might not require definition. While it would be difficult to find a card-carrying "cyberneticist" today, works such as these owe a clear theoretical debt to cybernetic conceptions of mentation. See, in particular Bordwell's "mission statement," "A Case for Cognitivism," in *Iris: A Journal of Theory on Image and Sound*, No. 9 (Spring 1989), pp.11-33.

[28] Indeed, the basis for their first encounter appears to have been Guattari's response to Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, the essay "Machine and Structure," written in 1969 –and infamously torpedoed by Lacan— in which the former posits a "machinic" model of the unconscious which might resist some of the rigidities of structural analysis. The machine, in its fundamental "productivity," and its situation (in terms taken from Lewis Mumford) within composite assemblages of other –social, technical, cultural— machineries, seemed to both Deleuze and Guattari a means both of opening up structuralism to a fundamentally *generative* analysis –eschewing the retroactive overlay of structuralist frameworks upon their objects of study— and of imbricating the totality of their project (be it noetic, psycho-schizo-analytic, aesthetic etc.) with an analysis of the concrete modes of *capitalist* production.

[29] Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness,* p.320.

Put differently –and in perhaps less polemical terms than Deleuze uses in this lecture– in the apparently neutral act of describing a phenomenon like "thought" via recourse to a field of statistical probability, Deleuze perceives a profound circumscription of its potentialities, a distribution of "possibilities" retroactively modelled on the actual, but in fact determining the very pathways which thought might be allowed to take. In the terms of *Difference and Repetition*, we might say that any such "image" of thought to which we might subscribe, formalises its functions in such a way as to limit them, determining the potentiality of thought in accord with *status quo* social, cultural and political conditions. This is a false image of thought, which obscures the fundamental role played by difference in thought's genesis, a contention to which we will return in depth.

Suffice it to say that for Deleuze, "information" –and its sister-concept "communication"– offer a particularly nefarious "image of thought," given the presuppositions to "neutrality" both terms derive from their scientistic, "descriptive" functions. Put differently, information and communication, both equally valorised under late-capitalism, act as Trojan Horses, masking a function whereby current (*doxic*) beliefs are reproduced, presented as natural, rather than as the contingent productions of a particular cultural and political *status quo*. This conservative functioning takes place in the context of an apparent neutrality or "factuality," guaranteed by their rootedness in mathematical axioms.

In this context, we can see that Deleuze's brief and circumscribed remarks around the new, "informational" materiality of motion pictures have philosophical and political implications which far overspill the movie theatre. It's clear that the "numerical images" to which Deleuze refers –those stored, transmitted and created through computer and communications technologies–[30] and which take as their fundamental materiality that slippery designation, *information*, seemed to Deleuze to be the harbinger of a profound change not only in the cinematic image, but in the contemporary image of thought, and thus the scope of its potentialities.

It is in this context that we must read Deleuze's claims, at the close of *Cinema II*, that "the new [electronic] images *no longer have any outside*…" rather, "a right side and a reverse, reversible and non-superimposable, like a power to turn back on themselves…[31] Likewise, in positing the "informational image" as a "closed system" which dedicates itself to certain circumscribed functions of the actual, we might begin to understand the political purport of his enigmatic remark that "*no information, whatever it might be, is sufficient to defeat Hitler*…"[32] Or, as he recapitulates these themes in "What is the Creative Act?", his claim that

[30] It seems clear that Deleuze is thinking not only of the "electronic" images of television, which he perhaps deals with most fully in a text to which we will return, his "Letter to Serge Daney: Optimism, Pessimism and Travel," but of the then nascent "Minitel" system, a text based digital service accessible through telephone lines and rolled out across France in 1982 by the State telecommunications and postal administration. This system, which provided each home in France with a small screen via which could be accessed various informatic databases and services –stock listings and prices, for instance, the telephone directory, school results and train schedules– was one of the most widely adapted pre-internet digital communications systems, but was ultimately superseded by the American "APRANET" model throughout the 1990s. It was finally discontinued in 2012. Its explicitly "informational" functions, as well as its centralised direction by the French State, have clearly influenced Deleuze's conception of the "*image numerique*." For an authoritative treatment of the Minitel system and its history, see M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society (2nd Edition)*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, chapter 5.
[31] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.272.
[32] Ibid., p.276.

"a work of art does not contain the least bit of information. In contrast, there is a fundamental affinity between a work of art and an act of resistance."[33]

We shall return to these contentions, and attempt to answer them throughout the body of the dissertation. But before treating them in depth, we need to clarify exactly what it means to speak of information in the context of cinema, and what it means to refer to a so-called "digital cinema," as it has come to supplant the 20th century "analogue" forms to which Deleuze dedicated his study.

## Digital Cinema

In the most fundamental terms, "digitisation" refers to a change in the materiality of motion pictures, which took place as information technologies proliferated into the public and consumer spheres through the latter half of the 20th century. At its inception, film was an analogue technology –in the sense of communicating a direct impression made by an object upon a physical substrate— in this case through a photo-chemical process which captures and replicates impressions made by waves of light. The "moving image" of film-stock cinema is thus constituted through chains of discrete images which feature a physical impression produced though exposure to light of a strip of gelatin emulsion and silver halide crystals.

This technology constitutes the "indexical" relation famously outlined by French critic André Bazin,[34] whereby at the ontological level the cinematic image and the filmed object are "indexed" one against the other, sharing a direct causal relationship which, for Bazin, as for Walter Benjamin[35] and others, constitutes an "objectivity" with distinct political implications. In causing perception to become automatic, such thinkers felt that film might supplant the intervention of certain ideological schemata evident in earlier pictorial representation – paradigmatically the cultural-psychological intervention of the "bourgeoisie" artist of painting or sculpture– a situation exemplified, for Bazin, in the "fact images"[36] of Italian neorealism.

Throughout the 1980s, 90s and 2000s however, this "analogue" technology was gradually superseded in cinema by "digital" encoding, whereby the cinematic image is instead constituted by an electronic sensor which breaks incoming light into millions of pixels, discrete units which are measured for brightness and colour and stored as chains of numbers. In (re)producing the image for the human eye, these numbers are then decoded and the image is "reassembled" for projection. And while this might strike the common movie-goer as a specific technical change, of limited interest beyond the realm of film production, we must bear in mind that "digitisation" refers to far more than this simple change in materiality.

[33] Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, p.322.
[34] See Bazin's original formulation in "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in A. Bazin, *What is Cinema? – Vol. I*, trans. H. Gray, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1967, pp.9-16.
[35] See W. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in H. Arendt ed., *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. H. Zohn, Shocken Books, New York, 2007.
[36] The term itself appears to be Deleuze's, (see *Cinema II*, p.1, Bazin meanwhile refers to "image facts"), however it encapsulates well the tenor of Bazin's reading of neorealism. For this, see in particular "An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism (Cinematic Realism and the Italian School of the Liberation)" in A. Bazin, *What is Cinema? – Vol. II*, trans. H. Gray, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2005, pp.16-40.

"Digitisation," even insofar as it applies just to cinema, constitutes something of a catch-all term, referring interchangeably to digitally fabricated special effects, the digital recording and presentation of otherwise ostensibly "live action" films, and technical practices such as the projection, editing and storage of film materials using digital technologies. Clearly, the terminology of "digital cinema" therefore embraces practices on all of these registers, given that developments on any one of them effect the totality of the cinematic ecology. As André Gaudrealt and Philippe Marion explain, in their book *The End of Cinema?: A Medium in Crisis in the Digital* Age:

> It would be naïve to think that digitalization could limit its effects to the encoding of data alone. Encoding cannot merely be restricted to an isolated technological operation; it necessarily affects language, for which encoding is, precisely, the primary principle. And when this primary principle becomes universal, it affects every media language and then all the media that transmit –meaning co-construct– these languages. Put more simply, digital encoding is the process of digitalizing our media from top to bottom…[37]

Leaving aside what, as we shall see, is perhaps a problematic application of the linguistic model to cinema— the imbricated nature of these developments is illustrated via recourse to a brief resume of the "big moments" in the digitisation of cinema.

Following limited use of digital effects in his 1977 film *Star Wars*, George Lucas established a research division in his production company, Lucas Film, dedicated entirely to research into digital techniques.[38] In 1982, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* and *Tron* showcased significant digitally composed content to widespread audiences for the first time.[39] By the late 1980s, "digital nonlinear editing systems" began to replace their mechanical counterparts as the industry standard.[40] In 1993, Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* was one of the first films to generate "believable" digital images, in terms of their apparent continuity with background images captured "photographically."[41] In 1995 *Toy Story* became the first film entirely synthesised using digital technology, while by the early 2000s film negatives were being digitised for work in postproduction.[42] By the second decade of the 21st century, the experience of seeing a film in a cinema was, generally, that of watching a digitally recorded film, often with extensive digitally fabricated special effects, distributed to cinemas digitally, and projected in the same way.

As we might anticipate from the types of film here enumerated, and as D.N. Rodowick has noted,[43] these developments were marked as much by the economic efficiencies afforded by digital production and distribution as by the "existential" threat posed to cinema by other video, televisual and digital screen forms. In seeking to differentiate itself from ascendant forms of small-screen entertainment, and to resist the trend of gradually diminishing ticket sales, cinema turned progressively toward a production of the "spectacular," using digital technologies –particularly elaborate special effects– to capitalise on the big budgets still

[37] A. Gaudreault & P. Marion, *The End of Cinema?: A Medium in Crisis in the Digital Age*, trans. T. Barnard, Columbia University Press, New York, 2015, p.45.
[38] D.N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 2007, p.7.
[39] S. Prince, *Digital Visual Effects in Cinema: The Seduction of Reality*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2012, p.4.
[40] Rodowick, *Virtual Life*, p.7.
[41] G. Balbi & P. Magaudda, *A History of Digital Media: An Intermedia and Global Perspective*, Routledge, New York, 2018, p.169.
[42] Rodowick, *Virtual Life*, p.8.
[43] Ibid., p.5.

available to Hollywood studios, and the awe-inspiring visual and sonic environment of the movie theatre.

This development has likewise had implications exceeding the experience of "going to the movies." Digital distribution, presaged by the "electronic" images of television, has meant that the very borders of the cinematic are now overrun by other forms, extending outwards symbiotically into unfamiliar territories. On the one hand, the socio-techno-economic change to the production and consumption of screen cultures has caused "cinema," in the sense that Deleuze evokes it (70 to 300 minutes long, intended for at least initial showing in large-screen format, produced with at least marginal artistic intent) to abdicate its central position at the heart of the culture of moving images –one it occupied without rival through much of the 20th century. This place has been usurped by television and video, and more recently by so-called "new-media"[44] —including, though not limited to— online streaming, gaming, social media, interactive and user-generated content.

These changes have been the source of some consternation in the world of film theory, which has struggled to maintain a sense of its identity and purpose simultaneous to the destabilisation of its objects of study.[45] Rodowick crystallises these anxieties neatly when he writes:

> The celluloid strip with its reassuring physical passage of visible images, the noisy and cumbersome cranking of the mechanical film projector or the Steenbeck editing table, the imposing bulk of the film canister are all disappearing one by one into a virtual space, along with the images they so beautifully recorded and presented.
> What is left, then, of cinema as it is replaced, part by part, by digitization? Is this the end of film, and therefore the end of cinema studies? Does cinema studies have a future in the twenty-first century?[46]

And while we may feel as though we are spectators to a circumscribed debate around "film aesthetics" –coloured, in no small measure, by a certain nostalgia, rather than any pronounced critical position– the implications of this transition, as I have suggested, stretch further than the simple conditions of spectatorship, or the existential crisis of a particular academic discipline.

There is a temptation, duly noted by the likes of Flaxman[47] and Markos Hadjioannou,[48] to conceive of this change and its implications in terms of Bazin's "indexicality" thesis, arguing that the translation of the film image into discreet packets of encoded "data" breaks the hitherto "causal" relation between object and image, interposing a new, and potentially ideological, interlocutor. But as both of the aforementioned thinkers note, the index was always a fraught line of defence in debates around the so-called "specificity" of film. By

[44] I have here taken the term as it is developed in Lev Manovich's *The Language of New Media* (2001), which in many ways determined the parameters for the academic study of media after computerisation. Nb. That Manovich, and others like Rodowick, ultimately argue that "*new* media" constitutes something of a misnomer, suggesting an idealistic rupture in place of various (actual) technical and cultural continuities. See L. Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 2001.
[45] Gaudreault & Marion, p.11.
[46] Rodowick, *Virtual Life*, p.8.
[47] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.120.
[48] See M. Hadjioannou, "In Search of Lost Reality: Waltzing with Bashir," in D. Martin-Jones & W. Brown eds., *Deleuze and Film*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2012, pp.104-120.

what ontological category, after all, might we claim a more "properly" causal relationship between exposed film-stock and colour and movement encoded as numbers?

Following Flaxman, I claim that a more fundamental problem, as we have briefly touched on it in its Deleuzian formulation, is that such images risk eliding those potentialities the latter had identified in cinema for opening onto the "outside" of a given image. We will recall that in Deleuze's terms, the new, electronic images "no longer have any outside," and while this claim might seem obscure, we might think, by way of example, about some of the characteristic moving images of the early 21st century –immersive video-game worlds for instance, or the networked image-space of YouTube. Such computer based image-systems seem literally to do away with any *outside*, immersively constructed or imbricated with telecommunications technologies in such a way as to create image spaces through which we might move multilaterally, escaping the circumscribed spatial-temporal dimensions of a given work of film.

And even in cinema conceived traditionally –made to be viewed sequentially and played in movie theatres– this trend, towards a "closure" of the image through certain totalising technical and aesthetic processes, has come to supplant styles of cinematic framing which rely as much on what remains "beyond" the image as that within it. Flaxman, for instance, identifies this function at work in the "overdetermined" digital aesthetic of James Cameron's blockbuster sci-fi film *Avatar* (2009) –at the time of writing still the highest grossing, and most expensive film ever made– which, he claims, in using techniques of 360 degree motion-capture and digital rendering, obliterates the cinematic "shot" in favour of a multi-angle information space, the "limits" of which are conceived as being merely technical limitations which might be overcome. As he explains, in *Avatar*:

> The vast majority of the 'performance' takes place within what the director and his crew dubbed 'the volume,' a huge motion capture stage containing as many as eighty or ninety digital cameras that surround the actors. The motion performance technology no longer exists for a given camera: rather, performances are captured from any perspective within the 360-degree spectrum. What this means is that, once the initial images are recorded, Cameron could go back and reshoot the virtual scene from any perspective or angle. At this point, the director is not shooting the film, nor going back and doing retakes, but manipulating the data. There is no shot to speak of, just the information necessary to render the image…[49]

And this change, from framed "shot" to "three dimensional" image determined through algorithmic and computational functions, is inexorably tied, for Flaxman, to the "endless expenditures of capital"[50] with which contemporary Hollywood cinema seeks to differentiate itself from small-screen forms. Thus, as he continues:

> …the spectacle of digital cinema, especially as we find it in *Avatar*, unfolds in an endless series of 'money shots.' Indeed pornography is not the worst way to think about the on-screen, since the digital cinema of the spectacle follows the very same inclination to 'show it all,' to disclose every last shred of rapturous action, and to leave nothing unseen (think, for instance, of Michael Bay). Of course, I'm referring here to an enormously big-budgeted cinematic orgasm to describe this inclination, but I think

[49] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.129.
[50] Ibid.

> the exorbitant excesses of Cameron's film disclose an imperative, at once aesthetic and economic, that determines the new idea of cinema: *it must be represented*.[51]

While of course we might object that not all contemporary films display this tendency, Flaxman's intervention offers a convincing diagnosis of a certain major trend orienting contemporary screen cultures, one which Deleuze himself had seemed to presage with his observations at the close of *Cinema II*. We might well argue, that in "becoming digital," the hyper-representational pyrotechnics of contemporary digital cinema have forgotten the "mechanics of the unseen," the outside, the *un-thought* which made of cinema the great "seventh art"[52] of the 20th century. In this context, Flaxman returns to Deleuze, and to the latter's concept of the "outside," writing that:

> Today, more than ever, we ought to lay claim to the concept of the outside as the most rigorous description of the cinema and the most unrelenting critique of the digital means and media that claim to have superseded it.[53]

Flaxman's work in this area is undoubtedly the starting point for my own, and this dissertation proceeds in accord with both Deleuze and Flaxman, as to a unique set of cinematic relations with the outside, and as to a danger posed to them by digitisation and the contemporary, "informatic" orientation of screen forms. However, I hope in contrast to strike a note of optimism, in the spirit of the Deleuzian cinema books themselves, which claim the catastrophes of the Second World War as the fundament for profound new cinematic-philosophical images.[54]

While this "informational" tendency has broader implications, far exceeding art, and while the contemporary malaise of cinema –if indeed there is one– is profoundly interrelated with a whole ecology of other screen forms, it seems to me, following others like Rodowick and Flaxman, that cinema provides a circumscribed battleground within which we might think these changes and their implications. Cinema may well be the canary down the proverbial mine-shaft –an "art" we can finally agree, after the great debates of the 20th century–[55] which,

[51] Ibid.
[52] The term is that of Italian film theorist Ricciotto Canudo, who, in 1911, published the manifesto "The Birth of the Sixth Art," in which he claimed that cinema synthesises the five major arts enumerated in Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* (architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry.) Canudo would subsequently add dance to this list, with cinema therefore becoming the seventh. See R. Canudo, "The Birth of a Sixth Art" (1911), and "Reflections on the Seventh Art" (1923), both in R. Abel ed., *French Film Theory and Criticism – 1907-1939, Vol. I: 1907-1929*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1988.
[53] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p. 134.
[54] See Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.x.
[55] Cinema's status as an "art form" was, indeed, no settled proposition for many writers during the 20th century. Since its earliest days, the interventions of Hugo Münsterberg, Sergei Eisenstein, Erwin Panofsky, André Bazin, Rudolf Arnheim *et al*., philosophical inquiry into the nature of film –animated by the desire to establish film as an art form of equal stature alongside literature, painting and theatre– has persistently grappled with questions of film's ontological, metaphysical and epistemic implications, always under the auspices of its entwined *aesthetic* and *technical* status. Indeed, the determination to prove film's status as a legitimate art form (perhaps *in spite* of its popularity with the general public) was a central engine of early writing on film, which engaged in a series of incredibly fertile attempts to articulate just what, exactly, was unique about the cinematic form. See, for instance, H. Münsterberg, *The Photoplay – A Psychological Study*, D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1916, R. Arnheim, *Film as Art*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1957, S. Eisenstein, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, trans. J. Leyda, Harvest & Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1977. For a counter-position, according to which the automatism of film and photography differentiates them from truly "creative" or "artistic" forms, see R. Scruton, "Photography and Representation," in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Spring, 1981), pp.577-603.

by virtue of its technical and economic dimensions, is perhaps uniquely susceptible to the toxins of a new social organisation. But unlike the unfortunate canary, to labour the analogy, the cinema, I will claim, as art, may well be imbued with its own immanent powers of resistance.

## Re-Formulating Information

In seeking out these powers, I propose a detour through the conceptual frameworks of information theory itself, which, I contend, unwittingly provide us with tools for pursuing philosophical objectives antithetical to the model of cybernetic control. In oft quoted passages, Deleuze describes his philosophical project as "a sort of buggery," whereby he envisages his writing as a process of "taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous."[56] In this context, claims Deleuze:

> …it was really important for it to be his own child, because the author had to actually say all I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too, because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions that I really enjoyed.[57]

This approach, far from simply polemical or playful –though it is certainly both– enables Deleuze to escape the philosophical proclivity toward systematisation, the positing of a self-evident and self-contained conceptual structure, in favour of identifying the differential and indeterminate elements within a given structure (or *oeuvre*). By turning Nietzsche into a metaphysician,[58] Plato into a thinker of immanence,[59] or indeed Freud into a repressor of unconscious desires,[60] Deleuze is able not only to point to presuppositions and limitations immanent to and animating a given theoretical schema, but to exploit chinks, glitches and lacunae which might advance a style of thought not as "criticism" or "clarification" but as a mobile, creative process, capable of opening up new "lines of flight."[61]

[56] G. Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, trans. M. Joughin, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, p.7.
[57] Ibid.
[58] See G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. H. Tomlinson, Continuum, London, 2002.
[59] See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.59
[60] See G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem & H. Lane, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000.
[61] The "line of flight," (*ligne de fuite*) is a concept which emerges from Deleuze's collaboration with Félix Guattari. As translator Brian Massumi explains, the French word *fuite* possesses a dual connotation of "flight" and "escape," and thus "covers not only the act of fleeing or eluding but also of flowing, leaking and disappearing into the distance (the vanishing point in a painting is a *point de fuite*.) It has no relation to flying." (B. Massumi "Notes on the translation and Acknowledgements" in G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans B. Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2009, p.xvi). Deleuze and Guattari introduce the concept in their elaboration of the "rhizome," the a-hierarchical, qualitative multiplicity they posit as a model of creative thought, imbricated in the flux of life. In this context, they explain: "Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities…" or again, "there is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome." (Ibid, p.9) As such, we might think of the line of flight as the opening by which a given multiplicity –for instance a philosophical concept or system– changes through contact with that which it is *not*, an element of escape or disappearance from a multiplicity's coherent identity which nevertheless refracts back into said multiplicity, causing its constituent elements to reform and reshape.

It is perhaps indicative of his contempt for cybernetics and for "information theory," as well as of the "mature," more austere style of his later works, that these concepts escape this treatment, in favour of the cautionary tone of the last chapter of *Cinema II*, or the brief critique with which he and Guattari open *What is Philosophy?*[62] It is also possible that the broadly "modernist" account of art which Deleuze offers –particularly in later works–[63] stems from a hope that the "informatic" subsumption of the "concept," and the ascendance of computational models of thought and of art might ultimately be avoided.

However, by the 21st century, and with the communications and information "revolutions" now fully consecrated, it appears we are no longer afforded the luxury of critiquing their functioning from a privileged, external ground, instead finding ourselves already imbricated in, and constituted through, their very relations and networks. As such, I propose a manoeuvre commensurate with Deleuze's description of his own philosophy, turning to "information theory" itself, in order to exploit some of the subtexts and slippages which constitute its fabric. Paradigmatically, I hope to identify practices by which digital cinema, from the perspective of information theory, might incorporate extraneous "noise" as an aleatory presence which exceeds the initially intended functions of digital systems.

"Noise" is a concept with a long tradition, in information theory and in the wealth of commentaries from the humanities and social sciences which have responded to it. While my usage of the term will thus be fully clarified in the pertinent chapters, I will introduce it in broad strokes here. Emerging from the Latin "*nausea*" –via a Middle English connotation of

[62] Here, in one of their firmest yet most circumscribed critiques of both "information" and "communications," Deleuze and Guattari warn of their emergence as "insolent and calamitous rivals" to philosophy. As they write: "Finally, the most shameful moment came when computer science, marketing, design, and advertising, all the disciplines of communication, seized hold of the word concept and said: 'This is our concern, we are the creative ones, we are the *ideas men*! We are the friends of the concept, we put it in our computers.' Information and creativity, concept and enterprise: there is already an abundant bibliography… but here the concept has become the set of product displays (historical, scientific, artistic, sexual, pragmatic) … the only concepts are products that can be sold." (G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *What is Philosophy?,* trans. H. Tomlinson & G. Burchill, Verso, London, 1994, p.10). While the rest of *What is Philosophy?* leaves the explicit terms of this critique aside, the work's subsequent definition of philosophy as the "creation of concepts" on a "plane of immanence," can be read as a protracted response to this contemporary state of affairs, and a rigorous definition of the specificity –and radicalism– of the philosophical endeavour.

[63] Deleuze's artistic "modernism" constitutes a point of some tension throughout his *oeuvre*. While he and Guattari –in their advocacy for "minor" literatures which might oppose themselves to canonical and institutional art– offer some compelling tools for thinking about certain "low" and "folk" forms of cultural expression in terms of their radicalism, their ultimate identification of the artwork with a process for capturing "compound[s] of percepts and affects… in stone, on the canvas, or by words…" which constitutes "a being of sensation and nothing else…" (Ibid., p.164) seems to orient their aesthetic philosophy squarely towards the distinctly modernist forms of painting, sculpture and literature, neglecting more nebulous contemporary forms of "creativity" like television and gaming production, the social play of online "memes" and the ascendance of "post-modern" forms of creative and ironic spectatorship. In this context, as Steven Zepke has noted, the fundamental moment underpinning Deleuze's aesthetic philosophy is Kant's discussion of aesthetic experiences which exceed the understanding (the sublime), which is reread by Deleuze as a "violent" encounter, whereby our intellectual structures become unmoored and problematised by sensation– a state of affairs which leads to a potential disconnect between Deleuze (and Guattari's) notion of art and contemporary, "post-conceptual" art practices. Such practices, which rely heavily on the "intellectual" participation of spectators, seem an awkward fit with a vocabulary of "sensation," and work in bridging this disconnect remains a pressing area of post-Deleuze scholarship. See, S. Zepke, "'A work of art does not contain the least bit of information': Deleuze and Guattari and Contemporary Art," in S. van Tuinen & S. Zepke eds., *Art History after Deleuze and Guattari,* Leuven University Press, Leuven, 2017, pp.237-254.

"quarrelling" or dispute– at its core, the term designates a certain "failure to communicate,"[64] resulting from an unintentional or unwanted a-semantic content present in a "message" or "signal" (understood in the broadest possible sense). And while "noise" has thus invariably been understood as undesirable or unpleasant, certain aesthetic and noetic functions of "noise" began to be valorised under the conditions of modernity.

Paradigmatic is the futurist painter and composer Luigi Russolo's 1913 manifesto "The Art of Noises," in which, contrasting the pre-modern world of "silence" and occasional curated "sounds" with the cacophony of industrialisation, he calls for a new music which might "break at all costs from this restrictive circle of pure sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds."[65] He continues, in terms not un-Deleuzian:

> Noise […] has the power to conjure up life itself. Sound, alien to our life, always musical and a thing unto itself, an occasional but unnecessary element, has become to our ears what the overfamiliar face is to our eyes. Noise, however, reaching us in a confused and irregular way from the irregular confusion of our life, never entirely reveals itself to us, and keeps innumerable surprises in reserve.[66]

Russolo's formulation, of noise as kind of inassimilable externality to human "semantic" practices like music, is not such a far cry from Deleuze's valorisation of those "encounters" which might impel thinking to become inhuman, unfamiliar or errant. And while Russolo has long provided a vocabulary by which composers and experimental musicians have been able to conceive of their projects as, in John Cage's terms "invade[ing] areas where nothing's definite,"[67] it's interesting to note how closely his conception of noise mirrors that with which information theory would come to operate in the mid 20th century.

Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, whose work at the Bell Telephone Laboratories in the 1940s instigated many of the key concepts of information theory, might seem unlikely allies in an attempt to think contra informatic control, much less such an attempt dedicated to cinema. However, their travails, which were initially dedicated to optimising technologies for the transmission of telecommunications signals, not only laid the technical ground-work for the eventual digitisation of the cinematic image, but provide some intriguing tools for thinking the role that "noise" might play in continuing its more radical experiments.

This is because in their 1949 text *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, (hitherto the MTC) Shannon and Weaver (who fleshed Shannon's more technical work out for a popular audience), posit information in quantitative terms, not as a semantic category, but as emerging from a field of probability, to be maximised for the greatest possible "potential" of as-yet un-known messages.[68] Very briefly, information, in Shannon's statistical terms, refers explicitly to the quantity of uncertainty that is removed from an "informee's" understanding of a situation which, nevertheless, requires an initial level of uncertainty in order for information to be transmitted at all. And what information technologies based upon the MTC

[64] M. Nunes, "Error, Noise, and Potential: The Outside of Purpose," in M. Nunes ed., *Error: Glitch, Noise and Jam in New Media Cultures*, Continuum, New York, 2011, p.3.
[65] L. Russolo, "The Art of Noises" (excerpts), trans. C. Tisdall, in U. Appollonio ed., *Futurist Manifestos*, Tate Publishing, London, 2009, p.76.
[66] Ibid., p.85
[67] J. Cage, *A Year from Monday: New Lectures and Writings by John Cage*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 1967, p.27.
[68] C. Shannon & W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1964, p.8.

therefore aspire to, is a maximisation of this initial "data deficit" (the maximum potentiality of messages) such that the amount of information (or reduction of data deficit) might be likewise maximal. Thus while this "technical" definition points to a certain "totalising" aspiration of information theory, such that *all* possible "messages" might be captured by the same logics of encoding and transmission, Shannon and Weaver's direct association of the quantity of uncertainty and that of information in a given transmission suggests that information systems are perhaps more compatible with the Deleuzian formulation of the outside than we might initially anticipate.

Essential is Shannon and Weaver's introduction of the concept of signal "noise," the presence of unwanted data in a transmission, which increases an "informee's" level of uncertainty without the attendant reduction in data deficit. This inevitable, empirical presence –of radio static, glitches, tics, dust, dirt and wind, the kinetic remainders of machine functioning and the accumulated whir of distance– always inserts itself into information technology. Picked up and transmitted as data, it constitutes, in Weiner's terms, the "Augustinian evil"[69] with which cybernetic and information technologies must perpetually struggle– the chaotic, entropic presence of disordered "nature," which information must strive to properly control.

In insisting, however, on the essentially a-signifying, processual character of information conceived technically, Shannon and Weaver open the way for a philosophical conception of information which might *include* noise, with information becoming no longer a static or determinate designation, but a differential and differentiating potentiality operating at the level of metaphysics. Luciano Floridi, for example, has more recently forged a compelling philosophy of information which, emerging from the work of Shannon, Weaver, Weiner, and many more, develops the former's distinction between "semantic" and "technical" information to contend that the fundamental characteristic of "data" –at the pre-or-supra-semantic level– is simply, according to the well-known formula of Gregory Bateson, "a difference which makes a difference."[70]

Of course, Shannon and Weaver, dedicated as they are to the optimal functioning of communications technologies –research implicitly, if not in their case explicitly– indexed to the consolidation of military systems of command and control after the Second World War, posit "noise" as an unwanted presence in a given transmission. And while Shannon is able to statistically determine the amount of "undesirable" versus "desirable" uncertainty (or information) in a message in the case of "known signals" –as such identifying and ameliorating "noisy" channels– the fact that information channels always generate a certain amount of noise –by virtue of their temporal, kinetic and spatial dimensions– and the fact that this noise is only differentiable from semantically useful information according to pre-determined (semantic) criteria (the intentions and requirements of the transmitter/communications system), mean that information theory is always grappling with information in Floridi's "ontological" sense –which is to say, a-signifying, unanticipated "data," or difference(s).

[69] Weiner, *The Human Use*, p.34.

[70] As Bateson explains, "…we can assert that any ongoing ensemble of events and objects which has the appropriate complexity of causal circuits and the appropriate energy relations will surely show mental characteristics. It will compare, that is, be responsive to difference… it will 'process information' and will inevitably be self-corrective either toward homeostatic optima or toward the maximization of certain variables. A 'bit' of information is definable as a difference which makes a difference." (G. Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Ballantine Books, New York, 1978, p.315).

As we shall see, this latter formulation could well be transposed into Deleuzian terms, when we steadily recall that the outside is a genetic, differential condition which simultaneously serves to engender and to problematise a "representational" or actual structure. As David Lapoujade has written, in this case in the context of a Deleuzian approach to language:

> …it is not a matter of 'leaving' language by invoking an experience of limits that would be a silence, a cry, or music –as if the latter were outside language– but rather of recognizing that the latter constitute the outside of language, an outside that works on language from within. They are the other side of language, a non-linguistic material whose intensive, chromatic variations work on language from the inside and, in so doing, disarticulate it.[71]

And this immanent function, Lapoujade notes, of an outside which is simultaneously the genetic condition of a given structure, may well be that by which we exceed the circumscribed avenues of informatic control.

Put another way, I hope to identify a chink in the armour of information theory and technologies, through which art and philosophy, in terms of their "co-creation" as envisaged by Deleuze, might continue to replicate and elaborate the spaces of indeterminacy and chaos which are their grist. If information, in its own fundamental terms, operates by virtue of uncertainties –albeit probabilistic uncertainties, retroactively indexed to the actual– and difference, might it be possible to imagine "information-images" which serve similar functions as the movement-and-time images Deleuze identifies as problematising intellectual habitudes and orthodoxies? Might we be able to think an informational "uncertainty" which is no longer probabilistic or indexed to the actual, but with which we might instead express virtual potentialities? Might "noisy" digital works, with noise understood in the extra-semantic sense of both Shannon and Floridi *and* Russolo, Cage *et al.*, continue to put thought in contact with an outside, an outside immanent to information itself?

It is in the spirit of these questions that I will close the thesis by focussing on such a work, analysing functions of both semantic and technical (or ontological) "noise" at work in contemporary film, and discussing David Lynch's film *Inland Empire* (2006). Here, contra Deleuze, I will argue that a productive relationship with the outside can indeed be found in digital materiality, which is introduced as an aleatory, inhuman presence throughout the film, and combined with "incompossible" or non-chronological loops of time which open the film's structure onto a radical problematisation of habitual thought.

I will argue that *Inland Empire*, Lynch's "farewell to film,"[72] is a compelling test-case for a digital cinema which engenders new and problematic relations with an "outside" immanent to informatic materiality. Firstly, it does so through its use of inherently "limited" digital technology (a low-tech Sony PD-150 hand-held camera), which consistently struggles to cope with the series of empirical demands made upon it –straining to auto-focus on actor's faces shot too closely, to adjust to dramatic changes in lighting, to keep up with the rapid movements required by the action of the film– all of which create a pixelated, "noisy"

[71] D. Lapoujade, *Aberrant Movements: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, trans J.D. Jordan, Semiotext(e), South Pasadena, 2017, p.287.
[72] M. Idato, "David Lynch on the return of *Twin Peaks* and why he will never make another film," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Online), 16 April 2007 (Updated May 5, 2017), <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-and-radio/david-lynch-on-the-return-of-twin-peaks-and-why-he-will-never-make-another-film-20170416-gvlr60.html> accessed 19 April 2019.

aesthetic. As such, not only are we consistently made aware of the film's digital materiality, which becomes a key aesthetic device, we are also provided with a digital space dedicated not to expedient communication, but to the production of that *other* kind of information, a-semantic, chaotic data, which actively encourages a wealth of disparate semantic responses. Likewise, at the level of the film's "narrative" –a term we may not ultimately be justified in applying– *Inland Empire* calls attention to the contingency and social determination of these responses, making the Hollywood-industrial-complex as producer and controller of information a key thematic refrain throughout.

Indeed, as we shall see, one of the ways in which Deleuze argues we might escape from the grip of "informational control" is by refusing to take at face-value the "neutrality" of the communication and transmission of information, instead, asking the fundamentally political question of a given piece of information: "*what is the source and what is the addressee?*"[73] In Shannon and Weaver's model, this neutrality is posited as the rigorously technical and statistical function of information regardless of content– provided it is transmitted between an informer and an informee with a shared "alphabet" with which to encode and decode a given message.[74] However this "shared alphabet" is only ever a pre-determined and inflexible abstraction, given that there can be no guarantee that informer and informee, once plugged into broader concrete social, political and epistemic assemblages, are ever "communicating" in a strictly neutral or equitable sense.

In asking exactly who or what constitutes these "anonymous" transmitters –a computer perhaps, but employed in what way? And calibrated according to what predetermined schemas or subterranean ideologies?– we open up the ostensibly "closed" system of information-transmission to political and ethical questions which are the remit of both philosophy and art. And indeed Lynch's film repeatedly does just that –referring to the capitalistic and misogynistic structures of Hollywood in terms of their production of certain highly interested *flows* of information, which, far from "communicating" in any platitudinous sense, "communicate" in the sense of physically communicating a force or imperative.

This thematic element, combined with the aforementioned technical and aesthetic devices (and others, to which we will return in the relevant chapter), determine a film which, contrary to Deleuze's concept of informatics-as-control, provide us an instance of informatics-as-resistance –at the very least a continued resistance to the habitudes of cinematic spectatorship. That such a work could not have been achieved without the use of "informatic" technology, nor without evoking certain key "informatic" concepts, I will argue, causes us to reconsider Deleuze's claims around the fundamental incompatibility of art and of information –insomuch as we are prepared to redefine, perhaps perversely, what is designated by these terms.

Allow me, though, before we proceed further, to anticipate some potential objections. Firstly, it should be noted here that my discussion of a "certain idea of cinema," –paradigmatically big-budget digital Hollywood productions– risks a familiar erasure in the collation of cultural histories– that of non-Western voices. India remains a far more prolific producer of films than the United States, its multi-lingual industry (often erroneously grouped under the "Bollywood" moniker –which refers primarily to Bombay's studio system) produces in the area of 1000 films per year.[75] The Nigerian film industry meanwhile, driven by a voracious

[73] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.276.
[74] L. Floridi, *Information: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, p.37.
[75] T. Ganti, *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema*, Taylor and Francis, Hoboken, 2013, p.3.

"straight to video" market through the late 90s and early 2000s, was, by 2010, producing 50 feature films a week,[76] and screening them to significant audiences across the African continent.

Indeed, as critic Simon Reynolds has noted, a sense of the exhaustion of creative possibilities in Western artistic and pop-cultural forms may finally cause the West to recognise creativity and dynamisms in other parts of the globe, as he writes:

> The overdriven economic metabolisms of rising mega-nations like China and India will doubtless generate all manner of social rifts and cultural turbulence. Popular energies and desires will be stoked that will come into friction with existing political structures and social norms, producing sparks and possibly conflagrations.[77]

While a significant majority of Hindi, Tamil and Telugu language cinema is focussed around a trope driven form of musical drama (which is, indeed, largely digitally produced) complex and shifting *auteur* practices like those of Anurag Kashyap[78] suggest that such "conflagrations" are well in train. And as Dudley Andrew,[79] Tori Arthur,[80] Femi Okiremuette Shaka and Ide O. Ibe,[81] among others, have argued, Nigeria's "Nollywood" studio system is consistently producing films which, in Okiremuette Shaka and O. Ibe's words: "mirror mythic cultural values and evoke responses in mass audiences."[82]

There is much more to say on the subject of "non-Western" cinematic practices, and of the US and Euro-centrism of film theory and philosophy, however, this is not the fundamental analytical axis of the present work, which remains dedicated, rather, to a technological development in the image –one which cuts across cinema in both Western and non-Western contexts. I will acknowledge (all too briefly) some of the potential implications of this approach in post-colonial contexts in chapter three of the dissertation.

Furthermore, we might ask why, if *Western* cinema has become so marginalised, even made redundant, by new "informational" forms of the image, is this thesis dedicated to a work of film which so closely resembles the "*auteur*" works of Deleuze's time-image? Wouldn't a study dedicated to Deleuze and the problematic of information have done better to refer to a wealth of contemporary moving images –those of YouTube, Snapchat, Tinder, social media and so on? Or even better, given that I hope to speak about "control" in the age of information, why not a more distinctly sociological study, drawing on the likes of Alexander Galloway, Matthew Fuller or Manuel Castells in identifying logics and functions of a

[76] See the comprehensive study in J. Haynes, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2016.
[77] S. Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to its Own Past*, Faber and Faber, New York, 2011, p.396.
[78] Kashyap, across works like *Ugly* (2014) and *Raman Raghav 2.0* (2016), creates grim vistas of contemporary Indian life, which interweave violence and corruption with networks of contemporary information technology – phone calls, texts, net cafes and burner phones, in an exhilarating imbrication of colonial and post-colonial forces and technics.
[79] See, D. Andrew, "The Roots of the Nomadic: Gilles Deleuze and the Cinema of West Africa," in G. Flaxman ed., *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000, pp.215-249.
[80] T. Arthur, "Reimagining the 'Blockbuster' for Nigerian Cinema: The Nollywood Narrative Aesthetic of Affective Spectacle," in *Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 6, issue 9 (May 2014), pp.101-116.
[81] F.O. Shaka & I.O. Ibe, "Neo-Nollywood: Mythical Reflections on Auteurism in Nigerian Cinema," in *Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire*, vol. 16, issue 2 (Fall 2016), pp.124-137.
[82] Ibid.

"network society" expressed in areas of life which far exceed the worlds of "entertainment" or of "art?"

Perhaps we might answer this question by taking up the unique notion of "framing" with which Deleuze affords us in his books on cinema. All perception, as we shall see, constitutes an exercise in framing, determining both a frame and an out-of-frame, and in this context I have focussed my own intervention around a particular techno-aesthetic change as it is expressed in the cinematic image. But clearly, "out-of-frame" abide this plurality of other problems, which not only inform and reflect upon this dissertation but which, in my own modest way, I hope this dissertation might likewise participate in. The transition to an "informational" society or a "society of control" is a vast and complex one, the implications of which are beyond the scope of *any* given work of theory, but by focussing on one precise instantiation of this development, I hope to contribute to the expansive body of literature grappling with all of its multiple dimensions.

This leads us to another potential objection –one which I, at least, have confronted regularly. Is it naïve, overly-optimistic or even pretentious to think that concepts of "information" and of concrete socio-political "control" might be dealt with in any meaningful way by a philosophical work dedicated to the "aesthetics" of cinema? Perhaps the easiest answer to this charge is a simple "yes." However, what initially attracted me to Deleuze's philosophy is his conviction, so well articulated in the work of Anne Sauvagnargues,[83] that art is of profound importance not just to how we "experience" or "reflect upon" the world, but to formulating the ways in which we might participate in it, might *change* it. A look to the Corbusier-influenced skyline of a given metropolis, or to the Bahausian contours of the most quotidian objects, seems evidence enough of Deleuze's prescience here. This penetration of art into the every-day perhaps reaches its zenith with cinema, which, as Paola Marrati has written, "was *modern* art, if only because it managed, like no other art of the twentieth century, to be part of all our lives."[84] Art indeed has the potential to quite concretely change the world, the fact that this has not always been for the better should not immediately provoke us to abandon it.

Leaving aside these somewhat grandiose rationalisations, we might finally object to a certain structural move. Why focus just on *one film* as emblematic of the conceptual apparatus I hope to fabricate and defend? Why, not, like Deleuze, evoke a plurality of works to support my claims –and to refute the vast weight of digital "rubbish" he would no doubt feel we are today submerged beneath.

Firstly, it seems to me that it should serve as sufficient to provide one coherent, well-defended counter-example to some of the claims Deleuze makes around the relationship between art and information, one counter-example which might thicken and nuance subsequent (Deleuzian) accounts of it. Secondly, in pragmatic terms, I have struggled to find many more examples of the kind of practice with which I identify the film. The fact of the matter is that I agree with Deleuze's fundamental contentions around the "afterlife" of the cinema– which has indeed become a shrunken and impoverished image of its 20th century

[83] See in particular, Sauvagnargues' book *Deleuze and Art*, in which she consistently identifies the "concrete" effects of art according to the Deleuzian schema. As she explains: "Art is real; it produces real effects on the plane of forces and not forms. The result is an extremely original shift within the fracture between the imaginary and the real. The imaginary ceases to be considered a mental fiction, and art is no longer considered a cultural distraction." (A. Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze and Art*, trans. S. Bankston, Bloomsbury, London, 2018, p.19).
[84] P. Marrati, *Gilles Deleuze: Cinema and Philosophy*, trans. A. Hartz, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2008, p.6.

self (even while more films are made, today, than ever). Deleuze is right, the "rubbish" may have won out– however it doesn't follow that we should concede defeat and abdicate the field, letting a certain "image" of the informatic rumble on un-challenged. In an age where resistance becomes more difficult, its minor and singular moments become all the more audacious, all the more precious, and this I feel, is a contention with which Deleuze would be sympathetic.

Further, I should say that I have no particular investment in the continuation of the 20th century cinematic form. As I have noted, it is already implicated in a profound process of deterritorialisation, whereby its functions are seeping out and dissipating into a wealth of other practises. The same might be said of art more generally,[85] which often emerges in Deleuze in a distinctly modernist aspect, yet which has been thoroughly problematised in an age of citation, sampling and mass participation(s). This need not be naively welcomed as a "democratisation," but neither should our loss of an 18th century, bourgeoisie model of genius creators and reified objects be a source of great tragedy. As Foucault once claimed, in discussion with Paul Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus, "my point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous…"[86] and I think this sentiment provides us with a solid ethic for approaching some of these changes.

It may well be true that "cinema," in the occasionally essentialist terms with which Deleuze refers to it, is a thing of the past, and this thesis should not be mistaken for an attempt to suggest a bright future (or to keep it on life-support). Rather, following Lev Manovich, Rodowick and Flaxman, I feel that "film theory," and indeed works of film, provide us with a useful set of tools for thinking through current developments in the culture of moving images (and in culture more generally). Not, as Rodowick has argued, because they offer up a "mature" discipline, with a rigorous set of concepts and criteria, but, I claim, because of a certain "untimeliness," an "out-of-sync" with which its objects might set in motion and reflect upon the contemporary techno-social milieu of images.

Finally, I'll close here by saying that the broader significance of this project stems from a problem with which philosophy finds itself squarely confronted today– that of the relationship between thought and technology. As our lives become increasingly "technical" – in the sense that our relationships, art, work, politics and indeed modes of *thinking*, take place in imbrication with information technologies in such a way as would have been unimaginable even a century ago– it falls to us to fabricate new concepts which not only help us to understand these changes, but to differentiate among them, identifying those which help, and those which hinder the cause of thinking creatively. Thus, while I plan to remain within the relatively circumscribed space of a specific technical "debate" –that around the status of the cinematic image after its transition to digital materiality– it is indeed in these broader terms that I ultimately conceive of my project and its importance. How can we think technology? How can we think with, and where necessary, against it? It is in turning to digital cinema, and its relation to some of the most fundamental concepts of contemporary technology –those of *noise, communication* and of *information*– that I hope to sketch an answer.

[85] For more on this contention, see M. Fuller, "Art Methodologies in Media Ecology," in S. O'Sullivan & S. Zepke eds., *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, Continuum, London, 2008, pp.45-55.
[86] M. Foucault, "On the Geneaology of Ethics: An Overview of a Work in Progress," in P. Rabinow ed., *The Foucault Reader*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1984, p.343.

## Structure

As such, in the first chapter of the dissertation I will trace the conceptual cartography of the "outside," which emerges via Blanchot, who views it as the impersonal core of literature, the place where we no longer say "I" –instead finding ourselves in the presence of a *raw being of language*– through Foucault, who imbues Blanchot's concept with more thoroughly ontological contours, identifying the outside as the "hiding place of all being."[87] I will then proceed –albeit cautious of the problems attendant to reading Deleuzian concepts as interchangeable across his works– to briefly explicate Deleuze's critique, in *Difference and Repetition*, of a "dogmatic image of thought," establishing it as part of the same noetic project which will subsequently point Deleuze to the outside. The "dogmatic image of thought" –a conservative and reactionary image in which thought is conceived in terms of "recognition," and is fundamentally oriented by a morality associating "truth" with "the good"[88]– provides the clearest distillation of a Deleuzian project to move philosophy away from its prejudices and habitudes towards a creative practice of "encounters." In this context, Deleuze will posit thought as emerging from a simultaneous encounter with both the *un-thought* and with the *inner limits* of thought— a refractory experience of provocation and constraint, which causes our faculties of thought to become differentially productive, provoked by of their contact with what Deleuze will describe as the pure "being of the sensible."[89]

In the second chapter I will extend the Deleuzian critique of habitual thought into his work on cinema. We have seen that thought emerges from an encounter with the radically un-thought, and in Deleuze's work on cinema this un-thought is articulated in terms of the "outside." But contrary to the literary outside of Blanchot and Foucault, the cinematic outside emerges as a consequence of film's unique potentialities for "framing." As Flaxman explains: "because its images are bound by a frame, the cinema introduces not a literary but a literal sense of the outside, namely the out of frame."[90] This chapter will thus explore the means by which framing advances a problematic relation between thought and the "whole," eschewing our habitual modes of thinking, what Deleuze will here call, borrowing Bergson's term, the "sensory-motor schema."[91]

It is in the temporally charged post-war cinema of the "time-image," claims Deleuze, that this "openness" of the image attains a new power. In the post-war cinema, the desolate facticity of Italian neo-realism, the irrational temporalities of the French New Wave, the vague wanderings of New Hollywood, the "whole" is replaced with an "outside," no longer guarantor of the image's meaning, but of a fundamental incomprehensibility onto which it is open. As such, this chapter will close by tracing the historical account which forms the axis of the two *Cinema* volumes —the decline of the various sensory-motor "action images" and the rise of a pure cinematic "time image," a transition, albeit not "historical" in any linear or

[87] M. Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside," in M. Blanchot & M. Foucault, *Foucault / Blanchot*, trans. B. Massumi & J. Mehlman, Zone Books, New York, 1987, p.57.
[88] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.131.
[89] Ibid., p.140.
[90] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.130.
[91] G. Flaxman, "Cinema Year Zero," in G. Flaxman ed., *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000, p.95.

progressive sense— which is nevertheless grounded squarely in concrete social and political circumstances. In this context, Deleuze claims that the cinematic image begins to form crystallisations and circuitries composed between the virtual and actual sides of the cinematic image, drawing to the surface unthought temporal forces in a catalytic imbrication of "truth," "falsehood," "dream" and "reality," a state of affairs I will illustrate with a brief discussion of Chris Marker's 1962 film *La Jetée*.

Chapter three will explicate some of the political implications of the concept of the outside— and as such prepare the ground for the critique of informational and control societies I intend to mount. While the political status of Deleuze's work is far from a settled question –with Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou, for instance, both arguing that no positive or programmatic "politics" can be derived from Deleuze's thought– I tend rather to follow Marrati, who argues that the two cinema books represent one of the major expressions of Deleuze's "political philosophy."[92] I will defend this claim by explicating the key concept of "belief in the world," as it emerges throughout *The Time-Image*, suggesting that cinema, in Deleuze's estimation, possesses unique potentialities for showing us the *link* between humans and their world –but only insofar as both terms (humans, world) are understood as fluid and fundamentally "problematic" – a conception influenced by Deleuze's idiosyncratic reading of Spinoza, Nietzsche and Marx. I will also here argue that Deleuze's cinematic philosophy accords with a Marxist axis we might detect throughout Deleuze (and Guattari's) work more generally— a conviction that the forces of resistance to capitalism must be conceived as immanent to capitalism itself. As such, I will argue, as a methodological matter of course, we must seek forces of resistance to informatic control not beyond, but *within* the new informational image.

Chapter four will begin the second half of the dissertation, in which explication of my conceptual framework and the elaboration of my reading of Deleuze gives way to a constructive movement squarely focussed on defining –and problematising– the digital. Here, I will take up Flaxman's argument, that contemporary digital media, paradigmatically for his purposes a big budget digital work like James Cameron's *Avatar*, consecrates a series of operations which close down philosophically valuable openings onto the outside, doing so in several interconnected ways. Firstly, through a proliferation of the cinematic frame such that we are denied a literal "outside" of the contemporary mass media image. Secondly, through an over-determination of capital in the image, which squeezes out potentialities for errance and obscurity. And thirdly, through the embrace of a film-making practice which treats cinematic images as "information" or "data." Contrary to Flaxman, and in keeping with a profound mechanism of *affirmation* which I claim animates Deleuze's philosophy, I will argue that it is in exploring these very processes that we might locate the digital image's own outside.

In this context, I will briefly introduce what Luciano Floridi designates the "informational turn"[93] in contemporary philosophy, a paradigm in which various thinkers, drawing on the early works of information science, have sought to philosophise with, about, and often against, the proliferation of "informational" technologies, practices and concepts in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. I will recapitulate Deleuze's critique of information in the closing stages of *The Time-Image*, as well as in his "Postscript on the Societies of Control," and the lecture "What is the Creative Act?," arguing that Deleuze, following a broader trend

[92] Marrati, p.x.
[93] A. Woodward, *Lyotard and the Inhuman Condition: Reflections of Nihilism, Information and Art*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2016, p.41.

in French post-phenomenological thought, may have erred in equivocating semantic and technical understandings of "information." These latter understandings, I will suggest, retain fertile opportunities for the type of philosophy Deleuze pursues.

In the fifth chapter, I will introduce Claude Shannon's "mathematical theory of communication" (MTC). Here, I will argue that Shannon's strictly technical definition of information, as a probabilistic measure of uncertainty and subsequent reduction of "data deficit," prior to any semantic understanding we might have of it, retains important aleatory features with which a Nietzschean-Deleuzian philosophy of chance and affirmation may well resonate in helpful (and underexplored) ways. I will continue with a brief discussion of the ways in which early information theorists (paradigmatically Norbert Weiner), in their moral objectives and political associations, have contributed to reimposing a semantic conception upon their own field of study. In this chapter I will further explicate the relationship between "information" and "noise" according to the mathematical theory of communication, arguing that the inevitable presence of noise in the transmission of information opens information theory to the possibility of thinking unique relations with both movement and time.

The impossibility of any information transmission without some form of noise (as aleatory, temporal and irreducible phenomena), and the conceptual difficulty with which information theory can differentiate between "useful" and "unwanted" information without bringing any pre-established semantic category to bear, I will argue, points us to the possibility of a uniquely "digital outside." In this context, I will also briefly introduce Gilbert Simondon's "ontogenetic" concept of information, as the operative element whereby concrete individuals are fundamentally "open" to variation –a result of their emergence from pre-individual "metastable states." This conception, I will argue, allows us to conceive of informatic "noise" in terms of its being fundamentally productive, and irreducible to any simple operation of "control."

Chapter six will restate my fundamental questions thus far. Is it possible, contra Flaxman, to think of contemporary, digital works of cinema which do in fact present us with an outside? That do approach "the point where and when we dispense with presuppositions and define thought itself as a problem"?[94] As I have argued, such a work would need to constitute a digital system, the dynamics of which were capable of engendering and valorising "noise," in such a way as to constantly call the logic of the operating system itself into question, in turn constituting new and "aberrant" logics of perception and of thought. And it is David Lynch's *Inland Empire*, I claim, which does just that. Through a consistent foregrounding of the noise of its digital materiality, through its return to the index in the form of an excoriating lead performance, through its profound criticism of Hollywood and the determinations of capital in the image, and through its presentation of loops of a-chronological and chaotic temporality, *Inland Empire* constitutes a film profoundly open to the Deleuzian outside, albeit on its own, uniquely digital, terms.

Finally, I will conclude by recapitulating the argument that I have made, that contemporary digital images retain unique possibilities for the staging of Deleuzian "encounters," and for the reterritorialisation of thought. I will here note, that while I have restricted my discussion to the circumscribed space of digital cinema, the concept of a "digital outside" potentially has far-reaching effects across the timely and essential study of technics (as pursued by Bernard Stiegler), philosophies of the so-called "informational turn," and the study of contemporary

[94] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.128.

aesthetics. In an Anthropocene era of justified pessimism, in which philosophy, like cinema, appears to be confronting its limits both internal and external— I hope identify a modest collection of chinks, gaps and glitches, that might point us to an outside.

# Review of Literature

## Introduction

Reviewing the scholarship pertinent to such a project is no small feat –particularly given the sheer amount of writing dedicated to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze today. Even a project oriented around so circumscribed a moment in Deleuze's thought –some remarks scattered through a single chapter– requires that I engage with metaphysical, political, epistemic and noetic interventions which spread out across his own *oeuvre* and beyond. Constraints of space determine that I here eschew many texts upon which I have drawn, and which treat themes and concepts which will emerge throughout the thesis. In dealing, for instance, with the Deleuzian concept of the "outside," and with a general model of thought as a practise of "encounters" as it is developed throughout the Deleuzian *oeuvre*, there could be room here for a discussion of the vast amount of scholarship responding to Deleuze's substantial metaphysical project in *Difference and Repetition*. Likewise, in treating the theme of "information" in Deleuze, my work is obviously related to a growing contemporary body of literature which places Deleuze in dialogue with the Internet, contemporary "post-conceptual" visual arts and so-called "new media." Furthermore, in discussing certain political implications of Deleuze's work on cinema, I might here outline the substantial debates around the very possibility of a political reading of Deleuze, such as would need to closely interrogate his work with Guattari and the way it has been read by critics as diverse at Frederic Jameson,[1] Slavoj Žižek[2] and Alain Badiou.[3]

Of course, I will have recourse to refer to many such issues and thinkers throughout the dissertation, but in order to curtail what could well be an interminable explication of secondary scholarship –which grows almost as fast as it could be read– I hope to place my work squarely in the context of writing on the two cinema volumes, a field within which I am confident of making novel contributions. As such, this literature review will take a relatively narrow focus, dedicated specifically to scholarship focussed on the two Deleuzian cinema books, albeit with a brief commentary on ancillary works –particularly those dedicated to the relationship between Deleuze's work and the concepts of "information" and "control." A central conviction animating this dissertation is that these two areas of scholarship remain relatively disparate– with works dedicated to the cinema books largely eschewing the provocations with which Deleuze closes *The Time-Image*, and those focussing on Deleuzian readings of information and "new media" neglecting the treatment of these ideas in the context of Deleuze's work on film.

There are, of course, exceptions. D.N. Rodowick, as we have already seen, provides resources upon which I will draw throughout the dissertation, and indeed his reading not only of the "digital" (*The Virtual Life of Film*) but of the implications of Deleuze's philosophy (*Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*) and of the contemporary (im)possibilities of writing on film (*Elegy for Theory*) have each provided invaluable resources for conceiving of this project. His major work dedicated to Deleuze's film philosophy, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*,

[1] See F. Jameson, "Marxism and Dualism in Deleuze" in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 96, issue 3 (1997), pp.393-416.
[2] See S. Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences*, Routledge, New York, 2004.
[3] See A. Badiou, *Deleuze - The Clamour of Being*, trans. L. Burchill, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000.

indeed treats the themes of this dissertation, particularly in the final chapter and conclusion,[4] in which he explicitly links the prospect of resistance to contemporary "informational" and "control" societies to the fate of the Deleuzian concept of the "outside."[5] However these questions are only briefly discussed, and, in contrast to my own work, Rodowick does not here closely interrogate the terms and culture of "information" theory and technology, instead focussing specifically on Deleuzian political questions of "belief in the world" and "a missing people" –themes to which we will also return.

Likewise, the work of Gregory Flaxman, albeit not consistently dedicated to the problem of the "digital," offers rich resources upon which the present dissertation will draw. Flaxman is certainly one of the most accomplished readers of Deleuze's cinematic philosophy, having made a diverse contribution across works like *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy*, *Understanding Cinematic Thinking* with Lisa Trahair and Robert Sinnerbrink, and as editor of *The Brain is the Screen*, a collection which features contributions from the likes of Greg Lambert, François Zourabichvili, and Éric Alliez, all thoughtful commentators on the Deleuzian cinema books in their own right.

Flaxman is also one of the thinkers to have taken most seriously the commentary on "information" Deleuze provides in *Cinema II*, particularly in two short pieces– the aforementioned "Out of Field, The Future of Film Studies," published in the *Angelaki Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* in 2012, and in the chapter "Cinema in the Age of Control" which features in the collection *Control Culture: Foucault and Deleuze After Discipline*. In the former, as I have already indicated, Flaxman defends a certain "specificity" of cinema and of cinema studies by virtue of their relation to the "outside" as it is articulated in Deleuze. In the latter, Flaxman develops his recent thinking on informational "grids" to explore the implications of control societies, paradigmatically through Hollywood representations of the contemporary American desire to get "off the grid" –illustrated through a reading of the *Bourne* series of films. Given that I will return to these themes later in the thesis, I will not explicate these pieces in detail here, suffice it to say that they provide the "jumping off point" for the present project, which began as a critical response to the former.

Put briefly, while I agree with Flaxman's claims about the worrying ubiquity of informational and digital systems of surveillance and control, and with his claims as to the potential dangers posed by the digitisation of the cinematic image to some of its more radical functions, my methodological convictions are perhaps different, and I am convinced that one of the ways in which we might respond to these problems is by *going further*, in our conceptualisations of digitisation and information, by re-reading and "reterritorialising" their ideas "from within." We will return to this contention in the pertinent chapters.

Finally, I must here mention the work of Patricia Pisters, whose 2012 book *The Neuro-Image – A Deleuzian Film-Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture* takes up many of the same problems as the present work. There are however fundamental differences between Pisters' work and my own, both in terms of methodology and conclusions, and these differences I feel merit my own intervention in this space. I will return to Pisters' work in the closing section of this literature review. For now, I propose to introduce a range of major interventions which

[4] As Rodowick eloquently explains this same problematic: "...if there is 'an original will to art' in the time-image, it is based neither on communicating with nor informing the spectator. Rather, the time-image puts us in contact with what is closest to us and yet most distant- thought that is still outside of us, and so remains intransmissible." (Rodowick, *Deleuze's Time Machine*, p.187).
[5] Ibid, p.192.

deal with Deleuze's philosophy of film, establishing the question of the "digital" as a phantom limb which largely elides systematic treatment throughout. I will then move on, in the second section of this literature review, to discuss those interventions which *do* deal with questions surrounding the "digital" and "new media" through the lens of Deleuze's work on cinema, before closing with some remarks as to the novelty of my own approach.

## Monographs

After a period of initial neglect in the Anglophone world,[6] since the early 2000s there has been an explosion of scholarship dedicated to the two Deleuzian cinema books, including the collections *The Brain is the Screen*, edited by Gregory Flaxman, *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Cinema*, edited by Ian Buchanan and Patricia MacCormack, *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze's Film Philosophy*, edited by D.N. Rodowick, and a Spring 1997 edition of *Iris* dedicated to "Gilles Deleuze, Philosopher of Cinema," also edited by Rodowick. In addition, there have been numerous book length monographs published, which can roughly be divided into two categories: explanatory works which clarify and comment upon Deleuze's cinematic "taxonomy," and "extensions" or "redeployments" which put Deleuze's cinematic concepts to work in regions beyond their initial scope.

In this first category, we might place Felicity Colman's *Deleuze and Cinema: The Film Concepts*, Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze on Cinema*, Richard Rushton's *Cinema After Deleuze*, David Deamer's *Deleuze's Cinema Books: Three Introductions to the Taxonomy of Images*, and Allan James Thomas' *Deleuze, Cinema and the Thought of the World*. I will occasionally draw on each of these works throughout this dissertation in order to clarify difficult concepts and thicken my account through a diversity of perspectives.

It is important to note that despite occasional references, none of these works deal systematically with Deleuze's critique of information, or in depth with the "digitisation" of cinema. Colman, for instance, suggests that Deleuze's concepts generally work interchangeably regardless of the digital or analogue status of the image.[7] Bogue closes with a brief and thoughtful meditation on the "televisual" image, but ultimately concludes that "television, computers and information technology in general provide external conditions of possibility for creativity in the cinema… but internal, properly cinematic concerns are finally what guide directors in their invention of new images."[8] Rushton makes similar remarks, arguing that the philosophical apparatus of the movement-and-time images are sufficient to give an account of cinema in its more contemporary guises.[9] For Deamer and Thomas, neither digitisation, nor information, are central terms, and are not dealt with in any extensive way.

In the category meanwhile of "extensions" of Deleuze's film philosophy we might place a number of works which, while touching on Deleuze's critique of information, likewise generally do not treat it systematically. Here we might mention Laura Marks' *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*, David Martin-Jones' *Deleuze and World Cinemas*, Anna Powell's *Deleuze and Horror Film* and *Deleuze, Altered States and*

[6] D.N. Rodowick, "Introduction: What does Time Express?" in D.N. Rodowick ed., *Afterimages of Deleuze's Film Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2010, p.xiv.
[7] F. Colman, *Deleuze and Cinema: The Film Concepts*, Berg, Oxford, 2001, p.6.
[8] R. Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, Routledge, New York, 2003, p.196.
[9] R. Rushton, *Cinema after Deleuze*, Continuum, London, 2012, p.120.

*Film*, and indeed, this list is far from exhaustive. One of the most notable characteristics of this latter category is a sense that the cinema books exhibit an adaptability across various philosophical, aesthetic and political projects. The books remain open to a kind of "creative criticism" or collaborative spirit, which encourages interlocutors from a variety of interdisciplinary pedigrees.

Teresa Rizzo, for instance, uses Deleuzian film-philosophy in the context of feminist critiques of spectatorship and notions of the body, pointing, in *Deleuze and Film – A Feminist Introduction*, to the broader tendency in Deleuze's work to overcome binary designations.[10] Rizzo takes up the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of the *machinic-assemblage* to posit the cinema as a kind of destabilising machine: "a machine that produces certain kinds of affective and intensive connections that destabilise subjectivity and identity, and that disrupt a binary construction of sexual difference."[11] Rizzo essentially argues that the "assemblage" formed between the film and its viewer offers profound possibilities for the destabilisation of a problematically gendered spectator.

Laura Marks meanwhile enacts a post-phenomenological reading of Deleuzian film-philosophy in *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*, drawing on the Deleuzian-Spinozist conception of "affect" to posit cinema as the vehicle for a kind of tactile perception, evoking embodied and often unconscious forms of cultural memory. As she writes, this so called "skin of the film":

> …offers a metaphor to emphasize the way film signifies through its materiality, through a contact between perceiver and object represented. It also suggests the way vision itself can be tactile, as though one were touching a film with one's eyes: I term this haptic visuality.[12]

Marks presents this kind of haptic sight as affording the possibility for a series of valuable deterritorialisations of traditional cultural antagonisms, creating "hybridised" experiences which transcend colonial and Euro-centric cultural stances. As she explains:

> As hybrids, the [films discussed] challenge the separateness of cultures and make visible the colonial and racist power relations that seek to maintain this separation. The works pollute viewers' ideas of cultural distinction, implicating each of us in them.[13]

Anna Powell's work takes a similar path, "extending" certain elements of Deleuze through a centralisation of the concept of "affect." In *Deleuze, Altered States and Film*, Powell's exploration of the "altered" affective states of delirium, hallucination, intoxication, as expressed in, and engendered by, films like *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Easy Rider* (1969) and *Donnie Darko* (2001) is concerned with a critique of normative structures of cognition and affect. As she writes: "I identify the affective properties of a special cluster of films that induce altered states by techniques to break up spatial conventions of linear time and sensory-motor movements linked by action…"[14]

[10] T. Rizzo, *Deleuze and Film: A Feminist Introduction*, Continuum, London, 2012, p.6.
[11] Ibid., p.7.
[12] L. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2000, p. xi.
[13] Ibid, p.xii.
[14] A. Powell, *Deleuze, Altered States and Film*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2007, p.3.

Likewise, in *Deleuze and Horror Film*, Powell embraces a "schizoanalytic" methodology, following her realisation that "the films I watched were more complex than a predetermined overlay of symbolic or structural meaning suggested."[15] Her work on horror films, conditioned by the conviction that Deleuzian film-philosophy must move beyond discussion only of art films and engage with more popular forms in order to be "of substantial use-value,"[16] reads horror films as offering "a micropolitical function to free us from the habitual schemata of representational templates and to start us thinking in new ways."[17]

Paola Marrati, meanwhile, particularly in the book *Gilles Deleuze – Cinema and Philosophy*, convincingly argues that Deleuze's work on cinema represents the crystallisation of his thinking on the political functions of art, developing the themes of "belief in the world" and "a missing people" out of earlier work with Guattari[18] and dedicating important passages to the uniquely cinematic contours of these concepts. Nadine Boljkovac likewise centralises "political" questions of memorialisation, resistance and trauma in her book *Untimely Affects – Deleuze and an Ethics of Cinema*, which explores the role of art expressing not only the "actual" but the various layers of "virtual" affects which emerge from the horrors of the 20th century.

While these works speak to the potentiality immanent to Deleuze's work on cinema to discuss themes and problems with which he himself does not explicitly deal, it struck me upon reading these materials how largely absent was the theme of "informatics" as evoked by Deleuze in the closing chapter of *Cinema II*. This seems odd given not only the pressing importance of formulating rigorous philosophical responses to an age of ubiquitous information technologies, but also because Deleuze himself locates his commentary on information squarely as the end-point of his gradually elaborated meditation on cinema.

"The life or the afterlife of the cinema depends on its internal confrontation with informatics,"[19] I quote again, in passages which likewise mirror his and Guattari's subsequent critique of "communications" as the great contemporary rival to philosophy in *What is Philosophy?*[20] Clearly, this theme therefore constitutes not an afterthought or footnote, but one of the profound axes by which we might understand Deleuze's work in the cinema books, and indeed his later philosophy more generally. While almost all of the interventions I have so far elaborated *mention* digital media, and some indeed briefly introduce Deleuze's critique of information, none treat these issues in a systematic or dedicated fashion, despite the significant ellipsis they form at the close of *The Time-Image*.

## The Collections

The aforementioned edited collections meanwhile *do* engage with concepts of digitisation and information, albeit in a sporadic fashion and to differing degrees. While *The Brain is the*

[15] A. Powell, *Deleuze and Horror Film*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2005, p.1.
[16] Ibid., p.2.
[17] Ibid., p.23.
[18] We will return to these key themes, which initially emerge in Deleuze's work with Guattari on Kafka, and are recapitulated in the cinema volumes, in the third chapter of the dissertation.
[19] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.277.
[20] See Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?,* pp.10-11.

*Screen*, for instance, provides some rich resources for conceptualising the "outside" as it emerges in *The Time-Image*, particularly in the form of a contribution from Greg Lambert,[21] the only real meditation on the significance of the "digital" emerges in the closing pages of András Bálint Kovács' piece "The Film History of Thought," in which he notes, in terms prescient to my own intervention:

> Deleuze began to write his cinema books in the mid-1970s, at a time when talk of the crisis in modern cinema had exploded and, indeed, when the demise of 'art cinema' was readily predicted. His books became, for this reason, a more or less latent critique of the theories proclaiming the death of cinema.[22]

This is because, in Kovács' estimation, the cinema books provide a compelling framework through which we might understand the audio-visual culture which was to emerge in the closing decades of the 20th century, and which has carried over characteristics of the Deleuzian "time-image," intensifying and proliferating them to a sometimes bewildering extent. As Kovács explains:

> What Deleuze underlines *vis-à-vis* modernism are the very features that the digital culture of the 1990s has blown up and popularized to incredible proportions: namely, nonlinear, crystalline-structured narration, the coincidence of mutually exclusive worlds, and the constitutive role of the 'any-spaces-whatever.'[23]

Leaving aside some of the terminology here, which will duly be explicated in the body of the thesis, this is a convincing claim, made all the more tantalising by the fact that it closes Kovács' piece, rather than instigating an elaboration of this position.

The collection *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Cinema*, meanwhile, edited by Ian Buchanan and Patricia MacCormack, seeks, as the title suggests, to put the materials of the cinema books in dialogue with Deleuze's earlier work with Guattari. As Buchanan writes in his introduction:

> It is in many ways surprising that Deleuze did not draw on this work himself in writing his cinema books because they are a rich resource for thinking through and working out questions to do with the cultural significance and indeed function of cinema.[24]

As such, claims Buchanan, the book constitutes an attempt to "engage with cinema as a whole – which a schizoanalysis of cinema should, in my view, try to fulfil, even at the cost of doing violence to Deleuze's thought."[25] Or, as Buchanan later writes, in the context of Deleuze's eschewal of questions of market forces and spectator desire in the cinema books, the collection is animated by the proposition that "*in order to engage with cinema as a whole we need to take Deleuze as a whole*."[26]

[21] G. Lambert, "Cinema and the Outside," in Flaxman ed., *Brain is the Screen*, pp.253-292.
[22] A. Bálint Kovács, "The Film History of Thought," in Flaxman ed., *Brain is the Screen*, p.169.
[23] Ibid.
[24] I. Buchanan, "Introduction: Five Theses of Actually Existing Schizoanalysis of Cinema" in I. Buchanan & P. MacCormack eds., *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Cinema*, Continuum, London, 2008, p.1.
[25] Ibid., p.3.
[26] Ibid., p.4.

While there is some merit to the claim that Deleuze's cinema volumes, in dedicating themselves to a certain idiosyncratic "taxonomy" of cinematic signs, perhaps neglect some of the more multilateral connections between the cinematic object and its technical, social and political situation(s), it is perhaps unfair to characterise the cinema books as overlooking questions of "cultural significance" or of "function" *carte blanche*. Indeed, what emerges throughout Buchanan and MacCormack's collection, despite Buchanan's claim, is a general neglect of the theme of the "digital" or of "information," which, given not only its emergence at the conclusion of Deleuze's work on cinema, and its profound contemporary import in terms of the aforementioned "cultural significance" and "functions" of cinema, seems, perhaps, an oversight.

Predictably, given his consistent engagement with these issues, this omission is not replicated in the collection edited by Rodowick and entitled *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze's Film Philosophy*. Here, alongside a thoughtful discussion by Kovács of Eco's "open work"[27] –a concept itself thoroughly influenced by thinking on cybernetics and information theory, and to which I will return in my fifth chapter– an entire section of the book –appropriately entitled "Futures," grapples with the contemporary or future conditions of the image, cinematic and beyond.

John Rajchman, for instance, places Deleuze's cinema books in dialogue with contemporary screen based visual arts– positing Deleuze's cinematic taxonomy as a system we might use to ask questions about modes of thought and sensibility engendered by a variety of contemporary audio-visual art forms, exceeding the circumscribed space of the movie theatre.[28] Damian Sutton meanwhile dedicates a chapter entitled "Immanent Images: Photography after Mobility"[29] to the contemporary conditions of digital photography, particularly as it emerges as a mass participatory practice in the context of mobile telecommunications technology. Both these pieces constitute interesting re-deployments of Deleuze's writing on film in the context of the contemporary, digital image– but neither focus on the "informational" thematic which I have claimed characterises Deleuze's own thought on such technologies.

Garret Stewart, meanwhile, digs a little deeper into this theme, identifying, in his contribution "Cinemonics versus Digitime" an alteration to temporality as it is experienced through digital images, positing a saturated "digitime" which displaces the fundamentally Bergsonian conception of time as it emerges in the cinema books. As he explains, taking up the Bergsonian-Deleuzian thematic of the "whole" onto which movement-images open in the first of Deleuze's cinema books:

[27] We will return to Eco's "open work" in chapter five of the dissertation. For now, it suffices to say that this concept emerges from Eco's conviction that art, albeit a signifying or "meaningful" structure, constitutes itself by virtue of a simultaneous interpretative "openness" –a certain indeterminacy of meaning. Eco, in a methodological approach commensurate with the present dissertation, uses the schism, in information theory, between "semantically meaningful" information and "noise" to model this relation. See U. Eco, *The Open Work*, trans A. Cancogni, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1989.
[28] J. Rajchman, "Deleuze's Time, or How the Cinematic Changes Our Idea of Art," in D.N. Rodowick ed., *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze's Film Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2010, pp.283-306.
[29] D. Sutton, "Immanent Images: Photography after Mobility," in Rodowick ed., *Afterimages*, pp.307-326.

> No longer a nexus or file of *whole* rectangles, the electronic frame becomes, when digitized, more like a weightless single easel for pixel tessellations, binary bit by bit, block by microblock.[30]

This change at the material level of the image, such that it is no longer a nexus for *external* forces of temporality but rather for a kind of *internal* movement, an interplay of superimposed "bits," leads Stewart to a question not unlike that animating the present dissertation. In the context of this change, he asks, "what then for narrative cinema?"[31]

Stewart teases out some of the implications of this development through a reading of several works of contemporary film, taking up, for instance, Deleuze's claims about a "closure" of the electronic image, in his discussion of Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *The City of Lost Children* (1995). In *Cinema II*, Deleuze claims that under the conditions of the "electronic" or "numerical image," the cinematic shot functions less like an eye, and more like an "overloaded brain endlessly absorbing information."[32] To illustrate this perhaps initially oblique claim, Stewart points to the "villain" in *The City of Lost Children*, ultimately revealed to be a disembodied brain in a tank of liquid. As Stewart notes, this "steam punk" contraption of wood and gramophone-esque trumpets, exemplifies the process currently under-way as cinema eschews "visuality" for a proliferating image-space of pure computational process:

> By being still humanoid… this brain needs an old-fashioned, wood-mounted camera lens for its contact with the outside world. Otherwise, the brain, folded entirely on itself, would not see at all; it would just process. The meeting ground of being and time would, in this way, surrender the necessity of any ocular focal point, any Albertian myth of the 'window.'[33]

This image of a non-seeing brain, a subjectivity which experiences time not as an unfolding of duration but as a set of repetitive computations, is recapitulated in Stewart's admirable reading of Eric Bress and J. Mackye Gruber's 2004 film *The Butterfly Effect*, which features non-chronological loops of temporality and in which, claims Stewart:

> The Deleuzian dialectic between the movement-image and the time-image has imploded in a kind of perverse synthesis, in which time itself has become mobile, a matter of framed exchange, rather than immersive duration.[34]

Stewart recapitulates his fundamental claim thus, "whatever process is glimpsed by digitime, it is not duration in its successive progress,"[35] and his formulation of a kind of spatialized "digitime" which runs contrary to the qualitatively differentiating "durational" time of 20th century cinema is certainty a convincing contribution.

In the same collection, Timothy Murray asks similar questions, drawing on both Deleuze and Lyotard in his essay "Time @ Cinema's Future: New Media Art and the Thought of Temporality." Here, Murray follows Lyotard in claiming that a certain "futuricity" of digital

[30] G. Stewart, "Cinemonics versus Digitime," in Rodowick ed., *Afterimages*, p.331.
[31] Ibid., p.331.
[32] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.274.
[33] Stewart, p.332.
[34] Ibid., p.335.
[35] Ibid., p.346.

and informatic technologies –their endless "innovation" and promise of untrammelled proliferation and gradual perfection– in fact serves to displace the "future" as a potential category of rupture or guarantor of change. In his accomplished analysis of artists working with digital materials and practices, including Jill Scott, Jean-Louis Boissier, Shu Leah Cheang and David Rokeby, Murray suggests, however, that various artistic practices which take as their grist "intensive" redeployments of archival, interactive and algorithmic informatic processes, might mitigate against this "closure" of the future. As he explains:

> Wherein lies the 'future' in the art of new media? Might there be a way in which informatics combines with the artistic performance of the digital archive to reinvigorate the placeholder of the 'future' itself, particularly in relation to the complexification of its informational present?[36]

In his analysis of the works of these artists, to which I direct the interested reader, Murray suggests some of the ways that this "reinvigoration" might already be underway, pointing, for instance, to Lynn Hershman's work "Agent Ruby," and Stelarc's "Prosthetic Head," both of which constitute "interactive Web and prosthetic beings who are programmed to interact with the viewer through text and Web recognition software."[37] Of significance to Murray, in the context of resisting a kind of "techno-progressivist" closure of the future, is the fact that both:

> …are programmed as open systems –they do more than perform the archive of the past. Their performance is contingent on the archive of the future because their responses become more complex and sophisticated as they interact with successive visitors in the future.[38]

While Murray's is an interesting contribution, it's hard, ultimately, to grasp in what sense these works might open up a "future" which is not that of predetermined algorithmic or computational structures –or, to state the problematic in its Deleuzo-Bergsonian formulation– a predetermined field of "possibility" engendered by them. Even if such algorithmic fabrications are able to "learn" through continued interactions with their environment –as a great deal of AI indeed does, in very complex ways– is it possible to imagine their engendering a noetic "event" like that of the Deleuzian "outside," such as would cause thought itself to become fundamentally problematic? Such a manoeuvre would, if it were to be formulated in Deleuzian terms, require at the very least an account of how computational learning might participate in, or respond to, states and conditions of virtuality –an account not present in Murray's chapter.

Further helpful contributions are found in the collection edited by David Martin-Jones and William Brown, and entitled simply *Deleuze and Film*, including an essay from Markos Hadjioannou, who explores the ways in which digital images might be understood as "crystalline" in the Deleuzian sense of their interweaving ostensibly "real" content with imaginary, dream and fictive elements. Hadjioannou provides a compelling example in the form of Ari Folman's "animated documentary" *Waltzing with Bashir* (2008).

As Hadjioannou explains, traditional arguments delineating digital and analogue images along the "indexical" or causal axis formulated by André Bazin are problematized when we

[36] T. Murray, "Time @ Cinema's Future: New Media Art and the Thought of Temporality," in Rodowick ed., *Afterimages*, p.360.
[37] Ibid., p.368.
[38] Ibid.

conceive of them as "indexed" to broader cultural and perceptual criteria of the "real." The dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park*, for instance, may not be "indexed" to a real-life dinosaur reflecting light-waves onto film-stock, but they are visually "believable" (at least enough for the narrative to function) insomuch as they are "indexed" to a cultural composite or *idea* of "dinosaurs," and assembled from materials as diverse as picture books, museum displays and paleontological imaging. In this context, writes Hadjioannou:

> …a digital image may not be indexical on the basis of its technical construction, but may still reproduce the qualitative functions of the analogue, thus overlapping with, rather than overturning, old media.[39]

Having established the conditions for a kind of "digital indexicality," Hadjioannou proceeds to analyse the confluences of memory, imagination and documentary testimony as they interpenetrate in Folman's film– a reconstruction of his own unreliable memories of time spent in the Israeli Defence Forces and tacit participation in the Sabra and Shatila massacre of Palestinian civilians. Leaving aside the complexities of the film analysis, we might say simply that the digital "subjectivity" of the film's animation is commensurate with the "imperfection" of perception in general, generating "crystal" images in the Deleuzian sense, which problematise distinctions between the virtual and the actual, the real and the imaginary, the true and the false. As Hadjiouannou explains:

> …the bracketing of truth is the actual power of the digitographic act. In other words, placed within the domain of the crystalline, the image is always something more than an image of a pre-existing reality. It is a reflection of reality, but not simply in the sense of a subjective portrayal of the world...[40]

Hadjiouannou's piece offers us some compelling materials for thinking through the possible aesthetic, political and noetic dimensions of digital cinematic images, and as such advances in a similar direction to the present dissertation. In the context of digitally constructed images, Hajiouannou suggests that always-already problematic relations between the true and the false, the real and the illusory –relations which become particularly muddied in the context of ideology, war or repression– might be experimentally (re)expressed through the digital image, bringing to the fore the presuppositions and blind-spots which constitute our subjective experience of such realities. What the piece does not explore however, is how such effects might take place at the specific level of digital materiality (informatics), as opposed to those which might equally be achieved at the level of narrative, or perhaps with traditional forms of animation.

In the same collection meanwhile, in the chapter "Digitalising Deleuze: The Curious Case of the Digital Human Assemblage, or What Can a Digital Body Do?" David H. Fleming reads David Fincher's 2008 film *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* as offering a new form of "digital human assemblage" which might destabilise traditional divisions of the human and nonhuman in philosophically efficacious ways. According to Fleming, the film treats the body of its eponymous character –portrayed by the actor Brad Pitt, who through a series of make-up, motion-capture and digital effects is born "old" and becomes gradually "younger"– as:

[39] Hadjioannou, p.106.
[40] Ibid., p.117.

> …a meta-cinematic time-image, simultaneously actualising a forward movement via its utilisation of new digital technologies, whilst concomitantly illuminating a spiralling return towards pre-cinematic modes of animated expression.[41]

As Fleming explains, outlining the process of "e-motion capture" used to render Pitt's face as that of Benjamin Button:

> For this, four Viper cameras simultaneously viewed and recorded Pitt's facial movements from various angles, building up a 3D model of his face within a computer. This involved a 'volumetric capture of a library of Brad Pitt's facial expressions,' which were then subdivided into 'thousands of "micro expressions" using Mova's Contour system.' These can be imagined from a Deleuzian perspective as an extensive library of digital affection-images.[42]

But untouched, in Fleming's piece, is the question of whether they *should* be imagined in this way. Fleming also reads the digital character as a "multiplicity" in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, but it's difficult to see in exactly what way a film like *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, which is ostensibly a conventional contemporary Hollywood love-story (albeit with the spice of Button's quirky transformation), offers up any meaningfully philosophical problematisation of its materials, commensurate with the movements and functions of "affection-images" and qualitative multiplicities as they are sketched by Deleuze.

While its important, as Anna Powell has consistently noted,[43] that Deleuze's film philosophy does not remain limited to the analysis of "art house" 20th century cinema, and is creatively applied to more popular and contemporary forms, it is also essential that this tendency is not taken too far, such that any and all cultural production might become retro-actively "significant" when overlaid with Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts. Such a tendency is certainly antithetical to Deleuze's own approach. For Deleuze, there are most certainly good films and bad films, and while he may draw on a very specific canon which elides other creative forms –the low-budget yet incredibly inventive "trash" of midnight movies,[44] the viewer-driven, "ironic" forms of spectatorship attendant to schlocky Hollywood blockbusters and "cult" films etc.– this does not mean that we are justified in applying his very specific conceptual lexicon to any and all films. Indeed, in so doing, we are in danger of obscuring the

[41] D. Fleming, "Digitalising Deleuze: The Curious Case of the Digital Human Assemblage, or What Can a Digital Body Do?," in Martin-Jones & Brown eds., *Deleuze and Film*, p.194.
[42] Ibid., p.200.
[43] See, for instance, Powell's remarks in, A. Powell, "The Daemons of Unplumbed Space: Mixing the Planes in *Hellboy*," in Martin-Jones & Brown eds., *Deleuze and Film*, pp.173-191.
[44] The "midnight movie" phenomenon appears to have eluded Deleuze. Beginning in the 1950s with the showing of low-budget and forgotten cinematic oddities on television stations late at night, the practise of "cult" late night viewing of offbeat films began in earnest with the screenings of Alejandro Jodorowski's "acid Western" *El Topo* (1970) at the Elgin theatre in New York in the early 1970s. Classic "midnight movies," David Lynch's *Eraserhead* (1977), John Waters' *Pink Flamingos* (1972), and more recently, Tommy Wisau's *The Room* (2003), share key characteristics which make them a fascinating area of cinematic production, particularly in terms of Deleuze'. They are invariably low budget, often amateur produced, generally with bizarre or "trippy" content hospitable to inebriated spectatorship. Such films often generate ritualised spectator practices, with audiences returning for repeated viewings, often interacting with the film in ironic ways. When viewing *The Room*, for instance, spectators will often arrive dressed as their favourite characters, will yell out criticisms of the film, and will throw plastic spoons at the screen in response to a bizarre unexplained photo of a spoon framed in the protagonist's apartment. In terms of their "minor" contrariety to hegemonic socio-cultural norms, their cult-like accumulation of new subject groups and practices, and their fundamentally experimental nature, such films are ripe for discussion in the terms of Deleuze's film philosophy.

significance of the observations with which Deleuze closes *The Time-Image*, and his claims that a new form of "informatic" image is perhaps incompatible with the "cinematic" as he has theretofore carefully defined it.

## The Neuro-Image

As I have said, perhaps the intervention in this area of scholarship most pertinent to my own is that of Patricia Pisters, who combines Deleuzian film-philosophy with findings from contemporary neuro-science in her book-length study, *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Film Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture*. Here, Pisters argues that the "neuro-image" represents a potential successor to the Deleuzian time-image, existing in the early 21st century as a result of the radical proliferation of screen cultures, and characterised by external circuitries of images which interrelate with the synaptic networks of human cognition.

As I have mentioned, I feel that significant theoretical and methodological differences differentiate our approaches, but before moving on to this contention, I will briefly explicate some of the key ideas in Pisters' work, which does indeed offer some compelling thoughts on the contemporary status of the "image" as philosophical category. As Pisters explains, her work constitutes an attempt to extend the image analyses of the cinema volumes into the contemporary milieu of digital and networked screen cultures, far exceeding the movie theatre.[45] As she writes, referring to the protagonist of a film she claims is paradigmatic of the "neuro-image," Tony Gilroy's *Michael Clayton* (2007):

> Arthur Edens, delirious and intelligent, caught up in the vortex of the contemporary urban cityscape full of networked electronic and digital screens – screens that are themselves always already connected to assemblages of power, capital, and transnational movements of peoples, goods, and information – is a typical character in a new type of cinema belonging to twenty-first-century globalized screen culture that I want to explore… and that I will describe as 'the neuro-image.'[46]

Pisters proposes a "schizophrenic" tendency inherent to these networks of images, which is simultaneously engendered by, and provides the potential for resistance to, a schizophrenic form of late-capitalism. This potential for "resistance" inherent to the neuro-image, claims Pisters, takes the Deleuzo-Guattarian model of a form of schizoanalysis, a term the latter thinkers use to criticise what they claim is a reductive overlay of pre-determined concepts in psychoanalysis, in favour of a form of analysis as complexification and hybridisation, the creation of new, "mixed" semiotic assemblages.[47] As Pisters explains, in the context of her own work:

[45] P. Pisters, *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Film-Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2012, p.3.
[46] Ibid., p.2.
[47] Leaving aside a detailed explication of this difficult concept here, we might turn to Guattari's description, in *Chaosmosis*, of schizoanalysis as a practice which, contrary to the reductivity of psychoanalysis (neurotic symptoms ceaselessly returned to the causal axis of the "Oedipal triangle" -mummy-daddy-baby) instead "will work towards its complexification, its processual enrichment, towards the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity." F. Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. P. Bains & J. Pefanis, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1995, p.61.

> …the power of schizoanalysis inherent to the neuro-image is the power of delirium, a dangerous, intense, and resisting force of schizoflows and overabundance. It must be noted, too, that the devilish difficulty we have with these schizoforms of resistance is to see that they are an immanent form of resistance, which means that the system against which such forms struggle functions according to the same schizophrenic logic.[48]

The contention that contemporary, networked image systems operate by virtue of overdetermination and excess, which, while consecrating functions of neo-liberal control, also offer potentialities for escape and resistance, is indeed convincing, and is not far removed from the methodological presuppositions animating the present dissertation. However, what differentiates my own approach from that of Pisters is a hesitance around the efficacy of a vocabulary from contemporary cognitivism and neuroscience for pursuing such objectives.

A growing area of scholarship,[49] the combination of Deleuzian philosophy with both neuroscientific and cognitive analysis conceived in the 4EA mould[50] is predicated on the notion that, as Pisters writes:

> [If] neurological processes are fundamentally connected to the brain, incorporate bodily and external processes and thus maintain a relation between the inside and the outside, then the 'strange encounter' between Deleuze and cognitivism becomes quite plausible. Their meeting is in fact an exploration of the implications of the brain as screen, halfway between the external world and internal brain processes.[51]

In other words, in modelling synaptic behaviours and neurological networks as embodied and environmental, contemporary cognitivism and neuroscience can be read as problematising a conception of subjectivity as a self-identical interiority, a conception which Deleuze himself sought to overturn throughout his work.

Indeed, Pisters finds explicit permission for enacting this "strange encounter" in Deleuze's own writing, quoting his remarks in an interview with *Cahiers du Cinema*, later condensed into the piece "The Brain is the Screen." Here, Deleuze had claimed that:

> I don't believe linguistics or psychoanalysis are of great help for the cinema. On the other hand, there is the biology of the brain, molecular biology. Thought is molecular, there are molecular speeds which make up the slow beings that we are… the circuits and links of the brain do not pre-exist the stimuli, granules or corpuscles which trace them.[52]

[48] Pisters, p.5.
[49] See, for instance, J. Protevi, "One More 'Next Step': Deleuze and Brain, Body and Affect in Cognitive Science," in R. Braidotti & P. Pisters eds., *Revisiting Normativity with Deleuze*, Bloomsbury, London, 2012, pp.23-36, and the contributions from both Arkady Plotnisky and Andrew Murphie in P. Gaffney ed., *The Force of the Virtual: Deleuze, Science and Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2010.
[50] A movement straddling the fields of cognitive science and philosophy seeking to identify cognition not as a process which takes place within the circumscribed space of the brain but as "embodied, embedded, enactive, extended [and] affective." (Pisters, p.76).
[51] Ibid., p.77.
[52] G. Deleuze & M. McMuhan, "The Brain is the Screen: Interview with Gilles Deleuze on 'The Time-Image,'" in *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture*, vol. 20, no. 3 (Fall 1998), p.48.

And while this idea remains relatively undeveloped in Deleuze's own work, Pisters takes up this gauntlet, drawing likewise on the work of John Protevi,[53] to connect the pre-individual forces (extended by images) which determine brain activity (as imaged by neuroscience).

This manoeuvre, of finding a scientific "illustration" of the pre-individual flows and functions identified by Deleuze as coalescing to produce thought, is, claims Pisters, mutually beneficial across disciplines, enabling cognitive and neurological studies a means of thinking the "sociopolitical and affective"[54] contexts and implications of their work. It should, however, be carefully noted that this manoeuvre has a broader context in film theory, which, commensurate with a wider trend in the humanities, increasingly turned to a "cognitivist" vocabulary throughout the 90s and early 2000s, following the significant interventions of David Bordwell and Noël Carroll. This story is a complex one which I will not treat in depth here –and I direct the interested reader to a comprehensive account from Robert Sinnerbrink–[55] suffice it to say that this development had a decidedly political flavour, with both Carroll and Bordwell –in vocabulary sometimes reminiscent of Alan Sokal– seeking to demolish what they felt was a torpid, doctrinaire and self-serving 1970s film-theory paradigm, dedicated to Marxist-psychoanalytic-semiotic readings of film.[56]

In place of this paradigm, Carroll, Bordwell and others sought to return to film analysis a "level-headedness" buttressed by findings from contemporary cognitive science, focussing on questions of quotidian, "successful" cognition,[57] and rejecting the retroactive overlay of concepts from what Bordwell would describe as "SLAB" film theory – that rooted in the work of Saussure, Lacan, Althusser and Barthes. While it should be made clear that the partisan tenor of the debate has largely subsided since the 90s,[58] and while Pisters' work is nuanced and conciliatory between these trends, the deployment of this methodology must be viewed in a broader academic (and global) context which eschews Marxism and psychoanalysis in favour of accounts of individual subjectivity or mind in terms of their functioning, and not the broader, impersonal structures of which they are an effect.

Furthermore, at a more methodological level, we might object that if findings from contemporary neuroscience are used to "model" virtualities and pre-individual singularities, it is only via an articulation which organises –or *represents*– them on a decidedly *actual* plane or register –one composed of neurological imaging, pathological description, statistical study etc. As such, we are perhaps in danger of once more embracing a limited and limiting "image" of thought –albeit one rich with context and caveat– which nonetheless does away with any "outside."

There is great danger in speaking on a philosopher's behalf, but one can't help but wonder if, having witnessed the situation of philosophy in the 21st century, as it broadly adopts an analytic model and struggles to identify points of difference with scientific method –and as such its purpose– Deleuze may have chosen his words around neuroscience differently today. Thought, for Deleuze, is "molecular" insofar as becomings of all kinds might be conceived of

[53] Pisters, p.76.
[54] Ibid.
[55] See, in particular, chapters one and four of R. Sinnerbrink, *New Philosophies of Film: Thinking Images,* Continuum, London, 2011.
[56] See N. Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads & Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988.
[57] Bordwell, "A Case for Cognitivism," p.12.
[58] See, for instance, the conciliatory intervention from "cognitivist" Carl Plantinga: C. Plantinga, "Cognitive Film Theory: An Insider's Appraisal," in *Cinéma et cognition*, vol. 12, no. 2, (Winter 2002), pp.15-37.

as "molecular." As such, Deleuze's remarks in the *Cahiers* interview might better be read in the context of his longstanding critique of semiotics and psychoanalysis, rather than any profound sense of solidarity with the direction of neuroscience. Lamentably, constraints of space mean that these contentions must be left to one side, and they have been introduced in order simply to indicate a fundamental difference in approach between my own work and a certain contemporary trend in Deleuzian film philosophy.

## Conclusions and Omissions

What this brief resume of scholarship emerging from Deleuze's cinema books suggests – other than a crowded playing field– is the fertility with which Deleuzian film-philosophy can be applied to a number of contemporary problems, be they political, cultural or philosophical. As I've already said, what puzzled me in working through these materials, however, was their general neglect of the significant closing chapter of *The-Time Image*. Here, not only does Deleuze situate the books in terms of his own broader project– closing with the suggestion that a certain conceptual terrain has now been opened whereby he might ask the question "what is philosophy?"[59] Deleuze also identifies a profound complex of "dangers" which might come to menace both cinema and philosophy alike.

I should here briefly note, that in addition to these works on Deleuze and cinema, there is likewise a significant body of scholarship dedicated to the intersection of Deleuze's thought with "the digital" conceived more broadly. In this category we might place the collections *Deleuze and New Technology* edited by Mark Poster and David Savat, *Deleuze and the Contemporary World*, edited by Ian Buchanan and Adrian Parr, *Control Culture: Foucault and Deleuze after Discipline*, edited by Frida Beckman, and certain contributions in the collections *Art History after Deleuze and Guattari* edited by Sjoerd van Tuinen and Stephen Zepke and *Deleuze and Guattari and the Production of the New* edited by Zepke and Simon O'Sullivan. In addition, single or dual author studies focussing on pertinent aspects of Deleuze's philosophy in contemporary, "digital" contexts include those of Alexander Galloway –*Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization* and *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks*, written with Eugene Thacker– David Savat and Tauel Harper's co-authored *Media after Deleuze*, and, in a work dealing with themes perhaps most explicitly linked to my own investigations, Kane Faucher's *Metastasis and Metastability: A Deleuzian Approach to Information*.

This list is far from exhaustive, and indeed many of these works have provided insights and explanations upon which I have drawn in my research. In focussing particularly on the question of cinema however, and more specifically still on a certain question of cinematic materiality, I hope, as I have written in my introduction, to contribute to the debates in this field by using a very precise "test case"– that of the cinema in its transition to digital substrates. This transition, while it is touched upon throughout these works, is not a central or systematic concern in any of them (except for that of Pisters). As such, and particularly in deploying the concept of the "outside" as it is developed throughout the cinema books, this thesis will make a contribution to the field that is both novel and valuable.

[59] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.287.

# 1. Where is the Outside?

## Introduction

I have spoken of the "outside" as a concept I propose to bring to bear in the context of contemporary "digital" images, in support of my claim –contra Deleuze– that such images might retain productive relations with virtuality and the aleatory, exemplified by the presence of "noise" in digital image systems. But before we can move on to this latter contention, it is important to clarify exactly what constitutes the "outside," and how I situate it within Deleuze's broader philosophical project. As such, in this chapter I will trace a cartography of the concept through the work of Maurice Blanchot and Michel Foucault, both of whom develop it in different ways, before linking it to the Deleuzian account of thought most (im)famously stated in chapter three of *Difference and Repetition*.

Before embarking upon this undertaking however, it is of the utmost importance that we properly understand the plurivocality of Deleuze's philosophy. In my account, the outside is not some kind of master concept or "key" to Deleuze's work on cinema, it is one concept among many, which together form the "assemblage" of his work on cinema. I have extricated this concept, following Gregory Flaxman, because of unique potentialities the latter has identified within it for thinking through certain implications of the "information age."

"Concepts are exactly like sounds, colours or images," Deleuze claimed in one of his *Dialogues* (1977) with Claire Parnet, "they are intensities which suit you or not, which are acceptable or aren't acceptable."[1] This is not to say that "all concepts are equal," or are the simple determinations of taste. A concept is "acceptable" or not according to the rigorous conditions of its utility, according to the problems which engender it and to the affects and actions it is able to produce in the world within which it is situated. It "suits" us or not in terms of the dramatic specificity of both thinker and *milieu*, the relation between which conditions the unique and arduous contours of thought. As such, I have extracted a *particular concept* from Deleuze, in keeping with specific problems to which this thesis is dedicated. Further, I have attempted to trace a cartography of this concept across several works (not only those of Deleuze), before extending it into fresh territories. This should not be mistaken for an attempt to totalise this concept across Deleuze's *oeuvre*, or to read it as somehow definitive of his project, even as it is limited to the cinema.

Finally, it is worth noting that while my work focusses primarily on the second of Deleuze's cinema volumes, *The Time-Image*, this is not to endorse an implicit tendency in some secondary readings of Deleuze's cinema books, that the "time-image" somehow supersedes, or is more important than the "movement-image" of the first cinema volume. Certainly, as we shall see, the cinema responds to the concrete problematic of the Second World War by more fully unfurling a certain cinematic temporality –even though many of Deleuze's examples of the "time-image," for instance that of Ozu– appear long before the War. However this should not be read as an account of the cinema gradually perfecting itself, or reaching more profound depths, as if in the service of some "*Geist*." Images, like ideas, emerge from problematic *milieu* to which they respond, and with which they remain in fluid and complex

[1] G. Deleuze & C. Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Columbia University Press, New York, 1987, p.4.

contact. As Deleuze explains, in the preface to the English edition of *Cinema I*: "The cinema is always as perfect as it can be, taking into account the images and signs which it has at its disposal at a given moment."[2] Indeed it is the contours of its current "perfection" to which the second half of this thesis is dedicated. I have taken the requisite tools for this pursuit from *The Time-Image*. This is not to claim that they lie exclusively there.

## Blanchot's Outside

The concept of the "outside," as developed in the latter stages of *Cinema II*, traces roots to Maurice Blanchot's study of literature. Blanchot, through a series of works,[3] returns again and again to the "question of literature," attempting to identify the idiosyncratic conditions of its very possibility. Eschewing a systematic response to this question, in favour of a demonstrative project of indeterminacy, Blanchot ultimately offers less a definition than a thoroughgoing problematisation. Thus, as he writes: "Let us suppose that literature begins at the moment when literature becomes a question."[4]

It's not by chance that we might detect a Heideggerean inflection here. Indeed, Blanchot's work takes place in frequent dialogue with Heidegger, and with the central Heideggerean determination to think *being*, albeit with a distinct emphasis which will eschew the latter's themes of authenticity and "unconcealment." Indeed, Blanchot's literary philosophy is a response to some of the same historical problems which condition Heidegger's thinking on art. For Blanchot, the radical "otherness" he perceives in literature is linked to the conditions of art in late modernity; shuddering into the same modes of self-referentiality and crisis which instigated Heidegger's "aesthetic" investigations.[5] But whereas Heidegger will seek to return art to a revelatory and foundational role such as the various 20th century artistic "isms" seemed to have abandoned, for Blanchot, the fact that art seemed increasingly disinterested in a representational "truth" in favour of a thoroughgoing problematisation of *itself*, allowed art, for the first time, to pose the question of its own idiosyncratic being.

Blanchot thus commences *The Space of Literature* with a re-staging of the "hermeneutic circle" as it appears in Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art," claiming that "the writer belongs to the work, but what belongs to him is only a book…"[6] And while, as we may recall, in Heideggerian terms the intractable relation between artist and work points us to the "feast of thought"[7] which abides in our constant movement between these terms, Blanchot, however, squarely orients his thought towards the fundamental impossibility of any such relation.

This impossibility indeed emerges in Blanchot's earliest works, dedicated to the question of literature's materiality. In the 1943 collection *Faux Pas*, for instance, Blanchot will reject any

[2] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.xii.
[3] See primarily: *Faux Pas* (1943), *The Work of Fire* (1949), *The Space of Literature* (1955), *The Book to Come* (1959).
[4] M. Blanchot, *The Work of Fire*, trans. C. Mandell, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1995, p.300.
[5] L. Hill, *Blanchot: Extreme Contemporary*, Routledge, London, 1997, p.123.
[6] M. Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. A. Smock, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1982, p.23. On the significant influence of Heidegger on Blanchot, see chapter three of William S. Allen's *Ellipsis: Of Poetry and the Experience of Language after Heidegger, Holderlin, and Blanchot*, State University of New York Press, New York, 2008.
[7] M. Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. J. Young & K. Haynes, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, p.2.

understanding of literary language based on *communication*, whereby sentences and words are simply a means of expressing the inner life of a subject (an author's beliefs, thoughts, feelings etc.). For Blanchot, as the example of poetry suggests, the materiality of literary language takes on an autonomy which exceeds the uses of *any* given subject. As he explains:

> We understand very well that the poet rejects daily language, if habit and the determinations of ordinary life have the effect of removing all material reality from this language. We also understand that the poet wants to restore language as its own value, that he seeks to make it visible, that he separates it from all that annuls it. That said, if it is true that poetry must occupy itself with everything in words that serves no purpose, to be attentive to images, to meter, to rhythm, to the contour of syllables, it remains for us to wonder what this resurrection of language that wants to exist as such strives toward.[8]

In other words, the very materiality of language, its resistance to the clear or direct transferral of *information* –its overabundance of meaning– constitutes a central function of poetry and literature. Such forms rely upon characteristics and operations of *their own*, over and above any intended meaning with which they might have been imbued. As Ulrich Haase and William Large summarise nicely, "literature becomes what it is, rather than merely a carrier for something external, like the thoughts of an author or the meaning of a culture."[9] Or, in Blanchot's terms (italics my own): "language doesn't speak anymore, but *is*. It devotes itself to the pure passivity of being."[10]

The implications of this approach thus exceed literary technique, or the subsequent "death of the author" at the hands of Roland Barthes. In *The Space of Literature*, Blanchot sets about crafting a philosophy of the negative as inherited (via Kojève) from Hegel,[11] in which the delineations of subjectivity and identity fall away before a negative power of raw language. For Blanchot, it is only in the context of an impersonal displacement, a destruction of self on the part of the author, who takes up and inhabits language, that literature can come to pass. Thus, he writes:

> The writer … gives up saying 'I.' Kafka, remarks, with surprise, with enchantment, that he has entered into literature as soon as he can substitute 'He' for 'I.' This is true, but the transformation is much more profound. The writer belongs to a language which no one speaks, which is addressed to no one, which has no centre, and which reveals nothing. He may believe that he affirms himself in this language, but what he affirms is altogether deprived of self.[12]

In effect, the writer is affirming *literature itself*, as a pure or supra-subjective process, one which defines the author but over which she herself can have no dominion. As Blanchot explains, in this "space of literature" (italics my own): "I am not there; no one is there, but the impersonal is: *the outside*, as that which prevents, precedes, and dissolves the possibility of any personal relation."[13]

[8] M. Blanchot, *Faux Pas*, trans. C. Mandell, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2001, p.137.
[9] U. Haas & W. Large, *Maurice Blanchot*, Routledge, London, 2001, p.28.
[10] Blanchot, *Space of Literature*, p.27.
[11] Haas & Large, p.25.
[12] Blanchot, *Space of Literature*, p.26.
[13] Ibid., p.31.

The nebulous, shifting nature of Blanchot's project determine that we should be neither glib nor definitive in evoking the "outside." Certainly, we should not read the outside as a spatial category, nor reducible to a simpler figure like the "unknown" or the "unarticulated." For Blanchot, the outside constitutes the formlessness of *pure being*, unfettered by the subject and its presuppositions. In his words, it is:

> …a region which cannot be brought to light, not because it hides some secret alien to any revelation or even because it is radically obscure, but because it transforms everything which has access to it, even light, into anonymous, impersonal being, the Nontrue, the Nonreal yet always there.[14]

As a perfectly present region which is nevertheless "unreal" and "untrue," we may already detect a resonance with the concept of the virtual, as Deleuze inherits it from Bergson– we will return to this relation in the coming chapter. Suffice it to say, not unlike the virtual, Blanchot's outside can be said to be both "Nontrue" and "Nonreal" (although, of course Deleuze is adamant that the virtual *is real*) to the extent that it constitutes an exteriority to interested discursive practices which produce and depend upon categories like "truth" and "reality."

In positing the "outside" as beyond both the subject and its "reality," literature, in Blanchot's estimation, therefore constitutes a problematisation of the very notion of truth, given the historical dependence of truth upon these very conditions. Once we find ourselves in the presence of a language without addressee, without ends or ideals, abiding in the inhuman materiality of its own being, the categories of truth and falsehood reveal themselves as the partial and interested contingencies they are. Dedicating his discussion to one of Kafka's many "exiles," Blanchot explains:

> He is in the outside itself – a realm absolutely bereft of intimacy where beings seem absent and where everything one thinks one grasps slips away. The tragic difficulty of the undertaking is that in this world of exclusion and radical separation, everything is false and inauthentic as soon as one examines it, everything lacks as soon as one seeks support from it, but nevertheless the depth of this absence is always given anew as an indubitable, absolute presence.[15]

Exiled to the outside, to the negative space of being, all fabrications of the "positive" thus reveal themselves as contingency and appearance– the constructions of a given subjectivity. This "negative" is not, however –in the spirit of Hegel– a device for the resolution of contradiction, the advance of a self-knowing *Geist*. Blanchot rather seeks to *reside* in the negative, to posit contradictions *without resolution*, an approach commensurate with the various impasses a rigorously "human" knowledge had arrived at in the 20th century. As Leslie Hill explains: "Hegel's dialectic of spirit is rewritten by Blanchot as a series of discontinuous and incompatible demands rather than a progressive ascent towards absolute knowledge."[16]

As I have mentioned, we need to be cautious before we talk about the outside in the simple terms of exteriority. The outside is outside, but it is also the very core of literature, the most radical interior of thought. Thus, in *The Book to Come*, Blanchot turns to Artaud's

[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., p.77.
[16] Hill, p.108.

correspondences with the editor Jacques Rivière, equally important to Deleuze. Artaud, responding to the rejection of his poems by Rivière's journal, attempted to explain the mute suffering that was their condition. "I am speaking of the absence like a gap," he writes, "of a kind of cold, imageless suffering, without feeling, like an indescribable clash of abortions."[17]

Blanchot identifies in this crisis of Artaud, the fact that he has not "yet *begun* to think,"[18] a profound proximity between Artaud and pure being, a being which must be reduced and falsified each time we seek to represent it. Artaud, by virtue of the unique coordinates of his "schizophrenia," finds himself in too direct a contact with the multiplicity and complexity of being to ever fully consecrate a representation; a "thought," or "image." Thus, writes Blanchot:

> It is as if he has touched, despite himself and by a pathetic mistake, whence his cries come, the point at which thinking is always unable to think: it 'uncan' [*impouvoir*], to use his word, which is like the essential part of his thinking, but which makes it an extremely painful lack, a failing that immediately shines from this center and, consuming the physical substance of what he thinks, divides itself on all levels into a number of particular impossibilities.[19]

In other words, we might say that Artaud's inability to think, the impossibility of his thought, thus propels him into the direct (and painful) presence of a pure negative –the outside– which is the remit and fundament of literature, "the giant murmuring upon which language opens,"[20] and the always misapprehended face of being itself.

As Blanchot explains, taking a path similar to that which Deleuze will later follow:

> When we read these pages, we learn what we do not manage to know: the act of thinking can only be deeply shocking; what is to be thought about is in thought that which turns away from it and inexhaustibly exhausts itself in it; suffering and thinking are secretly linked… Might it be that extreme thought and extreme suffering open onto the same horizon? Might suffering be, finally, thinking?[21]

And while Deleuze, as we shall see, will eschew the figure of "suffering" in favour of a mechanism for the posing of problems and formation of Ideas,[22] avoiding equally the "negative" in his immanent conception of becoming, this vocabulary of the "shock" which characterises thinking will remain one of his core motifs.[23]

[17] Quoted in M. Blanchot, *The Book to Come*, trans. C. Mandell, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2003, p.36.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Blanchot, *Space of Literature*, p.27.
[21] Blanchot, *Book to Come*, p.40.
[22] In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze thus explicates Blanchot in his own terms, centralising the formulation of "problems" which animates this era of his work: "Imperatives in the form of questions thus signify our greatest powerlessness, but also that point of which Maurice Blanchot speaks endlessly: that blind, acephalic, aphasic and aleatory original point which designates 'the impossibility of thinking that is thought,' that point at which 'powerlessness' is translated into power, that point which develops the work in the form of a problem." (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.199).
[23] The concept is by no means exclusive to Blanchot, and I don't seek to suggest Deleuze derives it primarily from his work. Indeed, the "shock" as it emerges in Deleuze no doubt more fully derives from the work of Jean Wahl, whose classes at the Sorbonne Deleuze attended while he was there in 1944-48, and who remained a profound influence. In Wahl's *Vers le concret*, we find an account of the noetic "shock" deployed in order to

## Foucault's Outside

This problematisation of truth and the subject, both sketched as the outgrowths of a negative fundament of which they are contingencies, provides Michel Foucault with a model via which he might re-stage his "archaeological" critique of discourse. Foucault takes up Blanchot's philosophy in "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought From Outside," explicitly purposing this "raw being" in the service of a philosophy which elides that discipline's tendencies toward stability and dualisms, particularly those of the subject/object schism. Thus, claims Foucault:

> If the only site for language is indeed the solitary sovereignty of 'I speak' then in principle nothing can limit it –not the one to whom it is addressed, not the truth of what it says, not the values or systems of representation it utilizes. In short, it is no longer discourse and the communication of meaning, but a spreading forth of language in its raw state, an unfolding of pure exteriority.[24]

Again, in terms which will prove prescient to our subsequent critique of "communication" in the context of informatic images, we see a supra-subjective, indeed *inhuman* aspect of language, one in which "representation" becomes an interested and contingent operation derived from our human (all too human) exigencies. In the presence of such a language, claims Foucault, we encounter a form of "thought" which is radically exterior to the subject and its interests, derived from "…neither truth nor time, neither eternity nor man," but rather "the always outdone form of the outside."[25]

Such a thought, in Foucault's hands, and in keeping with his long-standing philosophical objectives, becomes a means of overturning politicised functions of abstraction and of law which operate within language –or more broadly in the Foucauldian corpus, in "discourse." In positing a language outside the subject, which is indeed the very condition of subjects –through its proscriptive and interested determinations– Foucault suggests that language might be reconceived as radically untethered from the entwined notions of truth, time and law, suggesting forms of being irreducible to these categories. Thus, as Foucault explains:

> For a long time it was thought that language had mastery over time, that it acted both as the future bond of the promise and as memory and narrative; it was thought to be prophecy and history; it was also thought that in its sovereignty it could bring to light the eternal and visible body of truth; it was thought that its essence resided in the form of words or in the breath that made them vibrate. In fact, it is only a formless rumbling, a streaming; its power resides in its dissimulation.[26]

While Foucault's piece on Blanchot retains a studied distance from his more explicit political interventions, his characterisation of the outside therefore continues to develop his ultimate

transcend the realist/idealist schism in philosophy. According to Wahl, both realist and idealist schemes begin in response to a "shock" engendered in their thinking by the "concrete," a term Wahl will use in order to avoid the partisan ring of the "real." See J. Wahl, *Vers le concret: Études d'histoire de la philosophie contemporaine*, J. Vrin, Paris, 1932.

[24] Foucault, "Thought from Outside," p.11.

[25] Ibid., p.57.

[26] Ibid., p.55.

theme, that ideas of truth, historicism, prophecy, determinism –the very terms by which a given discursive regime orients itself– are fundamentally *interested*, and determined by the exercise of power relations of which they become the guarantors.

In the "thought from outside," Foucault perceives an errant means of cartography, whereby we might map these relations and make ourselves better responsive to them. But further than this, such a thought –in unravelling the universal truth to which language has pretended– opens the way for the kinds of localised, micro and differential resistances to which Foucault would increasingly dedicate his work. It is in these enigmatic terms that Foucault closes "The Thought from Outside," writing that through such a language, no longer indexed to truth or falsehood, "every single existence receives, through the simple assertion 'I speak,' the threatening promise of its own disappearance, its future appearance."[27]

"Every single existence," under Foucault's pen, become the dispossessed and marginal subjects of his "archaeology:" the mad, the sick, the imprisoned, women, homosexuals. In problematising the universality of discourses which have effected their marginalisation – religious truths identifying spaces of sin and penitence, scientific and medical truths delineating spaces of perversion, confinement and therapeutics– Foucault seeks, across his *oeuvre*, to identify the terms by which such existences might re-assert themselves according to new and counter-hegemonic participations in discourse, drawing on forces from "outside" a dominant *dispositif*.

In an appendix to his 1986 book on Foucault, Deleuze evokes this politicised conception of the outside in Foucault, here identifying it with the Nietzchean figure of the "overman." Through contact with the outside, conceived as those forces "outside" or beyond the remit of the human as it has hitherto been defined, Deleuze will claim that we might move beyond the human (all too human) condition, into a plurality of new becomings, such as might elide hitherto conservative and limiting functions inherent to this concept. As he writes, extending the material axis of Blanchot's thought far beyond that of literary language:

> The forces within man enter into a relation with forces from the outside, those of silicon which supersedes carbon, or genetic components which supersede the organism, or agrammaticalities which supersede the signifier… What is the overman? It is the formal compound of the forces within man and these new forces. It is the form that results from a new relation between forces.[28]

As such, the outside is here posited, in a distinctly Deleuzian light, as an outside of the "human" –the remit of the "inhuman" forces exterior to the subject as traditionally conceived in the Western philosophical tradition. The outside becomes a condition for novelty and change, which might eschew habitudes associated with the "human" and point us to a "people to come,"[29] neither human nor inhuman, no longer *beings* but rather *becomings*. As Deleuze thus continues:

[27] Ibid., p.58.
[28] G. Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. S. Hand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988, p.131, (translation modified).
[29] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.228.

> …the overman is much less than the disappearance of living men, and much more than a change of concept: it is the advent of a new form that is neither God nor man and which, it is hoped, will not prove worse than its two previous forms.[30]

And indeed, it is this political and "inhuman" outside, assembled from both Foucault and Blanchot, which Deleuze takes up, marbling the concept of the "thought from outside" throughout the latter half of *The Time-Image*. As Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier has noted, at the time of writing his cinema books, Deleuze was already involved in preparations for the book on Foucault,[31] and there can be little doubt that Blanchot, a frequent reference throughout the Deleuzian corpus,[32] appears here in a thoroughly Foucauldian aspect.

This opening of literature onto a pure, impersonal being of language –itself the "hiding place of all being," and harbinger of radical new potentialities in language and in thought– forms a key axis of *The Time-Image*. It is Deleuze's contention, however, that this revolutionary capacity of literature is attained with unique prowess by film. As Flaxman explains:

> By way of Blanchot, who baptized the concept as 'the impower [*impouvoir*] of thought,' and Foucault, who resumed it as 'the figure of nothingness,' Deleuze defines the outside as the point where and when we dispense with presuppositions and define thought itself as a problem. Inasmuch as Deleuze adds his name to this conceptual lineage, he does so according to his own philosophical taste. In a word, he does so *cinematically*.[33]

The "problematic of thought" constitutes a central preoccupation throughout Deleuze's oeuvre, most explicitly stated in the third chapter of *Difference and Repetition*. And while there are difficulties attendant to reading concepts "across" Deleuze's works, given the significant mutations they invariably undergo,[34] I will now briefly summarise this chapter, in order to clarify our subsequent postulation of a Deleuzian "outside" (*vis-à-vis* thought).

[30] Deleuze, *Foucault*, p.132, (translation modified).
[31] M. Ropars-Wuilleumier, "Image or Time? The Thought of the Outside in *The Time-Image* (Deleuze and Blanchot)," in D.N. Rodowick ed., *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze's Film Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2010, p.20.
[32] Not only does Deleuze evoke Blanchot in *Difference and Repetition*, in the context of his discussion of the formulation of "problems," but also in the *Logic of Sense* where he discusses the ambiguity of the "event" as it appears in Blanchot's writing on death. See G. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. M. Lester & C. Stivale, C.V. Boundas ed., The Athlone Press, London, 1990, pp.151-152, 156.
[33] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.129.
[34] Deleuze himself offers a meditation on the "shifting," consistently dynamic quality of his work in his "Author's Note for the Italian Edition of Logic of Sense," where he writes: "It is difficult for an author to reflect on a book written several years ago. One is tempted to act clever, or to feign indifference, or even worse, to become the commentator of oneself. Not that the book has necessarily been surpassed; but even if it remains relevant, it is an 'adjacent' relevance… We all move forward or backward; we are hesitant in the middle of these directions; we construct our topology, celestial map, underground den, measurements of surface planes, and other things as well. While moving in these different directions, one does not speak in the same way, just as the subject matter which one encounters is not the same…" (In Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness,* p.63.) In this sense, we can see that of the utmost significance to Deleuze is a methodological dynamism, a demonstrative rejection of the essentialism and reductivity he perceives in our habitual intellectual practices.

## The Dogmatic Image of Thought

Deleuze's critique of a certain "image" of thought to which Western philosophy has cleaved continues his longstanding project to posit new forms of thinking, such as would be creative, nebulous and changing; irreducible to *any* particular image. Thus, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze does not just disavow a certain conservative mode of thinking, but opens up a critical territory within which we might formulate new modes, such as would be capable –in keeping with the central objectives of the book– of thinking *difference in itself*, without recourse to *identity*. As Deleuze explains in the preface to the English edition, published in 1994:

> Finally, in this book it seemed to me that the powers of difference and repetition could be reached only by putting into question the traditional image of thought. By this I mean not only that we think according to a given method, but also that there is a more or less implicit, tacit or presupposed image of thought which determines our goals when we try to think.[35]

There is no shortage of commentaries on this critique, which identifies a "dogmatic image of thought"[36] animating philosophical enquiry as far back as Plato. As such, my own treatment of it here, as an attempt to contextualise the work Deleuze will later produce with regards to thought and cinema, will remain relatively circumscribed, and by no means aims to be definitive. On this front, I refer the reader to works by James Williams,[37] Daniella Voss,[38] and Henry Somers-Hall[39] (among many others).

Deleuze's critique of the "dogmatic image" is most clearly presented in chapter three of *Difference and Repetition*, but as Williams has cautioned, we must be wary of reading it in isolation from the broader metaphysical intervention Deleuze makes throughout the book.[40] This intervention, as we have said, seeks to think difference not via recourse to "identity" – such that we extrapolate differences from already constituted individuals– but as an ontogenetic force which is the very condition for individual bodies, a *differentiating difference* which adheres "all the way down." This form of "difference in itself," Deleuze will claim, is invariably elided by what he will describe –re-deploying a term from Kant– as a "transcendental illusion,"[41] whereby our intellectual focus is on already differentiated –or extended– bodies, as opposed to the intensive and differential forces which condition and produce them. In the service of this illusion, Deleuze will argue, thought claims as its own imbricated functions of *recognition* and of *representation*,[42] embracing a structural

[35] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.xvi.
[36] Ibid., p.131.
[37] J. Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2013.
[38] D. Voss, *Deleuze and the Transcendental Conditions of Thought*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2013.
[39] H. Somers-Hall, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2013.
[40] Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, p.118.
[41] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.229.
[42] The "conservatism" inherent to the model of recognition may already seem self-evident: we can only *re-cognise* that we have already encountered. Representation, however, is equally the target of Deleuze's critique. Leaving aside an in-depth explication of this critique here –which primarily hinges on a rejection of both Aristotelian and Platonic "hierarchies of being,"– it's helpful to think here in the explicit terms of art. If a painting, for instance, is conceived in terms of "representation," its relation to the real is already subsumed in a mediated or analogous (Aristotelian) difference which is essentially *univocal*. The painting's "difference" with the reality "to be represented" takes place under the auspices of a pre-determined distribution of sense, whereby

conservatism which inhibits the thought of novelty and change –the functioning of difference and repetition.

As such, argues Deleuze, philosophy has tended to mistake the functions of recognition and representation for thought itself, elevating a "popular" or "pre-philosophical" –which is to say *doxic*– "image"[43] of what it means to think to the level of a set of philosophical "principles." But, Deleuze will claim, most of our day-to-day mentation does not, in fact, class as "thought," in the properly philosophical sense. Certainly, the dogmatic image which Deleuze seeks to reject –a good and common sense, fundamentally modelled on the mode of "recognition" and inextricable from an inherent and conservative morality associating "truth" with "the good"– is what constitutes the mentation of the human being in its everyday *milieu*.[44] However this kind of thought shoulders none of philosophy's burden of breaking with *doxa*[45] and of effecting new modes of thinking. As Deleuze explains:

> …acts of recognition exist and occupy a large part of our daily life: this is a table, this is an apple, this the piece of wax, good morning Theaeteus. But who can believe that the destiny of thought is at stake in these acts, and that when we recognise, we are thinking?[46]

Recognition may well have been the habitus of philosophical thought thus far, its structuring image. But Deleuze, following the lineage of contrarian philosophers to whom he dedicates his work,[47] embarks in search of different forms.

A more properly *philosophical* form of thought emerges, claims Deleuze, when we conceive of thought as a response to an initial shock or bewilderment with echoes of the Kantian sublime[48] (italics my own): "Something in the world *forces* us to think. This something is an

"real" object and "copy" occupy determinate relations of analogy, and according to which copies can only ever be a degraded, secondary expression of a reality more properly filled with being. But for Deleuze, the work of art is not of the order of representation. It is *productive*, in terms of the affects and percepts which it concretises, and of the thought which they are able to provoke in intensive and qualitatively evolving modes. As a result, Deleuze's philosophical taste will consistently run to art forms which problematize the figurative, in favour of those which we might say, to vulgarise somewhat, *put figures in motion*, such as is the fundamental characteristic of film. For perhaps the definitive "moment" in Deleuze's critique of representation, see the text "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy," Appendix I, in Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, pp.253-280. See also the authoritative account in D. Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1999.

[43] Note that in this context, the image is deployed in a thoroughly different sense to that in which it emerges throughout the *Cinema* volumes, in which the image becomes a contingent and catalytic "appearance" manifested from the flux of virtual/actual forces. We shall turn to this fundamental change in the concept of the image in the following chapter.

[44] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.131.

[45] Ibid., p.134.

[46] Ibid., p.135.

[47] This pantheon is well known. Philosophers Nietzsche, Spinoza and Bergson, but also artists and writers – Francis Bacon, Proust– and ultimately, a series of "*auteurs*" of modern cinema.

[48] There is nothing innocent in Deleuze's choice of the sublime as a model for the moment which might instigate a thought freed from the auspices of the dogmatic image –what Deleuze will describe as a "thought without image." Indeed the sublime, as the response to an object which is "devoid of form," which excites a "negative pleasure" and is "ill adapted to our faculty of presentation," offers up a simultaneously noetic-aesthetic experience which is reliant on no representational schema, no model of recognition. The sublime, that which, Kant writes, might "do violence, as it were, to the imagination, and yet [be] judged all the more sublime on that account," offers Deleuze a model by which we might conceive of thought not as a harmonious exercise which takes place in accordance with a pre-distributed regime of sense, but as that which, in Kant's terms, might "transcend […] every standard of the senses." (See I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. W.S. Pluhar, Hackett,

object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*."[49] This encounter, with what Deleuze enigmatically designates a "sign;"[50] "moves the soul, perplexes it – in other words, forces it to pose a problem: as though the object of the encounter, the sign, were the bearer of the problem – as though it were a problem."[51]

To vulgarise, we might say that this encounter with a sign, which emerges as the "bearer of a problem," constitutes a triumvirate sketch of the *new*. It is an encounter with the *radically new*, the *un-thought,* which constitutes thought, and which is elided by any dogmatic or habitual image of thinking we may have. Confronted with something we have never seen, to which we have no immediate means of response, which –in essence– *we do not recognise*, we begin to think in earnest.

Such a thought, confronted with the radically new, is thus simultaneously confronted with its own *inability to think*, a groundlessness which impels it into action. Reaching out, as it were, for a thought which has *not yet been had*, the thinker confronts both the limits of thought and the very moment of rupture which calls for thought to be renewed. Or, as Deleuze and Guattari recapitulate in *A Thousand Plateaus*, drawing on the passages we have already encountered in Artaud:

> …Artaud, in his letters to Jacques Riviere, [explains] that thought operates on the basis of a central breakdown, that it lives solely by its own incapacity to take on form, bringing into relief only traits of expression in a material, developing peripherally, in a pure milieu of exteriority, as a function of singularities impossible to universalize, of circumstances impossible to interiorize.[52]

Thus, writes Deleuze, in the context of such a thought –a "thought without an image"– thinking reveals itself not as something innate, easily in reach, but something which must be "engendered,"[53] *created*, sometimes painfully, in response to our confrontation with the new.

Indianapolis, 1987, pp.75-81). Of course, Kant's project –the (re)elevation of a purified and *a priori* schemata of philosophical reason to the apex of human knowledge– will draw from the sublime dramatically different conclusions to those of Deleuze. Their point of departure, as we shall see, is the function of the faculties.

[49] Ibid., p.139.

[50] The "sign" is a concept with a long history throughout Deleuze's work, and we must here carefully note that Deleuze will later characterise the two *Cinema* volumes as a "taxonomy" of cinematic signs. Beginning in 1964 with *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze will associate the "sign" with a noetic event engendering a process of interpretation, writing that, "everything that teaches us something emits signs; every act of learning is an interpretation of signs or hieroglyphs." (G. Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. R. Howard, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000, p.4) While it is thus associated with a process of interpretation, the sign, particularly with regards to Deleuze's later work on cinema, does not accord to a linguistic model. Indeed, Deleuze is careful to avoid any *analogue* between the cinematic "signs" he will posit and "language;" invoking instead the interpretative semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce. As he explains: "the cinema seems to us to be a composition of images and of signs, that is, a pre-verbal intelligible content (pure semiotics)." (Deleuze, *Cinema I,* p.xi). This is to say that the sign, particularly as it emerges in Deleuze's work with Guattari, does not accord to the structural(ist) model of signifier coordinated against a signified, but constitutes instead a productive or individuating intensity, engendering an encounter, and immanent to a regime or ecology of interrelated signs. Or as Anne Sauvagnargues explains: "Like images, signs are no longer devalued as degraded material doubles of a representation or thought, but rather unfold upon maps of affects in an ecological semiotics and an ethology of territory." (A. Sauvagnargues, *Artmachines – Deleuze, Guattari, Simondon*, trans. S. Verderber & E.W. Holland, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2016, p.46).

[51] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.140.

[52] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* p.378

[53] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.147

In keeping with the central preoccupations of *Difference and Repetition*, the new is here distinctly christened "difference." In the context of the cinema volumes the vocabulary will change, however the essential shape and orientation of the encounter (towards "un-thought" novelty and change) remain. As Deleuze explains:

> For the new – in other words, difference – calls forth forces in thought which are not the forces of recognition, today or tomorrow, but the powers of a completely other model, from an unrecognised and unrecognisable *terra incognita*.[54]

In the cinema volumes, this *terra incognita* will become an "outside."

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze argues that this encounter with the new has a dramatic series of liberating functions, impelling consciousness to become a-centred, dynamic and creative. We have noted a trace of the Kantian sublime, and in Deleuze's account of the "faculties" this mischievous connection becomes explicit. But whereas in Kant's account, the failure of the faculty of imagination invokes the powers of reason –engendering a discordant but "collaborative" relation– for Deleuze, the "encounter" with difference engenders a disjunctive exercise of simultaneous provocation and constraint, a "violence" passed between the faculties, in an intensive refraction of their differential natures.[55]

Furthermore, given that it is as-yet un-thought, the object of the encounter can only be *sensed*, and this "pure" sensation, untrammelled by the noetic operations of recognition, causes sensibility itself to become liberated from its hitherto purposive and habitual exercises.[56] In Deleuze's terms, the object, "really gives rise to sensibility with regard to a given sense… it is not a sensible being but the being *of* the sensible. It is not the given but that by which the given is given."[57] Freed from the restrictions of "common sense" (imbricated with the unphilosophical premise of recognition) which had hitherto restricted it,

[54] Ibid., p.136.
[55] As Deleuze writes, in the context of this encounter: "Each faculty is unhinged… each one, in its own order and on its own account, has broken the form of common sense which kept it within the empirical element of *doxa*, in order to attain both its 'nth' power and the paradoxical element within transcendental exercise. Rather than all the faculties converging and contributing to a common project of recognising an object, we see divergent projects in which, with regard to what concerns it essentially, each faculty is in the presence of that which is its 'own.' Discord of the faculties, chain of force and fuse along with each confronts its limit, receiving from (or communicating to) the other only a violence which brings it face to face with its own element, as though with its disappearance or its perfection." (ibid., p.141).
[56] Deleuze deals with the concept of "sense" in his identification of one of the "dogmatic image's" key postulates, the so-called "postulate of the ideal." According to this postulate both common sense and good sense are the distribution which guarantees the "concord" between thought, truth and goodness (Ibid., p.167). Deleuze's critique of this postulate, which is derived from Descartes' foundational claim that "good sense is the most evenly distributed thing in the world," (R. Descartes, *A Discourse on the Method of Correctly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, trans. I. Maclean, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006, p.5), exemplifies complementary themes Deleuze treats in *The Logic of Sense*, in which he associates "good sense" with the concrete functioning of particular forms of social organisation –he is explicit in naming agrarian "enclosure" and middle class "regulation" (Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p.76)– and "common sense" with an "organ" dedicated to the collapse of diversity into a homogenising function of "identity" (Ibid., p.78). But sense, for Deleuze, must be grasped in its dimensions prior to any particular operation, for example its structuration as a propositional determinant of the order "true/false." The properly philosophical problem, for Deleuze, is not to determine the truth or falsehood of propositions cleaved from their situation in a chaotic real, but rather to understand the structure and genesis of sense itself, in its multiple and contradictory forms (good sense, non-sense, common sense etc.).
[57] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.140.

sensibility "thereby enters into a discordant play, its organs become metaphysical."[58] We might here recall the "raw being" Blanchot detects in literature, and note that the "object of encounter" likewise provides us with a raw being of sense, no longer reducible to a sensible subject, but *passing through* the subject as the very condition of its sensibility.

Alongside this being of pure sensation, and perhaps more importantly for our purposes, Deleuze will claim that this encounter likewise ushers thought into the presence of a *pure being of memory*. In searching –and failing to find– a memory commensurate with the object of the encounter, memory, like sense, comes into contact with the very being of memory, a *transcendental memory*, the *a priori* ground of the empirical memory of the subject, hitherto invariably conditioned by the dogmatic conditions of recognition. As Deleuze explains:

> Empirical memory is addressed to those things which can and even must be grasped: what is recalled must have been seen, heard, imagined or thought… transcendental memory, by contrast, grasps that which from the outset can only be recalled, even the first time: not a contingent past, but the being of the past as such and the past of every time.[59]

This dual model of memory refers to chapter two of *Difference and Repetition*, in which we encounter three "syntheses" of time. And temporality, as I suggested in the introduction to this thesis, lies at the very heart of the sophisticated rereading of Bergson which Deleuze will enact when turning to cinema. Thus, before we can elaborate the specifically cinematic form of a "thought without image" –such as, I claim, will adopt the name the "outside"– we must clarify finally the idiosyncratic role played by *time* in Deleuze's discussion of thought– paradigmatically as it emerges in the form of the "three syntheses" of time in *Difference and Repetition*.

## The Three Syntheses of Time

The three syntheses are ostensibly divisible into the familiar temporal categories of past, present and future, however, in keeping with the anti-*doxic* project to which Deleuze is dedicated, these three faces of temporality must be apprehended in an altogether new way. Central once more is Kant, to whom Deleuze imputes the formulation of a profound new notion of time, such as it becomes a pure and empty form, an interiority through which change itself might be thought.[60] As opposed to classical conceptions of time, such as philosophy had largely inherited from ancient Greek cosmology, and whereby time (the Platonic "moving image of eternity"[61]) was conceived in terms of the rotation of the planets – that is to say, as both cyclical and kinetic– Kant, Deleuze claims, in response to advances in the Enlightenment sciences, liberates time from movement, such as time becomes, in Deleuze's words, "unrolled, straightened…" assuming "the ultimate shape of the labyrinth, the straight line labyrinth which is, as Borges says, 'invisible, incessant.'"[62]

[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] D. Voss, "Deleuze's Third Synthesis of Time," in *Deleuze Studies*, issue 8, no. 1 (May 2013), p.195.
[61] R.D. Archer-Hind ed., *The Timaeus of Plato*, trans. R.D. Archer-Hind, Macmillan and Co., London, 1888, p.118.
[62] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.111.

And this "pure" form of time, no-longer indexed to movement, likewise engenders a fundamental problematisation of the subject, such that, Deleuze will claim, the Kantian subject is fundamentally "split" by "the form of time which runs through it."[63] This "splitting" of the subject takes the form of a subjectivity which is situated in time, such that its habitual foundations are consistently ungrounded by the passage of time, which requires the formulation of new selves in a persistent "othering." To express this splitting, Deleuze turns to Rimbaud's infamous formulation that "I is another,"[64] or, more precisely, in Deleuze's words, "it is not the other which is another I, but the I which is an other, a fractured I…"[65]

This dual "event" in the philosophy of time, such that temporality becomes a pure and empty form through which we might apprehend change and appearance, and such that the subject becomes internally cleft between an *I* which is the contraction of a collection of habits and an other which is the product of temporality's empirical demands and flux, constitutes a temporality which therefore lies at the very heart of Deleuze's elaboration of what it means to *think*. But before we can turn to this complex endpoint to Deleuze's "noetics" of time, we must elaborate briefly the content of the three syntheses.

Firstly, and perhaps most intuitively, there is the synthesis of habit, or of the present. Here, temporality emerges in a thoroughly Bergsonian aspect, with the "synthesis" understood as a certain "contraction" such as constitutes a habit. Important to note is that for Deleuze, this synthesis is not the product of subjectivity, rather its functioning is "passive." In this sense, we are not speaking at the level of psychology or of phenomenology. A human being constitutes exactly such a "synthesis" in the form of a collection of bio-chemical "habits" which are contracted in the context of a horizon of possible (inter)actions. Or as Sean Bowden explains, this synthesis:

> …takes place insofar as otherwise indifferent moments of sensation come to be related to one another through the contraction of a habit, where this latter is defined as the formation of a horizon of anticipations on the basis of the qualitative impressions generated by received sensations.[66]

But, Deleuze observes, this first form of temporality, the synthesis of the present, engenders a paradox, which necessarily ushers in a *second* form of temporality. For if the present constitutes time, yet nevertheless continues to "pass" and make way for new presents, it appears as if the present passes into one of its own dimensions. As such, Deleuze will claim: "We cannot avoid the necessary conclusion *–that there must be another time in which the first synthesis of time can occur."*[67] Thus, while the first synthesis constitutes the "foundation" of time, the second, claims Deleuze, constitutes the "ground" within which this

[63] Ibid, p.169.
[64] Rimbaud's formulation, in an 1871 letter to Paul Demeny, takes the form of a meditation on the "future of poetry." Here, Rimbaud will write: "I am present at the birth of my thought: I watch it and listen to it… If old imbeciles had not discovered only the false meaning of the Ego, we would not have to sweep away those millions of skeletons which, for time immemorial! have accumulated the results of their one-eyed intellects by claiming to be the authors!" (A. Rimbaud, *Complete Works, Selected Letters*, trans. W. Fowlie, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005, p.375).
[65] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.261.
[66] S. Bowden, "'Becoming Equal to the Act': The Temporality of Action and Agential Responsibility," in R. Braidotti & S. Bignall eds., *Posthuman Ecologies: Complexity and Process after Deleuze*, Rowman & Littlefield, London, 2019, p.124.
[67] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.79.

foundation is embedded.[68] This ground, Deleuze will claim –the condition for the fundamental changeability of the present– is a kind of "memory." But this is not the "memory" of an individual subject, the temporal form to which Deleuze refers must once more be understood in the most rigorously metaphysical and supra-subjective, which is to say "passive" sense.

As the condition for the contraction of habit which constitutes the present, this form of "memory" or of "pure past" is the *a priori*, transcendental condition of the passing present. It is thus a past which was never present, and which does not pass, yet which nevertheless allows the differentiation of *former* and *present* presents.[69] This transcendental form of temporality thus comprises the originary temporality of which presents constitute particular dimensions. We have spoken of Bergson, and we might here recall that for Bergson, conscious perception is constituted by a profound imbrication of memory and what he describes as the "sensory-motor"[70] condition of preparedness for future action. In order for memories to penetrate into the present, to be *actualised*, they are thus contracted from a hitherto virtual (though perfectly real, and, as we shall see, for Deleuze, *fully determined*) memory which coexists with the present, which is indeed the very condition of the present; a situation Bergson illustrates via recourse to his famous temporal "cone."[71]

This distinction between pure memory and memories activated in the service of the subject's sensory-motor exigencies, between *virtual* memory and its *actualisation* in sensory-motor response, lies at the heart of Deleuze's subsequent account of the unique temporality afforded by the cinematic screen. This opening onto a pure complexity of time constitutes the central architecture of the *time-image*, in which multiple and interconnected temporal loops, freed from such subjective presentations as narrative and chronology are made manifest. We will return to this idea in the following chapter.

But in addition to these two syntheses, which comprise the present and the past-as-condition for the present, Deleuze will argue that there must also be a *third* synthesis, perhaps the most complex of the three: that of *difference* or the *future*. The third synthesis, Deleuze explains, is simultaneously *static*, *formal* and *serial*, insomuch as it is the synthesis which serves to distribute past, present and future as delineable categories. This distribution, importantly, takes place in the context of an *event* or *act*, constituting what Deleuze describes as a "caesura," on either side of which are formally distributed a past as condition for the subject, the present as that situation in which the subject is confronted with a problem to which it has no apparent solution, and a future in which the subject will arrive at a solution to this problem– but only insomuch as it becomes *other than it is*. Thus, as Deleuze explains, evoking a concept of time which is no longer subordinate to movement, such as will recur throughout his work on cinema:

> The synthesis is necessarily static, since time is no longer subordinated to movement; time is the most radical form of change, but the form of change does not change. The caesura, along with the before and after which it ordains once and for all, constitutes the fracture in the I (the caesura is exactly the point at which the fracture appears).[72]

[68] Ibid.
[69] Bowden, "Becoming Equal," p.125.
[70] H. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N.M. Paul & W.S. Palmer, Zone Books, New York, 2005, p.168.
[71] See ibid., p.152.
[72] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.89.

This serial distribution of temporality, occasioned by an "encounter" with the un-thought, thus suggests a subjectivity which is no longer unitary, but cleft by its constitution through time, through which it becomes constantly "other" to itself. The third synthesis thus ties temporality's dimensions together, with the past as "ground" or condition, the present as agent or event, and the future as the necessary production of difference and novelty in response to this event.[73]

The "encounter" of thought, as we have said, opens up this trifold activity of time, in the context of a confrontation with a pure difference which is no longer subsumed within identity (and as such, cannot be recognised). The creativity incumbent upon the agent in the present, such that it might confront the present, searching the pure past for resources with which to produce the future, constitutes the fundamentally temporal architecture of a thought which is no longer "dogmatic" but which is instead creative. But thought, as we have said, is rare. This latter synthesis, which transcends habit in a creative production of the new, is open to the subject only when it *embraces* the encounter, *choosing* to eschew habitude in favour of difference in itself.

For this reason, Deleuze will implicate the creativity here incumbent on the subject with the Nietzschean "eternal return," suggesting that it is only in the context of an *affirmation* of the event, which indeed sees the "subject" make way for an "author" or "actor" of time, that this third synthesis can properly adhere, projecting a future which is no longer simply the repetition of habit. As Deleuze explains, the third synthesis is rather a "royal repetition," a *repetition of difference*, which:

> …constitutes a future which affirms at once both the unconditioned character of the product in relation to the conditions of its production, and the independence of the work in relation to its author or actor.[74]

In other words, we encounter, in the third synthesis, a future which exceeds the initial conditions of its production, likewise overflowing the capacities of a subject to comprehend or respond to it. It is only in the context of a Nietzschean *amor fati*,[75] an openness to difference in all of its aleatory and unthinkable excess, that the subject is able to "become equal to […] the unequal in itself,"[76] producing difference through an embrace of the difference which is its own condition.

In the terms of this dissertation, we might say that it is only in embracing a formless "thought from outside" (from the future, or from the purest past) that the subject is able to move beyond the limits of the present, producing –and being produced by– a new which is radically undetermined. But philosophy, Deleuze contends, has been for the most part unable to stage the kind of encounter which might lead us to this creative production of the future–

[73] Bowden, "Becoming Equal," p.129.
[74] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.94.
[75] As Deleuze explains, in his book on Nietzsche –evoking the Nietzschean motif of dice throwing and conception of the world as a gambling table– this process can be seen as an affirmation of the imbricated nature of chance and necessity immanent to *all* becomings: "The dice which are thrown once are the affirmation of *chance*, the combination which they form on falling is the affirmation of *necessity*. Necessity is affirmed of chance in exactly the sense that being is affirmed of becoming and unity is affirmed of multiplicity. It will be replied, in vain, that thrown to chance, the dice do not necessarily produce the winning combination, the double six which brings back the dicethrow. This is true, but only insofar as the player did not know how to *affirm* chance from the outset." (Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p.26).
[76] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.90.

predicated as it is on a *doxic* model of enchained *recognition* and *representation*. In this context, Deleuze will ask, "is there a hope for philosophy, which for a long time has been an official, referential genre?"[77] It is in search of an answer to this question that Deleuze ultimately seeks a protracted philosophical encounter with *art*, writing that "the search for a new means of philosophical expression must be pursued today in relation to the renewal of certain other arts, such as the theatre or the cinema."[78]

In his books on Francis Bacon, on Kafka and on Proust, this pursuit takes the form of painting and of literature. But cinema, in its *temporal* and *kinetic* dimensions, not to mention its profound relations with mentation (as traced all the way from Hugo Münsterberg down to contemporary neuro-cognitivists), seems uniquely predisposed to produce such encounters. For this reason, as Gregory Flaxman explains:

> Whatever their intricacies and digressions, *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image* fundamentally contend that, beyond all other arts, the cinema opens the possibility for deterritorializing the cogito, the rigid 'image of thought' that in one form or another has dominated Western philosophy.[79]

The elaborate cinematic philosophy these books enact continues the attempt to identify a form of thought which, in confronting its own radical ungroundedness, opens itself to difference and novelty, to the intensive and differentiating forces which produce extended or actualised states. But it is important here to note that when Deleuze comes to elaborate this philosophy with regards to cinema, gone are the terms of a "thought without image," in favour of an "*outside*." Why does Deleuze make this move? What is at stake in this change? It is to this cinematic outside that we now turn.

[77] Flaxman, *Brain is the Screen,* p.3.
[78] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.xxi.
[79] Flaxman, *Brain is the Screen*, p.2.

# 2. The Image and the Out of Frame

## Introduction

Why, having criticised philosophy for embracing a certain "image" of thought, would Deleuze look to cinema, the art of moving images, for a way out of the *impasse*? The answer to this question lies in the idiosyncratic conception of the image which Deleuze takes up, in the *Cinema* volumes, from Henri Bergson, and in which the Deleuzian "image" fundamentally changes form. No longer a "representation" of matter or memory, the product of an interested and orthodox reduction, the image becomes, following Bergson, the *very identity* of both matter and memory, a metaphysical category through which we might overcome dualisms at the heart of philosophy; dualisms which had become increasingly problematic in the face of developments in science, psychology and art. And while Bergson, claims Deleuze, had misconstrued the cinematic image as emblematic of the fragmenting and spatialising tendencies of a wrongheaded scientism– for the latter, the unique experiments with space and time effected by the *cinematic image* offer us unique openings onto the virtual, onto the outside.

In this chapter, I will elaborate this evolution of the image, tracing Deleuze's account of thought into his work on cinema, whereby the "un-thought" becomes implicated with the image and its "out-of-frame." I will map the trajectory by which this "out-of-frame" –the literal "outside" of the cinematic image– changes, in the context of the profound re-distributions of sense and thought attendant to the horrors of the Second World War, from an "open," to an "outside." This "outside," no longer a "whole" grounding the image's meaning, is rather a fundamental incomprehensibility with which the image is in contact, an "intolerability" immanent to the modern world. Far, however, from greeting this development with pessimism, Deleuze –in keeping with the affirmative operations of thought we encountered in the previous chapter– will claim that this "intolerable" outside opens our hitherto habitual exercises of thought onto a thought of virtuality, difference and change, the very conditions for the production of the *new*.

## The Image

Thus, before we can discuss the cinematic image, it is necessary to briefly recapitulate the image as it appears in Bergson, tied as it is to a certain "crisis of psychology"[1] emerging at the end of the 19th century. This crisis corresponds to the increasing impossibility of a dual metaphysics of mind and matter, problematised on fronts as diverse as physiology –which had gradually come to understand the function of the brain as an electro-chemical organ; psychology –which, abiding in the shadow of Sigmund Freud, now embraced a broadly "processual" rather than essential concept of the psyche; and physics –which had by now, and via thermodynamics, had thoroughly problematised any notion of stable essences in favour of a universe of movement, change and flux. This situation, so it seemed to Bergson, rendered redundant the schism in philosophy between idealism and realism, which had characterised philosophical debate for at least the last three centuries.

[1] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.xviii.

In this context, Bergson begins *Matter and Memory* by deploying the image as a kind of philosophical first principle, writing, "I am in the presence of images, in the vaguest sense of the word, images perceived when my senses are opened to them, unperceived when they are closed."[2] Of the utmost significance, however, is Bergson's claim that the centres which enact this perception, the body and the brain, can in no meaningful sense be extricated from or privileged above this "external" world of images. As he explains, "to make of the brain the condition on which the whole image depends is, in truth, a contradiction in terms, since the brain is by hypothesis a part of this image."[3]

The difference between mind, body and their outside, claims Bergson, is thus only one of function, not –in keeping with a long philosophical tradition of dualism– of any profound metaphysical difference. This manoeuvre, Bergson claims, thus transmutes the struggle in philosophy over the differential status of mind and world. Once matter itself is understood as the "aggregate of images,"[4] with the perceiving brain itself included as just another such "image," we have found a model by which we might overcome the problematic delineation of inside and outside, thought and extension, most profoundly expressed in the Cartesian *cogito*, but tracing roots at least as far back as Plato. As Bergson therefore writes:

> Every image is within certain images and without others; but of the aggregate of images we cannot say that it is within us or without us, since interiority and exteriority are only relations among images. To ask whether the universe exists only in our thought, or outside of our thought, is to put the problem in terms that are insoluble, even if we suppose them to be intelligible…[5]

The rejection of this "false problem" to which philosophy has dedicated itself, of a metaphysical difference between mind and matter, does not equate to a claim that consciousness is illusory or unimportant. Indeed it is exactly consciousness' operations of both memory and perception with which Bergson seeks to model the "appearance" of images more generally, the "aggregate of images" which is the real itself.

For Bergson, perception is a selective process whereby the perceptive centre, in the paradigm case –though as we shall see, not necessarily– a brain or nervous system, discards that which does not interest it, perceiving only that which directly effects its capacity to extend action. Thus, in *Matter and Memory*, he will advance a perceptual account of consciousness whereby images emerge around, and centralise, the perceptive centres of mind and body in terms of their utility or lack thereof.[6]

This is not, however, the route to a kind of Kantian anthropocentrism, of "things in themselves" which are "hidden behind" images. This collapse of transcendence which occurs once we consider both matter and mind as united in the category of the image is such that an infinitely complex and multidirectional "perception" of images constitutes the total fabric of the real. Thus, the leaf of a tree, by neglecting those elements of sunlight which do not "interest" it (its beauty, for instance, or its tanning potentiality) and extracting those that *do* (the protons which fuel photosynthesis) perceives an *image* of sunlight, in much the same way that the "interests" of a solar scientist produce an image of the sun which might differ

[2] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p.17.
[3] Ibid., p.19.
[4] Ibid., p.18.
[5] Ibid., p.25.
[6] Ibid., p.31.

significantly from our own. As Anne Sauvagnargues explains, this seemingly innocent "rhetorical" use of the image thus elevates the image to a metaphysical status, whereby "images" become the totality of an immanent real:

> Rigorously speaking, images are the only things that exist. Such a realism of the image must be taken literally… the image is thus not a mental snapshot, a double or a fiction, but a real composition of relations of differential forces, consisting of varying speeds and of fluctuating actions and reactions, and which also experience variations of power of affects.[7]

Deleuze, whose *oeuvre* is persistently dedicated to overturning what he sees as the problematic tendency of Western thought to deploy representation in the service of transcendent universals,[8] thus takes up this account of the image pursuant to his own critique of habitual forms of thought. The image, for Deleuze, becomes an immanent metaphysical mode, an expression or appearance emerging from the fundamental interplay of forces with which his metaphysics begins in earnest, in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. This plane or field of forces, restated, in *Difference and Repetition*, *What is Philosophy?* and *Pure Immanence* as a "plane of immanence,"[9] constitutes the multi-directional, a-centred and dynamic whole which is the condition of Deleuzian metaphysics.

Immanence, Deleuze's (at times perverse) extension of Spinozist substance, is perhaps the cornerstone of his philosophical project, and is consistently levelled at philosophies of transcendence, which emerge, so he claims, as the "poisoned gift"[10] of Plato. As Nathan Widder explains:

> Deleuzian immanence is… a domain of complex and subtle folds, which are both spatial and temporal in nature, and whose exteriority is unlike that posited by philosophies of transcendence. Indeed, for Deleuze, transcendence is nothing more than an erroneous interpretation of these folds, one that misconstrues them as ruptures or breaks that point to a beyond.[11]

The impossibility of such a beyond, and the dubious ends this fiction has served –be it the reactionary denial of life Deleuze divines in Nietzsche, the repressive problematic of desire conceived as lack in psychoanalysis, or the "arborescent"[12] and hierarchized models of thought which buttress the modern State– determine a Deleuzian metaphysical project squarely oriented towards total immanence and the rejection of any transcendent scheme.

However, caution, when characterising such a "metaphysics of immanence," is essential. Gregory Flaxman has rightly noted the difficulties attendant to any kind of systematised or programmatic reading of Deleuze's philosophy, at least in ways which are not rigorously self-critical.[13] Indeed, the question of a Deleuzian "ontology" is particularly fraught, given, as François Zourabichvili has written: "If there is an attitude of Deleuze's philosophy, it is

[7] Sauvagnargues, *Artmachines*, p.87.
[8] C. Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002, p.xxxii.
[9] Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?,* p.35.
[10] N. Widder, *Political Theory After Deleuze*, Continuum, London, 2012, p.17.
[11] Ibid., p.19.
[12] See Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.15.
[13] G. Flaxman, *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy: vol. I – The Powers of the False*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2012, p.270.

pretty much this: extinguishing the word being, and through this, ontology."[14] However, as Claire Colebrook has noted, Deleuze's fundamental preoccupation with immanence represents not an attempt to stabilise any *particular* ontological description of the real, rather:

> Immanence begins with a commitment to the given. There is just one flow of life… This plane ought not to be thought of as some thing or being – some object towards which we bear a relation – but as an open and dynamic flow of becoming.[15]

It is precisely in the context of rejecting *being* in favour of mobile and differentiating *becoming(s)* that the Bergsonian account of images appears so fertile to Deleuze. In conceiving of matter as appearance or image, "perceived" through its contact with other images –which, conscious or not, enact this perception in terms of certain reductions and interests– Deleuze has found a philosophical device whereby we might approach an a-centered, inhuman and multi-perspectival account of metaphysical appearance or individuation.[16]

But just when we suspect we are in the presence of the kind of ontological monism with which critics like Badiou have charged Deleuze,[17] one in which the "image" becomes an *a priori* metaphysical principle, a totalising image –like that which is the subject of critique in *Difference and Repetition*– we must turn to the unique characteristics of the *cinematic* image, which, in its exercise of *framing*, produces relations with an "outside," and eschews any such totalising tendency of thought.

## The Out of Frame

Deleuze's claim as to a cinematic relation with the outside begins with his adoption, in *Cinema I*, of the vocabulary of set theory. The framed cinematic image, he argues, constitutes a "relatively closed system" or "set," [18] which contains as its parts a diversity of elements: characters, props, scenery and so on. This set, he argues, is inherently "informational," a presentation of data which varies in complexity from frame to frame.[19] Fundamental to this presentation, and to its supposedly informational character, is an inherent function of limitation.[20] As in Bergson's account of perception, the frame selects and limits the components of a set, simultaneously determining what is not to be included. Framing always determines both the set's content and that which remains external to it; an outside.

It's important to note that Deleuze has here evoked the concept of information, writing that, "if the frame has an analogue, it is to be found in an information system [*une système informatique]* rather than a linguistic one."[21] This claim, which abides in the context of what Deleuze perceives as a reductive overlay of concepts from linguistics in the analysis of

[14] Quoted in ibid., p.305.
[15] Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*, p.57.
[16] We will return to explicate Deleuze's entwined conceptions of both "actualisation" and "individuation" later in this chapter.
[17] See, in particular, A. Badiou, *Deleuze – The Clamour of Being*, trans. L. Burchill, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000, p.10.
[18] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.15.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., p.16.
[21] Ibid., p.15.

cinema –as practised, paradigmatically, by Christian Metz[22]– appears to run contrary to some of the positions Deleuze will later take with regards to information, for instance in "What is the Creative Act?" For now, Deleuze will claim that in order to function cinematically, and avoid slipping into what he describes as "an empty aestheticism,"[23] each framing must be "explained" in some way, through its interrelation with other shots, establishing the regularity or normality of a given apportionment of parts. This necessity, Deleuze emphasises, adheres even in non-narrative film,[24] and consecrates an essentially communicative function of the cinematic image. The problem, as we shall see, is when this "informational" tendency is exacerbated by certain informatic technologies and their associated "images of thought," such that the communicative function of the image eclipses its more problematic and productive elements, a contention to which we will return.

Thus, albeit in idiosyncratic terms, we may feel as though we are faced here with a fairly traditional account of the workings and purport of cinematic art. Its images are arranged in such a way as to communicate information to the viewer, which different directors do in a variety of ways. However, it is in the relation these framed "sets" maintain with what they *exclude*, with their outside, that the specificities of the Deleuzian approach begin to emerge. Of the utmost significance is Deleuze's claim that what adheres *outside* of the frame is a state of affairs which is neither immediately perceptible nor comprehensible, yet which is nevertheless *perfectly present*. As he explains:

> There remains the out-of-field [*hors-champ*]. This is not a negation; neither is it sufficient to define it by the non-coincidence between two frames, one visual and the other sound (for example in Bresson, when the sound testifies to what is not seen, and 'relays' the visual instead of duplicating it). The out-of-field refers to what is neither seen nor understood, but is nevertheless perfectly present.[25]

Important here is Deleuze's distinction between the out-of-field and those devices by which the "out-of-shot" is traditionally deployed by filmmakers. In the simple guise of off-camera noise or space suggested by eye-line, the out-of-shot would constitute the proliferation of further "framings." What's at stake here is a fundamental "unknown" which nevertheless effects the very possibility of a given image. And the process goes both ways. "All framing determines an out-of-field,"[26] writes Deleuze, offering an account of cinematic creativity in stark contrast with the tradition of film and media studies which, as Flaxman has noted, tends towards understanding the frame as an exclusionary and even aggressive delineation.[27] While a set may tend towards closure, it is fundamentally constituted by an inability ever to fully do so. Or as Deleuze explains, "[framed] content is defined both by the tendency to constitute closed systems and by the fact that this tendency never reaches completion. Every closed system also communicates."[28]

Deleuze is here talking about more than just cinematic technique. His invocation of the language of "closed systems" refers explicitly to another, related critique inherited from

[22] See C. Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, trans. M. Taylor, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991.
[23] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.18.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., p.19.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.124.
[28] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.20.

Bergson, according to which science –like matter– is characterised by its tendency to form "closed systems,"[29] isolated through from the totality of the Universe. But the study of "closed systems" Bergson will argue, dedicates us to the pre-distributed, "given" terms of that system, eliding a genuine thought of genesis, change and creation– a veritable thought of the *whole*. As Bergson writes, evoking his key concept of duration (*durée*)[30]:

> The universe *endures*. The more we study the nature of time, the more we shall comprehend that duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new.[31]

This process, Bergson claims, the endless "elaboration of the absolutely new," is neglected by (Newtonian, mechanistic) science, [32] which takes the probabilities (and reversibility) it is able to derive from closed systems as adhering in the "whole" or "totality" within which they are situated. However, as Bergson writes: "the systems marked off by science *endure* only because they are bound up inseparably with the rest of the universe."[33]

But how does this pertain to cinema? Indeed, Deleuze identifies a profound resonance between these "epistemic"[34] interventions and the operations of framing, which persistently tends towards a closure which eludes it. Thus, as he writes:

> …the frame works like a mobile mask according to which every set is extended into a larger homogenous set with which it communicates, and sometimes it works like a pictorial frame which isolates a system and neutralises its environment… it is

[29] As Bergson himself concedes: "Certainly, the operation by which science isolates and closes a system is not altogether artificial. If it had no objective foundation, we could not explain why it is clearly indicated in some cases and impossible in others. We shall see that matter has a tendency to constitute isolable systems… but it is only a tendency. Matter does not go to the end, and the isolation is never complete." (Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.10).

[30] Duration, for Bergson, constitutes the contiguous and indivisible co-existence of *all times* experienced by consciousness, and is developed throughout his works from an initially psychological structure into an ontogenetic account of *being itself*. As he explains, in *Time and Free Will*: "Pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present states from its former states. For this purpose it need not entirely be absorbed in the passing sensation or idea; for then, on the contrary, it would no longer *endure*. Nor need it forget its former states: it is enough that, in recalling these states, it does not set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another." (H. Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F.I. Pogson, Dover, Mineola, 2001, p.113). Implicit in this passage is the idea that we cannot stress, substitute or remove a certain note, without introducing a *qualitative* change to the entire melody. It is just this impossibility of extricating the different temporal categories of past, present and future –of a *quantitative* distribution of temporality– which causes Bergson to assert that mathematised and "spatial" approaches to time are unable to give us a full account of life.

[31] Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.11.

[32] It should be made clear, that the "mechanistic" model in Bergson's sights is far from universally adopted within science itself, particularly in its developments since his death. See for instance the work of Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, who identify a plurality of physical systems which function in indeterminate and unpredictable ways, for instance those which produce increased complexity and order out of entropic chaos. For them, the question of the "openness" of a given system is of fundamental importance. See I. Prigogine & I. Stengers, *Order out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature*, Bantam Books, Toronto, 1984.

[33] Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.11.

[34] Although, as Deleuze argues, these interventions are not "epistemological" in the traditional sense of "reflecting" upon scientific knowledge and its conditions, instead, "on the contrary in the sense of an invention of autonomous concepts capable of corresponding with the new symbols of science." (Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.68). I have here used the term for the sake of brevity and convenience, while conceding scare quotes to Deleuze.

> nonetheless true that a system which is closed – even one which is very closed up – only apparently suppresses the out-of-field, and in its own way gives it an even more decisive importance.[35]

We might think, by way of example, of Hitchcock's archetypical exercise in framing(s), *Rear Window* (1954). The film itself presents a paradigmatically "closed system," imbuing us with the immobility of its protagonist, photojournalist L.B. "Jeff" Jeffries, who is resting a broken leg. His view onto the courtyard behind his apartment constitutes a rigorous framing, within which we are afforded tertiary frames in the form of the windows of his various neighbours. Each of these frames exists in a relation to an outside or absence which conditions the distribution of values therein.

Thus "Miss Torso" and her string of suitors adhere in the context of an absent lover, set to return from the army at the end of the film. "Miss Lonelyhearts" potters sadly in her apartment, unaware of the single pianist in the next apartment, later to be her match. The killer, Thorwald, performs a series of acts –cleaning a knife, moving heavy objects, apparently killing a neighbour's dog– which are all conditioned by the sudden absence from the frame of his wife. Jeffries, able to perceive these absences in God-like fashion, is himself unaware of the distribution of values within his own frame, the prescience of girlfriend Lisa and nurse Stella –the true *actors* of the film– whose admonitions ultimately win out over his own sense of self as a restless adventurer.

Each frame, including the meta-frame constituted by the view from Jeffries' apartment, is in constant relation with an externality of which it is oblivious, or in Thorwald and Jeffries' respective cases, attempting actively to foreclose. Hitchcock, meanwhile, signs this proliferation of frames with his trademark flourish, appearing briefly himself as a guest in the pianist's apartment. This gesture, crystallising a consistent Hitchcockean tendency to foreground the *filmic* character of film-worlds, represents the ultimate thread by which the closed system of the film is connected to the external, "real" world, in which we find ourselves as spectators.

As Deleuze recapitulates, establishing a schism between framings which posit further, more comprehensive sets (Jeffries' God's-eye-view) and those which form a whole or totality which is the *condition* of sets (Hitchcock, the filmmaker, appearing to foreground the very logic of any cinematic "framing"):

> Framing is the art of choosing the parts of all kinds which become part of a set. This set is a closed system, relatively and artificially closed. The closed system determined by the frame can be considered in relation to the data it communicates to the spectators: it is 'informatic…' [yet] it determines an out-of-field, sometimes in the form of a larger set which extends it, sometimes in the form of a whole into which it is integrated.[36]

The relationship with Bergson's epistemic and metaphysical interventions here, as I have said, is far from simply analogous or illustrative. Moving from a discussion of the *frame*, to one of the *shot*, Deleuze provides the following definition: *"Cutting* [découpage] *is the determination of the shot, and the shot, the determination of the movement which is established in the closed system*, between elements of parts of the set."[37] The introduction of

[35] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.19.
[36] Ibid, p.22.
[37] Ibid.

movement into Deleuze's discussion, and his subsequent postulation of a *movement-image* definitive of classical cinema, makes explicit the metaphysical purport of Deleuze's discussion of the cinematic image.

The movement immanent to cinematic images constitutes, so Deleuze claims, a unique means of apprehending key metaphysical attributes of both space and time. In short, the framings which constitute the movement-image give us an image of *duration*, the necessarily qualitative change of the whole within which any image can be said to emerge. Or in Deleuze's terms (italics my own):

> The shot is like the movement which continuously ensures conversion, circulation. It divides and subdivides duration according to the objects which make up the set; it reunites objects and sets into a single identical duration. It continuously divides duration into subdurations which are themselves heterogeneous, and reunites these into a duration which is immanent to *the whole of the universe*.[38]

Recall that this whole, in Bergson's terms, is fundamentally open, necessarily oriented toward the "continual elaboration of the absolutely new." As such, even from these preliminary, definitional stages of Deleuze's two *Cinema* volumes, we see the "informational" or communicative functions of cinematic images as existing in tension with creative and differential forces which exceed their ability to fully close themselves, to fully communicate or elaborate themselves *as information*. However, this "movement-image," and the Bergsonian "whole" (the totality of durations) within which it emerges, is not the object of the present thesis. Indeed, as I have suggested, something *changes* in the cinematic image, commensurate with a re-distribution of sense attendant to the Second World War. In this context, the "openness" of the image becomes an "outside."

## From the Open to the Outside

Perhaps the characteristic mode of what Deleuze describes as "classical" or pre-war cinema is the "action-image,"[39] a cinematic image whereby characters, situated within a *milieu*, respond and interact with it, propelling forward narrative arcs predicated on their action. In this sense Deleuze associates the action-image with cinematic "realism," which is not to be confused with a "realistic" depiction of reality, but instead forms a conceptual topology in which all of a film's material is contiguous, and such stylised or exaggerated motifs as we encounter (dream sequences, hallucinations, the quirks of genre) make "sense" insofar as they do not puncture the *milieu*/action relation. As he explains:

> What constitutes realism is simply this: milieux and modes of behaviour, milieux which actualise and modes of behaviour which embody. The action-image is the relation between the two and all the varieties of this relation. It is this model which produced the universal triumph of the American cinema, to the point of acting as a passport to foreign directors who contributed to its formation.[40]

[38] Ibid, p.24.
[39] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.159
[40] Ibid.

Indeed, this perhaps remains the predominant form of popular cinema today, in which characters respond to and embody environmental factors, extending them back in a mechanism which propels narrative. We can easily see how John McClane's (Bruce Willis) body becomes a site for the modes of behaviour typical to the "action hero" in the *Die Hard* films –vengefulness, rage and stoicism, but also laconic comedy and indifference– in its gradual undress and accumulation of traumas throughout the film, which coalesce upon it from the *milieux* of terrorist infested urban spaces, and are hitherto re-extended in the form of explosions, shattering glass and a carnage of extras.

However, Deleuze claims that the circumstances of the mid 20th century presented the action-image (and indeed the movement-image more broadly) with a "crisis,"[41] from which emerged a new kind of image. While we may of course protest that the action-image appears now to be the dominant cinematic form, and as such suggesting it is in "crisis" seems disingenuous,[42] Deleuze, in keeping with his conviction that we might differentiate the "essence of cinema" from the vast majority of films,[43] identifies the disconnected, multidirectional films of the post-war New Wave(s) as constituting a fundamental problematisation of the action-form. As he explains:

> …the crisis which has shaken the action-image has depended on many factors which only had their full effect after the war, some of which were social, economic, political, moral and others more internal to art, to literature and to cinema in particular. We might mention, in no particular order, the war and its consequences, the unsteadiness of the 'American Dream' in all its aspects, the new consciousness of minorities, the rise and inflation of images both in the external world and in people's minds, the influence on the cinema of the new modes of narrative with which literature had experimented, the crisis of Hollywood and its old genres…[44]

In this context, Deleuze thus claims that while "people continue to make [action-image] films: the greatest commercial successes always take that route… the soul of the cinema no longer does."[45] This "soul" –which we might read as film's unique technical and artistic potentiality for the production of new images of time and movement– thus encounters broadly the same set of concrete historical factors to which the likes of Frederic Jameson and Jean-François Lyotard will attribute a "post-modernity."[46]

It is in the temporally charged post-war cinema of the "time-image," claims Deleuze, that these entwined social, cultural, political and aesthetic conditions cause the "openness" of the image to reach unprecedented intensity. Indeed, in the post-war cinema –Italian neo-realism, the French New Wave, New Hollywood– the "open" Deleuze identifies in the framing of classical cinema is replaced with an "outside," no longer guarantor of the image's meaning, but of a fundamentally "unthought" and "unthinkable" situation with which it is in contact. As Deleuze explains:

[41] Ibid., p.229.
[42] Indeed, the rise of small screens has seen cinema turn increasingly to a hyperbolic action-image of vast special effects and spectacular scenes of destruction.
[43] Ibid., p. xviii.
[44] Ibid., p.229
[45] Ibid.
[46] See, F. Jameson: *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Verso, London, 1991, and J.F. Lyotard: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington & B. Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1984. Both thinkers approach the epistemic consequences of this same set of conditions, albeit in what are at times completely contradictory ways.

> …the time-image puts thought into contact with an unthought, the unsummonable, the inexplicable, the undecidable, the incommensurable. The outside or the obverse of the images has replaced the whole, at the same time as the interstice or the cut has replaced association.[47]

As such, the question of thought, and of the unthought, occupies a similar centrality here as it does in *Difference and Repetition*. As we have seen, the objective, for Deleuze, is to move beyond the (all too human) models according to which thinking constitutes a conservative operation of "recognition" and of "representation." This cinematic outside, Deleuze will claim, affords us a means of approaching the kind of "thought without an image" hitherto obscured by these orthodoxies. And while both Blanchot and Foucault sought to identify the outside as a function of literature, Deleuze's conviction is that the post-war cinema approaches this same territory with unique prowess.

"…the essence of cinema," writes Deleuze, "–which is not the majority of films– has thought as its higher purpose, nothing but thought and its functioning."[48] Leaving aside the essentialist tenor here (and indeed marbled throughout the cinema volumes, which exhibit a constant predilection for "high art" cinema, perhaps neglecting similar potentialities immanent to more popular forms) this claim is indeed persuasive. From the earliest interventions of Hugo Münsterberg, through to more recent interlocutors like "cognitivists" Carroll and Bordwell, film theorists and philosophers have identified a unique resonance between the processes of thought and film.

Film, after all, seems to provide a quite comprehensive model of cognition. It takes after human perception in its perspectival recording of the passage of time and movement. Furthermore, in its ability to recall events, to juxtapose them –through techniques like "flashback" and "montage"– in temporally complex ways, it bears a more than cursory resemblance to the processes of memory. In directing attention towards certain elements within the image, through techniques of framing, focus and angle, it emulates the interested operations of consciousness. By combining images in spatio-temporally impossible ways, it is able to emulate the imagination, which can forge associations and move across vast spatial-temporal terrains with incredible speed. As Claire Colebrook has written:

> It [makes] sense that philosophy might need to confront cinema: not because cinema tells stories or offers examples about which we philosophise, but because cinema as the composition and variation of images might also be akin to the brain, akin to a new style of philosophy.[49]

And as we have seen, it is exactly a "new style of philosophy" which Deleuze calls for, if we are to escape the dogmatisms and habitudes of thought. As such, his turn to cinema constitutes a search for those "new means of […] expression" [50] which might renew philosophy, allowing it to think difference, change and novelties beyond our pre-conceived distributions of sense. Deleuze, indeed, is explicit in linking his earlier vocabulary of that encounter which might "force us" to think with the cinema of the time-image, writing:

[47] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.220.
[48] Ibid., p.173
[49] C. Colebrook, "Review of P. Pisters (2012) *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian-Film Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture*," in *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*, vol. 8, issue 1, (Feb 2014), p.148
[50] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.xxi.

> …if it is true that thought depends upon a shock which gives birth to it (the nerve, the brain matter), it can only think one thing, *the fact that we are not yet thinking*, the powerlessness to think the whole and to think oneself, thought which is always fossilized, dislocated, collapsed. […] What Blanchot diagnoses everywhere in literature is particularly clear in cinema: on the one hand the presence of an unthinkable in thought, which would be both its source and barrier; on the other hand the presence of another thinker in the thinker, who shatters every monologue of a thinking self.[51]

This simultaneous "source and barrier," as we have seen, is the "impossible" moment at which thought is confronted with that which it has *never thought* –a confrontation which impels thought into creativity. This "other thinker" is the author or agent of such a creativity, who does not pre-exist this process, but who must be *brought into being* through an affirmation of those forces which have so shattered its peace and self-identity.[52]

And while this "shattering" has often been the destiny of those outlying, "untimely" *personae* who so consistently fascinate Deleuze –Rimbaud, Kafka, Artaud, Schreber– This shattering, he will claim, becomes the norm in the concrete circumstances of the Second World War. Faced with the unspeakable realities of that conflict, from the Holocaust to the desolation of European cities through fire bombing, the traditional exigencies and parameters of both thought and action shudder and collapse. And parallel with this "democratisation" of the impossibility of thought, cinema, as "mass art," takes on a new and profound importance, proliferating to ever larger publics those moments which might provoke it anew.

In positing the cinematic images which might enact this dual movement –a problematisation of thought, which calls for thought anew– Deleuze once more advances a "commentary" on Bergson, in particular, on the latter's theory of action. Bergson had dubbed the set of habitual response mechanisms we employ in the face of external stimuli the "sensori-motor system,"[53] a set of regulatory neural affects conditioned by past experience and disposed to respond "sensibly" to events. This system or schema is that which litigates over sense data, "recognising" it in terms of its utility or lack thereof for motor action. While this schema is practically useful, its culturally learnt aspects, as well as its focus on actual as opposed to virtual objects and situations, predispose it to certain conservatisms at odds with Deleuze's conception of thought as creativity. This is also the model upon which the "action" images of classical cinema draw in constructing narratives, as Ronald Bogue explains:

> The sensori-motor schema provides the commonsense temporal and spatial coordinates of our everyday world, and the signs of the movement-image, which are the signs of the classic cinema, ultimately conform to the coordinates of that commonsense world.[54]

[51] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.173.
[52] In *Cinema II*, Deleuze will thus resume his discussion of Artaud, positing this "creativity" as implicated with a form of "automatic writing," analogous to the operations of cinema, and calling into being a new form of thinker, no longer conscious or unconscious, but rather wedding the aleatory and undetermined with a wilful process of creation. As he explains: "Artaud believes more in the appropriateness between cinema and automatic writing, as long as we understand that automatic writing is not at all an absence of composition, but a higher control which brings together critical and conscious thought and the unconscious in thought: the spiritual automaton…" (Ibid., p.171).
[53] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p.150.
[54] Bogue, p.5.

But it is exactly the "common sense" of dogmatic thought which has become an impossibility following the catastrophes of the War. The post-war cinema, claims Deleuze, thus begins to express this situation, producing, "a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent [*de voyant, non plus d'actant*],"[55] in the context of which, "it is no longer a motor extension which is established, but rather a dreamlike connection through the intermediary of the liberated sense organs."[56]

The paradigm case is Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero* (1948), in which twelve-year-old Edmund Kohler, wandering the streets of a shattered Berlin, consecrates a new style of movement; the primary aspect of which is temporal, rather than spatial. The "plot" of the film is as simple as it is unimportant. Trying to survive in the ruins of the city –until so recently capital of the "Thousand Year Reich"– Edmund floats from situation to grim situation: a squabble over the meat of a dead horse, a young girl selling her body for cigarettes, the death of his father and the arrest of his brother– a soldier unregistered with the authorities. What we see, however, is not a chain of linked and purposive events, unfurling in a spatial trajectory of "beginning, middle and end." Rather, we are confronted with a series of floating and disconnected images– Edmund's ragged body, the crumbling facades of ruined buildings, vistas of twisted metal, the furrowed brow of Edmund's father.

Walking through this wasteland, adrift in a destruction which far outstrips his comprehension, much less his agency, Edmund becomes a *seer*,[57] bearing mute witness to the vast, impersonal forces which conspire to fabricate the real. As Deleuze explains:

> …the character has become a kind of viewer. He shifts, runs and becomes animated in vain, the situation he is in outstrips his motor capacities on all sides, and makes him see and hear what is no longer subject to the rules of a response or an action.[58]

And it is this disconnection, this "liberation" of sense from its traditional moorings in the service of habitual mentation and of action –the sensory-motor schema– which places post-war cinema in contact with the outside; the problematising inner-limit of thought. Thus, Deleuze will claim:

> The sensory-motor break makes man a seer who finds himself struck by something intolerable in the world, and confronted by something unthinkable in thought. Between the two, thought undergoes a strange fossilization, which is as it were its powerlessness to function, to be, its dispossession of itself and the world.[59]

This "powerlessness" however, must be understood in the context of the affirmation Deleuze claims is the key to bringing about the *new*, in thought and in life. This "dispossession" of both the human being and its world must serve, in the context of a Nietzschean *amor fati*, as the condition for the creative becoming of both a *new thinker* and, potentially, a *new world*. As such, far from pessimistic, Deleuze will claim that this development affords cinema (and in turn, its spectators) unique opportunities to apprehend aspects of the Universe hitherto neglected or obscured by the habits and presuppositions of the sensory-motor paradigm. It

[55] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.3.
[56] Ibid, p.5
[57] Ibid., p.2
[58] Ibid., p.3
[59] Ibid., p.175.

provides the thinker with an opening onto *virtual* characteristics of time and of reality, producing what he will describe as a pure or direct "time-image."[60]

Deleuze's account of the time-image is once again framed as a series of "commentaries" on Bergson, who, we will recall, understands temporality in terms of a mutual interpenetration of past and present (*duration*), a synthesis which is the condition for the production of the qualitatively new (*creative evolution*). The post-war cinema, Deleuze claims, expresses this constant interrelation explicitly. These films, he will argue, begin to draw virtual and actual components of the image into a range of new temporal forms –peaks, crystals, sheets– such as confound our habitual intellectual modes of response. In order, therefore, to continue our account of the cinematic "outside" we must briefly elaborate the concept of the virtual, as it emerges in Bergson, Deleuze and cinema.

## The Virtual in Bergson

The virtual is one of the most frequently misconstrued concepts in Deleuze's oeuvre, insomuch, as Keith Ansell-Pearson rightly notes, it is often treated in vague way, as "all the other stuff that is not actual, something like the universe in its totality and unfathomable complexity."[61] At the very least, what this characterisation neglects is the multiplicity and drift of the concept as it emerges in Deleuze's different works– at times in a thoroughly Bergsonian aspect (as duration or *élan vital*), in a re-fitted Kantianism as the stuff of "Ideas" in *Difference and Repetition*, or indeed, as closely associated in various works with the concept of the "event."[62]

In this first sense, we must remember that for Bergson, far from some kind of woolly metaphysical totality, the virtual cannot be understood without recourse to an actual, individuated body, for which it serves as the condition for action, memory, and the particular contractions of duration which ultimately form consciousness. Thus, in *Matter and Memory*, Bergson introduces the virtual in the context of his discussion of the nervous system, which he explains as a particular arrangement of matter allowing the body to draw upon the virtual in differentiating and positing ever more complex and multiple courses of action.[63]

In Bergson's account, in order for it to escape the mechanistic straightjacket of "actual" actions and reactions –which is to say to bring about as-yet-un-actualised aspects of the real– the nervous system "slows down" incoming sense-data, creating an "interval" between perception and action within which it might draw upon those aspects of temporality which are *beyond* sensory-motor habit, those of a *pure past*. This pure past –the accumulated forces, potentialities and events which have *never been* actualised– is the condition for new "counter actualisations"[64] which could not have been foreseen according to the pre-distribution of

[60] Ibid., p.x.
[61] K. Ansell-Pearson, "The Reality of the Virtual: Bergson and Deleuze," in *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 120, no. 5 (Dec 2005), p.1112.
[62] C.V. Boundas, "Virtual/Virtuality," in A. Parr ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary – Revised Edition,* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2010, p.301.
[63] See chapters One and Two of Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, pp. 17-133, throughout which this theory is gradually elaborated.
[64] The term is Deleuze's, and emerges in *The Logic of Sense*, in the context of the virtual/actual "doubling" of every event. As Deleuze explains: "On the one side, there is the part of the event which is realized and accomplished; on the other, there is that 'part of the event which cannot realize its accomplishment.' There are

actual states of affairs. It is for this reason that Bergson, like Deleuze, will differentiate the potentiality immanent to the virtual from possibility, which, he will claim, is only ever a retroactive derivation from the actual– a contention to which we will return.[65] The virtual, however, is radically unforeseeable, inasmuch as it is not actual, nor tethered to the exigencies or limits of a sensory-motor horizon of perception or thought.

By way of demonstration, both Bergson and Deleuze will draw on the well-known passages in Proust, in which memory becomes no longer purposive, situational and individual –yoked to the functions of a sensory-motor schema– but rather pure, unintentional and a-centred. In the explosive so-called "episode of the madeleine," in which the unmoored plurality of life in Combray emerges, filling the Narrator with "an exquisite pleasure" which causes "the vicissitudes of life [to become] indifferent,"[66] we find an instance of what Bergson will describe as "pure memory,"[67] a memory no longer provoked by purposive sensory-motor response and tethered to the exigencies of action, but rather by the pure presence of the past, which lies dormant, virtual, and might be summoned into actuality by all manner of haphazard and intensive "events." It is this virtuality, Bergson will claim, that the subject will "actualise," in the process of acting in ways which lie beyond the pre-distributed terms of the given.

The profundity of this kind of memory, as Deleuze notes, is not merely located in the realm of psychology. Indeed, this psychological structure spills out into a theory which might account for the (metaphysical) persistence of the past *in general*, as the condition for the ontogenetic emergence of new individuals. As Deleuze explains, in his book dedicated to Bergson:

> We have great difficulty in understanding a survival of the past in itself because we believe that the past is no longer, that it has ceased to be. We have thus confused Being with being-present. Nevertheless, the present is not; rather, it is pure becoming, always outside itself. It *is* not, but it acts. Its proper element is not being but the active or the useful. The past, on the other hand, has ceased to act or to be useful. But it has not ceased to be. Useless and inactive, impassive, it IS, in the full sense of the word…[68]

thus two accomplishments, which are like actualization and counter-actualization." (Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p.151).

[65] This distinction will prove of the utmost significance, particularly when we turn to the "probabilistic" statistics of information theory. As such, I will treat it in depth in the pertinent chapter. For now, it suffices to say that the virtual, for Deleuze as for Bergson, must never be confused with the possible– given that the latter concept designates a retroactive imposition of the image of the present upon the past (or future). The virtual, meanwhile, is fundamentally characterised by its difference from, or more properly differential relations with, the actual– such that it cannot, by definition, resemble the present which it actualises. As Deleuze explains, in *Bergsonism*: "the real is supposed to be in the image of the possible that it realizes… and, every possible is not realized, realization involves a limitation by which some possibles are supposed to be repulsed or thwarted, while others 'pass' into the real. The virtual, on the other hand, does not have to be realized, but rather actualized; and the rules of actualization are not those of resemblance and limitation, but those of difference or divergence and of creation… while the real is the image and likeness of the possible that it realizes, the actual, on the other hand does not resemble the virtuality that it embodies." (Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p.97).

[66] M. Proust, *In Search of Lost Time: Volume 1 – Swann's Way*, trans C.K. Scott Moncrieff & T. Kilmartin, The Modern Library, New York, 1992, p.60.

[67] See, Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Chapter Two, pp.77-133.

[68] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p.55.

In this sense, Deleuze will stress that "pure memory" refers not to any psychological operation, rather to a virtuality presupposed by the present of action, whereby individual psychologies might "leap into the past as into a proper element."[69]

This is because the past, far from being somehow "reconstituted" by a brain which maintains a record of it, is perfectly real and present –albeit virtual– until it is actualised in the form of memory or habitual motor-response. As such, the mechanism here is the same as in the case of perception, whereby a "perceptive centre" differentiates –or "contracts"- aspects of a pure, virtual past in the service of particular functions at the level of the actual.[70] Or, in Deleuze's words: "In the same way that we do not perceive things in ourselves, but at the place where they are, we only grasp the past at the place where it is in itself, and not in ourselves, in our present."[71]

In this context, Bergson will outline the "present" as fundamentally cleft between virtual past and actual present, which flow into functions of memory and of perception respectively. The present is comprised of two "jets" or "flows" of time, one flowing back into virtuality, another into an actualised present. And what Bergson will describe as "false recognition" (or *déjà vu*) is only the most immediately perceptible instance of this "splitting" of the present, a glimmer of the consistent structure of the present, whereby:

> Our actual existence […] whilst it is unrolled in time, duplicates itself all along with a virtual existence, a mirror-image. Every moment of our life presents two aspects, it is actual and virtual, perception on one side and memory on the other. Each moment of life is split up as and when it is posited. Or rather, it consists in this very splitting…[72]

The virtual aspect of this splitting, virtual memory, as we have said, operates to keep Bergson's metaphysics fundamentally *open*, to explain the fact the actual states are not static, but are rather conditioned by the functions of temporality-as-change (duration), and the production of novelty (creative evolution), which emerge from the reservoir of virtual events– flows and forces which accumulate as the condition of future actualisations.

## The Virtual in Difference and Repetition

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze takes up this conception of the virtual, offering a rigorously technical account of its functions, and extending them into an idiosyncratic "structuralism" beyond Bergson's own, at times obscure, vitalism. In the service of his project to think "difference-in-itself," a differentiating difference, such as might invert a long-standing philosophical prejudice whereby differences are thought via recourse to already constituted individuals –a difference derived from "identity"– Deleuze evokes the virtual, imbricating it with Gilbert Simondon's philosophy of individuation, in order to posit

[69] Ibid, p.56.
[70] A structure Bergson illustrates with his famous diagram of the temporal "cone." See Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p.152.
[71] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p.56.
[72] H. Bergson, *Mind – Energy: Lectures and Essays*, trans. H. W. Carr, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1975, p.165.

a processual differentiation which would be the *condition* of constituted individuals, a differentiating difference "all the way down."[73]

In the service of this project, Deleuze will establish as distinct virtual differen*t*iation (with a *t*) and actualisation as differen*c*iation (with a *c*), to refer to the two "parts" or "moments" of difference.[74] Essential here is Deleuze's insistence that objects are "double," in the sense of their having both virtual and actual reality. By way of Deleuze's example from linguistics,[75] we might say that the virtual aspects of language –differential relationships between and within series of phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, conventions of syntax and grammar– remain ideal (yet perfectly real) until actualised through speech or writing, laryngeal and facial muscles, ink, paper or symbols on a computer screen.

It is in this sense that Deleuze will claim that "the reality of the virtual is structure,"[76] a genetic or generative structure, comprised of intensive singularities which bear no identity beyond that which is determined by their relations. Deleuze's focus here, in keeping with the noetic "critique" advanced throughout *Difference and Repetition*, is on the virtual structure of *Ideas*, which he defines in the once more Bergsonian (and Riemannian) terms of "qualitative multiplicity," or here, "continuous multiplicity"[77] multiplicities which are indivisible, change only qualitatively, and are intensive (a term to which we will return). Or as Deleuze explains:

> An Idea is an *n*-dimensional, continuous, defined multiplicity… by dimensions, we mean the variables or co-ordinates upon which a phenomenon depends; by continuity, we mean the set of relations between changes in these variables… by definition we mean the elements reciprocally determined by these relations, elements which cannot change unless the multiplicity changes its order and its metric.[78]

As the above passage suggests, "virtual structure," far from closed or static, is therefore fundamentally relational and dynamic. Flows of intensive force are constantly redistributing the singularities which comprise virtual structure, causing some to become defunct, and producing others which ensure that virtual structure is mobile and evolving. Indeed evolution, in the biological sense, offers a helpful model of just how this process might be conceived, with the virtual structure of DNA composed (and re-composed) through constant contact with environmental, physical and aleatory factors which cause some gene sequences to become obsolete, new ones gradually to emerge.

Important, therefore, to note, is that while the object is "double" in the sense of having a virtual and an actual reality, these two aspects of the object are not identical, nor even do they resemble one another.[79] Fundamental to this "asymmetry" between virtual and actual faces of the object is the role played by "intensity," to which we have already briefly referred.

[73] For an accomplished study of the "renovation" undergone by the virtual in *Difference and Repetition*, in particular its re-emergence under the influence of Simondon's philosophy of individuation, see S. Bowden, *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's Logic of Sense*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2011, Chapter 3, pp.95-151.
[74] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.207.
[75] This example features in *Difference and Repetition*, but is also comprehensively stated in G. Deleuze, "How do we Recognise Structuralism?" in D. Lapoujade ed., *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974*, trans. M. Taormina, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2004, p.176.
[76] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.209.
[77] Ibid, p.182.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid., p.209.

Deleuze's evocation of intensity is perhaps best understood via recourse, once more, to the Bergsonian distinction between quantitative and qualitative multiplicities. Quantitative multiplicities, we may recall, depend upon an enumeration of parts which are spatially distinct from one another, and thus divisible.[80] Qualitative multiplicities, meanwhile –like duration(s)– are divisible only inasmuch as an alteration to any constitutive part effects a change to the whole. As Daniel Smith and John Protevi explain, "extensive differences, such as length, area or volume, are intrinsically divisible… intensive differences, by contrast, refer to properties such as temperature or pressure that cannot be so divided."[81]

Indeed, Deleuze's evocation of intensity in the fifth chapter of *Difference and Repetition* draws heavily on a thermodynamic conception of intensive quantity, which, contra classical thermodynamics, posits differences of potentiality or energy in intensive forces as the productive condition of extended states or systems.[82] Put briefly, what interests Deleuze in the thermodynamic conception of intensive quantity, is the fact that it is differentially productive –as illustrated by the example of steam powered engines, which produce motion through the juxtaposition of different temperatures that, in accordance with the second law of thermodynamics, work to re-establish equilibrium. Leaving aside, here, the specificities of Deleuze's engagement with thermodynamics –in which he ultimately seeks to reject the thesis of an entropic "heat-death" of the Universe– we might say that the differentially productive mode of intensities conceived in an initially thermodynamic mould appears to Deleuze a particularly fertile means of conceptualising differentiation and individuation in a more thoroughly metaphysical sense. "Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of differences…" he will write, "differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, *difference of intensity*."[83]

It is for this reason that Deleuze will attribute to intensities a generative or genetic role, such that virtual, intensive differences work ceaselessly to resolve themselves and their tensions through differen*c*iation in actual bodies, constituting a concrete mechanics to the qualitative and evolving functions Bergson will attribute to temporality. In keeping with Deleuze's account of the "transcendental illusion," however –whereby we invariably dedicate ourselves to the empirical study of actual individuals– it is important to note that this "cancellation" of intensive difference in the context of actualisation is only ever an empirical effect. Intensity abides, "uncancelled," both in its own order and in the extensities it produces (as the condition for potential future "counter-actualistations").

This "dualism" –which is anything but a dualism, once we properly understand the two moments of difference as continually implicated in multi-lateral and reciprocal operations, "threshold" moments, metastability and "phase-shifts"– must likewise be understood in the context of Deleuze's noetic project to establish modes of thought hospitable to the movements of difference and different(c)iation *without* recourse to concrete identity. We have already seen how, for Bergson, temporality-as-duration is characterised by a constant, creative evolution which makes suspect our intellectual habitudes, our tendency to think in

[80] See in particular Bergson's elaboration of this distinction in the early chapters of *Time and Free Will*.
[81] D. Smith & J. Protevi, "Gilles Deleuze," in E.N. Zalta ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2018 edition: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/deleuze/> Retrieved July 19, 2019.
[82] For a detailed treatment of the Deleuze's use of the concept of "intensity" in the context of thermodynamics see D. Clisby, "Intensity in Context: Thermodynamics and Transcendental Philosophy," in *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*, vol. 11, issue 2 (May 2017), pp.240-258.
[83] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.222.

calcified and abstract modes, neglecting certain "intuitive" and creative functions proper to philosophy.

In positing differen*t*iation as the condition for the extensive and localised resolutions of differen*c*iation, Deleuze has extended this project into a complex metaphysics, in the service of his critique of a thought of difference predicated on the notion of "identity" –such as precludes certain processual and problematising modes immanent to reality. As such, he will claim of these two "moments" of difference, that the first constitutes *problems* –the genetic and differen*t*ial relations of singularities in the virtual– while the second constitutes *solutions*, in the localised and actual expression of individuals, bodies, organs and so on. Or, in his words:

> …in the case of the organic, the process of actualisation appears simultaneously as the local differenciation of parts, the global formation of an internal milieu, and the solution of a problem posed within the field of constitution of an organism. An organism is nothing if not the solution to a problem, as are each of its differenciated organs, such as the eye which solves a light 'problem;' but nothing within the organism, no organ, would be differenciated without the internal milieu endowed with a general effectivity or integrating power of regulation.[84]

For Deleuze, our conceptualisation of real difference (difference-in-itself) is mitigated by our focus on extensive (or quantitative) magnitudes, as opposed to the intensive (qualitative) forces which generate and alter them, guaranteeing their processual character. This error of thought, the "transcendental illusion,"[85] sees us assign to intensive and virtual singularities the same traits or characteristics as the actual and extensive states they engender.[86]

It is not only the task of a "thought without image," as it is sketched in relation to philosophy is chapter three of *Difference and Repetition*, but also –as I have briefly suggested– a potentiality of art, which might mitigate against this illusion, this obliteration of virtual difference in favour of an actualised (differen*c*iated) "difference" we grasp via recourse to identity. To quote Deleuze Deleuze's claim in the preface to *Difference and Repetition* once more: "the search for new means of philosophical expression […] must be pursued today in relation to the renewal of certain other arts, such as the theatre or the cinema."[87] For cinema, as we have briefly suggested, ushers in a new relationship between actuality and the virtual, creating virtual-actual circuitries and crystallisations which offer themselves up to perception, and causing the "two sides" of the object to merge in a catalytic cross-pollination.

## Cinema and the Virtual

These crystallisations adhere as a result of the profound indeterminacies of the cinematic image, structured as it is of inter-bleeding images of "reality," "falsehood," "dream," "memory" and "hallucination," collaged together as a uniform perceptual "fact" by the automatic visuality of the camera and the editing table. As Deleuze explains, in *Cinema II*, in the context of post-war cinema:

[84] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.211.
[85] Ibid., p.266.
[86] Smith & Protevi, Section 4.1 "*Anti-Oedipus*".
[87] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*., p.xxi.

> …perception and recollection, the real and the imaginary, the physical and the mental, or rather their images, continually followed each other, running behind each other and referring back to each other around a point of indiscernibility. But this point of indiscernibility is precisely constituted by the smallest circle, that is, the coalescence of the actual image and the virtual image, the image with two sides, actual and virtual at the same time.[88]

What does Deleuze mean here? It appears as if, in opening up a cinematic time-image, such that circuitries of action-reaction, movement and narrative, begin to fall away in the post-war world, film begins to open up our thought, placing it in contact with the virtual forces which are the condition of the actual entities to which our intellect is habitually oriented, and which it habitually mistakes for the whole of reality.

The films evoked alongside Deleuze's postulation of the "crystal image" –Welles' *Citizen Kane* and *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947), Zanussi's *The Structure of Crystals* (1969) and Carné's *Daybreak* (1939)– operate by virtue of the inextricable presences of memory, dream and hallucination with a narrative "present" which they consistently work to displace. This tendency perhaps reaches its apogee in *La Jetée* (1962), Chris Marker's post-apocalyptic, twenty-eight minute "photo novel," in which the protagonist, a condemned prisoner, simultaneously inhabits a present, past and future which coalesce into a u-chronic world of imbricated dream and reality. As such, we will turn to a brief analysis of the film here, in order to make explicit some of the powers Deleuze attributes to a "crystalline" cinematic image.

*La Jetée* constitutes an incredibly pure time-image, composed as it is of a montage of still shots which are themselves evacuated of all movement, in the context of an apocalypse where the only "action" available takes the form of an exploration of time. Humanity, we are told –in the austere narration which constitutes the only dialogue– has almost been eradicated in a Third World War. In a network of subterranean galleries beneath the Chaillot in Paris, the "victors" of the war struggle to find a means of saving humanity, following the destruction of all life on the surface of the planet. Space, we are told, is "off limits," and as such, "the only hope for survival lay in Time."[89] A group of experimenters are looking for a "loophole in Time," through which it might be possible to retrieve food, medicine and energy sources capable of re-starting large scale industry. As the narrator explains: "This was the aim of the experiments: to send emissaries into Time to summon the Past and Future to the aid of the Present."[90]

We may already grasp the Bergsonain contours of the film's narrative –such that a virtual past is actualised in the service of action in the present– however it's important that we remember that time-images do not simply "illustrate" a pre-established philosophical system. *La Jetée* itself produces a new image of time, a temporal-cinematic "sign" such as philosophy might *work with*, experience as provocation, and without which it could not open up a particular "line of flight." In the case of *La Jetée*, this takes the form of a temporality expressed as a series of superimposed "static" moments, the still images, which –in a style reminiscent of Eisenstein's montage– coagulate in such a way as to produce a complex and

[88] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.72.
[89] *La Jetée*, dir. C. Marker, Argos Films, Paris, 1962.
[90] Ibid.

evolving virtual "outside," which explodes into actuality in the form of the film's single motion shot– to which we will shortly return.

The film's protagonist, a prisoner who is ear-marked as a guinea-pig for this experimental time-travel, is chosen by his jailers because of the visceral persistence of an image from his childhood – a woman he had seen on the viewing platform (*la jetée*) at Orly Airport, in pre-apocalypse Paris. On the basis of this actualised fragment of the past, we might say that his jailers therefore hope to throw him (in French, *jeter* –he will become "the thrown," *la jetée*), into the past itself, the pure, virtual past, actualising it in the service of the present. This one, fragmentary image –the face of a young woman looking over her shoulder– has engraved itself the prisoner's memory, however it is disconnected from all context, floating upon a sea of virtuality such that he is unsure even as to its reality. Perhaps, he muses, "he invented that tender moment to prop up the madness to come…"[91] Around this single, actualised image, trembles a world of indistinct, virtual images, of which the prisoner is only vaguely aware. On their obscure evidence alone, he forges his sole conviction with regards to this memory– "he knew he had seen a man die."[92]

The head experimenter, to the prisoner's surprise, is a calm and reasonable man, who informs him that the human race is doomed. The previous "guinea-pigs" sent through time had either died or gone mad as a result of the experiments, but, as the experimenter explains, the project is animated by the conviction that, "if they were able to conceive or dream another time, perhaps they would be able to live in it."[93] The prisoner's eyes are covered, and he is bound, reducing his perception such that the only possible motion is into the labyrinths of thought and memory, as he is repeatedly injected with powerful drugs, such that we might doubt whether the constellation of images which begin to appear are real or hallucinations. On the tenth day of the experiment –through which the prisoner suffers horribly– fragmentary images from before the war begin to appear: a peacetime morning –with grass, sun and sheep– a peacetime bedroom – "a real bedroom"–, real children, real birds, real cats (Marker's obsessive signature, present in every film) and on the sixteenth day, the "jetty" at Orly Airport.

Here he meets the woman from his vision, and on repeated visits to the "past" they strike up a relationship, walking together in an idyllic pre-war park, talking and laughing. Herein the temporality of the film is once more complicated– within the pure past into which he has been thrown, and through which he begins to move with confidence and ease, the two lovers slowly forge an alternate temporality, which is marbled through the film – a temporality provoked by the "event" which is their love. As the narrator explains, in the context of this love, the two figures "are without memories, without plans. Time builds itself painlessly around them."[94]

The affair reaches its crescendo in the stunning moment of the film's one motion shot– a sequence in which the woman's eyes slowly open as she lies opposite the prisoner in bed, accompanied by a symphony of singing birds. Tarkovsky famously refers to the "pressure" of time in a given shot,[95] and this sole moving image, emerging from the "timeless" temporality

[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] A. Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. K. Hunter-Blair, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1989, p.117.

of love, seems likewise to emerge from the overwhelming pressure of the frozen, static images which surround it, causing it to spread out in a kind of "eternity" redolent with potentiality– such as lovers will well know.

It is here, in this single image, that the film's unique temporal "sign" finds its expression. Deleuze had already dedicated important passages to the imbrication of temporality, love and the "sign" in his book, *Proust and Signs*, in which he had written, in terms not un-Bergsonian, that, "signs are the object of a temporal apprenticeship, not of an abstract knowledge."[96] This apprenticeship, which takes the form of a gradual discernment and interpretation of signs, reaches particular intensity in the case of love, whereby, Deleuze will write: "The beloved appears as a sign, a 'soul'; the beloved expresses a possible world unknown to us, implying, enveloping, imprisoning a world that must be deciphered…"[97]

But the experience of love, or of the sign of love, is not just the experience of a new world. This very confrontation with a "new world" in and of itself implies that there must be a *plurality* of worlds, such that:

> …the pluralism of love does not concern only the multiplicity of loved beings, but the multiplicity of souls or worlds in each of them. To love is to try to *explicate*, to *develop* these unknown worlds that remain enveloped within the beloved.[98]

Indeed, to return to the explicit terms of *Difference and Repetition*, we might say that love, even in its most domesticated and atomised forms (as experienced by two individuals, as under patriarchal or capitalist norms) produces an imbalanced, differential axis of potentiality, which sees the individual's world "opened up" through contact with that which it is *not*. But more important still, lest we slip into a certain lurking dualism, is the fact that this contact with another world –with an *outside*, beyond the logics of our own– engenders the necessary thought of a *plurality* of worlds, a constellation of continuous or qualitative worlds, each evoking their own complex of virtual-actual relations.

In using these few seconds of motion-picture footage (here, Marker used a 35mm Arriflex camera as opposed to the Pentax Spotomatic camera used for the stills– the story goes, he could only afford to hire the former for an afternoon) Marker makes explicit the *qualitative change* that takes place in response to an *intensive event* like love. In this "opening" of the hitherto static world of the film onto the potentiality of movement, an "aberrant movement" – even as small as the opening of one's eyes– the film posits as emancipatory and explosive the potentialities which lie dormant, immanent, virtual, within a given system of images.

The reprieve, however, is brief. The tenderness of this image is abruptly cut by a return to a harsh, static shot of the head experimenter. After the success of their experiments with the past, the jailers decide finally to send the prisoner into the future, where he encounters a rebuilt Paris, and an advanced humanity awaiting him, appalled at the machinations of their barbaric ancestors. Despite their apparent hostility to his age, the prisoner recites the "line" he has been given by his captors, that "because humanity had survived, it could not refuse to its own past the means of its survival."[99]

[96] Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, p.4.
[97] Ibid., p.7.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Marker, *La Jetée*.

Returning to the present equipped with a power unit able to re-start human industry, the prisoner nevertheless discovers that he is slated for liquidation by his captors. Awaiting execution, he receives a message from the future humans, who claim they are able to help him by using their own, much more advanced form of time-travel. Rejecting their offer to come and live in the future, he instead elects to return to the past, to find the woman who perhaps still awaits him there. He returns to the jetty at Orly, sees the woman and runs towards her. He is vaguely aware that his own, young self must be on the platform, producing the initial memory to which he has always returned, but it is only in this moment that he recognises an agent from the present, who has been sent back to execute him. He is shot, and in his final moment, realises that the memory which has projected itself so profoundly throughout his life, is that of his own death.

The film's denouement, accompanied by the Heraclitean realisation that "there [is] no way to escape Time,"[100] should not be read in the simple terms of science fiction, nor of sophistries and abstract speculations on time travel. What is essential, to Marker's film, is the way in which a series of temporal structures and formations –a "timeless" temporality of love, a "present" evacuated of all possible action by catastrophe and violence, a messianic future to which the present might open itself and orient its "experiments"– are literally made manifest, differen*c*iated, actualised through the montage flow of images.

We must also be careful not to read the film's *mise en scène* as purely that of an imaginary dystopia or a paranoid Cold War futurism. As Matthew Croombs has noted, a critical focus on the film's play with stasis, movement and temporality has often obscured its "radically political content,"[101] a central and "undertheorized" depiction of torture which, he argues, is fundamentally conditioned by Henri Alleg's book *La Question*, and its detailed descriptions of the brutal methods deployed by French paratroopers during the Algerian War of Independence.[102] Indeed, the tension between the grim scenes in which the prisoner is restrained, blindfolded and injected with drugs, contorting himself in obvious agony, and the idyllic images from a pre-war Paris of crisp sheets and shop windows filled with glittering wares, must be read as emerging from this decidedly "actual" socio-political juncture. As Croombs explains:

> Marker ultimately uses a series of subversive formal strategies, […] superimposition in particular, to create an abject frontier between these consumer and colonial contexts, unravelling the binary opposition that sustained 'modern' French subjectivity.[103]

As such, the images which constitute *La Jetée*, far from simply being those of science-fiction, respond to the visceral and contemporary problems not only of nuclear war, but of colonial power and repressive brutality. In the face of these "intolerable" situations, Marker, and we must hope, the spectator, is forced into an operation of thought which reaches "outside" the habitual experience of affluent, Western subjectivity, and into a problematising mode which

[100] Ibid.
[101] M. Croombs, "La jetée in Historical Time: Torture, Visuality, Displacement," in *Cinema Journal*, vol. 56, no. 2 (winter 2017), p.25.
[102] As Croombs explains, (ibid., pp.25-28) the journalist and activist Alleg was responsible for the widespread proliferation of news regarding the French military's use of torture during the Algerian War, following the smuggled-out account of his own torture in the El-Biar and Lodi prisons. The book sold 60,000 copies in the first two weeks of publication and was hugely influential not only in activist but in artistic circles in metropole France.
[103] Ibid., p.26.

expands perception to account for intensive forces conditioning the Western real– forces it is at pains to obscure.

Everything which occurs in the film, once we properly understand the virtual as perfectly real –"completely determined"[104] as relational structure expressing an axis of intensity–[105] must likewise be understood as "real" in the sense of provoking concrete affects and responses in thought. Time and time again –to use an appropriate cliché– the images of *La Jetée* race towards a virtual past which is actualised in disparate forms vaunted by Bergson and Deleuze alike: dream, hallucination, involuntary memory, *déjà vu*. But what is essential in the crystalline "descriptions" of the film is the notion that these "leaps" into the virtual past, once it is understood as perfectly real and present, constitute not just illusory effects of consciousness, but genuine explorations of temporality, of time's differential forms and contours, rigorously uncoupled from the successive, purposive and actual temporality of sensory-motor perception.

As such, the film, like its protagonist, emerges from virtual temporality bearing all new manner of "seeds"[106] which might "counter actualise" alternate temporal structures in the most concrete sense. It is as if the relation between virtual structure and actual, spatial-temporal individuation, were, in these unique cinematic crystals, sped up, raised to catalytic intensity, such that new and complex relations between virtual and actual might adhere.

"Art is real," writes Anne Sauvagnargues, "it produces real effects on the plane of forces…"[107] and in this sense, insomuch as the crystalline temporal images of *La Jetée* produce effects in the virtual and differential forces which constitute the structure of thought, we can read its production of these new "forms" of temporality in the most concrete, purposive sense. Indeed, Deleuze will elaborate the concrete significance of such virtual-actual circuitries or crystallisations, for thought, and, as such, we should always remember, for the modes of life it is capable of engendering. As he explains, essential is an operation of mutual exchange immanent to the crystal image:

> Distinct, but indiscernible, such are the actual and the virtual which are in continual exchange. When the virtual image becomes actual, it is then visible and limpid, as in the mirror or the solidity of finished crystal. But the actual image becomes virtual in its turn, referred elsewhere, invisible, opaque and shadowy, like a crystal barely dislodged from the earth.[108]

[104] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.209.
[105] The terms here owe a debt to Anne Sauvagnargues' explication of the two "moments" of difference. As she explains: "These two regimes of difference express the energy axis of an intensity, which is individuated by resolving its difference in potential: a differen*t*iated (with a *t*) body on the virtual plane diffren*c*iates (with a *c*) itself by individuating itself… the two moments of difference take up the axis of virtual forces (differen*t*iation with a *t*) and actual forms (differen*c*iation with a *c*)." (Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze and Art*, p.59).
[106] Indeed, Deleuze will identify three modes by which "exchange" and "indiscernibility" might be understood to take place in such crystal-images, enumerating alongside the actual-virtual couplet, the limpid and opaque sides of crystallisation, and a relationship between "seed and the environment." Unifying these three movements, explains Deleuze, is the notion of "expression." As Deleuze writes: "The crystal is expression… the seed is on the one hand the virtual image which will crystallize an environment which is at present [*actuellement*] amorphous; but on the other hand the latter must have a structure which is virtually crystallisable, in relation to which the seed now plays the role of actual image." (Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.77).
[107] Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze and Art*, p.19
[108] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.73.

This is not the case of a "closed" circuitry which enacts a mutual and self-contained movement between virtual and actual. We must bear in mind the asymmetries and intensive flux of both actual and virtual facets of the object, such that they are constantly effecting intensive and qualitative changes in one another. In this sense, Deleuze will stress that the crystal image is fundamentally *productive*, enacting a catalytic genetics whereby "something takes shape inside the crystal which will succeed in leaving through the crack and spreading freely."[109] Thus, as Deleuze explains, far from an eternal and self-contained exchange:

> The dividing in two can come to completion, but precisely on condition that one of the two tendencies leaves the crystal, through the point of flight. From the indiscernibility of the actual and the virtual, a new distinction must emerge, like a new reality which was not pre-existent.[110]

But what is this new reality? What forms might it take? For Deleuze, the answer lies in the generative and genetic forms immanent to virtual differentiation. Or more properly, to the complex of relations between virtual structure as differen*t*iation and actualised bodies as differen*c*iation. This relation, elided by a thought based on "representation," "recognition" or "identity," operates as the crack through which ideas burst forth, "swarm[ing] in the fracture, constantly emerging on its edges, ceaselessly coming out and going back, being composed in a thousand different manners."[111] Thus, writes Deleuze, "time in the crystal is differentiated into two movements, but one of them takes charge of the future and freedom, provided that it leaves the crystal. Then the real will be created…"[112] Or, put differently, in the terms of a kind of complicated, problematised Bergsonian vitalism, "what we see in the crystal is always the bursting forth of life, of time, in its dividing in two or differentiation…"[113]

To return once more to the terms of *Difference and Repetition*, the crystallisation of an indeterminate actual-virtual relation causes actual states of affairs (or solutions) to become profoundly implicated with virtual differentiations (or problems), such that the actual, the present, *becomes problematic*. The "problematics" of *La Jetée* are manifold: how might we live, love and act in a world evacuated of all movement, through an apocalypse of our making but beyond our control? How might we not only seek lessons from the past, but from a "utopian" future, such as might save us from a present which *presents* itself –according to its current logics of action-reaction– as an inevitability? How might we concretise new temporalities which escape from the "pressures" of a hegemonic, "official" temporality – imposed upon us as if from above? How is the subjectivity, and indeed the attendant temporality, of the affluent Western individual buttressed by the presence of obscure and distant colonial operations which provide its very material conditions of affluence and comfort? These questions, in *La Jetée*, are posed in the context of a nuclear apocalypse, but they seem no less pertinent as we face up to the prospect of its anthropogenic, climatic offspring.

*Life*, *time*, *the virtual*– these constitute multiple facets of the outside, the operation which serves constantly to displace thought, to provoke it into new and creative modes. But perhaps we have still remained too obscure, referring to "thought" as it is reified in books, colloquia and academic dissertations. Thought, I have suggested, *the thought from outside*, engenders

[109] Ibid., p.89.
[110] Ibid., p.91.
[111] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.169.
[112] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.91.
[113] Ibid., p.94.

affects and becomings in the most concrete sense. It is to the most immediately concrete register to which we now turn, if we are to outline the stakes and implications of Deleuze's philosophy of the outside *vis-à-vis* cinema and thought: that of politics.

# 3. A Politics of the Out-of-Frame

## Introduction

It is clear, as we saw in the previous chapter, that the transition from the "open" to the "outside" of the out-of-frame has concrete social and political dimensions– taking place under the auspices of the profound shattering of intellectual habitudes engendered by the Second World War. But this new cinema of the "seer" is political in another, active sense, according to the mutant politics we might derive from Deleuze's philosophy of art. For the "seer" of post-war cinema does not simply enact a mute and a-political observation of the *status quo*. In positing the "time-image," Deleuze provides us with a series of concepts through which we might think the cinema as a *political* form, capable of engendering an "outside" to a given socio-political *milieu*. The ways in which cinema thus *politicises* the outside are multiple and complex, and must briefly be outlined before we can turn to Deleuze's explicit critique of new functions of "control," emerging in the informatic image.

Firstly therefore, in this chapter I will elaborate Deleuze's emphasis on what he describes as the "time-money conspiracy" immanent to the cinematic image. His reading of this conspiracy, and of the means by which 20th century film was able to reveal it and resist it through self-referential devices such as the "film within a film," is emblematic of a subtle and protean Marxism we might derive from Deleuze's account of film, one which I claim animates Deleuze and Guattari's work more generally. This "immanent Marxism" crystallises in their fundamental conviction that the forces which might precipitate the overthrow of capitalistic modes of life must be conceived as immanent to capitalism itself.

Next, I will explicate Deleuze's identification of the cinematic image with a set of powers for replacing socio-political habitudes with a revolutionary creativity, such as might bring forth new social arrangements and a new sense of political conviction –a notion influenced by the French art historian and film theorist Élie Faure's association of cinema with a nascent form of secular "Catholicism" in the 20th century. I will argue that this notion, which Deleuze will rework into the enigmatic themes of "belief in the world" and of a "people to come," continues to offer profound pathways for radical political thought and praxis in the context of digital societies. If, as Deleuze argues, the future of cinema (our present) is constituted by a profound struggle with informatics conceived as control, it is essential that we identify those political functions Deleuze claims to find in the post-war cinema. In so doing, I argue, we discover resources by which we might continue to critique and to "resist" functions of control in the contemporary digital, informatic image– our task in the coming chapters.

## Time is Money

Of course, cinema is, to use the French formulation, "always already" contaminated by its profound relationship with capital– an industrial, popular form, fundamentally indexed to the rise of a globalised consumer culture. As such, it might seem unusual to associate it with powers of "resistance," even in its most reified and *avant-garde* guises. Deleuze is well aware of this tension, pointing to the "rubbish" which dominates cinematic production. However, the vast majority of films, for Deleuze, do not obscure the powers cinema

possesses "once it stops being bad,"[1] and embraces its "essence" as a production of inhuman images of movement and of time. As explains, in the preface to *Cinema I*:

> One cannot object by pointing to the vast proportion of rubbish in cinematographic production – it is no worse than anywhere else, although it does have unparalleled economic and industrial consequences. The great cinema directors are hence merely more vulnerable– it is infinitely easier to prevent them from doing their work.[2]

In other words, Deleuze understands the cinema as continually engaged in a kind of internal struggle with the conditions of its own production, a struggle which nevertheless affords it unique potentialities for revealing and criticising these very conditions.

Deleuze indeed inherits much from Marxist thinking on film, perhaps most explicitly picking up its fundamental tension(s) in his discussion of *money* in *The Time-Image*. Here, he notes the inherent connection between cinema and capital, adopting, in keeping with his broader political approach, a discussion focussed on the "micropolitical"[3] force or flow that is money; the inevitable condition of cinematic production. For Deleuze, this relation is fundamental. As he explains, in *The Time-Image*, rejecting the explicit terms of Walter Benjamin's famous thesis: "what defines industrial art is not mechanical reproduction but the internalized relation with money,"[4] and again, quoting Marcel L'Herbier: "space and time becoming more expensive in the modern world, art had to make itself international, industrial art, that is, cinema, in order to *buy* space and time as 'imaginary warrants of human capital.'"[5]

However, while film, for Deleuze, thus enacts the fundamental terms of the cliché that "time is money," [6] given its nature as an activity the product of which is "a minute of image which consists of a day of collective work,"[7] this is not to say that as art, the 20th century cinema

[1] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.172.
[2] Ibid, p.xix.
[3] "Micropolitics," the Deleuzo-Guattarian response to the failures of traditional leftism during and after May '68, is constituted by an attempt to approach phenomena not from the perspective of broad or overarching political-theoretical structures, but to focus on the micro and molecular intensities (in this case "money" as an unqualified process or intensive force) which, in a misapprehension of thought, are extrapolated to construct abstract political totalities. We find a similar theme expressed in Deleuze's book on Foucault, in which he will identify power as a dispersed, localised and mobile intensity, irreducible to any centralised or abstract conception of it: "In brief, power is not homogenous but can be defined only by the particular points through which it passes… Foucault shows that […] the State itself appears as the overall effect or result of a series of interacting wheels or structures which are located at a completely different level, and which constitute a 'microphysics of power.'" (Deleuze, *Foucault*, p.25).
[4] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.80.
[5] Ibid, p.81. Capitalism, as Marx and Weber alike demonstrate, had developed a generalised commodification of both time and space through the 19th and into the 20th century. Gone were traditional, familial and feudal holdings of space in favour of a general equivalence whereby space became property, and subject to the homogenising evaluation of markets. Time, likewise, which had hitherto been comprised of seasonal, festival, lunar and other assorted "agricultural" cycles, gradually became a homogenous and "abstract" time attendant to twenty-four-hour mechanised labour. In this sense, space and time not only become in a certain sense profoundly *abstract*, but also *expensive* under the conditions of capital. Art meanwhile, no longer the preserve of "privileged" space-times –as when produced through religious patronage, or in accordance with agricultural and festival cycles– likewise began to require ever greater outlays of capital in order to purchase blocks of this homogenised space-time. (See K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy: Answer to the Philosophy of Poverty by M. Proudhon*, trans. the French Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Progress, Paris, 1955, pp.20-24, & M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons, Routledge, London, 2001).
[6] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.80.
[7] Ibid.

does not simultaneously problematise this situation. Indeed, the 60s and 70s saw a consistent auto-critical foregrounding of the *facts* of film production, the constant leitmotif of which was *money*. For Deleuze, various developments of the time-image –the staging of films within films (as in Fellini, Godard and Kazan), the demise of the studio system in America which led to an unprecedented experimentation and risk-taking– all contributed to a confrontation with and, at certain ideal moments, a reterritorialisation of the "time-money conspiracy."[8]

We might think, for instance, of *8½* (1963), in which the "directors block" of Fellini's thinly veiled self-portrayal, Guido Anselmi (Marcello Mastroianni), constitutes a self-reflexive foregrounding of the impossibility of making a film in the context of financial pressures. The more Guido is hounded by producers and journalists, the less decisive he is able to be regarding his production, which begins to fall apart (at the same time as the narrative of *8½* falls apart, opening up a vista of strangely beautiful, new images). Likewise, in Godard's *Contempt* (1963), the confrontation staged between brash Hollywood producer Jeremy Prokosch (Jack Palance) and Fritz Lang's delightful self-portrayal as a relic from an artistically incorruptible old-world, speaks to the creative tensions in Godard's own practice. Lang's determination to finish his adaptation of the *Odyssey*, even after its producer has died and the script has been given up as a disaster, constitutes a profound statement on artistic *will*, likewise played out by Godard's half-century of making obscure yet personally invested films.

Deleuze's discussion of the "film within the film" convention thus identifies a contradiction immanent to post-war cinema which may well point to a way out of the time-money circuitry. While cinema is invariably linked to money as the condition of its production, it is simultaneously, at its best, able to reflect upon this linkage in valuable ways. Taking up the Marxist thesis of money as a "general equivalent," Deleuze gestures to the ways in which the time-image, by superseding the movement-image (in which we are given a set of movements as exchanges of equivalence) injects questions of inflation, disparity, and dissymmetry into the image, and thus into any transcendent "equivalence" capital might seek to engender. In effect, it *problematises money* as micropolitical flow or force. Or as Deleuze explains:

> What the film within the film expresses is this infernal circuit between the image and money, this inflation which time puts into the exchange, this 'overwhelming rise'. The film is movement, but the film within the film is money, is time… endlessly relaunching exchange which is dissymmetrical, unequal and without equivalence, giving image for money, giving time for images, converting time, the transparent side, and money, the opaque side, like a spinning top on its end.[9]

Deleuze's examples here are from his preferred canon of high-brow art films –Wenders' *The State of Things* (1982), in which a beleaguered film crew are marooned in Portugal after the production runs out of money, Godard's *Passion* (1982), in which the extravagant film restaging works of classical painting eventually stalls and falls apart– but there are other, less rarefied examples of this production of asymmetrical and abortive time-money exchanges.

We might think of Michael Bay's contemporary Hollywood blockbusters, which seem to "come apart" at the seams through an over-inflation and overinvestment of capital, poured

[8] Ibid., p.81.
[9] Ibid.

into ever smaller instants of temporality. Bay's *Armageddon* (1998), for instance –famous for its catastrophic digital editing, which proliferates (non-intentional) irrational cuts and disjunctive images– gradually reveals the over-determinations of capital which constitute contemporary Hollywood images.[10]

The film, which critic Roger Ebert described as "an assault on the eyes, the ears, the brain, common sense and the human desire to be entertained,"[11] reportedly has an average shot length of 1.5 seconds, the condensation of over a million feet of Kodak film (a feat for which, apparently, the company gifts filmmakers with six bottles of Korbel champagne).[12] And this condensation, of unbelievable amounts of labour, money, technology and *time* into ever smaller and more abrupt cinematic instants, creates a disorienting, chaotic experience of temporality, which makes patently clear the impossibility of any equitable or equivalent "exchange" of abstract money for concrete time. The "time-money" exchange here simply *does not work*, in the most fundamentally noetic sense, and it is difficult to watch Bay's film without constantly *encountering* (in the Deleuzian sense) the impossibility of such an exchange –the same which is the very nature of labour under capitalism.

The fact that film possesses these powers, intentional or not, for revealing its own monetary "materiality" –for inflating, over-determining and opening up the closed circuits of film-money causality– will be of the utmost importance when we turn to critiques of the contemporary, "digital" image. I will argue that a similar function continues to operate in certain Hollywood productions, which self-reflexively problematise not only their technical and aesthetic formalism, but also their own substrates of finance and of power, in a movement which is potentially of great value to philosophy.

For now, I claim that this aspect of Deleuze's thinking on cinema conforms with a political approach he and Guattari develop throughout their collaborative works, which sees the conditions for the reterritorialisation of capitalism as immanent to capitalism itself. In a sense, though this is by no means an uncontroversial claim, in arguing that it is only by exploiting conflictual elements within capitalism itself that we can hope for a revolutionary politics, their work retains a certain profoundly (non-revisionist) Marxist axis. [13]

Indeed, Guattari nearly summarises the political disposition which would direct his and Deleuze's investigations, writing, in *The Machinic Unconscious* that, "liberation from capitalistic constraints happens, not through a politics of return to archaic territorialities, but

[10] The script, worked upon by nine writers, tells the story of an asteroid hurtling towards the Earth, which, we are told, can only be stopped by a rag-tag group of oil drilling experts who are sent into space to bury a nuclear warhead beneath its surface. At every level of its production, the film is oversaturated with capital, from unprecedented access to NASA's real rocket propulsion facilities, down to the $20,000 worth of dental work allegedly used to make actor Ben Affleck's teeth more big-screen appropriate.
[11] R. Ebert, "Armageddon," *RogerEbert.com*, July 1 1998, <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/armageddon-1998> retrieved September 10, 2019.
[12] *Armageddon*, dir. M. Bay, Touchstone Pictures, Burbank, 1998, (DVD Director's Commentary).
[13] Deleuze himself claims, in an interview published in the collection *Negotiations,* that: "I think Félix Guattari and I have remained Marxists, in our two different ways, perhaps, but both of us. You see, we think any political philosophy must turn on the analysis of capitalism and the ways it has developed. What we find most interesting in Marx is his analysis of capitalism as an immanent system that's constantly overcoming its own limitations, and then coming up against them once more in a broader form, because its fundamental limit is Capital itself." (Deleuze*, Negotiations*, p.171). However, a clean linkage here is not assured. Not least among the problems of deriving a Deleuzo-Guattarian Marxism is their persistent rejection of the "negative" as inherited from the Marxist-Hegelian dialectic. We abide in absence of the "phantom limb" in Deleuze's corpus, his last book, which was to have been called *The Grandeur of Marx*.

through the crossing of an additional degree of deterritorialization."[14] In other words, resistance to capital, for Deleuze and Guattari –a task they unabashedly and continually affirm– cannot but take the forms we are afforded by capitalism itself.[15] It is in this context, following their postulation of capitalism as "axiomatic" in its ability to transform heterogeneous flows into uniform flows of capital, that they will write, in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

> Some people invoke the high technology of the world system of enslavement; but even, and especially, this machinic enslavement abounds in undecidable propositions and movements that, far from being a domain of knowledge reserved for sworn specialists, provides so many weapons for the becoming of everybody/everything, becoming radio, becoming electronic, becoming molecular… Every struggle is a function of all of these undecideable propositions and constructs *revolutionary connections* in opposition to the *conjugation of the axiomatic*.[16]

In this context, Delezue and Guattari will famously gesture to schizophrenic tendencies immanent to capitalism, which see its immense productivity produce all manner of disjunctive and undecidable connections –such, indeed, as the "irrational cuts" of the New Wave– which may well afford potentialities for "revolutionary connections" in turn.

Revolution, for Deleuze and Guattari, can of course not be posed in any teleological sense – as a coherent party political program or as the product of a self-achieving *Geist*. "Schizoanalysis as such has strictly no political program to propose," they will write, "if it did have one, it would be grotesque and disquieting at the same time."[17] However forces – which here remain couched in an explicitly libidinal vocabulary of "desire"– can clearly either form conjugated, "captured" and quantitatively productive flows, commensurate with capitalistic forms of encoding, or enter into new and "undecidable" connections which throw out qualitative, differential and virtual sparks. The distinction between these forms of connectivity (which of course cannot be posed as a simple duality, but rather a series of crossed thresholds and indeterminacies) might well be expressed as that between those connections which are "axiomatic" and those which are "problematic." Or as Eugene Holland explains:

> …in most cases, such subversion gets absorbed –axiomatized and reterritorialized– by the existing system, which simply adds one more axiom to its structure of domination-appropriation (e.g. trade-unionism, Fordism, or the French Communist Party as ways of absorbing various workers' movements).[18]

[14] F. Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*, trans. T. Adkins, Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, 2011, p.227.
[15] Marx, we will recall, in important passages, writes that: "Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and trained, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument… the knell of capitalist private property sounds." (K. Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy - Volume One*, trans. B. Fowkes, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976, p.929).
[16] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.473.
[17] Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti Oedipus*, p.380.
[18] E.W. Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis*, Routledge, London, 2001, p.104.

However, alongside these "apparatuses of capture" there are the constant, empirical conflagrations and complexifications which take place as an inevitable by-product of production, or more properly, as the true nature of desiring-production, once it escapes from molar and abstract overcoding(s). Thus, as Holland continues, evoking the distinction between "subjugated" groups and "subject" groups Deleuze and Guattari lift from Sartre:

> Happily, as ubiquitous as they are, subjugated groups under capitalism only ever have one leg to stand on: decoding and deterritorialization are constantly pulling the rug out from under any permanent formation (including those of capital itself.) And this is where the chances for revolution lie… Schizo-revolutionary strategy thus seeks to reinforce and magnify the subversive thrust of capitalist decoding and deterritorialization; to provoke the transmutation or schism of subjugated groups into subject groups… so as to attain critical mass and overthrow power…[19]

Technologies play just as prominent a role in these moments of conflagration and chaos as do works of art, profoundly open as they are to empirical and inhuman forces. And the cinema occupies a particularly important role here, given its coalescence of modern, industrial technologies and aesthetic experimentation.

However, as I have noted in the introduction to this dissertation, it appears as though Deleuze has perhaps abandoned this revolutionary "optimism" by the time of his work on "information" in the 1980s and 90s, a lapse I hope here to rectify. But before we can move on to this task, we must acknowledge another, perhaps more profound way in which Deleuze identifies the cinema with a revolutionary or resistant politics. For the Deleuzian account of cinema has another political purport, focussed on the enigmatic question of "belief in the world"[20] and the possibility of a "people to come."[21]

## Belief in the World

"Belief in the world" constitutes perhaps one of the most unexpected motifs in *The Time-Image*. It takes the form of an injunction to re-establish the link between the human and the world which has been elided by the historical predominance of the sensory-motor schema and brought to catalytic intensity by this schema's collapse in the modern world. "The modern fact is that we no longer believe in this world," writes Deleuze, "we do not even believe in the events which happen to us, love, death, as though they only half concerned us."[22] The latter stages of *The Time-Image* are dedicated to this problematic, which bears a distinctly Nietzschean pedigree.

We might perhaps read a "post-modern" inflection into this position, understanding it as a claim around the contemporary impossibilities of establishing "meaning" or of determining courses of action in a world of shattered metanarratives –to use Lyotard's parlance.[23]

[19] Ibid., p.105.
[20] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.207.
[21] Ibid., p.228.
[22] Ibid., p.177.
[23] See Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, pp.34-37.

Important, however, for Deleuze, is the notion that the sensory-motor schema has always, in a sense, negated belief in the world, in so much as it responds to an abstract, "reduced" and representational *model* of the world, which, albeit practically "useful," is not the plurality of worlds engendered by actual-virtual flux and contingency. In this sense –the same in which Nietzsche will ascribe to both Christianity and metaphysical thinking a profound "nihilism"– any interested reduction of the world serves to alienate us from the world understood as an open multiplicity– the constant production of new worlds. But whereas the sensory-motor schema afforded us at least a certain, anaemic "belief" –that consequences might flow from our actions, that we might be afforded concrete means of participating in an already "given" world– the shattering of this schema paradoxically completes its tendency toward nihilism, throwing us into a mute spectatorship devoid of any such belief. But cinema, Deleuze claims, possesses characteristics which might restore to us a belief in the world. Furthermore, in the context of the time-image, placed in irrevocable contact with the outside of thought, this might no longer be the limited belief in actions and reactions, such as we derive from the sensory-motor schema– instead becoming a revolutionary belief, a conviction that the world might be *other than it is*.

"It is clear from the outset that cinema had a special relationship with belief," writes Deleuze, going further to claim that, "there is a Catholic quality to cinema."[24] This observation may seem a strange one. But Catholicism, we may well note, itself consists of a grand *mise-en-scène*, of Apostles, villains and heroes, spread across audacious and exotic sets, while cinema, with its great deco temples occupying pride of place on street corners and in the weekly routine (a Saturday night mass to replace that of Sunday morning) constitutes in turn, in Deleuze's words, a "cult which takes over the circuit of the cathedrals."[25] While we may baulk at this language, Deleuze's evocation of Catholicism is not without precedent. As Paola Marrati explains:

> The strangeness of such words under his pen is only superficial. The context partly explains the reference to Catholicism: Deleuze is discussing an essay by Élie Faure where Faure argued that there is a 'cult' in cinema that takes over the function of cathedrals. More important than the context is the fact that Catholicism arguably plays out an aspiration toward universality, toward a becoming-world, that current processes of globalization do not exhaust. In any case, it is such a Catholic aspiration toward processes of universalization that matters for Deleuze, and if cinema is capable of replacing the 'cult of the cathedrals,' it is because, unlike theatre, in cinema *the link between humans and the world is always at stake*.[26]

In *Vocation du Cinéma*, the art historian, medical doctor and critic Faure does indeed claim that film embodies similar social characteristics as Christian architecture of the middle ages. Through its attempts to unite the masses by virtue of a "universal language," through its subjugation of the individual and their resources into the project of erecting its "edifices," through the necessary simplicity of its themes and language, cinema, for Faure, constitutes:

[24] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.176.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Marrati, p.80

> …today, the most "Catholic," means of expression that the evolution of ideas and techniques has put at the disposal of man, if we want to return to this word its original, human sense.[27]

Thus, like the great cathedrals which formed the spiritual centrepiece of medieval life, the collaborative productions of Hollywood seemed to Deleuze, as to Faure, to constitute a profound new "spiritual" activity of 20th century humanity, a set of shared cultural objects around which quotidian life might be oriented.

But there is more than just collaborative effort and the deployment of massive resources in common between church and cinema. As Deleuze argues, essential is the fact that cinema constitutes an art of the *masses*,[28] in the dual sense of the word, a situation which imbues it with a simultaneously spiritual and *political* power (with "spirit" understood in the most rigorously immanent, Deleuzian sense). As Deleuze explains:

> …from the outset, Christianity and revolution, the Christian faith and the revolutionary faith, were the two poles which attracted the art of the masses… hence it developed either in the direction of a transformation of the world by man, or in the discovery of an internal and higher world than man himself…[29]

Indeed the "near-filiation"[30] between Faure and Sergei Eisenstein in their respective theoretical approaches suggests that cinema may well have something to tell us about the admixture of faith and revolutionary politics (one particularly pronounced in the Russian experience, to which we will return). As Faure writes:

> It is thus a social terrain renewed from top to bottom that the cinema awaits as its destiny. Certainly, it has not yet realised the promises that architecture, in other times, has held *vis-à-vis* the believing crowds. But this is because its social foundations and the mythical impulses that might spring from them are still in formation, it having taken several centuries for architecture to reach its own accord with the feelings in genesis of which it was, in the end, the expression.[31]

[27] "…auhourd'hui le plus «catholique» des moyens d'expression que l'évolution des idées et des techniques ait mis à la disposition de l'homme, si l'on veut bien restituer à ce mot son sens humain originel." (The translations of Faure are my own, as the full text is yet to be translated into English.) É. Faure, « Vocation du Cinéma » in, *Fonction du Cinema, De la cinéplastique à son destin social (1921-1937)*, Éditions d'Histoire et de d'Art, Librairie Plon, Paris, 1954, p.4. This explicitly architectural linkage no doubt owes a debt to Erwin Panofsky's hugely influential "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures" (1934) published three years earlier. Here, Panofsky provides one of the most pleasing accounts of film as a collaborative effort, once more sketching it as a kind of secular cathedral building. As he writes: "It might be said that a film, called into being by a co-operative effort in which all contributors have the same degree of permanence, is the nearest modern equivalent of a medieval cathedral; the role of the producer corresponding, more or less, to that of the bishop or archbishop; that of the director to that of the architect in chief; that of the scenario writers to that of the scholastic advisers establishing the iconographical program; and that of the actors, cameramen, cutters, sound men, make-up men and the divers (*sic*) technicians to that of those whose work provided the physical entity of the finished product, from the sculptors, glass painters, bronze casters, carpenters and skilled masons down to the quarry men and woodsmen. And if you speak to any one of these collaborators he will tell you, with perfect bona fides, that his is really the most important job - which is quite true…" (E. Panofsky, "Style and Medium in Motion Pictures," in *Three Essays on Style*, I. Lavin ed., MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1995, p.30).
[28] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.176.
[29] Ibid.
[30] M.C. Flinn, "The Prescience of Élie Faure," in *SubStance*, vol. 34, no.3., issue 108 (2005), p.58.
[31] "C'est donc un terrain social renouvelé de fond en comble qu'attend le cinéma pour accomplir son destin. Certes, il n'a pas encore réalisé les promesses que l'architecture, en d'autres temps, a tenues vis-à-vis des foules

And indeed, we find his sentiment mirrored –via the dialectic– in Eisenstein, for whom art, and in particular cinema, constitutes the ultimate "spiritual" activity of human life:

> The inexhaustible potential of all art, having achieved its highest level of development in the form of cinema, is offered not only to masters, artists, craftsmen. Just as priceless is what this furthest development of art as a whole offers to those who meditate on the general laws of artistic creation… for this purpose our cinema is an inexhaustible quarry for the definition of general laws and conditions of art as one of the most characteristic reflections of man's spiritual activity.[32]

Indeed, an explicit yet strangely secular spirituality crystallises in much late 20th century cinema. Tarkovsy's sprawling films constitute a self-professed attempt at the generation of a "new spirituality,"[33] one uniquely conditioned by the material circumstances of presenting religious content in the context of strict Soviet censorship. *Andrei Rublev's* (1961) vistas of medieval Russia, in which we move from molecular treatments of cracked or spattered paint, drops of water or of flittering ashes, up to vast tableaux of extras engaged in battle or industry, often within the same shot, constitute a cinematic cosmology which oscillates between patterns observable in both the vast and the minute. *Stalker's* (1979) saturated *mise en scène,* in which religious iconography, syringes, weapons, coins and clocks form a montage of interlocking symbols submerged beneath a "film" of tepid water, gives us a worn-out collection of worldly matters, later sublimated by the messianic emergence in full-colour of the telepathic little girl, riding atop the Stalker's shoulders. Such films constitute a high-water mark in the production of a cinematic spirituality, one in which our "link" with the world, in all of its tenuousness and complexity, is made manifest.

There can be little doubt therefore, that the specific vocabulary of a spiritual/revolutionary tendency toward "belief in the world" in Deleuze's work on cinema emerges from the influence of both Eisenstein and Faure. But a third and more thoroughly philosophical axis, formed by Deleuze's Nietzschean and Spinozist commitments, determines the unique specificities of this belief.

## A Cinematic Spinozism

In order to have a *revolutionary* function, this cannot be belief in the "link" with a given world, one in which all values are already distributed– such as in the orthodoxies of organised religion. Indeed, it is via recourse to Deleuze's profound –and often perverse– Spinozism that we might understand in exactly what sense the notion of belief might be purified of its *doxic* tendencies, opening the way for moments of creativity, pluralism and resistance.

When Spinoza provides his famous definition VI, writing "by reality and perfection I understand the same thing,"[34] we may rightly question the efficacy of his philosophy from a

croyantes. Mais c'est que ses assises sociales et les élans mystiques qui ne peuvent jaillir que d'elles sont encore en formation, et qu'il a fallu plusieurs siècles à l'architecture pour réaliser son accord avec les sentiments en genèse dont elle a été, en fin de compte, l'expression." (Faure, *Vocation du Cinéma*, p.15).

[32] Eisenstein, *Film Form*, p.193.

[33] N. Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky: Labyrinths of Space and Time*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2012, p.213.

[34] B. Spinoza, "Ethics" (Part II, Definition VI), in E. Curley ed., trans., *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994, p.116.

political (or revolutionary) point of view. If reality and perfection are absolutely equivalent, then according to what orientation would we strive to change anything, *to act at all*? Indeed, as Antonio Negri has noted, the history of philosophy has in effect afforded us "two Spinozas"[35] one, broadly rationalist and materialist, who "expresses the highest and most extensive development of the cultural history of its time," and the other, who "accomplishes a dislocation and projection of the ideas of crisis and revolution." It is this tension, Negri will claim, which means that, "the first is the author of the capitalist order, the second is perhaps the author of a future constitution."[36] Spinoza, Negri claims, thus presents us with an anomaly which resists subsumption within our (already ideological) history of ideas, an "absolute exception," irreducible to whatever systemisations with which me might approach it.[37]

Indeed, criticisms of the political implications of Spinozist thought often closely resemble those levelled at Deleuze. Paradigmatic are perhaps those of Alain Badiou, who accuses Deleuze of an unconscious *status quo* monism, writing, for instance, that:

> [Deleuze] came to tolerate the fact that most of his concepts were sucked up… by the *doxa* of the body, desire, affect, networks, the multitude, nomadism and enjoyment into which a whole contemporary 'politics' sinks, as if into a poor man's Spinozism.[38]

However, leaving aside the complexities of the Badiou-Deleuze schism, it is important to say that Badiou has here misread Deleuze in the terms of this "first Spinoza," rather than the second, for whom we may well say that reality is perfection insomuch as reality is *difference* and *change*. To explicate this complex axis of Deleuze's *political* philosophy, we must briefly therefore explicate Spinoza.

Spinoza famously argues throughout the *Ethics* that there is a single immanent substance, which is God (or nature).[39] As such, everything exists and acts in such a way as is necessary in accordance with God's nature and does so without an external end or purpose. This rejection of any transcendent conception of divinity thus problematises the very possibility of normative "natural law" as it had hitherto been imposed by both state and church. As Spinoza writes, in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*:

> We conclude therefore that God is described as a legislator or a prince, and as just, merciful etc., only because of the limited understanding of the common people and their lack of knowledge, and that in reality God acts and governs all things from the necessity of his own nature and perfection alone, and his decrees and volitions are eternal truths and always involve necessity.[40]

The implications of this philosophical manoeuvre are vast. Not only does Spinoza call into question the very premise of state and religious power –that legislative proscriptions over and above human behaviours can be derived from scripture– he opens the space for a radical self-

[35] A. Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*, trans. M. Hardt, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991, p.4.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., p.5.
[38] A. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event, 2*, trans. A. Toscano, Continuum, London, 2009, p.35.
[39] Spinoza, "Ethics," (Part I, Prop XIV), p.93.
[40] B. Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, J. Israel ed., trans. M. Silverthorne & J. Israel, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p.64.

determination of individuals, given that their natures and actions must invariably be seen as modular expressions of divine will.

Far, therefore, from creating a kind of imbricated homogeneity from which we can no longer derive difference or multiplicity, Deleuze reads this "univocal" premise (alongside that of Duns Scotus) as a condition for thinking *genuine* difference or singularity. As he explains, in *Difference and Repetition*:

> …the essential in univocity is not that Being is said in a single and same sense, but that it is said, in a single and same sense, *of* all its individuating differences or intrinsic modalities. Being is the same for all these modalities, but these modalities are not the same… the essence of univocal being is to include individuating differences, while these differences do not have the same essence and do not change the essence of being…[41]

And while Deleuze will claim that Spinoza –in positing the modes as dependent on substance (and not vice versa) does not ultimately succeed in thinking difference without identity[42]– Deleuze's commitment to radical immanence sees substance and its plural modalities understood as fundamentally inextricable.

Importantly, this plurivocal metaphysics is therefore –for Deleuze as for Spinoza– simultaneously the condition for an ethics. The architecture of this Spinozist-Deleuzian ethics is complex, and involves a highly specific lexicon, which constraints of space do not allow me to treat fully here.[43] Suffice it to say that from these metaphysical terms, Spinoza advances a definition of *freedom* according to which singular "bodies" (understood in the broadest possible sense) are free insomuch as they express divine substance to the full extent and in the full exercise of their unique (modal) powers. The essence of singular beings must be properly understood to accord with their own capacities to self-determine and individuate –to affect and be affected– expressing their singularity in ways which extend capacities for action and resist external repressions. This is therefore an ethics dedicated to the multi-lateral increase of potentialities, and such as *must* become a politics, given that such singularities exist simultaneously. Or as Negri explains:

> The singularity is free. Freedom is the form of the singular being. There is an identity between the singular being and its practical nature. Necessity is not contradictory with freedom but only a sign of the ontological absoluteness of freedom.[44]

In other words, Spinoza's metaphysical premise –that reality, as God, is perfection– becomes an ethical premise– that univocal difference and individuation is to be affirmed in all of its simultaneous modalities – which in turn becomes a political premise – that the ideal circumstances for individuation are those which allow for the broadest possible diversity and difference of individuation(s).

[41] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.36.
[42] In order to arrive at a thought of difference-in-itself, Deleuze will claim it is necessary to move beyond Spinoza's essentially monist modality, according to which, he claims: "Spinoza's substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent on substance, but as though on something other than themselves… such a condition can be satisfied only at the price of a more general categorical reversal according to which being is said of becoming, identity of that which is different, the one of the multiple, etc." (Ibid., p.40).
[43] It is most fully elaborated in Deleuze's two books on Spinoza, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (1968), and *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (1970).
[44] Negri, p.83.

It is therefore belief in a very specific world that Deleuze advocates, an open plurality of worlds ushered in when we take seriously a (Spinozist) naturalist philosophy of necessity. Belief in the world must be understood as belief in the world's capacity to be multiple, to elaborate itself by becoming *other than it is,* a belief which is therefore thoroughly fertile with the possibilities of a revolutionary politics.

From an ethico-political perspective, this approach may still seem vague or abstract, especially once removed from the political circumstances of Spinoza's own *milieu*. However Kathrin Thiele rightly notes the radical pragmatism inherent to Deleuze's inheritance of Spinozism, writing:

> First we have to adequately understand the rigorous philosophical demand for an immanence immanent only to itself that is so fundamental to Deleuze's thought. His strong commitment to immanence and nothing but immanence already turns every ontological endeavour into a practical one, and that is into an endeavour driven by an ethico-political impetus.[45]

In this sense, a Deleuzian injunction toward *belief* must only ever be understood in terms of a pragmatics, a sense that in the very *act* of believing in a certain kind of world, we commence the task of bringing it into being (or, more properly, becoming).[46]

Thus the "link" between humanity and the world, properly understood, constitutes a belief in the world's capacity to change, to become an open plurality of worlds and not to calcify in any preordained manner, according to any transcendent principle. And it is this link, argues Deleuze, which has become untenable in the modern world. Evacuated of the potentiality for political action, traditionally understood as a function of the sensory-motor schema, the pure "optical" and "sound" situations of the time-image (which is to say situations which are no longer "sensory-motor," but rather *unthought* and as such, can only be sensed) precipitate a kind of thinking which must take the reconstruction of such a belief as its essential mission. Or as Deleuze explains:

> The link between man and the world is broken. Henceforth, this link must become an object of belief: it is the impossible which can only be restored within a faith… Only belief in the world can reconnect man to what he sees and hears. The cinema must film, not the world, but belief in this world, our only link… restoring our belief in the world– this is the power of modern cinema… whether we are Christians or atheists, in our universal schizophrenia, *we need reasons to believe in this world*.[47]

The prescience of this contention, in the context of global capital and anthropomorphic climate change –which present themselves at entwined inevitabilities– is profound. It has become all but an impossibility to imagine the emergence of a world, or of worlds, that exceed the logic(s) of the present one, a fact that Deleuze not unconvincingly traces to the crisis of modernity in the jaws of the Second World War. But in *believing* that there exists a link between humans and the world they are destroying, and furthermore that this world is

[45] K. Thiele, "'To Believe in this World, As It Is': Immanence and the Quest for Political Activism," in *Deleuze Studies*, vol. 4, issue supplement – "Deleuze and Political Activism," p.31.
[46] Ibid., p.34
[47] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.177.

plurivocal, radically undetermined and redolent with differential potentialities, we might commence the task of changing it.

## Minority Cinema

But *who are* these believers, given that this shattering and disillusionment is so profound? How might we identify the agents who would enact such a belief, given that the concept of "humanity" itself is so thoroughly problematized by the catastrophes of the 20th century, the impending disasters of the 21st?

Classical Soviet and American cinema, claims Deleuze, deployed a concrete or stable notion of "the people" as *socius* or body-politic. The status or ideal organisation of this "people" could be the source of (even bloody) debate, but their appearance as *a priori* principle for political thought and aesthetic representation was unquestioned. We must think here of some paradigmatic examples: the crowds in Eisenstein, which surge and seethe as though a single organism, dividing into particulate units before reconverging into a whole. In Hollywood, the musicals of Berkeley, in which showgirls swirl and organise into elaborate geometric shapes, perfectly coalescing the ideal tenets of the American *socius*– democratic interchangeability and Fordist mass-production. And later, this tendency evolves, in Hollywood, into that of the Western, and that *other* Ford, to distribute a "people" constituted by ragged, self-sufficient individuals, producing films that "address a people by 'testifying' to the hardships of their existence."[48]

However, the same conditions which lead to the collapse of the sensory-motor schema problematised this hitherto stable (if contestable) premise, causing "the people," as they had hitherto existed, to disappear. As Deleuze explains:

> In American and Soviet cinema, the people are already there, real before being actual, ideal without being abstract. Hence the idea that cinema, as art of the masses, could be the supreme revolutionary or democratic art, which makes the masses a true subject. But a great many factors were to compromise this belief: the rise of Hitler, which gave cinema as its object not the masses become subject but the masses subjected; Stalinism, which replaced the unanimism of peoples with the tyrannical unity of a party; the break up of the American people, who could no longer believe themselves to be either the melting-pot of peoples past or the seed of a people to come (it was the neo-Western that first demonstrated this break-up). In short, if there were a modern political cinema, it would be on this basis: the people no longer exist, or not yet… *the people are missing*.[49]

This absence, so keenly and so suddenly felt in the late 20th century West, has been, so Deleuze claims, the condition of "third world" and "minority" cinema since its inception. Here, the people are *already* missing, insofar as minority identities (paradigmatically post-colonial subjects) have never been permitted to properly appear within hegemonic orders of visibility. That not only individual subjectivity but collective identity are thoroughly problematised by the violence of colonisation is a fact Deleuze claims is reflected by a

[48] Ibid., p.223.
[49] Ibid.

number of filmmakers from non-Western contexts (Lino Brocka, Pierre Perrault, Glauber Rocha, Yılmaz Güney, Youssef Chahine, Ousmane Sembene).[50]

Reflecting on the impasse encountered by Kafka, who found himself facing the entwined impossibilities of choosing not to write or of writing in the coloniser's language,[51] Deleuze however points to a third way, open to "minority" *auteurs*. As he writes, evoking key themes from *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*:

> Kafka pointed to another path, a narrow path between the two dangers: precisely because 'great talents' or superior individualities are rare in minor literatures, the author is not in a condition to produce individual utterances which would be like invented stories; but also, because the people are missing, the author is in a situation of producing utterances which are already collective, which are like the seeds of the people to come, and whose political impact is immediate and inescapable.[52]

In this context, Deleuze appoints cinema the grand task of preparing the way for a "people to come." Claiming, "art, and especially cinematographic art, must take part in this task: not that of addressing a people, which is presupposed already there, but of contributing to the invention of a people."[53]

The notion of a "people to come" such as are immediately identity-less, obscure (and obscured) by current power relations and regimes of visibility, but who might emerge in a revolutionary becoming whereby the "subjected" become "subjects," offers up a compelling

[50] Of course, we cannot proceed in this direction without acknowledging critiques of Deleuze from the perspective of post-colonial studies, perhaps most notably those mounted by Spivak in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in which she charges Deleuze (along with Foucault) of exemplifying the tendency of Western intellectuals to reinscribe hegemonic conceptions of the subject through their very attempts to a-centre or criticise it. As Spivak writes, taking as her starting point the conversation between Deleuze and Foucault published as "Intellectuals and Power": "The participants in this conversation emphasise the most important contributions of French poststructuralist theory: first, that the networks of power/desire/interest are so heterogeneous that their reduction to a coherent narrative is counterproductive – a persistent critique is needed; and second, that intellectuals must attempt to disclose and know the discourse of society's other. Yet the two systematically and surprisingly ignore the question of ideology and their own implication in intellectual and economic history (G.C. Spivak, "'Can the Subaltern Speak' revised edition," in R. Morris ed., *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, Colombia University Press, New York, 2010, p.28). In other words, both thinker's definitive concepts, *desire* and *power*, are here read as enacting a double manoeuvre to silence these very "others:" on the one hand a totalising tendency which occludes any genuine thought of the subject outside of the mould inherited by the Western theorist, and on the other an ideological naivety which elides the properly imperialist-economic program which depends upon such activity. There is undoubtedly a tendency in Deleuze to use examples and concepts taken from post-colonial contexts indelicately (See, for instance, Caren Kaplan's critique of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "nomadic thought," and her claim that it emerges from a long tradition of Eurocentric and pejorative understandings of indigenous experiences, in C. Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1996). Certainly, these are intractable problematics which will continue to emerge as Western intellectual history confronts the colonial genocides with which it is implicated. However, in terms of a Deleuzian pragmatics, of "starting right here," Deleuze's strategy not of attempting some kind of artificially external critique of Western thought, but of working from within, seems reasonable. The central Deleuzian preoccupations with difference, novelty, the unknown, the unsubsumable, and the violent reflexivity of the encounter, would seem well disposed towards opening Western metaphysics and philosophy onto non-Western and counter-hegemonic perspectives. See also the contributions in S. Bignall & P. Patton eds., *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2010.

[51] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.224.

[52] Ibid., p.228

[53] Ibid., p.224

model of how a "revolutionary consciousness" might be understood in terms beyond the "inevitabilities" of dialectical materialism. In taking up majoritarian forms (cinema), and using them to produce images such as might reflect the situation of "minor" identities, art therefore emerges as a powerful machinery for producing collective identities and movements from "outside." Such identities, movements and consciousness do not pre-exist this process, but are called into becoming through its very action. But how, we must finally ask, are these people to be called into becoming? What forces and functions might begin this initially opaque undertaking? It is in Deleuze's account of an encounter with the "intolerable," that this chapter concludes, washing us up, once more, on the shores of the outside.

## The Intolerable

As with his conception of "the outside," inherited via Foucault from Blanchot, Deleuze's evocation of the intolerable begins with one of his most profound theoretical axes, the noetic philosophy which he develops with reference to Antonin Artaud. As we have seen, as far back as *Difference and Repetition*, Artaud's meditation on the gruesome impossibility of thought, of *any* thought, propelled Deleuze towards a critique of habitual, anthropocentric and dogmatic ways of thinking. Deleuze resumes this theme, with a new, political colouring in the latter part of *The Time-Image*, writing:

> Artaud never understood powerlessness to think as a simple inferiority which would strike us in relation to thought. It is a part of thought, so that we should make our way of thinking from it, without claiming to be restoring an all-powerful thought. We should rather make use of this powerlessness to believe in life, and to discover the identity of thought and life…[54]

This "identity" of thought and life indicates what is at stake in Deleuze's noetic philosophy. Thought, conceived as radically immanent to the plane(s) on which it is situated –alongside matter, human and inhuman forces, a qualitatively evolving chaosmos of actual-virtual relations– is no mere reflection on an already distributed real. Properly understood, as a "thought from outside," thinking creates the *new*, bringing forth previously unimaginable forms of life.

This conception, which drives Deleuze to the "thought without an image" sketched in *Difference and Repetition*, becomes, in *The Time-Image*, the remit of a politics sculpted by the apparent hopelessness of the 20th century. As he explains:

> It is as if modern political cinema were no longer constituted on the basis of a possibility of evolution or revolution, like the classical cinema, but on impossibilities, in the style of Kafka: the intolerable.[55]

Deleuze evokes the neorealists to illustrate this cinema of the intolerable –De Sica's *Umberto D* and its scenes of quotidian squalor, Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero* and its vistas of rubble[56]– in short, as we have said, we have arrived at a cinema which confronts a power so

[54] Ibid., p.175.
[55] Ibid., p.226.
[56] Ibid., p.2.

profound, a situation of such despair, that the sensory-motor schema can no longer bring its powers of recognition to bear. Deleuze illustrates this "overwhelmed" cinematic perception with an example from *Umberto D*, which, in muted tones and with a cast of non-professional actors, tells the story of the titular character, an old man desperately trying to maintain his rented room. Thus, in one scene, writes Deleuze, we see:

> …the young maid going into the kitchen in the morning, making a series of mechanical, weary gestures, cleaning a bit, driving the ants away from a water fountain, picking up the coffee grinder, stretching out her foot to close the door with her toe. And her eyes meet the pregnant woman's belly, and it is as though all the misery in the world were going to be born. This is how, in an ordinary or everyday situation, in the course of a series of gestures, which are insignificant but all the more obedient to simple sensory-motor schemata, what has suddenly been brought about is a pure optical situation to which the little maid has no response or reaction. The eyes, the belly, that is what an encounter is… Of course, encounters can take very different forms… but they follow the same formula.[57]

Robbed, by concrete socio-political circumstances, of the possibility for coherent sensory-motor response, both characters in, and viewers of, neorealist cinema thus come to grasp new and hitherto obscured aspects of the real. Faced with the raw optical and sonic data afforded by the screen-image, we perceive the mechanics of a pure "encounter" in terms prior to any predetermined social inscription.

And indeed, these new "encounters" are capable of engendering visual revelations and dispositions of thought which shatter socio-politically determined conventions of perception immanent to the sensory-motor schema. In one example Deleuze will return to frequently – Rossellini's *Europe '51* (1952)– Irene (Ingrid Bergman), the wife of a wealthy industrialist, will be driven by the suicide of her son to a new regime of "pure" perception, in which hitherto subterranean relations structuring the real are suddenly made manifest. Roaming the slums of post-war Rome, entering the factories upon which her affluence is built, Irene sees the factory workers and in an apparent "hallucination" believes she is seeing convicts. As Deleuze explains:

> …if our sensory-motor schemata jam or break, then a different type of image can appear: a pure optical-sound image, the whole image without metaphor, 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… The factory creature gets up, and we can no longer say 'Well, people have to work…' I thought I was seeing convicts: the factory is a prison, school is a prison, literally, not metaphorically...[58]

As such, the shattering of the sensory-motor schema affords us concrete political functions, revealing the "intolerable" conditions of capitalistic, fascistic and otherwise repressive social arrangements within which it has functioned.

And it is this "intolerable" which, in keeping with the noetic dimensions of the outside as we have already encountered them, forces us into the activity of forging new, creative and anti-

[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., p.21.

fascistic lines of flight, be they in philosophy, art, or indeed political praxis. As David Lapoujade explains:

> Everything begins, each time, with a 'vision' of something intolerable, unjust, or shocking. Such events affect not only individuals; sometimes an entire social field 'sees' something intolerable and rises up. *We do not live in a world where all political action is impossible, we live in a world where the impossible is the condition of every action, of every new creation of possibilities*.[59]

As such, this is not a mere "revelation" of a political reality which was hitherto obscured. The production of affects in such an image must be understood in the immanent terms of the image as we have seen it conceived via Bergson. Once situated at the level of the intensive variation and becoming of matter, or, to transpose things into terms more hospitable to politics –an individual or social "body"– the "intolerable" and "impossible" affects extended by a given cinematic image, call forth responses in the "images" to which they relate (minds, social bodies, collective identities). Or, as Lapoujade continues:

> The perceptual or affective shock is inseparable from the powers it awakens in each of us… perceptions communicate directly with the plane of intensive matters of which we are composed. A redistribution of powers is effected that makes perception an *event*. At that point, but only at that point, we stop thinking in terms of the future and rather in terms of becoming. A becoming is first of all this: powers that rise up and pull us toward something non-personal and, in this way, 'political.'[60]

If it seems as if we are still speaking about "political becomings" in the abstract, we might turn, in closing, to a concrete example.

Joshua Oppenheimer's *The Act of Killing* (2012) –co-directed with Christine Cynn and an anonymous Indonesian filmmaker– provides a compelling example of the capacity of film to extend multilateral affects –in both its subjects and its spectators– which might produce qualitative changes in individual and collective bodies. Focussing on the aftermath of the 1965-66 massacre of between 500,000 and two to three million Indonesian "communists" (though this designation became a short-hand for anyone the perpetrators sought to remove from their communities, including ethnic Chinese Indonesians and Christians), by government backed militias, the film sees actual perpetrators of the massacres recruited into the project of producing a narrative film about their own exploits.

This "film within a film" is as chilling as it is absurd, with the group of aging self-professed paramilitary "gangsters" producing elaborate costumes and dance routines, stylising their violence in accordance with their acknowledged obsession with Hollywood genre films: musicals and Westerns. The locus of the film is perpetrator Anwar Congo, who, initially a thug who frequented the local movie houses, eventually found himself leading a death squad in North Sumatra, purportedly personally killing 1,000 people –primarily by garrotting. Early in the film, Congo takes Oppenheimer and his crew to the rooftop of a building where he murdered these "communists," proudly dancing the cha-cha-cha for which he was infamous at the time.

[59] Lapoujade, *Aberrant Movements*, p.275.
[60] Ibid.

However, through a string of outlandish and gratuitously violent self-staged scenes, the unrepentant Congo appears to become gradually aware of the gravity of his crimes. At one point, he is hooded and "tortured" by his fellow perpetrators, ultimately stopping the shoot as he suffers a nervous breakdown. In this context, we might think of Slavoj Žižek's claim –in the context of a thoroughly psychoanalytic reading of cinema– that "we need the excuse of a fiction to stage what we really are,"[61] rereading it in Deleuze's terms, as a suggestion that it is only through the "inhuman" presence of the camera, and the impersonal theatricality of performance, that Congo's "sensory-motor" justification for his actions falls away in the context of an "encounter" with their pure "intolerability." Later, he returns to the rooftop, retching repeatedly in a "pure" bodily response to his own violence, consecrating one of the most arresting scenes in contemporary cinema.[62]

Of course, there can be no guarantee that the political affects produced by cinema, nor indeed the "people" that it might call into being, are to be desired, a fact of which Deleuze is profoundly aware. Deleuze, indeed, closes *The Time-Image* with a profound meditation on Leni Riefenstahl, and on the Nazi obsession with cinema, writing:

> …it is true that up to the end Nazism thinks of itself in competition with Hollywood. The revolutionary courtship of the movement-image and an art of the masses become subject was broken off, giving way to the masses subjected as psychological automaton, and to their leader as the great spiritual automaton.[63]

It seems as if, in a certain sense, Hitler consecrates or completes a certain tendency of the movement-image, a tendency emerging initially in the exhortations to class-consciousness of Eisenstein, and the production of a Fordist social machinery in Berkeley. In situating its spectacular movements within a "whole" which contextualises them, making them seem –in the hands of certain accomplished *auteurs*– inevitable, the movement-image is inherently vulnerable to the prosecution of dangerous and concretely repressive ends. Indeed, the endless proliferation of films about Nazism and the Second World War seems to bear witness to the fact that Hitler's staging of a quasi-mythic "rise" and spectacularly destructive "fall" seem uniquely cinematic in their contours (a fact of which his propagandist Goebbels was well aware).[64]

But the time-image produces images and affects of a different order, engendering, as we have seen, not a blind or immediate activity, such as is hospitable to the imperatives of fascism, but rather a *problematisation*, an "ungrounding" which causes action itself to seem impossible. Its images emerge not from a pre-established –and as such potentially authoritarian– "possible" but from an identity-less and as-yet-un-actualised "impossible," which calls for thought to be reborn. As Deleuze writes:

[61] L. Simmons, "Slavoj Žižek," in F. Colman ed., *Film Theory and Philosophy: The Key Thinkers*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 2014, p.308.

[62] For a compelling reading of this film, and its powerful affective and ethical dimensions (as well as some important caveats around the "reliability" of its history and the ethics of its production), see chapter seven of R. Sinnerbrink, *Cinematic Ethics: Exploring Ethical Experience Through Film*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2016, pp.165-184).

[63] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.271.

[64] For more on National Socialism's consistent fascination with, and use of cinema see E. Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 2002.

> The movement-image, that is, the bond that cinema had introduced between movement and image from the outset, would have to be abandoned, in order to set free other powers that it kept subordinate…[65]

Indeed, to vulgarise, we might say that these are the powers of the outside. These are the powers of a "pure" temporality, no longer limited by the movements of action/reaction, but by the production of the impossible event in time, an event which might erupt into a constellation of new becoming(s).

However, it is in these same passages that Deleuze warns us of another "automata," which might replace these "psychomechanics" of fascism, an "automata of computation and thought, automata with controls and feedback."[66] And whereas Nazism constituted a danger immanent to the movement-image, this "computational" automata comprises a threat immanent to the time-image, or to its "electronic" successors. In this context, Deleuze will write:

> The modern configuration of the automaton is the correlate of an electronic automatism. The electronic image, that is, the tele and video image, the numerical image coming into being, had either to transform cinema or to replace it, to mark its death. We do not claim to be producing an analysis of the new images, which would be beyond our aims, but only to indicate certain effects whose relation to the cinematic image remains to be determined. The new images no longer have any outside (out-of-field) …[67]

In evoking this new, computational and electronic image, and its imbrication with cybernetic concepts of control and feedback, Deleuze is writing with characteristic prescience, pre-empting the profound imbrication of computing technologies and cinematic production in the years since. It is this development to which we will now turn.

[65] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.271
[66] Ibid., p.272
[67] Ibid.

# 4. Digital Cinema

## Introduction

> We are witnessing either a death or a birth, no one can tell for sure yet which. Something crucial is happening in the world of screen and sound… Second birth or death? This is the question facing cinema.[1]

Alexandre Arnoux's words, written in 1928, could just as easily have been written today, in response to the digitisation of the cinematic image. As it is, the source of the French screenwriter and novelist's anxiety was the advent of sound in motion pictures –the birth of the "talkie"– which seemed to many of his contemporaries[2] to be bringing to a close the "golden age" of film. It's clear therefore, that the theme of the "end," "exhaustion" or "death" of cinema is far from a new one. As André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion observe: "cinema's entire history has been punctuated by moments when its media identity has been radically called into question."[3] The advent of the "talkie," of colour, of the widescreen format, of television, have all been characterised as existential threats to the medium. Each of these developments has, in turn, proved to be a creative stimulant.

Despite, however, this eternal return of the theme of cinema's demise, it's undeniable that a certain conception of cinema –as the experience of viewing a long-form projected film print in a designated public space– no longer occupies pride of place as *the* nexus of screen culture and innovation. This form has abdicated its position to television, online streaming, user-generated video content and a wealth of digitised "small screen" practices. But this model, which is certainly that which Deleuze evokes, was only ever *one idea* of cinema. It's important therefore, before we talk about the "future" of cinema, to identify just what disparate forms and practices might be captured by this term.

Avant-garde filmmaker Hollis Frampton, in a 1979 lecture entitled "The Invention Without a Future" (a remark attributed to Louis Lumière in 1895), argued for the conception of cinema as a kind of open process, always evolving alongside technological developments and persisting insofar as it elides a stable or coherent essence. Taking up the theme of cinema's future by looking to its gradual accumulation of a *past*, he claims that:

> …it is only now, I think, that it begins to be possible to imagine a future, to construct, to predict a future for film, or for what we may generically agree to call film and its successors, because it is only now that we can begin to construct a history and, within that history, a finite and ordered set of monuments, if we wish to use T.S. Eliot's terms, that is to constitute a tradition.[4]

Frampton's *processual* notion of cinema, in which disparate practices might be linked by the same genealogy or tradition, provides us with a helpful means of thinking media changes like those attendant to digitisation. It is important, in discussing a transition like that of cinema

[1] Quoted in Gaudreault & Marion, p.31.
[2] For a thorough history of the advent of sound, and the disparate reactions with which it was greeted, see D. Gomery, *The Coming of Sound – A History*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2005.
[3] Gaudreault & Marion, p.11.
[4] H. Frampton, "The Invention Without a Future," in *October*, vol. 109 (Summer 2004), p.74.

into the digital format, that we don't mistake our historical situation for the kind of birds-eye perspective that might define cinema's essence or its fundamental limits.

Indeed Deleuze, in resonant passages, claims that Bergson's conception of film was limited by the form of cinema to which he had access at the beginning of the 20th century, mistaking its present state for the totality of its potential. As Deleuze writes:

> …did he fall victim to another illusion which affects everything in its initial stages? We know that things and people are always forced to conceal themselves, have to conceal themselves when they begin. What else could they do? They come into being within a set which no longer includes them and, in order not to be rejected, have to project the characteristics which they retain in common with the set. The essence of a thing never appears at the outset, but in the middle, in the course of its development, when its strength is assured.[5]

Bergson, writing about early 20th century film, mistook cinema for a "fragmentation" of time and movement, its discrete frames analogous to the spatialising tendencies of the intellect. In Deleuze's account however, there seems little doubt that cinema's "strength is assured" by the time it enters the self-reflexive, complex modes of the time-image. However, as I claimed in the introduction to this dissertation, Deleuze's work on film closes upon a note of profound anxiety as to the *future* of this medium. As Deleuze will write: "the life or the afterlife of the cinema depends upon its internal struggle with informatics."[6] Or again, establishing certain political contours of this struggle: "a work of art does not contain the least bit of information. In contrast, there is a fundamental affinity between a work of art and an act of resistance."[7]

We will return to Deleuze's critique of information later in this chapter. Suffice it to say, that with the process of digitisation, a fundamental characteristic of which is the treatment of its materials as "information,"[8] it seems clear that this struggle is well underway today. Is it possible however, that Deleuze, in musing on the danger of an "informational" understanding of cinema, fell victim to this same "illusion" that afflicted Bergson? Was he unable, as a result of the specificities of his *milieu*, to conceive of a "will to art"[9] animating cinema become informational? Or is he right in suggesting that information, imbricated as it is in systems of control and communication which are the grist of globalised capital, had already begun to lose its powers of resistance and creativity? At what stage do we find the cinema today? Are we speaking of a life, or an afterlife?

[5] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.3.
[6] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.277.
[7] Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, p.322.
[8] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.129.
[9] This term recurs throughout the cinema volumes, and is obviously indebted to Alois Riegl's "*Kunstwollen*," which, in Riegel's work, resonates with the notion of "*zeitgeist*," designating a historically situated, productive process which is no longer indexed to an artistic "ideality" but rather the expression of a desired reality –in accordance with a particular worldview. In the distinctly Nietzschean terms of Deleuze's deployment of the term, we resist any such "timely" conception of a "will to art," equally any subjectivist reading which would place this will in the person of the artist. We might therefore say that for Deleuze, the "will to art" emerges from the particular "lines of flight" upon which disparate artistic practices are situated, constituting the processual and immanent modes of creativity through which art produces the "untimely," or the "new." For Riegl's treatment of the term, see A. Riegl, "The Main Characteristic of the Late Roman *Kunstwollen*," in C.S. Wood ed., *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s*, Zone Books, New York, 2003, pp.87-104.

## Digitisation and the Out of Field

There has been no shortage of commentary on these very questions, and I do not propose to wade into the "analogue vs digital" debate in general. For broader, more "birds-eye" critical accounts of this transition, including some of its theoretical and philosophical implications, I refer the reader to the aforementioned texts by D.N. Rodowick,[10] Gaudreault and Marion,[11] Lev Manovich[12] and, for a more general "history" of the digitisation of media, Balbi and Magaudda.[13] Rather, I will here take up Gregory Flaxman's argument regarding the digitisation of film and its relationship with Deleuze's "outside," given not only that it appears to be one of the most convincing contemporary extensions of Deleuze's own thinking on new, computational images, and also because it offers a thoroughly persuasive diagnosis of certain tendencies in the new, digital image. As such, before I turn, in this chapter, to Deleuze's own thinking on "information" and the "outside," I will briefly introduce Flaxman's arguments as they appear in the piece "Out of Field: The Future of Film Studies," in which he suggests that the proliferation of digital forms calls into question the very possibility of cinema, and of the academic disciplines which have emerged to make sense of it.

This short piece is far from Flaxman's most significant intervention in the "film philosophy" paradigm, or indeed in that of Deleuze scholarship. The breadth of his work is perhaps best expressed in the book *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy*, part of a two-volume study dedicated to the "powers of the false" in art and philosophy.[14] As such, I seek not to categorise Flaxman's work as a whole, especially given that the question of the "out of frame" seems to remain, for him, a live one. Instead I hope to use his piece as a tentatively isolated artefact, a theoretical moment in time, from which to develop the threads of a complementary (though divergent) trajectory of study. I do so because this piece coalesces the tangle of themes I hope to explore in this dissertation. Digitisation, as it takes place in cinema, crystallises a series of profound technical, aesthetic and economic changes adhering in the late 20th century, the implications of which extend far beyond film itself. Indeed, the unique interest of this piece is to trace these developments in terms of their relation to the "outside."

Briefly, Flaxman forcefully poses the question of the entwined futures of both film and film studies, both thoroughly problematised by the advent of digitisation. As he writes:

> At this critical juncture, we find ourselves at a point of profound and even existential reckoning: if it hasn't happened already, the outgrowth of digital culture seems to dissolve the borders, stakes, and claims that had heretofore delineated film studies. Does the medium have a future, much less a field?[15]

To wrangle with this question, Flaxman's piece executes a revival of the "specificity thesis," whereby early film theorists (Münsterberg, Bálazs, Eisenstein, Bazin *et al.*) sought to identify

[10] See Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film*.
[11] See Gaudreault & Marion, *The End of Cinema?*
[12] See Manovich, *The Language of New Media*.
[13] See Balbi & Magaudda, *A History of Digital Media*.
[14] At the time of writing, a second volume, dedicated specifically to the question of cinema, remains in the works. Lamentably, the contributions it will no doubt make to these very debates remain to be seen.
[15] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.120.

essential characteristics differentiating the artistic powers of cinema from those of any other medium.[16]

Flaxman rightly notes that far and away the most frequent means of establishing a cinematic specificity has consisted in claiming an indexical relationship between film and the objects it records. The paradigmatic articulation of this position (which is maintained by contemporary thinkers writing in the context of the digital turn such as Manovich[17] and Rodowick[18]) is that which we have encountered in the work of André Bazin, who claimed that the definitive characteristic of film art was a direct ontological linkage between the object and its filmed image. As Bazin writes (italics my own): "The photographic image *is the object itself*, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it."[19]

This indexical relation, taken, in Bazin's hands, to the level of both an ontological and political significance, has been the standard defence of film's specificity in the face of digitisation and animation,[20] which are instead able to fabricate images of objects to which they bear no indexical relation. However, it is an argument which Flaxman quite rightly eschews. As he explains:

> Is the index really the last line of defence between medium specificity and media studies? This is a crude simplification of course, but it helps to frame the problem that confronts us today and perhaps even to formulate a different manner of response, one that lies 'out of frame.'[21]

In Flaxman's estimation, the key characteristic, of profound significance in the context of digitisation, is cinema's relation to the *outside*. As he writes, thus returning to Deleuze and the notion of the "out of frame":

> The perverse nature of this solution consists in eschewing the 'thereness' and 'thisness' of the image in order to affirm the cinema on the basis of that which lies beyond the limits of the visible. While the out of frame is not specific to cinema – we can trace it back at least as far as rectilinear perspective – the cinema undertakes experiments with the off-screen that divagate from the history of the prior visual arts and, more importantly, mark its historical and philosophical difference from digital media.[22]

Indeed, the reason for my focus on this short piece is a sense of profound solidarity with this thesis. But, in the spirit of "creative criticism," I hope, ultimately, to find a different –that is to say "digital"– way out of the cinematic image's contemporary impasse.

Flaxman's piece affects a two-fold motion, on the one hand offering a tentative –and Deleuzian– definition of the "cinematic," while simultaneously distancing it from the contemporary media landscapes (and films) which have come, in the 21st century, to supplant it. The nexus of this dual movement is the outside. Digital media, claims Flaxman, embarks

[16] Ibid.
[17] See Manovich, *Language of New Media*, p.295.
[18] See Rodowick, *Virtual Life of Film*, p.9.
[19] Bazin, "Ontology of the Photographic Image," p.14.
[20] See, for instance, A. Groenstad, "Back to Bazin? Filmicity in the Age of the Digital Image," in *Popular Culture Review*, vol.13, no.2 (Summer 2002), pp.11-23.
[21] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.120.
[22] Ibid., p.120.

unwittingly on a project to ameliorate the out-of-field, foreclosing its possibilities for the reterritorialisation of both thought and image.

It does so, claims Flaxman, in several key and interconnected ways. Firstly, the landscape of new media constitutes a proliferation of framings outside and beyond the frame, as well as within the frame, in the interstices between images, which populate and squeeze out the obscurities which hitherto opened onto the outside. Television, tablets, laptops, smartphones, all constitute a proliferation of the hitherto circumscribed space of the cinema itself, changing the phenomenal experience of film to one of reduced depth and fidelity in favour of increased convenience, mobility and accessibility. And within these tertiary or extra-cinematic screen spaces there is an internal proliferation, immanent to their technological operations, in the form of multiple windows and hyperlinkages. As Flaxman explains:

> …for some time, the cinema has been in conversation with computer technology, appropriating its displays and interfaces. In these new configurations, the cinema increasingly exchanges off-screen space for something like 'a number of coexisting windows.' It is as if the out of field had been folded back into the image, either in the form of so many panels multiplied across the surface of the screen or in the form of so many panels stacked within the display.[23]

This "conversation" takes place both intrinsically and extrinsically to the work of film-art itself. On the one hand, we have the now ubiquitous experience of watching films initially produced for exhibition on the big-screen on laptops, phones and on the back of aeroplane seats. On the other, we have a style of filmmaking which itself begins to express hyper-informational tendencies as part of its narrative and style.[24]

Further, Flaxman argues that digital cinema is (at least implicitly) oriented towards its own "myth of total cinema,"[25] in the form of a totalised immersive space which explicitly closes down its own outside. Flaxman takes the notion of "the myth of total cinema" from Bazin, who had rejected George Sadoul's gradualist account of cinema's evolution, in favour of a psychological history, whereby, even before cinematographic technologies emerged, the arts had striven for a representational form that might imitate the movement, colour and forms of life comprehensively.[26] Such a myth, claims Flaxman, is now animating digital cinema's attempts to extend the frame to include all possible dimensions of the image. Thus:

[23] Ibid., p.127.

[24] We might think about this change via recourse to the horror genre. What long trajectory has led horror film from the obscure expressionism of Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) or Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) to contemporary so-called "torture porn," and why? Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining,* as we have seen, derives its terror from vast plains of uncertainty punctuated by sudden, transcribed bursts of information, which impel us into a field of questions: "What is the Overlook hotel? What happened here? Was it real or in his head?" In sitting down to watch a film like *Saw* (2004) or *Hostel* (2005), however, there is only one question, "how much 'information' -in the form of moans, torn flesh and dilated pupils- can I take?" Ultimately, however, this distinction relies on a definition of information which is not that deployed in the technical vocabulary of information science, I will return to this distinction in the next chapter.

[25] Bazin, indeed, claims that from the earliest experiments with phonography and photography, their creators were animated by the idea of an art form that might perfectly replicate reality. The history of cinema therefore becomes less a probabilistic and piecemeal development towards an uncertain end, but a process pursuant to a "guiding myth…" "a recreation of the world in its own image, an image unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist or the irreversibility of time." Bazin, "The Myth of Total Cinema," in Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, p.21.

[26] As Bazin writes: "If the origins of an art reveal something of its nature, then one may legitimately consider the silent and the sound film as stages of technical development little by little made a reality out of the original

> …the digital domain has already begun to displace the screen with virtual environments, and it does not seem implausible to imagine, at some point in the future, that the frame itself will give way to an animated ambience in which spectators or even users are projected… In the inexorable rush to full-fledged virtual reality, the off-screen is presented not as an aesthetic limit or philosophical problem but as a technological obstacle that we are sure to overcome.[27]

According to this argument, one of the most pronounced and significant aspects of cinema's specificity is therefore a certain technical limitation, an inability to ever exceed the presentation of a certain circumscribed "world," which is situated within an unknown yet perfectly present externality (the out-of-frame, conceived as the virtual forces participating in the image, and the "outside" which might provoke thought). This is indeed a persuasive argument, but it fails to account for certain digital means of achieving this same function. I will return to this contention in chapters five and six.

The second key level on which Flaxman claims that digital cinema threatens the outside is eminently political. Indeed, it represents the central presupposition of his piece, that the technological and politico-economic developments surrounding digitisation are nefariously linked. "When images are subject to endless algorithms and equally endless expenditures of capital," he writes, "the on-screen is not only overdetermined but overinvested…"[28] In other words, the endless algorithmic manipulations and fabrications of major studio digital cinema constitute a reduction of aleatory and processual aspects which had once opened cinema onto the virtual. The pressures of capital (and of cinema's attempts to differentiate itself from ascendant small screen forms) determine a kind of film-making in which non-intentional forms of creativity, obscurity, and, in important ways, technical materiality (noise) are reduced, in keeping with the exigencies of market forces.

And this technical development, as we have suggested, is tied to changes in narrative and film content, which broadly embrace hyperbolic, "action packed" worlds, which leave little to the imagination. Indeed, Flaxman is quite right, in the context of his castigation of James Cameron's *Avatar*, when he identifies such "overdetermined" images with "an imperative, at once aesthetic and economic, that determines the new idea of cinema: *it must be represented*."[29] This linked economic and aesthetic injunction, claims Flaxman, constitutes a profound threat to certain cinematic potentialities that exist in relation to the *unpresented*, *the out-of-field*, and *the outside*.

At the heart of this development, as I suggested in the introduction to this thesis, is a conceptual alteration whereby the image's content becomes "data" or "information." As Flaxman has suggested, in the context of digital 360-degree motion capture technology:

> …at this point, the director is not shooting the film, nor going back and doing retakes, but manipulating the data. There is no shot to speak of, just the information necessary to render the image…[30]

'myth'… every new development added to the cinema must, paradoxically, take it nearer and nearer to its origins. In short, cinema has not yet been invented!" (Ibid.)

[27] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.128.

[28] Ibid., p.129.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

Key to Flaxman's position –developing concerns we find in Deleuze– is thus a conception of the image eschewing other (potentially metaphysical and noetic) dimensions in order to become simply "information." As Flaxman recapitulates, closing his essay with both a seamless definition and a compelling statement of conviction:

> The outside emerges between worlds, none more valid than another but collectively incommensurable; and yet these worlds will be brought together by the improbable torsions of so many 'irrational' cuts. This is the virtual power of the cinema… Even as the digital image erodes this cinematic power, or perhaps precisely because it does so, we ought to make the off-screen the source of a new critical agonism. Today, more than ever, we ought to lay claim to the concept of the outside as the most rigorous description of the cinema and the most unrelenting critique of the digital means and media which claim to have superseded it.[31]

The proliferation of frames, the exigencies of capital which form the image, and a treatment of the image and its contents as "data" or "information:" these are the three key threads of Flaxman's piece, which combine into a compelling diagnosis of the contemporary threat posed to cinematic art. As Flaxman rightly notes, these factors are profoundly imbricated, and we will have cause to treat all three, however I hope to focus on the claim which I feel is perhaps most significant, that the image has become "information."

This, indeed, appears to be one of the central concerns Deleuze outlines in his discussion of the new, "electronic" and "numerical" images. As such, we will now turn to the concept of information as it is deployed –and criticised– by Deleuze, as imbricated with functions of control and of capital, such as threaten the "resistant" capacities he identifies with art more generally. This discussion, however, will pave the way for the following chapter, in which I will argue that the very concept of "information" might offer the seeds of its own resistance, opening new digital means and media up to their own "out-of-field."

## Information and Philosophy

As we have seen, one of the fundamental axes by which Flaxman identifies the "new idea of cinema" –and as such the contours of a broader contemporary digital-image space– is in terms of its material structure as "information," which, he argues, poses grave dangers to Deleuze's concept of a cinematic "outside." In advancing this position, Flaxman deftly draws on certain key themes in Deleuze's work. As such, I will briefly outline these themes as they emerge in Deleuze, explicating his critique of "information," specifically as it is formulated in his "Postscript on the Societies of Control," in the lecture "What is the Creative Act?" and in the closing chapters of *The Time-Image*. Here, breaking with a more polyvocal deployment of the term across earlier works with Guattari, as well as with Gilbert Simondon's "metaphysical" philosophy of information, with which he was obviously familiar,[32] Deleuze

[31] Ibid., p.133.

[32] I will return to Simondon's philosophy of information in the next chapter. For now, it suffices to say that as one of Deleuze's influences –see for instance Deleuze's short piece "On Gilbert Simondon" in the collection *Desert Islands and Other Texts*– Deleuze would most certainly have been aware of the metaphysical response to cybernetics advanced by Simondon, particularly in the text *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique (L'individuation à la lumiere des notions de forme et d'information)* the only text of Simondon's which Deleuze

explicitly associates information with a new regime of "control," which exercises power through modular, mobile and dispersive distributions commensurate with the production of a neo-liberal subject. It is in this context that Deleuze will claim that "the life or the afterlife of cinema depends on its internal struggle with informatics,"[33] identifying information with functions of communication, transmission and circulation antithetical to art as he identifies it throughout his *oeuvre*. "A work of art does not contain the least bit of information," Deleuze will claim, "in contrast, there is a fundamental affinity between a work of art and an act of resistance."[34]

"Information" is a concept which has seen no shortage of philosophical discussion since the widespread advent of "information technologies" throughout the 1980s and 90s. Indeed Ashley Woodward, in the context of his sophisticated reading of Lyotard's aesthetics, rightly notes that philosophy may well be in the process of making yet another "turn," in order to comprehend and participate in these developments. As he explains:

> The contemporary theoretical context witnesses many claims to some kind of significant 'turn' –ethical, theological, speculative, neuroscientific, nonhuman, and so on– which would perhaps be comparable to the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy which dominated much of the twentieth century. Each declaration of a 'turn' stakes a claim as to what is at issue in thought today. One of the most plausible claims is to that of an *informational* turn, plausible both because of the way it traces its development to the linguistic turn itself, and because it undeniably has much broader cultural resonance: we are living today in an 'information age,' as few would dispute, resulting from what some term the 'fourth revolution,' that of computation.[35]

Evoking a theme of Luciano Floridi's, that this "informational turn" may well rival the three other great decentering moments in the history of thought –the Copernican, the Darwinian and the Freudian–[36] in terms of its fundamental re-ordering of our conceptions of the world and of our place in it, Woodward commences a project of rereading information theory in the context of Lyotard's philosophy, which is indicative of a concerted movement among contemporary thinkers dedicated to so-called "continental" paradigms.

Indeed, as Woodward's work indicates, 20th century thinkers working in this tradition have often hitherto advanced broadly critical or pessimistic accounts of information theory. While there are some exceptions –most notably Gilbert Simondon's sophisticated reading of information as the function of a metastability with which we might think beyond Aristotelian

definitively cites. In terms of recapitulating Deleuze's critique of information, I have left this text to one side, given that Deleuze is clearly referring to information in a distinct sense and context, however, when I turn to my own "re-reading" of information theory, and a riposte to some of Deleuze's claims, I will have cause to briefly introduce Simondon's work.

[33] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.277.

[34] Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, p.322.

[35] Woodward, *Lyotard and the Inhuman* Condition, p.41.

[36] Ibid, p.70.

hylomorphism[37] – thinkers such as Heidegger,[38] Lyotard,[39] Guattari,[40] and Deleuze have all advanced critiques which broadly identify information theory and technologies with a generalised grammatisation and instrumentalism attendant to the advance of capitalism. This general position is articulated by Heidegger in a 1962 lecture later published as "Traditional Language and Technological Language," in which he claims that:

> With the unconditional reign of modern technology there is an increase in power –the demand as well as the performance – of the technological language that was devised for the widest possible spread of information. Because this [power] is scattered in systems of formalized reports and signals, the technological language is the severest and most menacing attack on what is peculiar to language: saying as showing and as the letting-appear of what is present and what is absent, of reality in the widest sense.[41]

Heidegger's claim here that "information" constitutes a technical language which might menace language's less instrumental, more philosophically expressive characteristics, is not such a far cry from Deleuze's own subsequent postulation of information as that which "replaces nature," insomuch as it fabricates an interested and utilitarian horizon of thought directly indexed to industrialised capital. This tendency in the 20th century "continental" tradition, easily understood given information theory's explicit ties both to new forms of computerised capitalism and to the American military-industrial complex, has however, perhaps obscured some of the latent *poieses* we might identify within information theories and technics. It is into this breach that contemporary interlocutors like Woodward and Floridi have stepped.

But before we can turn to some of the concepts emerging from this burgeoning area of contemporary study, we must recapitulate Deleuze's critique of information, which is spread across several later works, and which in its contours and objectives closely resembles these other thinkers in the European critical-metaphysical tradition. It is my contention that Deleuze has here perhaps neglected the characteristic –and at times perverse– optimism which characterises his philosophy more generally, eschewing a creative-critical "rereading" of information technology in favour of a generalised criticism of its forms and formulae.

## Deleuze and Information

According to Deleuze's conception, the problem of "information" is eminently political. In his terms, "information" designates a category which, behind a mask of apparent neutrality, in fact imposes a set of highly interested imperatives, which buttress a given socio-political *status quo*. This critique is perhaps most forcefully stated in the short lecture "What is the Creative Act?" which condenses many of the key themes of the cinema volumes for a largely non-philosophical audience at the FEMIS film and television school in Paris. Here Deleuze

[37] See G. Simondon, *L'Individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information*, Éditions Jérôme Millon, Grenoble, 2013. We will return to Simondon's work later in this chapter.
[38] See M. Heidegger, "Traditional Language and Technical Language," trans. W.T. Gregory, in *Journal of Philosophical Research*, vol. 23 (1998), pp.129-145.
[39] See, for instance, the essays "Matter and Time" and "Time Today," in J.F. Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. G. Bennington & R. Bowlby, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1991.
[40] For a clear formulation of Guattari's critique of information, see Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious,* pp.98-104.
[41] Heidegger, "Traditional Language," p.141.

recapitulates his theme, which we have elaborated with reference to *Difference and Repetition*, that ideas are rare, situated as opposed to general, and fundamentally creative. Thus, he claims, evoking key notions which will also emerge in *What is Philosophy?*:

> I consider that having an idea, in any case, is not on the order of communication. This is the point I was aiming for. Everything we are talking about is irreducible to any communication. This is not a problem. What does it mean? Primarily, communication is the transmission and propagation of information. What is information? It is not very complicated, everyone knows what it is. Information is a set of imperatives, slogans, directions –order words. When you are informed, you are told what you are supposed to believe.[42]

In speaking of the "order-word," Deleuze evokes a concept developed in his work with Guattari. For Deleuze and Guattari, "order-words" are functions of language which impel a certain action or obedience in subjects. As such, these are functions which likewise effect a more generalised "ordering" of social life. Order-words depend upon the inbuilt presuppositions and conditions of the assemblage immanent to any given enunciation, in order to direct concrete transformations in the bodies to which they are referred. Thus, as Verena Conley explains, in an archetypical example of the "order-word": "it is the judge's sentence that transforms the accused into a convict."[43]

It is important to note, in keeping with Deleuze and Guattari's immanent and mongrel approach to semiotics, that "order-words" do not function only in terms of their explicit linguistic content, instead operating in terms of a certain "redundancy" of linguistic elements. Their semantic "meaning" is not necessarily indexed to the effects the order-word is intended to produce, which instead operate at the level of pre-individual and intensive forces, conditioned by social, political, biological and technological conditions– to name just a few of these axes.

We might think, by way of a quotidian example, of an instance evoked several times by Deleuze in tracing the linkage between "order-words" and information –that of the newspaper. Ostensibly a source of "facts," any attentive reader of the Murdoch press is well aware that buried beneath the explicit content of the written word is a set of presuppositions, imperatives and injunctions –presuppositions about migrants and crime for instance, or injunctions around to whom one should direct their vote.

It is in this sense that Deleuze will claim that information functions by virtue of a certain "nullity" or "ineffectiveness."[44] Its surface effects are constituted by a pretention to "neutrality" or "factuality," a feigned "ineffectiveness," which in fact masks certain interested and subterranean functions of power, a fact that makes information a particularly nefarious fabric of "order-words."

In this context, to return to the distinction of Floridi's we have already encountered in the introduction to this thesis, it might seem as though Deleuze is using the term "information" in a distinctly "semantic" sense –referring to something like "meaningful data," or "facts," albeit "facts" thoroughly problematised by the interested conditions of their production– a theme we find echoed in the epistemic interventions of Foucault. However it is important to

[42] Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, p.320.
[43] V. Conley "Order-Word," in Parr, *Deleuze Dictionary*, p.198.
[44] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.276.

note that Deleuze's evocation of the term "information," not only in "What is the Creative Act," but also in important passages in *Cinema II*, and *What is Philosophy?,* is explicit in linking *this* conception of "information" to the functions and architecture of "information technologies."

## The Society of Control

Deleuze turns to the linkage between "information" and computation and communications technologies in the short 1993 text "The Postscript on the Societies of Control," in which he claims that the so-called "disciplinary societies"[45] identified by Foucault are in the process of being superseded by societies which use information technologies and informational conceptions of the human being in such a way as to engender new forms of modular, self-regulating control, perhaps more nefarious than the clumsy "discipline" of State sanctioned violence and panoptical spaces. These societies, which use widespread pharmaceutical interventions, hyper-individualistic competition, debt and general conditions of employment precariousness to establish forms of internalised obedience to the capitalist *status-quo*, are likewise buttressed by powerful new technologies for the surveillance and "data-ization" of populations.

We will recall that for Foucault, the 17th and 18th centuries saw the emergence of a new and generalised social form in which discipline and punishment were no longer exceptional or circumscribed operations but proliferated into a general social organisation which took a normalising surveillance of the body as its principle.[46] Of the paradigmatic Foucauldian disciplinary spaces, schools, prisons and hospitals, Deleuze writes, however, that by the 20th century (italics added):

> The administrations in charge never cease announcing supposedly necessary reforms: to reform schools, to reform industries, hospitals, the armed forces, prisons. But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It's only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door. These are the *societies of control*, which are in the process of replacing the disciplinary societies.[47]

Opposed to these enclosed and discrete disciplinary spaces, Deleuze, borrowing the terminology of "control" from William S. Burroughs, will posit instead a constellation of modular, a-centred and metamorphosing processes of control; paradigmatically those of debt, drugs, and neo-liberal style individualism.

These are control mechanisms which no longer depend upon a logic of closure, capture and surveillance, but rather upon a logic all the more inescapable because it is modular and mobile, adjusting itself to the flux and change of the subject's unique social and bodily coordinates. As Deleuze explains, in the so-called "disciplinary society:"

[45] See M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish – The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan, Vintage Books, New York, 1995.
[46] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p.209.
[47] Deleuze, "Postscript," p.4.

> The different internments or spaces of enclosure through which the individual passes are independent variables: each time one is supposed to start from zero, and although a common language for all these places exists, it is *analogical*. On the other hand, the different control mechanisms are inseparable variations, forming a system of variable geometry the language of which is *numerical* (which doesn't mean binary). Enclosures are *molds*, distinct castings, but controls are a *modulation*, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point."[48]

As such, in the "control societies," subjectivising processes become –in a certain sense– no longer doctrinaire or proscriptive, but mobile and differential, indexed to capital in such a way as to allow an apparent image of "freedom" to exist commensurate with an ultimate axiomatization of specific modes of production and of subjectivisation.

For Deleuze, this transition is well illustrated in the move from the power structures of the "factory" to that of the "corporation," a development expressed in concrete demographic changes in the labour force, as much as in a certain mode of subjectivisation which transcends this concrescence. Whereas the traditional proletarian factory constituted a metastability which was able, at times, to be made to benefit its workers –in the form, for instance, of collective bargaining– the modular logic of the neo-liberal corporation, which pits workers against one another in the service of sales targets, bonuses and various strata of competition, threatens the possibility of any such gains. As Deleuze explains:

> …the factory was a body that contained internal forces at a level of equilibrium, the highest possible in terms of production… but in a society of control, the corporation has replaced the factory, and the corporation is a spirit, a gas… the factory constituted individuals as a single body to the double advantage of the boss who surveyed each element within the mass and the unions who mobilized a mass resistance; but the corporation constantly presents the brashest rivalry as a healthy form of emulation, an excellent motivational force that opposes individuals against one another and runs through each, dividing each within.[49]

This destabilisation of the hitherto bipolar movement between the individual and the mass which takes place in disciplinary societies, therefore sees every worker become his or her own "boss," in the sense of taking personal responsibility for an internalised subjectivisation in the service of production.

This change, claims Deleuze, is likewise illustrated by the usage in control societies of new informatic forms such as the "database." Whereas the individual-mass dyad was previously expressed through forms of singular identity such as the *signature* or the *number* –an individual's "unique" mark in the context of a collective– the society of control, claims Deleuze, establishes a new formation of internally cleft individuals defined instead as absolutely interchangeable in the context of the *database*. As he explains:

> In societies of control… what is important is no longer either a signature or a number, but a code: the code is a *password*…The numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it.[50]

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., p.5.
[50] Ibid.

In this context, Deleuze, in a characteristically differential (re)expression, will redeploy his concept of the "dividual" –which, in a thoroughly different context, also emerges in his discussion of the cinematic frame[51]– using the term here to refer to an internally cleft subject determined through digital and informational substrates. Or, as he explains: "we no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become '*dividuals*,' and masses, samples, data, markets or '*banks*.'"[52] Here, the dividual can be understood not only in the sense of a kind of internal "splitness," designating, in Paul Patton's terms, "not whole subjects but partial subjects defined by certain functional aspects identified in relation to particular ends,"[53] but also as constantly "dividing" commensurate with an endless project of neo-liberal and prosumer "self-creation" (we might think of the perpetual (re)education and "upskilling" required by neo-liberal labour markets).[54]

This change, as it emerges in everyday life, to a form of subjectivisation which takes place through the consistent collection and interpolation of information, is perhaps illustrated by the demise of the taxi and the rise of Uber. In the ostensibly "disciplinary" space of the taxi, the worker must surrender their time and efforts, but is afforded at least the consolation of potential rudeness in the face of a long day, or an unpleasant customer. In the Uber, however, not only is the worker's behaviour self-monitored in response to the constant collection of information –in the form of user ratings and reviews– but this model is replicated in the experience of the customer, who is reciprocally rated in turn. As such, an "informationally" moderated, yet self-imposed mode of behaviour is engendered in both worker and consumer, in a function which proliferates in different forms across the breadth of so-called "late capitalist" societies.

We can already perceive the profound importance this short text has for any attempt to put Deleuze in dialogue with "new media" and information technology. Indeed, in particularly prescient terms, Deleuze will claim, as a consequence of the society of control, that: "the disciplinary man was a discontinuous producer of energy, but the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network. Everywhere *surfing* has already replaced the older *sports*."[55] Strangely, this seems to be the first occurrence of the "surfing" analogy in the context of networked information, a year before the public gained access to the "World Wide Web" in August 1991. This cosmetic prescience aside, the technicity of computing networks clearly informs Deleuze's conception of control societies. As he explains, in a passage in which he links various forms of social organisation with the machines which inform their operations:

[51] According to Deleuze, the cinematic shot is "dividual" [*dividuel*] inasmuch as framing –and the consistent relation between different framed images– engenders a consistent redistribution of values within a given shot. This redistribution of values also abides in the difference between the film and the objects filmed, such as cinema redistributes the values of non-cinematic "reality." As Deleuze explains: "The cinematographic image is always dividual. This is because, in the final analysis, the screen, as the frame of frames, gives a common standard of measurement to things which do not have one – long shots of countryside and close-ups of the face, an astronomical system and a single drop of water – parts which do not have the same denominator of distance, relief or light. In all these senses the frame ensures a deterritorialisation of the image." (Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.18).
[52] Deleuze, "Postscript," p.5.
[53] P. Patton, "Philosophy and Control," in Beckman, *Control Culture*, p.195.
[54] J.T. Nealon, "'The Path is for Your Steps Alone:' Popular Music, Neoliberalism and Biopolitics," in Beckman, *Control Culture*, p.105.
[55] Deleuze, "Postscript," p.6.

> Types of machines are easily matched with each type of society – not that machines are determining, but because they express those social forms capable of generating them and using them. The old societies of sovereignty made use of simple machines – levers, pulleys, clocks; but the recent disciplinary societies equipped themselves with machines involving energy, with the passive danger of entropy and the active danger of sabotage; the societies of control operate with machines of a third type, computers whose passive danger is jamming and whose active one is piracy and the introduction of viruses.[56]

Here we get a sense of the politically complex nature of these developments, which Deleuze is at pains to stress. While machines like computers, and the networks they support, are thoroughly imbricated with these new modes of control, the relation is not simply one of causality. Likewise, in a move characteristic of the "optimism" which I claim consistently animates his philosophy, Deleuze introduces the machines commensurate with each regime of domination in terms of each of their potentialities for self-destruction and for sabotage.

Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari are far from techno-pessimists, and the development of "machines" understood in the colloquial sense is always situated for them within the context of "social" and "collective" machines understood in terms inherited from Lewis Mumford.[57] As such, when we come to understand the functions of "machines" in the sense of technical objects like the computer, we must always remain cognisant of the fact that, for Deleuze and Guattari, these machines comprise parts or dimensions of larger social, cultural (etc.) machines which situate them and deploy their energies.

Leaving this contention aside, it is therefore clear, in speaking not only of "information" as it appears in newspapers or on television, but also as it flows through databases, networks and algorithms, that Deleuze –in keeping with the multi-lateral operations of his philosophy– is speaking about information in both semantic *and* technical terms– designating not only a collection of explicit imperatives and "order words" but also an implicit function of algorithmic and informatic systems which produce particular forms of subjectivity in the service of certain socio-political ends– namely, those of neo-liberalism and capital.

Unsurprisingly, given its meditation on the entwined factors of global, "post-industrial"[58] capital and information technology, the "Postscript" has been the focus of a great deal of scrutiny in the years since Deleuze's death, particularly in the field of "new technology" and "new media" studies. As Mark Poster notes, such approaches should be made cautiously, and not risk deriving too neat a historical trajectory from Deleuze's account:

> Elements of 'control' existed in Europe in the early modern period as the state hired spies to keep track of suspected miscreants. Equally, forms of 'discipline' proliferate in the twenty-first century as the United States, for example, erects more and more prisons under the so called 'get-tough' policies of recent administrations. The shift from discipline to control is also Eurocentric, overlooking the very different disposition of these state strategies in the southern hemisphere.[59]

[56] Ibid.
[57] For an excellent summary of this aspect of their thought, see W. Bogard, "Deleuze and Machines: A Politics of Technology?" in Poster & Savat eds., *Deleuze and New Technology*, p.16.
[58] Daniel Bell's term is not explicitly used in the piece; however, it captures many of the key themes Deleuze explores here with regards to contemporary capital.
[59] Poster & Savat, *Deleuze and New Technology*, p.260.

Indeed, both Poster and David Savat have argued that the "database" functions of the society of control can, in many ways, be seen as intensifying the hierarchical and normalising forms of visibility Foucault attributes to a disciplinary society.[60]

These objections aside, Deleuze's lucubration in this text has a great deal to tell us about "new media," information technologies and networks. At the very least, it's clear that in the years since Deleuze wrote on control, technologies for the storage and transfer of electronic information have taken an increasingly prominent role in the prosecution of state interests. As Saul Newman writes, summarising these developments well:

> There can be little doubt that we are living today in a control society. The signs are all around us: ubiquitous CCTV cameras filming public spaces; the introduction of biometric scanning and facial recognition technology in major airports; the planned implementation of ID cards in the United Kingdom and elsewhere – cards which would contain biometric information; widespread DNA testing for even minor offences, and the setting up of national DNA databases; the use of electronic monitoring bracelets for offenders or terrorist suspects placed under home detention; the use of 'smart cards' on public transport systems and for accessing health services, and so on. We are seeing the development – bit by bit – of an all-encompassing system of surveillance and regulation, the weaving of an intricate web of overlapping circuits of control, information gathering and identification.[61]

All of these mechanisms of surveillance and control depend upon screen and information technologies, and any analysis of either in the 21st century must acknowledge their deployment along these lines, regardless of potentialities for radical thinking and creativity with which we might hope to identify them. But how does Deleuze read the entwined themes of "information" and of "control" in the context of his thinking on cinema, and on its outside?

## Control and Information in *The Time-Image*

We will recall, as per our earlier discussion, that for Deleuze, a fundamental quality of the "frame" is *informational*– the presentation and communication of a series of objects or parts collected to form a set. In order to avoid an "empty aestheticism,"[62] cinema, and, we may well extrapolate, art more generally, must "communicate" in at least a marginal sense, commencing with certain determinate objectives of expression. However, the expressive mode which is ultimately that of art emerges from the artwork's fundamental relations with not only its own –inhuman– materiality, but also with the a-centered and internally "violent" functions this materiality is able to engender in sensibility. As such, as we have noted, this "informatic" tendency of cinema took place in profound relation to (in the classical cinema of *The Movemet-Image*) an extended set, or "open," and later (in the post-war cinema of *The Time-Image*) an "outside."

Deleuze, however, will close the second of his cinema volumes by warning of a situation in which this informatic or communicative tendency of images attains supremacy, eliding the

[60] Ibid, p.47.
[61] S. Newman, "Politics in the Age of Control," in Poster & Savat eds., *Deleuze and New Technology*, p.105.
[62] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.18.

more obscure potentiality of cinematic images to establish relations with the un-thought or the outside. For Deleuze, this development represents an existential threat to what he has argued is a unique cinematic relationship with the virtual, or more properly, the crystallisations and bipolar movements formed by cinema between virtual and actual images. The problem, for Deleuze, seems to be that "electronic" and "numerical" images –and here Deleuze must be thinking not only of television, but of computers and the informatic "Minitel" telecommunications system– consecrate new screen forms oriented less towards experiments with visuality –such as determines a frame and in turn, an out-of-frame– than to entwined processes of communication and computation, which perhaps eschew this externality.

Deleuze outlines his reticence around television in the short "Letter to Serge Daney," written as a preface to the latter's *Ciné-Journal* in 1986. Here, Deleuze will claim that while there is nothing *in principle* to prevent television from attaining the kinds of resistant functions he will ascribe to cinema, television's ultimately "social" dimensions, "stifle its potential aesthetic function."[63] Part of the way this occurs, Deleuze claims, is television's function of engendering what he will describe as a certain "professional" spectatorship– insomuch as various expected or *learnt* forms of watching –we might think, for instance, of the affective imperatives of canned laughter tracks– are engendered according to broader social conditions. Thus, Deleuze will write:

> TV is, in its present form, the ultimate consensus: it's direct social engineering, leaving no gap at all between itself and the social sphere, it's social engineering in its purest form. For how could professional training, the professional eye, leave any room for something supplemental in the way of perceptual exploration?[64]

Here we get a clear sense of the problems Deleuze identifies with certain forms of contemporary, non-cinematic images– a closure of spaces for perceptual experimentation, in favour of pre-determined (sensory-motor) forms commensurate with particular socio-cultural *status quos*. In this sense, the televisual image is explicitly, for Deleuze, associated with the functions of control to which he will dedicate his 1993 text. As he explains, returning to the theme of a cinematic "year zero" –and emergence of the time-image– after the Second World War:

> Cinema met its first death at the hands of an authoritarian power culminating in fascism. Why does its threatened second death involve television, just as the first involved radio? Because television is the form in which the new powers of 'control' become immediate and direct.[65]

[63] Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p.74.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Deleuze, Ibid., p.75. In this context, Deleuze is evoking themes that are likewise present in his earlier work with Guattari. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, for instance, they will evoke a regime of "machinic enslavement," in which individuals, once plugged into the mass-media systems of late capital, become little more than transmission nodes for pre-determined functions and movements of information, as they explain: "…one is enslaved by TV as a human machine insofar as the television viewers are no longer consumers or users, nor even subjects who supposedly 'make' it, but intrinsic component pieces, 'input' and 'output,' feedback or recurrences that are no longer connected to the machine in such a way as to produce or use it. In machinic enslavement, there is nothing but transformations and exchanges of information, some of which are mechanical, others human." (Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.458).

There are a few caveats that need to be raised around this position, lest we slip into the kind of limited and limiting "high-browism" of 20th century thinkers like Adorno. Firstly, we might argue that while 20th century cinema benefited from various periods of experimentation and politicised creativity –pre-Hayes code Hollywood, neorealism, the French New Wave– it has also consistently, as Deleuze well notes, been imbricated with the functions and proliferation of control functions immanent to (American) capitalism.

Secondly, the delineation of supposedly "creative" cinema in opposition to prosaic and artistically conservative television neglects certain "aberrant movements" we might detect in television production– especially in the years since Deleuze wrote. The rise of so-called "cinematic" television –shows like *True Detective* (2014-present) with its oft-vaunted six minute tracking shot, *Transparent* (2014-present) with its character driven treatment of issues in contemporary "identity politics," or *The Wire* (2002-2008), with its multi-layered depiction or Baltimore's political and criminal strata of power relations– may well be read as problematising this distinction, or even of realising Deleuze's own claim that "electronic images will have to be based on still another will to art, or on as yet unknown aspects of the time-image."[66]

I propose to leave this question to one side, in accordance with my decision to focus squarely on the question of the contemporary digitisation of the *cinematic* image, however I will state in passing that I feel as though Deleuze's observations here remain persuasive, especially if we pause to think about what, in this contemporary "golden age" of serial television, constitutes genuine experimentation, risk-taking or even "resistance." It would appear that the cinematic tropes and techniques used by this form of television production stem not, after all, from any profound desire to critique habitual modes of perception or mentation, but are deployed in the service of decidedly social and entertainment functions commensurate with a dominant socio-political assemblage of conditions. Such televisual practices seem generally to draw on self-consciously "intelligent" aesthetic and narrative devices in order to generate critical and spectator loyalties, and to guarantee continued audience engagement via a consistently "dividual" episodic construction.

As we have said, Deleuze refers not only to the "electronic" images of television, but also to the "numerical" images of computation, which, with no slight prescience, he feels are equally implicated in the future trajectory of the image. The potential problem with such images stems likewise from a certain eschewal of the out-of-frame, this time, through the turn away from functions of visuality *toute court*. As he explains, in the penultimate chapter of *Cinema II*:

> …when the frame or the screen functions as instrument panel, printing or computing table, the image is constantly being cut into another image, being printed through a visible mesh, sliding over other images in an 'incessant stream of messages,' and the shot itself is less like an eye than an overloaded brain endlessly absorbing information…[67]

This "incessant stream," has constituted a central preoccupation of theories responding to the advent of digital and information technologies in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Indeed, the model of an overloaded, "informatic" brain, losing capacities for depth reflection and

[66] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.273.
[67] Ibid., p.276.

criticality, constitutes a profound contemporary anxiety around information technologies, manifested in interventions as diverse as those of Nicholas Carr[68] and Bernard Stiegler.[69]

For Deleuze, the danger of this "incessancy" lies in a related tendency toward *closure* of information systems, such as would disconnect them from the whole or outside which was hitherto the source of cinema's unique powers– the destabilising significance of a given image. As we have seen, Deleuze will characterise this development in terms of a certain "radical ineffectiveness" of information, a sense that its endless circulation and proliferation (communication) engenders an interiority which elides catalytic and generative contact with *any outside*. As he explains:

> …what makes information all-powerful (the newspapers, and then the radio, and then the television) is its very nullity, its radical ineffectiveness. Information plays on its ineffectiveness in order to establish its power, its very power to be ineffective, and thereby all the more dangerous.[70]

We might recall here the Bergsonian critique of closed systems, his contention that purely scientific approaches to reality delineate artificial areas of study which elide the philosophical imposition to comprehend life itself as indivisible continuity and flux, a process of irreducible ontogenesis.[71] There is a profound resonance between this appraisal of mechanistic science and a critique we might make of information-technology cultures in the 21st century (indeed it is this same critique, albeit with very different conclusions, which animates Stiegler's work). Faced with the vast glut of specialised and archived information on the Internet, for example, there is no guarantee that we might make any meaningful use of it.

Deleuze himself, as we have earlier noted, remains cautious in his declamations around informational and electronic images. However, he does quite clearly suggest that the digital image is one which closes down relations with the outside, writing that:

[68] Journalist Nicholas Carr provides a neuro-scientifically informed account of the recent changes wrought upon human consciousness in his 2010 bestseller *The Shallows*, citing cognitivist accounts of the ways in which the human brain has become increasingly distraction prone, and less oriented towards depth-thinking and complex problem solving with the advent of information technology. See N. Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2010.

[69] Stiegler, across various works, critiques the rationalising tendency inherent to a form of reason unable to properly (and politically) think its fundament in technics, which is thus "essentially precarious," especially in the face of malevolent forces of marketisation. As he writes in *States of Shock*: "What perhaps we today have also discovered, and what we experience so painfully and anxiously, is that reason presupposes retentional conditions for its *Bildung*… these conditions form and support individual and collective memory, which depend on hypomnesic techniques (on *hypomnemata*) that have today been industrialized, and which, with the development of rationalization, are no longer in the control of any public or noetic powers: they have passed into the hands of what Polanyi called the 'self-regulating market.'" (B. Stiegler, *States of Shock: stupidity and knowledge in the twenty-first century*, trans. D. Ross, Polity, Cambridge, 2015). In keeping with his thematic of a general (and uninterrogated) "technologisation" of knowledge, Stiegler draws equally upon Adorno and Simondon to identify a "generalized proletarianization" which serves to liquidate knowledge.

[70] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.276.

[71] As Bergson writes: "The systems we cut out within it would, properly speaking, not then be *parts* at all; they would be *partial views* of the whole. And, with these partial views put end to end, you will not make even a beginning of the reconstruction of the whole, any more than, by multiplying photographs of an object in a thousand different aspects, you will reproduce the object itself… analysis will undoubtedly resolve the process of organic creation into an ever-growing number of physico-chemical phenomena, and chemists and physicists will have to do, of course, with nothing but these. But it does not follow that chemistry and physics will ever give us the key to life." (Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p.31).

> The electronic image, that is, the tele and video image, the numerical image coming into being, had either to transform cinema or to replace it, to mark its death… The new images no longer have any outside (out-of-field), any more than they are internalized in a whole; rather, they have a right side and a reverse, reversible and non-superimposable, like a power to turn back on themselves. They are the object of a perpetual reorganization, in which a new image can arise from any point whatever in the preceding image. The organization of space here loses its privileged directions, and first of all the privilege of the vertical which the position of the screen still displays, in favour of an omni-directional space which constantly varies its angles and coordinates, to exchange the vertical and the horizontal.[72]

This spatial change, the transformation of the screen's very orientation from that of the window or painting to that of an information table – a map or newspaper – constitutes one of the key ways in which Deleuze will suggest that new and digital media obscures or forecloses the possibility of an outside. The informatic space, by virtue of its ability to constantly reorganise space and time, and by proliferating its framings in ways we have already seen in Flaxman's analysis of the new digital spectacle, enables it to overcome the limitations which had served to indicate its contingency and limits.

We might think here, by way of contemporary example, of so-called "massively multiplayer" or "open world" video games like *World of War Craft* (2004) or the *Grand Theft Auto series* (1997-2013), in which a player's avatar is relatively free to pursue courses of action in an immersive "world" designed for maximal dispersion of content– often in the form of scattered vignettes, extensive "wastelands" and extra-narrative characters and situations. Such electronic moving images, in terms of their technical and aesthetic architecture, would appear at first glimpse literally to ameliorate any "outside," presenting their worlds as all-encompassing and self-contained (and thus an ideal site for escapism and addiction.)[73] If the information space is constantly able to proliferate itself according to a given representational logic, we risk a model of thought only capable of travelling along pre-determined channels – an informational sensory-motor schema.

Indeed, Deleuze intuits such a space in his discussion of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's film *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (1977), which combines invented characters and real testimonies, genuine artefacts and surreal, theatrical framings into an informatic web which bears a striking resemblance to the then-unrealised post-military internet. As Deleuze writes (italics my own):

> …one of Syberberg's originalities is to stretch out a vast space of information, like a complex, heterogeneous, anarchic space where the trivial and the cultural, the public and the private, the historic and the anecdotal, the imaginary and the real are brought close together, and sometimes on the side of speech, discourses, commentaries, familiar or ancillary testimonies, sometimes on the side of sight, of existing or no longer existing settings, engravings, plans and projects, acts of seeing with acts of

[72] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.272.

[73] Nb. As I said earlier in the dissertation, I have made a strategic decision not to treat video games in depth in the context of this thesis, given that there is already a significant body of literature dedicated to their philosophical implications, and the parameters of this scholarship have evolved along different (though comparable) contours. Here, the video game is used once again to illustrate a particular point of Deleuze's, not to advance my central argument with regards to the digital cinematic image.

> clairvoyance, all of equal importance and forming a network, in kinds of relationship which are never those of causality. *The modern world is that in which information replaces nature*.[74]

But from this presentation of a paradigmatic information-technology space, Deleuze derives the following message: "Syberberg's powerful idea is that *no information, whatever it might be, is sufficient to defeat Hitler*."[75]

Despite, therefore, the auto-critical function of the film, which *uses* information in such a way as to communicate this idea, Deleuze remains convinced that information in itself –un-buttressed by what is presumably Syberberg's more traditional "will to art"– operates according to a totalising logic, "replacing nature," obscuring virtuality and thus potentialities for change. As we have suggested, the closed systems instigated by informatics lack the political and spiritual potentialities which make them efficacious when it counts. These, for Deleuze, must be found "outside."

In this context, one of the ways in which Deleuze argues we might escape from the grip of "informational control" is by refusing to take at face-value the "neutrality" of the communication and transmission of information –its apparent "factuality"– instead "opening up" information by asking speculative and contextual questions proper to philosophy or art. For Deleuze, the way we "go beyond" information is by asking, whenever we encounter it: "*what is the source and what is the addressee?*"[76]

"Information" may well be the transmission of "facts" in a newspaper, or data in a computer or communications system, but Deleuze's conviction is that we must continually question not only the conditions for this "factuality," but also the (perhaps unconscious) interests and imperatives it serves. In so doing, we open up the ostensibly "closed" system of information-transmission to political and ethical questions which are the remit of both philosophy and art.

The interpolation of such questions within an apparently "neutral" communications system, is once more conceived, for Deleuze, in terms of creativity and resistance. As he explains, in a 1990 conversation with Antonio Negri, establishing once more the profound schism in his thought between *creativity* and *communication*: "Creating has always been something different from communicating. The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control."[77] Or again, returning to the clutch of political concepts advanced throughout *Cinema II*:

> What we most lack is a belief in the world, we've quite lost the world, it's been taken from us. If you believe in the world you precipitate events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small their surface or volume. It's what you call *pietas*. Our ability to resist control, our submission to it, has to be assessed at the level of our every move. We need both a creativity *and* a people.[78]

We might therefore summarise Deleuze's position thus: while a work of art deploys its unique relations with both sensibility and matter to problematise thought, placing it in contact

[74] Ibid., p.276.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p.175.
[78] Ibid., p.176

with its “outside” and thus resisting dogmatism (and potentially calling forth new peoples and modes of life), a piece of information constitutes a representational, ordering function, which controls through its tendency to proliferate and to form closed systems, eradicating obscurity and indeterminacy. But where does this diagnosis leave us today, when our experience of art is almost exclusively “informational,” at least in terms of its materiality? Must art, in order to survive, cling to analogue film stock, as to oil and canvas? Or is it possible to conceive of an outside immanent to digital technologies?

# 5. Cybernetics and Information

## Introduction

We have spoken of an informational tendency, which, following Deleuze, we have identified adhering in cinema since its earliest days, claiming that it reaches saturation in digital images, the materiality of which is fundamentally that of *data*. However, as Peter Krapp, among others, has noted, we shouldn't rest easy in our definitions of information or of the informatic, which remain fundamentally variable.[1] Indeed, as we saw in the introduction, Claude Shannon, whose early work on problems of information transmission would see him regularly dubbed the "father of information theory"[2] was dubious that any generalised or totalising definition of information would ever be possible, writing:

> The word 'information' has been given different meanings by various writers in the general field of information theory. It is likely that at least a number of these will prove sufficiently useful in certain applications to deserve further study and permanent recognition. It is hardly to be expected that a single concept of information would satisfactorily account for the numerous possible applications of this general field.[3]

Thus, while we have established the general sense in which Deleuze refers to "information" – as imbricated not only with "communication," but with "order-words" and functions of "control"– the plurality of the concept perhaps affords us other, aberrant readings, such as might advance his broader aesthetic-philosophical project. It is to such aberrant readings that this chapter is dedicated, turning to a discussion of information as it is conceived in various "technical" and "ontological" guises, not only by cyberneticists and information theorists, but by Gilbert Simondon, for whom information, properly understood, is not of the order of a neutral "communication" between pre-distributed terms, but is fundamentally *productive*– the processual element whereby forms are ceaselessly *in-formed* by variation and chance.

## The Mathematical Theory of Communication

As I have noted, one of the most systematic contemporary treatments of the concept of information, such as takes in a breadth of potential uses of the term, is that of Luciano Floridi, who, drawing on the distinctions made by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver brackets two major senses of the term information- the first, "semantic," the second, "technical," "mathematical," or "ontological."[4] The contours of a "semantic" definition of information may already seem intuitive. I have already briefly outlined this concept of information, which we might summarise in Floridi's terms as "well-formed, meaningful and truthful data."[5] To vulgarise somewhat, this would be information which is coherent in the context of a semantic structure like a language –adhering to its rules and pre-distributions of sense– and referring to objectively "factual" situations in the world.

[1] P. Krapp, *Noise Channels: Glitch and Error in Digital Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2011, p.xi.
[2] Floridi, *A Very Short Introduction*, p.6.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Floridi, *Philosophy of Information*, p.42.
[5] Ibid., p.80.

As opposed to information in this sense, is information we might variously refer to as statistical, technical, or ontological– which is to say information as an a-signifying process which, theoretically, exists prior to any semantic overlay. In this context, as Floridi explains:

> Information theory approaches information as a physical phenomenon, syntactically. It is not interested in the usefulness, relevance, meaning, interpretation or aboutness of data, but in the level of detail and frequency in the uninterpreted data (signals or messages).[6]

And even within the field of so-called "information theory" dedicated to information in these terms, we encounter a plurality of uses of the concept. In the 1920s for instance, statistician and geneticist R.A. Fisher identified information as a measure of the content of uncertainty which might be removed from the results of an experiment.[7] Leaving aside the specifics of his mathematics, which are rooted in sigma-algebras of probability, we might say simply that for Fisher, the more "uncertain" the results of an experiment, the larger a distribution of probabilities may be extrapolated from it. As such, the experiment has an amount of potential "informativeness" commensurate with an initial level of "uncertainty" it contains (with both terms understood in a rigorously statistical sense.)[8]

A similarly probabilistic concept of information emerges in the work of mathematician and electrical engineer Claude Shannon, whose work, like Deleuze's time-image, traces roots to the Second World War. Here, "information" is defined in the context of an attempt to mitigate against extraneous and unwanted "noise" accompanying the transition of telephonic and radio signals.[9] In 1948, while working for Bell Telephone Laboratories, Shannon published "A Mathematical Theory of Communication" (hitherto the MTC), later fleshed out with Warren Weaver into a book of the same name. This key text lay much of the groundwork for information theory, establishing some core conceptual and technical presuppositions which have since guided its development. As Susan Ballard explains:

> Shannon's initial brief was to develop efficient telephone lines, and his approach involved breaking down a system into subsystems in order to evaluate the efficiency of the channels and codes. The concern was with signal and the emphasis was on the consistency of transmission and reception of information through any given medium. To increase efficiency Shannon insisted that the message be separated from its components; in particular, those aspects that were predictable were not to be considered information. Furthermore, Shannon was adamant that information must not be confused with meaning.[10]

[6] Ibid., p.31.
[7] Faucher, p.7.
[8] Nb. That I have decided not to treat in-depth the mathematics of these various "statistical" concepts of information, an acknowledgement of the limits of my own knowledge in this area, but also in order to maintain a clear conceptual focus throughout the dissertation. The essential notion I hope to extrapolate from mathematical or statistical theories of information is the profound imbrication of "uncertainty" with "information," such as might be explored from the perspective of art. I refer the interested reader to clear, authoritative treatments of the mathematical theories underpinning both Weiner and Shannon's work in J.R. Pierce, *An Introduction to Information Theory: Symbols, Signals & Noise (Second Edition)*, Dover, New York, 1980.
[9] S. Ballard, "Information, Noise, et al.," in Nunes, *Error*, p.61.
[10] Ibid., p.61.

To reiterate, not to be confused with meaning, information, in Shannon's terms, constitutes a statistical measure emerging from a probability space distribution. Or as Warren Weaver explains, in his introduction to Shannon's more technical piece (italics my own):

> To be sure, this word information in communication theory relates not so much to what you *do* say, as to what you *could* say. That is, information is a measure of one's freedom of choice when one selects a message… the concept of information applies not to the individual messages (as the concept of meaning would), but rather to the situation as a whole, the unit information indicating that in this situation one has an abundant amount of freedom of choice, in selecting a message, which it is convenient to regard as a standard or unit amount.[11]

In the simplest possible terms therefore, information, according to the MTC, refers to the statistically measurable amount of uncertainty that is removed from a situation which requires, *a priori*, the presence of uncertainty in order to generate information. To explain via recourse to an example from Floridi, if informee (A) anticipates a message from informer (B), when it is known in advance that B produces only one message (we might think of flipping an unbiased coin with the same symbol on both sides), then A is in a state of "data deficit" (uncertainty) of zero, and no information, in the MTC sense, will be communicated. If, however, B is capable of transmitting two equiprobable messages (as in the case of an unbiased two-sided coin), suddenly, A is in a state of data deficit *greater than zero*. Upon tossing the coin, B therefore produces an amount of information which is equal to the amount of data deficit that it removes for the informee.[12]

This is the broad theoretical underpinning of digital communication systems, which rely on an information source providing a transmitter with a message, which is then translated into a signal and sent to a receiver, the task of which is to re-translate the signal into the original message.[13] Importantly, the primary technological problem Shannon identifies is with affording each of the links in this chain the maximum possible *potentiality* for transmitting or receiving information. And as such, as he writes, from the technological point of view:

> The significant aspect is that the actual message is one selected from a set of possible messages. The system must be designed to operate for each possible selection, not just the one which will actually be chosen since this is unknown at the time of design.[14]

In his attempt to model this maximal "possibility" of messages, Shannon is thus dedicated to the study of probability space distributions which might likewise be maximal. His conception of "information" as imbricated with a commensurate presence of uncertainty thus leads him to the claim that information mirrors, in certain key respects, the thermodynamic processes of entropy.[15] This strange coupling makes more sense when we understand that, like Fischer,

[11] Shannon & Weaver, p.9.
[12] L. Floridi, "Semantic Conceptions of Information," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2019 Edition), E.N. Zalta ed., <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/information-semantic/> retrieved August 6 2019.
[13] Shannon & Weaver, p.7.
[14] Ibid., p.31.
[15] Although for this perhaps confusing coupling, we may well have mathematician and physicist Jon von Neumann to thank, given his advice to Shannon that: "You should call it entropy for two reasons: first, the function is already in use in thermodynamics under the same name; second, and more importantly, most people don't know what entropy really is, and if you use the word *entropy* in an argument you will win every time." (Quoted in Floridi, *A Very Short Introduction*, p.42).

Shannon understands increased uncertainty as commensurate with an increase in information content, and as such, increased "disorder" within a system, (although, as Floridi notes, the term "randomness" is perhaps less culturally loaded and as such potentially misleading). As such, the more information a system contains, the more "entropy" it produces.[16]

The fundamental unit of this kind of transmissible, entropic "Shannon" information, is the *bit*, a designation which refers to the entropy of a random variable that is, with equal probability, typically either 0 or 1 –as in binary systems (or more properly, the information gained when the value of this variable is known). And as Floridi, like others working in the subsequent "philosophy of information" therefore note, the basic building-blocks of such information systems are fundamentally, in a rigorously pre-semantic sense, "differences." This indeed is the sense of the oft-quoted formulation of cyberneticist Gregory Bateson, who claims that a "bit" of data is, essentially, "a difference which makes a difference."[17] As Bateson explains, advancing a kind of cybernetic panpsychism:

> …we can assert that any ongoing ensemble of events and objects which has the appropriate complexity of causal circuits and the appropriate energy relations will surely show mental characteristics. It will compare, that is, be responsive to difference… it will 'process information' and will inevitably be self-corrective either toward homeostatic optima or toward the maximization of certain variables.[18]

And this, Bateson claims, leads us to the conclusion that (italics my own):

> A 'bit' of information is definable as a *difference which makes a difference*. Such a difference, as it travels and undergoes a successive transformation in a circuit, is an elementary idea.[19]

Of course, I do not seek to draw a neat comparison between Bateson's concept of "difference" and that to which Deleuze dedicates himself across various works. This is undoubtedly an *actual* difference, and information theory remains thoroughly dedicated to a probabilistic mathematics of the "possible," such as Deleuze, we shall see, rejects. However, as Bateson's formulation indicates, information theory provides us with a means of re-thinking information as irreducible to any *particular* purposive schema, and as such allows us to conceptualise information as processual, differential and fundamentally untethered from any particular socio-cultural (or semantic) operation(s).

Indeed, in this context, Floridi associates "data" with its etymological roots in Euclid's *Dedomena* or ("the given"), as being, prior to any semantic or epistemic interpretation, an instance of discontinuity or difference which constitutes the "anchor" for our subsequent derivation of information from an aspect of reality. As Floridi explains:

[16] Ibid., p.43.
[17] Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, p.315.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid. By way of explanation of his association of the "bit" and the "idea," Bateson evokes the example of a man felling a tree with an axe, according to which feedback processes are used to adjust the man's motions commensurate with changes in the face of the tree. Thus, as he explains, in the context of this circuitry of man-axe-tree: "…we should spell the matter out as: (differences in tree) – (differences in retina) – differences in brain) – (differences in muscles) – (differences in movement of axe – (differences in tree), etc. What is transmitted around the circuit is transforms of differences. And, as noted above, a difference which makes a difference is an *idea* or unit of information." (Ibid, p.318.)

> Dedomena… are pure data or proto-epistemic data, that is, data before they are epistemically interpreted. As 'fractures in the fabric of Being,' they can only be posited as an external anchor of our information, for dedomena are never accessed or elaborated independently of a level of abstraction. They can be reconstructed as ontological requirements, like Kant's *noumena* or Locke's *substance*: they are not epistemically experienced, but their presence is empirically inferred from, and required by, experience… dedomena are whatever lack of uniformity in the world is the source of (what looks to informational organisms like us) data, e.g. a red light against a dark background.[20]

Thus, to reiterate, in turning to the most fundamental conceptions of information, we encounter an a-signifying, differential and proto-epistemic instance of "discontinuity" perceived in the real. Of course, it must be here acknowledged that "information theory" and its associated cybernetic projects are embedded in distinctly interested and purposive projects, and as such, these "metaphysical" or ontological-descriptive functions of information are invariably subsumed, in information theory, within concretely *semantic* projects.

Paradigmatic perhaps is that of the so-called "father of cybernetics" Norbert Weiner, whose early work on information was dedicated to perfecting automatic guidance systems for anti-aircraft guns during the Second World War. In this context, Weiner had identified the statistical basis for the functions of "feedback," whereby the mechanics of an antiaircraft weapon might "observe […] by itself the statistics concerning the motion of the target plane, which then works these into a system of control… adjusting its position to the observed position and motion of the plane."[21]

This model, whereby "information" constitutes a statistical chain to which a "perceptive" or "control" centre might respond and orient itself, seemed to Weiner, as we outlined in the introduction, an ideal model of the functions of human mentation. But more than that, Weiner would come to imbue this form of information with metaphysical and even "moral" status. For Weiner, statistical information is the measure of a genuine operative principle – irreducible to matter or to energy– through which order is able to crystallise from the apparent disorder of the Universe at large. As Weiner thus writes, positing information as that principle which might resist the entropic "chaos" of thermodynamic nature:

> There are local and temporary islands of decreasing entropy in a world in which the entropy as a whole tends to increase, and the existence of these islands enables some of us to assert the existence of progress…[22] we ourselves constitute such an island…[23]

The means by which this "negentropy" adheres is information, which, through its deployment in functions of "feedback" and "control" allows certain complex and isolated systems to better order themselves in response to a general and chaotic thermodynamic "wind-down" of the Universe. Thus, for perhaps the first time, information emerges from its *technical* context as a concept bearing distinct *philosophical* import. Indeed, this negentropic character of information, argues Weiner, establishes it as the fundamental principle whereby we might understand the human project, as one dedicated, since the Enlightenment, to proliferating and

[20] Floridi, *Philosophy of Information*, p.86.
[21] Weiner, *The Human Use*, p.62.
[22] Ibid., p.36.
[23] Ibid., p.40.

perfecting information control and transmission systems in a series of complicating and ordering functions which might ultimately be taken up by human built machines.

Leaving aside Weiner's somewhat grandiose rationalisations of the cybernetic project, it, like that of Fischer, Shannon and Bateson, thus offers us a no longer strictly semantic, but processual and "metaphysical" means of understanding information. And while Weiner's work emerges coloured by distinctly anthropocentric and technocratic objectives –such as inform the cybernetic worldview more generally– we might turn to one final "ontological" conception of information, such as avoids the socio-political prejudices of the cybernetic project– that of Deleuze's contemporary Gilbert Simondon.

## Simondon and Information

Simondon's work on information, with which, as we have noted, Deleuze would have been familiar, constitutes a protracted response to cybernetic theories of information– which, given Simondon's profound interest in developments in contemporary technology, comes as no great surprise. However Simondon is at pains to differentiate his subsequent conception(s) of information from those of cybernetics, which he felt did not go far enough in their conceptualisation of information as an ontological category, neglecting those aspects which might explain processes of *ontogenesis*. A study of information as part of *genetic* processes, Simondon suggests, would perhaps be the remit of a "universal cybernetics" or "allagmatics,"[24] no longer dedicated simply to probabilistic information transmitted between static and neutral transmitters, but to a productive and differential form of information which would provide a model for individuation in general. In this context, Simondon will claim that information "must never be reduced to signals or to the supports of carriers of information in a message,"[25] rather, for Simondon, information is an ontologically operative principle, a condition for the genesis of the new.

I do not propose to treat Simondon's philosophy of information in depth, given that Deleuze himself clearly elects not to evoke it in the context of his critique of information in control societies, and given that to do so would overspill the limits of this dissertation. We can only speculate as to why Deleuze decides not to draw on Simondon's philosophy in this context. As I claimed in my introduction, it appears as though the former's philosophical and artistic taste for a particular model of both thought and of art determine a response to information which is largely critical, and hopes, underpinned by a certain idiosyncratic modernism, to think about its emergence from "the outside." However, as I have also noted, the subsequent proliferation of these technologies into all walks of life no longer allows us such an "immaculate" approach to information, a situation which perhaps explains the recent increase in Anglophone scholarship dedicated to Simondon's work.[26]

[24] Simondon will define allagmatics as the "theory of operations," with an operation constituting "the realisation of an exchange of energy between matter and form, resulting in the ensemble reaching a state of equilibrium" (G. Simondon, *L'individuation à la lumiere*, p.48). Thus while science, in his estimation, is able to provide us with a theory of individuals, it neglects this complementary, "allagmatic" study of the (ontogenetic) conditions and contingency of its objects. Nb. The primary text in which Simondon condenses his theory of information is *L'Individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information*, which is yet to be published in English translation, as such, the translations from this work are my own.
[25] Quoted in Faucher, p.41.
[26] Recent years have seen a renaissance of interest in Simondon's work in the Anglophone world, in which translations of Simondon's work had not been forthcoming. The short pieces "Technical Mentality" and "Techno Aesthetics" were translated by Arne De Boever, and published in *Parrhesia* in 2009 and 2012

Suffice it to say that Simondon, like Deleuze, is dedicated to a project which will think processes of individuation without recourse to already individuated entities. For Simondon, and contra Aristotelian hylomorphism,[27] individuation takes place in the context of pre-individual "metastable states,"[28] which, much like the Deleuzian virtual, resolve their differential energetic tensions through contingent individuations. And while these tensions resolve themselves through individuation, they nevertheless do not exhaust the energetic potentiality immanent to metastability, which subsists as the subsequent condition for new and alternate individuations. In the context of this metaphysical project, a response to what he perceives as the ontological inadequacy of hylomorphism, Simondon deploys a concept of information which might multilaterally explain the genesis of "individuals" conceived biologically, technically, socially, collectively and in terms of psychology– in short, information as a fundamental ontogenetic category. Bypassing the debates in cybernetics around the materiality or immateriality of information,[29] its human or non-human status, Simondon will conceive of information as an operative process in matter, the modality by which matter is open to variation and productivity.

As such, Simondon will argue that information must not be reduced to technocratic categories, whereby it is "transmitted" and "received" between ostensibly static and pre-determined individuals, and such as its operations might be modelled purely in the terms of probability mathematics. For Simondon, the "uncertainty" evoked in information theory must become a genuine *indeterminacy*, the potentiality of an "infinite variation" which will nevertheless systematise itself through the energetic resolution of metastable states– while, as we have said, never fully exhausting this metastability. The essential point is that for Simondon, information, as a condition for ontogenesis, cannot be simply probabilistic, insomuch as it must be *genuinely productive*, not a selection from a pre-distributed field of probabilities. As such, Simondonian information is, in a certain key sense, *improbable*, the correlation between "sender" and "receiver" –when we come to understand these terms in the ontological context of metastability– must be disparate or differential, in order to produce differential *tension* and thus to be *productive.*

Simondon's examples are well known: the brick, which is in-formed by its mould in an energetic exchange of inter-elemental forces;[30] the crystal, which emerges from a series of reciprocal relations between a catalytic seed and a pre-individual milieu (a supersaturated liquid);[31] or binocular vision, wherein a new "individual" is produced in the form of a resolution of disparities in sense-information between the two retinae.[32] Without delving into

respectively. "The Essence of Technicity" appeared, translated by Ninian Mellamphy, Dan Mellamphy and Nandita Biswas Mellamphy, in *Deleuze Studies* in 2011. The collection *Gilbert Simondon: Being and Technology*, edited by De Boever, constituted the first book-length study of Simondon published in English, in 2012. It was not until 2017 that *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, translated by Cécile Malaspina and John Rogove, became the first of Simondon's major works to be published in full, in English.

[27] Briefly, Aristotle's hylomorphism stems from his explanation of the genesis of the individual as a confluence of matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*). According to this theory, matter and form pre-exist their entanglement, and as such, partake in the same mode of being as the individual they constitute. Simondon, however, will claim that this model neglects not only the alternate form that matter takes before a given individuation, but also the materiality involved in any given formation. For Simondon, the formation of an individual is thus properly understood via recourse to the differential energetic conditions which form a *metastability*.

[28] Simondon, *L'individuation à la lumiere*, p.26.

[29] Faucher, p.42.

[30] See Simondon, *L'individuation à la lumiere*, pp.39-48.

[31] Ibid., pp.72-77.

[32] Ibid., p.554.

the specifics of these cases, we might simply say while a *probabilistic* modelling of the information "transmissions" in these processes might well have certain explanatory powers after the fact, it could not provide a proper account of the disparities or "tensions" of information such as require resolution in a *new individual*. Or as Simondon explains:

> The relation can never be conceived as a relation among pre-existing terms, but rather as a reciprocal regime of the exchange of information and of causality in a system that individuates itself. The relation exists physically, biologically, psychologically, collectively and as internal resonance of the individuated being; the relation expresses individuation and is at the heart of being.[33]

For Simondon, information conceived under the rubric of "communication" does not offer up an account of such geneses, a fact which limits cybernetics to a study of pre-distributed, "closed" systems of the transmitter/receiver type. As such, in the context of this so-called "tension" of information, Simondon will claim that:

> While a probabilistic theory can be applied to the measurement of the quantity of information in the prediction of an exchange between transmitter and receiver, a measure of the tension of information could hardly be made by experience…[34]

This is to say that scientific, empirical and mathematical methods of studying information necessarily neglect certain speculative and generalised forms of conception open to philosophy,[35] particularly when it rids itself of its proclivity for the hylomorphic model and begins to think processes of individuation rather than already constituted individuals.

While the purport of Simondon's intervention therefore clearly lies beyond information technics, Simondon's thought returns ceaselessly to them for demonstrative purposes, such as makes his philosophy invaluable to an analysis of their functions. In this context, and in attempting to identify a genuinely differential and genetic aspect of information, Simondon will point to the internally cleft nature of technical information transmission systems, given that they function simultaneously via a maximisation of the presence of an aleatory ground (the field of possible messages) yet constitute meaningful information through systemisation. Or as Simondon writes:

> Information is, in a sense, that which can be infinitely varied, that which, in order to be transmitted with the least possible loss, requires a sacrifice of energy efficiency so as to avoid any reduction of the range of possibilities… But information, in another sense, is that which, in order to be transmitted, must be above the level of pure random phenomena, such as white noise or thermal agitation; information is then that which

[33] G. Simondon, *L'individuation psychique et collective*, Editions Aubier, Paris, 1989, p.54.
[34] Ibid.
[35] As Simondon writes, in *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, in a passage which gives us a good sense of how he conceives of both philosophy's role and unique potentiality: "It is only at the level of both the most primitive and the most elaborate of all thoughts, philosophical thought, that a truly *neutral* and *balanced* because *complete*, mediation between opposing phases can intervene. It is thus *philosophical thought* alone that can assume the knowledge, valorization and completion of the phase of technicity within the entirety [*ensemble*] of man's modes of being in the world, by way of a meditation regarding the rapport between science and technics, theology and mysticism." (G. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. C. Malaspina & J. Rogove, Univocal, Minneapolis, 2017, p.xvii).

> possesses a regularity, a localisation, a defined domain, a determined stereotypy through which information distinguishes itself from pure chance.[36]

In this context, for Simondon, information therefore constitutes a "third way" between form, as systematised, meaningful content, and pure chance, understood as the variability to which individuals are open at the level of intensive and pre-individual metastable states. As Simondon explains, "information is not form, nor is it a collection [*ensemble*] of forms; it is the variability of forms, the influx of variation with respect to form."[37] And as such, as an "unpredictability of a variation of form," Simondon will identify as distinct three nevertheless intimately related terms: "pure chance, form and information."[38] According to these terms, information thus constitutes the opening by which form is in constant contact with the aleatory, the entropic variability which is indeed the very condition for the individuation of forms. In Simondon's estimation, contemporary cybernetics had yet to comprehend this interrelation of *form, chance* and *information*, dedicated as it was to concrete technocratic projects conceived according to the transmitter/receiver model.[39]

For Simondon however, such a conception offers up not only a vocabulary for conceiving of processes of ontogenesis, but provides us a means of thinking the uniquely informatic contours of both thought and the living being. In well-known passages, Simondon takes up the mechanical model of the "transducer,"[40] identifying it with a "a physical, biological, mental, social operation through which an activity propagates gradually within a domain, by founding this propagation on a structuration of the domain that is realized from one place to the next."[41] This form of dynamic auto-complexification might be understood, in this context, as the multilateral transmission and translation of information throughout the disparate dimensions of a system in the process of individuating itself. As such, the term designates a process at the most fundamental level of Simondon's ontology. At the same time, Simondon will identify a uniquely transductive potentiality in living things, writing:

> Indeed the living thing is not exactly a transducer like those that can be found in machines; it is that and something more; mechanical transducers are systems with a margin of indeterminacy; information is that which adds determinacy. But this information must be given to the transducer; it cannot invent it; it is given to it by a mechanism that is analogous to that of perception in the living… On the contrary, the living thing has the capacity to give itself information, even in the absence of all perception, because it possesses the capacity to modify the forms of the problems to be resolved; for the machine, there are no problems, only data that modulate the transducers….[42]

This latter contention is essential, insomuch as it establishes the unique characteristics of the "informatic machine" that is the living being –that is, as a being possessed of a capacity to *problematise*. In significant passages, Simondon thus advances a distinctly Bergsonian

[36] Ibid., p.148.
[37] Ibid., p.150.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] In the broadest possible terms, a transducer is a device which converts energy from one form into another– for example an amplifier, which translates variations in electrical currents into sound vibrations.
[41] Quoted in J.H. Barthélémy, "Fifty Key Terms in the Works of Gilbert Simondon," in *Gilbert Simondon: Being and Technology*, A. De Boever, A. Murray, J. Roffe & A. Woodward eds., Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2012, p.230.
[42] Simondon, *Technical Objects*, p.156.

philosophy of problematisation, whereby the living being –as opposed to the machine– is capable of thinking temporally, or more precisely, in terms of the problematics of the *virtual*. As Simondon explains, for the machine:

> …there is no modification of forms that would be oriented by the presentiment of a problem to be resolved; the virtual does not act upon the actual, because the virtual, insofar as it is virtual, cannot play a role for the machine. It can only react to something that is positively given, actually done. The living thing has the faculty to modify itself according to the virtual: this faculty is the sense of time, which the machine does not have because it does not live.[43]

As such, and as we have seen via recourse to Deleuze's three syntheses of time, problematisation requires a noetic movement *beyond* the actual, into the virtual, or, in the terms of this dissertation, into the outside, such as would serve to confront the empirically given with its limits, contingency and ungroundedness, propelling us to think it in such a way that it might become *other than it is*. The cybernetic model, according to which the processing of differences on the register of the actual –data– might be conceived as an *a priori* model not only of computational functions, but also of the synaptic and electro-chemical functions of "thought," neglects this properly temporal character of thinking, such, as we have seen, splits the subject, forcing it to become *other than itself.*

This is not to return to a kind of anthropocentric valorisation of human mentation as a privileged metaphysical site, or to retreat into a vitalism in the face of a "machinic" cybernetics of thought. The problem, indeed, for Simondon as for Deleuze, is that the cybernetic model retains a *distinctly human* –which is to say pre-philosophical and *doxic* – model of thinking as a sensory-motor process of "transmission" between already recognised terms. Philosophical thought however, as we have argued, in order to consummate its project of breaking with *doxa*, must be creative –which is to say it involves the engendering of transductive processes between terms which are *not* pre-distributed. These terms are instead produced through contact with virtual and aleatory forces which exceed the "given" or a pre-distributed regime of (common) sense. And, as we have argued, such a production might take the form of our contact with the inhuman sense distributions of *art*.

But where might we identify such processes in the *technics of information*, which, as we have seen, invariably take the transmitter/receptor model and depend upon a distribution of probabilities, such as, in Deleuze's terms, constitutes a *closed system*? At the very least, throughout this chapter, and through our encounter with various concepts of information as ontogenetic, differential and productive, it appears as though we may be rash in talking about "information" purely in the terms of *control* –even if this is indeed how Norbert Weiner will explicitly refer to it. But are the informatics of contemporary digital image networks, imbricated as they are with the exigencies of capital and control, capable of producing these moments of noetic rupture, such that the transmitter-receiver relation overspills all intentionality or systematisation, problematising its pre-determined terms and limits? In Simondon's terms, we are looking for a presence which might "open" the transmitter/receiver model to the productive variability of entropic difference(s), such as would produce *new individuals* beyond the initial scope and design of a system. And indeed, I claim that the MTC affords us just such a model, in the form of signal "noise."

[43] Ibid., p.157.

## Noise in the MTC

The essential point thus far is that systems modelled in terms of the MTC require the presence of "uncertainty" in order to transmit information. Of course, as we have suggested, given its rootedness in statistical probability, "uncertainty," according to the MTC is conceived in terms of a distribution of probabilities, implicating it with the notion of "the possible" –a term Deleuze will follow Bergson in rejecting for its retroactive derivation from the actual. For a transmission system in the MTC mould to "communicate" information (as *reduction* of data deficit) it relies indeed upon a certain pre-distribution of sense, paradigmatically in the form of a "shared alphabet" through which informer and informee might mutually "comprehend" the content transmitted. As such, the maximisation of probability in the MTC establishes a field of "possibility," inasmuch as there must be a pre-distributed ground determining the nature of the content to be transmitted. This ground, invariably, will be of the order of the *actual*.

We may recall though that the possible, for both Deleuze and for Bergson, constitutes a philosophically untenable concept, one which they will rigorously oppose to virtuality, given its pre-distribution of as-yet unrealised yet perfectly identifiable events. As Deleuze explains, in *Bergsonism*:

> …the possible is a false notion, the source of false problems… we give ourselves a real that is ready-made, preformed, pre-existent to itself, and that will pass into existence according to an order of successive limitations. Everything is already *completely given*: all of the real in the image, in the pseudo-actuality of the possible.[44]

It is this dimension of the possible which obscures the fundamentally aleatory, unthought and intensive processes which determine *becoming*, negating the possibility of genuine novelty or difference. In this context, Deleuze will claim that rather than the real resembling the possible, it is the possible which retroactively resembles the real, "because it has been abstracted from the real once made, arbitrarily abstracted from the real like a sterile double."[45] And, so, argues Deleuze, under the arid rubric of the possible, "we no longer understand anything either of the mechanism of difference or of the mechanism of creation."[46]

Uncertainty, in the terms of the MTC, is certainty conceived according to a statistical space distribution of "possibilities." For all Shannon and Weaver's talk of maximal potentiality, uncertainty and "freedom," digital telecommunications systems, as we have said, require a standardised "alphabet" (understood in the broadest sense) shared between transmitter and receiver, and as such pre-distribute a certain field of possibility. Nevertheless, I claim, information, in the technical terms of the MTC, does afford us a means of thinking forms of absolutely indeterminate *potentiality*, such as would be commensurate with the ontogenetic operations of the virtual. Such a concept, I argue, is afforded if we turn to Shannon and Weaver's conception of "noise," rereading it from the perspective of *art*.

[44] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p.98.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

For despite their frequent insistence on the distinction between the "semantic" and "technical" problems confronted by information theory, Shannon and Weaver's formulation of information does indeed evoke a normative semantic criteria. The "freedom" and "uncertainty" Weaver identifies as entwined abide only in specific and predetermined ways, as Weaver reveals in his introduction of the idea of signal "noise." As Weaver explains:

> If noise is introduced, then the received message contains certain distortions, certain errors, certain extraneous material, that would certainly lead one to say that the received message exhibits, because of the effects of noise, an increased uncertainty. But if the uncertainty is increased, the information is increased, and this sounds as though the noise were beneficial![47]

As Weaver continues, the technical problem of information is thus inextricably linked to a "semantic" problem, whereby, "some information is spurious and undesirable and has been introduced via the noise. To get the useful information in the received signal we must subtract out this spurious information."[48] The spectre of "noise" thus introduces into the message a *cleft* notion of uncertainty, characterised by Weaver as a schism between "desirable" uncertainty (freedom of choice on the part of the sender) and "undesirable" uncertainty (interposed by errors and noise.)[49] And this "undesirable uncertainty" may well point us back in the direction of the virtual.

As Shannon and Weaver acknowledge, there can be no information without noise. The very technicity of information technologies, which imply temporal and kinetic dimensions, means that they are constantly, to varying degrees, "open" to the presence of noise.[50] All technology generates noise, in the form of dust, tics and glitches, the almost imperceptible whir of the thermodynamic functioning of machines, the accumulated loss of fidelity in a signal's travel through wires and through various computational-mechanic processes of encoding and decoding. The presence of noise, however, rather than being merely an undesirable operative remainder in information transmission systems, opens the otherwise rigorously technical posing of the problems of MTC onto the semantic register. As we have noted, via Weaver, noise may still be conceived as information, but it is "unwanted" information, in the sense that it does not accord with the original content of the message (and the intentions of the informer) and is produced simply as a physical consequence of the transmission of data. But data, in the pre-semantic terms we have encountered in Floridi, Bateson *et al*., need not have any pre-determined systematisation, referring simply to instances of difference or discontinuity which might be subsequently interpreted as information. As such, noise, or undesirable information, is still *data* at the ontological level, an informational "difference which makes a difference," in Bateson's terms.

In this sense, information theory affords us two forms of information, one, "desirable" according to the pre-determined parameters of the transmission system, and the other aleatory and variable, the "infinite variation" of form which Simondon will associate with ontogenesis. It is as if information theory, opening itself, via probabilistic statistics, onto the flux and contingency with which Deleuze will claim thought should strive to be in contact, has spooked– closing up again and retreating into a sensory-motor paradigm. The "semantic" understanding of information returns to adjudicate between two forms of information, the one

[47] Shannon & Weaver, p.19.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ballard, p.60.

"wanted" and useful, the other "unwanted" and meaningless. Indeed Shannon's project is squarely oriented around the identification and mitigation of this latter form of information, which he is able to calculate in the case of known signals –and as such, to ameliorate with the subsequent addition of *redundancy*–[51] however, the requirements and parameters of a given informatic system, and as such the "semantic" decision as to which aspects might be considered "useful" and those which are "unwanted" remain fundamentally variable.

Indeed, as Peter Krapp notes, the only discernible difference between noise and message, in his terms "signal," is one of *intentionality*. As he explains with an intuitive example: "Though arguably musical, an orchestra tuning up is generally considered to be noise, but the clapping of an audience, a form of white noise, is taken to be meaningful and, hence, signal."[52] Indeed, it is this strict schism, in the discourse of information theory and indeed philosophy, which I hope to problematise. Such a problematisation, I claim, would also form the grist of an informatic art.

Art indeed, and modern art in particular, has long been dedicated to questions of intentionality, and to opening the parameters of a given expressive system to disordering processes in a reciprocal movement of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. In this context, the imbrication of noise and signal is no longer a *problem*, at least in the quotidian sense of the term, but rather a productive and genetic encounter such as we see valorised by Simondon or Deleuze. In this context, Umberto Eco, for example, has explored the parallels between *poetics* and information theory, writing, in *The Open Work*:

> This phenomenon, the direct relationship between disorder and information, is of course the norm in art. It is commonly believed that the poetic word is characterized by its capacity to create unusual meanings and emotions by establishing new relationships between sound and sense, words and sounds, one phrase and the next – to the point that an emotion can often emerge even in the absence of any clear meaning.[53]

Likewise, John Cage, whose experiments constitute perhaps the most well-known project to problematise the limits of music through its admixture with noise, outlines his objective thus:

> Invade areas where nothing's definite (areas-micro and macro-adjacent the one we know in). It won't sound like music – serial or electronic. It'll sound like what we hear when we're not hearing music, just hearing whatever wherever we happen to be. But to accomplish this our technological means must be constantly changing.[54]

Cage's long-standing project, alongside others like Pierre Henry, Karlheinz Stockhausen, La Monte Young, and even non-musicians like Artaud and Yves Klein, was to thoroughly

[51] Leaving aside the technicalities of informatic "redundancy," we might say simply that redundancy designates the inclusion of an excess of intended data (message) in the context of noisy or limited channels, in order that the proliferation of "unwanted" information is counterbalanced by a greater proportion of "desirable" information, as such making the reception and translation of the originally intended message more likely. As Floridi explains: "We are more likely to reconstruct a message correctly at the end of the transmission if some degree of redundancy counterbalances the inevitable noise and equivocation introduced by the physical process of communication and the environment. Noise extends the informee's freedom of choice in selecting a message, but it is an undesirable freedom and some redundancy can help to limit it." (Floridi, *A Very Short Introduction*, p.40).
[52] Krapp, p. 55.
[53] Eco, p.52.
[54] Cage, p.27.

problematise any auditory demarcation between "noise" and "music." And indeed this experimentalism has been replicated throughout the 20th century in more popular forms like rock –the experiments with amplifier "feedback" which would culminate in punk and heavy metal– and jazz –with its gradual movement, through the 50s and 60s through hard bop to modal and "spiritual" jazz, culminating in the noisy "free jazz" experiments of John Coltrane or Ornette Coleman. As the experience of modern music thus suggests, "noise" can indeed by extended into modes of signification, at the same time enacting a critique of signifying schema by drawing attention to their contingency and limits. It is therefore via recourse to such artistic practices, and an "artistic" conception of noise, that we will proceed.

## The Art of Noise

The popular sense of the word "noise" inevitably orients us toward the auditory, and indeed the tension between intentional "sound" and unintended or aleatory "noise" has been thoroughly played out in the context of music. As such, a brief discussion of its experiments may help us to clarify the debate with regards to both information technology and the cinematic image. Douglas Kahn has written that "noise can be understood in one sense to be that constant grating sound generated by the movement between the abstract and the empirical,"[55] and it is indeed in understanding noise as the remit of a kind of *indeterminacy between* abstract –which is to say systematised– content, and an empirical "openness" onto the aleatory energetic chaos of the Universe at large that we might best comprehend it. As Kahn explains:

> Imperfections in script, verbal pauses, and poor phrasing are regularly passed over in the greater purpose of communication, yet they always threaten to break out into an impassable noise and cause real havoc. As a precautionary measure, such local impurities are subsumed under a communication presumed to be successful, even if many important details and larger associations are lost in the process. The process of abstraction itself, what is lost, is thereby involved in the elimination of noise. Noise in this way is the specific, the empirical…[56]

To transpose this claim into the terms of the MTC, we might say that intentional "messages" always require the functions of a certain abstraction, in accordance with a pre-distributed realm of "possibilities" (good sense). But noise, as empirical, environmental and aleatory presence, emerges consistently from singular and undetermined coordinates which constitute the potentiality for new and "aberrant" messages, beyond (yet radically interior to) the given.

Futurist painter Luigi Russolo offers us one of the earliest and richest accounts of this schism between "abstract" sound and empirical, singular "noise" –whilst thoroughly problematising it– in his 1913 manifesto "The Art of Noises," composed as a letter to his friend and fellow futurist Balilla Pratella. Here, Russolo, in the spirit of 20th century avant-gardism –which in the forms of dada, surrealism and art-brut had increasingly turned to aleatory and non-intentional forms of creativity– argues that industrialisation called for creative practices commensurate with the phenomena of mechanisation, urbanisation and the demise of a traditionally bourgeoisie "artist-subject," predicated on its possession of an internal or transcendent "genius."

[55] D. Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 2001, p.25.
[56] Ibid.

Noise, Russolo argues, constituted a new phenomenon, emerging from the techno-sociological juncture at which humanity had found itself at the beginning of the 20th century. Apart from very rare events like storms and avalanches, and aside from the restricted and generally ritualistic instances of music, Russolo claims that the pre-industrial world was essentially noiseless, writing: "Ancient life was all silence. In the 19th century, with the invention of the machine, Noise was born. Today, Noise triumphs and reigns supreme over the sensibility of men."[57] The industrial revolution, argues Russolo, had caused noise to proliferate everywhere, and music, in its gradual movement towards dissonance and atonality –as practised by contemporary composers like Schoenberg, Prokofiev and Bartók– was itself moving toward the raw principle of a "noise music." As Russolo explains:

> At first the art of music sought and achieved purity, limpidity and sweetness of sound. Then different sounds were amalgamated, care being taken, however, to caress the ear with gentle harmonies. Today music, as it becomes continually more complicated, strives to amalgamate the most dissonant, strange and harsh sounds. In this way we come ever closer to noise-sound. This musical evolution is paralleled by the multiplication of machines, which collaborate with man on every front. Not only in the roaring atmosphere of major cities, but in the country too, which until yesterday was normally silent, the machine today has created such a variety and rivalry of noises that pure sound, in its exiguity and monotony, no longer arouses any feeling.[58]

And despite this emergence from an industrial milieu, Russolo is at pains to identify noise with a certain vitalism, an organic primacy, such as had been elided by "institutional" art and "culturalist" abstraction. In its immediacy and irreducibility, noise, he therefore claims, is at odds with the transcendent and rarefied objectives of "sound." As he explains, in a passage I will quote once more:

> Noise […] has the power to conjure up life itself. Sound, alien to our life, always musical and a thing unto itself, an occasional but unnecessary element, has become to our ears what the overfamiliar face is to our eyes. Noise, however, reaching us in a confused and irregular way from the irregular confusion of our life, never entirely reveals itself to us, and keeps innumerable surprises in reserve.[59]

As I suggested in my introduction, the terms here are not so far removed from those of Deleuze. The schism whereby Russolo identifies the presuppositions of institutional classical music as establishing a calcification or abstraction over and above the productive flux of *life* bears stark similarities to the Deleuzian injunction that thought should seek its provocations in the irregular and differential intensities which constitute the *chaosmos* of pre-individual forces. Furthermore, Russolo's suggestion that this new "will to art" emerges commensurate with a concrete socio-industrial assemblage of conditions, is mirrored in Deleuze's claim, throughout the cinema books, that the cinema, as industrial art, constitutes a profound new means through which the "masses" might come to experience noetic disjunctions in both time and movement.

Russolo remains the touch-stone for a 20th century avant-garde tradition dedicated to letting processual, aleatory and environmental factors (co)determine the structure of artworks.

[57] Russolo, p.74.
[58] Ibid., p.75.
[59] Ibid., p.85.

Examples are plentiful, but perhaps one of the most illustrative in this context is Alvin Lucier's sound work *I am Sitting in a Room* (1969), in which the artist records himself reading a short text before replaying this recording in a room. The text spoken is as follows:

> I am sitting in a room different from the one you are in now. I am recording the sound of my speaking voice and I am going to play it back into the room again and again until the resonant frequencies of the room reinforce themselves so that any semblance of my speech, with perhaps the exception of rhythm, is destroyed. What you will hear, then, are the natural resonant frequencies of the room articulated by speech. I regard this activity not so much as a demonstration of a physical fact, but more as a way to smooth out any irregularities my speech might have.[60]

This last remark, a reference to Lucier's own stutter, constitutes a wry nod to the "non-intentional" slippages and dislocations which reside at the very heart of speech, passed over in the interest of "communication." As promised, this replay is itself re-recorded, the process repeating again and again until, after around 15 minutes, the words have become unintelligible and all we are left with is the strangely beautiful resonant harmonies of the room itself. Given that all enclosed areas have unique resonant characteristics, which in this case are reinforced by each subsequent replay of the recording, we might say that in effect, Lucier –via the recording technology at his disposal– makes of the room itself an instrument, opening the semantic content of his message onto the entropic processes immanent to the signal's transmission through a circumscribed space-time. Symbiotically, the a-signifying, entropic noise of the Universe is enfolded back, by the work, into the signifying practice of "modern art," *in-forming* a new "individual" (the work) to which a plurality of other artists have since responded.[61]

Indeed, as Eco rightly notes, it is not sufficient to establish a simple dualism between information-as-indeterminacy and "meaningful" structures or semantic organisation. Artistic practices, even those which take as their materials the "noisy" content which lies beyond pre-established signifying regimes, work to incorporate and organise these materials– subjecting them to what he describes as a "new kind of organization." As Eco explains, in the context of literature and poetry:

> The concept of information is useful here only to clarify one of the directions of aesthetic discourse, which is then affected by other organizing factors. That is, all deviation from the most banal linguistic order entails a new kind of organization, *which can be considered as disorder in relation to the previous organization, and as order in relation to the parameters of a new discourse*.[62]

[60] A. Lucier, "I am Sitting in a Room," Lovely Music Ltd, New York, 1981, accessed on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAxHlLK3Oyk> retrieved August 9, 2019.
[61] Indeed, Lucier's work has been appropriated in the context of the digital media ecology, with a YouTube user re-enacting the piece in order to reveal the subterranean architectures of digital encoding- recording himself reciting a text derived from Lucier's, posting the video on YouTube, "ripping" it from YouTube in mp4 format and reposting it. The user repeats this process 1000 times, until all we are left with is an indistinct collage of digital shapes and sound. As his own script explains: "what you will see and hear, then, are the artefacts inherent in the video codex of both YouTube and the mp4 format…." YouTube user "Ontologist," "I am Sitting in a Video Room 1000," YouTube, published 2010, accessed on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qKz5YW5J-U> retrieved August 9, 2019.
[62] Eco, p.60.

However, it should be noted, that the "ordering" principles of contemporary art, claims Eco, differ from those of classical art, in so far as they maintain, as their function, an essentially parasitic relationship with the previous order, a polar movement between disordering practices and the order of the system which gives birth to them. Thus:

> In fact, one might say that rather than imposing a new system, contemporary art constantly oscillates between the rejection of the traditionally linguistic system and its preservation –for if contemporary art imposed a totally new linguistic system, then its discourse would cease to be communicable. The dialectic between form and the *possibility* of multiple meanings, which constitutes the very essence of the 'open work,' takes place in this oscillation.[63]

We may here recall Simondon's postulation of information, understood in an ontogenetic sense, as offering a kind of "third way" between systematised content and pure aleatory chaos, and as such providing the productive conditions for *new* organisations (individuals). Indeed the "open work" to which Eco gestures would appear to be a tentative model of the kind of artistic practice which might aspire to such a thirdness, between calcified order and variable chaos, in the productive space between the empirical and the abstract, from which might emerge a plurality of new and varied individuals. In terms of its basis as a fundament for the transition of information, and with simultaneous potentialities for *problematising* this information, noise therefore becomes an important concept which we can read across media, practices and discourses alike.

Such environmental and aleatory "noise" indeed forms a major axis in the work of numerous avant-garde filmmakers, for instance Stan Brakhage and Marie Menken, both of whom make films which incorporate aleatory, non-intentional and technologically "noisy" elements into their work. Brakhadge's films *Mothlight* (1963) and *Dog Star Man* (1961-64) incorporate over exposures, negative scratching, blurring, and various physical "degradations" of the film stock in order to depict the fallible and bodily elements of consciousness and memory. Menken's play with superimposition, over-and-under-exposure, fast and slow motion, blurring and wavering hand-held camera –revolutionary at the time of her early films– constitute a lilting fabric of quotidian imagery, reified into impressionistic time-images across films like *Go! Go! Go!* (1962-64) and *Lights* (1966).

But such films, we might argue, depend upon their bodily presence as film-stock, a direct, indexical relation to environmental factors which leave their fingerprints. How might we conceive of film which uses digital means and media in a similar way? Are major works of cinema –as opposed to the fringe experiments of avant-gardists– still produced which might capture these forces in new and innovative ways? In order to answer this question in the affirmative –it is not necessary, nor, sadly, possible– to point to a rich and proliferating new school or tradition. Besides, as Deleuze has told us, the vast majority of cinematic production is "rubbish." It would suffice, in order to argue this case, simply to point to one film, one example, which justifies the claims made in this thesis– identifying the potential for a noisy "digital outside," which might be both filmed and thought. It is, I claim, *Inland Empire* which does just that.

[63] Ibid.

# 6. Inland Empire

## Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore David Lynch's 2006 film *Inland Empire*, positing it as a counter-example to some of the forms of "closure" and of "control" with which both Deleuze and Flaxman associate the new, "informational image." The film, I will argue, instead engenders relations with a "digital outside," opening up the space for a series of noetic encounters that unground our habitual thinking, provoking us to think –philosophically and otherwise– in novel and creative ways. The film achieves this, I claim, in three interrelated ways. Firstly, by foregrounding its own digital materiality, in such a way that the "analogue vs digital" conflict becomes a central component of the film. In making explicit not only certain new potentialities but also the aesthetic "limitations" of its own digital materiality, the film thus enacts similar experiments with the "outside" as Blanchot identifies in poetic language –emphasising un-subsumable, un-thought and inhuman factors which are not only the fundaments to our modes of expression, but, in a related sense, essential components to the production of art. In the context of digital technics, I will explicitly identify these image components with "noise," which Lynch proliferates both at the semantic and the technical –which is to say entropic and indeterminate– levels of the film, using it productively in order to generate a series of noetic "encounters" –such as we have elaborated with regards to Deleuze's thought.

Secondly, I claim that the film proliferates a "digital outside" through its thematic foregrounding of the concrete circumstances of contemporary film production –centralising what Robert Sinnerbrink describes as a story about "Hollywood in trouble."[1] In this context, the film advances the kind of auto-critique with which Deleuze identifies *auteur* cinema of the 20th century, presenting a grim, nightmarish image of Hollywood –its descent into corruption and violence tied to its contemporary encounter with "new media" technologies and forms. Deleuze, we may recall, argues that in order to avoid the closure of information systems –opening their functions up to an "outside"– we ought to pose contextual, critical and speculative questions which are the remit of both art and philosophy. In his words, "[to go] beyond information is achieved on two sides at once, towards two questions: *what is the source and what is the addressee?*"[2] And *Inland Empire's* protracted auto-criticism, not only of Hollywood as a menacing centre for the distribution of information, but of a whole "new media" ecology within which it is situated, works towards exactly these questions. Furthermore, while the film thus constitutes a "critique" of certain informational, "new media" images, its genesis as a series of fragments of digital imagery intended for Lynch's website means that this critique does not take the form of an "external" commentary on such images, but rather forms an immanent critique, using contemporary digital technologies and aesthetics to explore potential *future* directions of the screen image.

Thirdly, the film uses digital recording and editing technology to create "incompossible" loops of a-chronic temporality, "splitting" the film's characters in such a way as to suggest new forms of digital subjectivity. The film's subjects are dissolved across these temporal loops in various modes of performativity, fantasy and a multiplication of identities, impelling us to think the form of a new, digital subject, such as might elude the functions of neo-liberal

[1] Sinnerbrink, *New Philosophies*, p.144.
[2] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.276.

subjectivisation and control. These subjects, by *affirming* this splitting, in all of its problematic dimensions, might –in keeping with our account of Deleuze's third synthesis of time– instead become creative, revolutionary, planting the seeds for a "people to come." On these key and interrelated registers, I will argue, the film opens up fresh philosophical territories within which we might think *with* informational and digital technologies, yet *against* their tendencies for control and the closure of the cinematic image. This dual movement, I will claim, might characterise a "digital outside."

## Synopsis

At the outset, it must be noted that caution when embarking upon such an "analysis" is essential. As Sinnerbrink has noted, the film: "communicate[s] an experience of thinking that resists philosophical translation or paraphrase…"[3] Indeed, its fragmentary and chaotic structure works to resist theoretical systematisation, and as such the discussion in this chapter does not hope to provide a definitive "reading" of the film's thematic or aesthetic components. Even if we entertain the idea that the film is able to make some kind of contribution to philosophical thought, we must acknowledge the fact that any attempt to (re)articulate its functions in the context of written philosophy risks ironing out their specificity and eliding what was valuable about them in the first place.

Deleuze, indeed, acknowledges this very problem in the last pages of *Cinema II,* noting that theoretical works on cinema have always been a fraught proposition. Responding to Godard's remark that the filmmakers of the French New Wave only ever wrote theoretical texts which were ancillary to their *creative* practice as filmmakers, Deleuze will claim that "this remark does not show a great understanding of what is called theory. For theory too is something which is made, no less than its object."[4] Indeed, in so much as I hope to argue that the film genuinely contributes something to philosophical thinking, it will be in the context of a conception of philosophy as a "creative practise" which is commensurate with Deleuze's own method. As he explains:

> For many people, philosophy is something which is not 'made,' but is pre-existent, readymade in a prefabricated sky. However, philosophical theory is itself a practice, just as much as its object… a theory of cinema is not 'about' cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices… it is at the level of the interference of many practices that things happen, beings, images, concepts, all the kinds of events.[5]

In this context, the reading of *Inland Empire* in this chapter does not constitute an "analysis" in the strict sense of the term. Instead, this chapter responds to the film's ability to establish noetic "events" through the various "interferences" it is able to produce –between its subjects, spaces and materials, but also between itself and the spectator– effecting a form of thought which could not have adhered before it served as the grist for this "encounter." Philosophy we may recall, in Deleuze's terms, constitutes a "fabrication of concepts,"[6] and it is indeed the concept of a "digital outside" with which my own work hopes to emerge from its "encounter" with Lynch's film.

[3] Sinnerbrink, *New Philosophies*, p.142.
[4] Deleuze, *Cinema II,* p.287.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.5.

*Inland Empire* tells the "story" –though we may not ultimately be justified in using this term– of fading Hollywood actress Nikki Grace (Laura Dern) who hopes to make a comeback by embarking upon a film called *On High in Blue Tomorrows*, which, in typical Lynchian style, we soon learn is cursed. The film charts the movement by which Nikki becomes gradually indiscernible from the role she is to play– "Susan Blue," a Southern Belle trapped in an apparently abusive relationship. In a key early scene, Nikki and her co-star Devon Berk (Justin Theroux) sit down with the film's director, Kingsley Stewart (Jeremy Irons) and his laconic assistant Freddy (Harry Dean Stanton), in a vast and empty soundstage for a preliminary read-through of the script. Shortly after beginning their reading, Freddy notices a presence lurking in the shadows of the half-finished set. Running to investigate, Devon hears receding footsteps, and chases the apparent intruder into a corner of the soundstage where they seem to have disappeared, inexplicably, "where," in Devon's words, "it's hard to disappear."[7]

This unsettling event provokes Stewart to disclose his knowledge that *On High in Blue Tomorrows* is fact the remake of an unfinished German feature entitled *47*– whose two lead actors were murdered. The script, he informs us, is apparently the subject of an old Polish gypsy hex, a fact the studio has kept from those involved. As Stewart explains, gesturing to his right-hand man:

> Now, Freddy is purposefully out and about gathering what in this business is the most valuable commodity… *information*. Information is indispensable. You probably know this from your own lives… we all have people who gather, agents, friends, producers, and sometimes they share... sometimes not… Now, Freddy has found out that our producers know the history of this film and have taken it upon themselves not to pass on that information to us.[8]

Later, Nikki walks with her groceries down an alleyway, and noticing a door marked *Axxon N*,[9] she enters, finding herself in the shadows at the back of this same sound stage. Peering out, she sees the impossible sight of herself in rehearsal– the previous soundstage scene now shot from a different angle. Horrified, as Devon runs towards her, she flees through a door in the unfinished set. Whereas in the previous version of this scene, Devon encountered the door

[7] *Inland Empire*, dir. D Lynch, USA, Absurda / Studio Canal, 2006.
[8] Ibid.
[9] The term is first introduced in the film's opening sequence, accompanying the black-and-white image of a record spinning on a gramophone. Here, a voice-over tells us that we are listening to "Axxon N … the longest running radio show in history… continuing, in the Baltic region: a grey winter day in an old hotel." This strange "sign" recurs throughout the film, at several points scrawled in chalk on doorways and featuring an arrow indicating the direction Nikki is to follow. At each point this device recurs, it immediately precedes a "splitting" of the character: the first time immediately prior to her discovery of herself, viewed from the shadows of the sound-stage. The second time, Nikki sees this "sign" on Hollywood boulevard, immediately before noticing herself across the street, flashing a mocking grin. While Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster have described Axx oNN as "the axiom of the unintelligible…" (S. Critchley & J. Webster, "What is the Hole Inside the Hole: On David Lynch's Inland Empire" in *Bedeutung*, Issue 3 "Life and Death," <http://www.bedeutung.co.uk/magazine/issues/3-life-death/critchley-webster-lynch-empire/> retrieved August 24, 2019) Sinnerbrink meanwhile argues that "one can more fruitfully approach the resonances of 'Axxon N.' as a cinematic 'axon' or brain/nerve cell linking multiple layers of consciousness… a topologically linked series of nested narrative filmworlds…" (Sinnerbrink, *New Philosophies*, p.151). Clearly, as the harbinger of the film's various "doublings" of Nikki's character, the term is related to the "splitting" of the subject through its participation in various networks of retentional/recorded images (gramophone, film image etc.).

as the flimsy façade of a dummy house with nothing behind it, in this reality (or *temporality*) Nikki emerges into an *actual* house in another part of the world.

From this point on, what hints of narrative we were originally provided begin to fall away, in favour of a series of dark, recurrent and almost imperceptibly connected images. Nikki appears to be living, suddenly, in a suburban house with an abusive husband, apparently "becoming" Sue Blue. She encounters a group of sex workers, the "valley girls," who share stilted, sexually charged and irrational dialogue. We are shown images of Polish sex workers in 1930s Łódź, and a backyard gathering of circus performers. With a man wearing glasses in a shadowy office, Nikki/Sue discusses at length stories of her abuse at the hands of men, dating back to childhood. Interspersed at regular intervals is footage of a group of actors in sinister rabbit costumes, occupying a set reminiscent of classic 1950s sitcoms, and accompanied by an incongruous laughter track.

Nikki/Sue eventually walks down Hollywood Boulevard at night, and, shortly after once more seeing the "sign" *Axxon N* scrawled in chalk across a door, is stabbed in the stomach with a screwdriver by Devon's wife –who has come to believe the two on-screen lovers are having an affair in the "real world." She dies an agonised, slow death, vomiting blood, and falls onto the sidewalk beside a group of homeless people. At this point, after having disappeared from the film for over an hour, we hear Kinglsey Stewart call "cut," and the camera zooms out to reveal that Nikki has been on a film set. Further surreal images follow- Nikki wanders trance-like into a projection room where her performance is already on the screen. She is pursued by a terrifying "red lipped man" whom she shoots, causing his face to change into a distorted copy of her own. Finally, Nikki is at home again, apparently happy, while the end credits roll and a group of dancers mime and perform to Nina Simone's song *Sinner Man*.

## A Semantic Outside

The first thing we might therefore say about *Inland Empire* is that it is, in a certain fundamental sense, unwatchable. We might here recall the Austrian writer Robert Musil's account of his young protagonist's attempt to read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*: "When he stopped reading in exhaustion after half an hour he had only reached page two."[10] It is with a similar sense of despair that, upon reaching the hour mark of this labyrinth of images, we realise that there remains over two hours of the film ahead. This difficulty, however, derives not just from pretentious obscurantism –though there is perhaps a dose of *that*– ultimately, what makes the perceptual and noetic experience of *Inland Empire* so difficult, a characteristic it perhaps shares with Kant's daunting tome, is the sustained hostility the film offers to any habitual exercise of the faculties of both perception and of thought.

At the level of narrative, the film "plays" with our noetic processes through a selective distribution and retention of *semantic* information. In the film's early scenes –the most conventional "movement" or "action-images"– we are drip-fed just enough information to orient our subsequent perceptual experience. This is a story about the production of a Hollywood film, starring an actress whose career is on the wane. However these "plotted"

[10] M. Weigelt, "Introduction," in I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. M. Weigelt & M. Muller, Penguin Books, London, 2007, p.xv.

elements are quickly problematised with the introduction of "noisy" semantic materials in the form of *non-sequitur* and *non-sense*.

Early in the film, Nikki is visited at her home by a mysterious older woman, who claims to be her neighbour. The woman (Grace Zabriskie) approaches Nikki's house, followed by the ubiquitous movement of the hand-held camera. On being admitted by Nikki's butler, she and Nikki are seated at a small table. In a Polish accent, the woman explains that she has been visiting all of her "new neighbours." Their subsequent exchange exemplifies the film's consistent operation –at both the semantic, "narrative" level, but also, as we shall see, at that of its technical-aesthetic texture– to disrupt all systematised, "meaningful" content, via a disjunctive openness to "noise" –which is to say, content which does not accord with the system's pre-distributed terms.

"Which house are you living in?" asks Nikki, to which the woman replies, enigmatically, with perhaps a note of contempt,
"…just down the way… tucked back in the small woods…"[11]
And already we find ourselves spectators to a micro-staging of the film's "play" with information: Zabriskie's character refuses to communicate in any clear or coherent way, her obscure comments instead evoking a kind of "free association" of dark and disconnected images.

The scene unfolds as an uncomfortable game on the register of semantic information, with Nikki probing nervously for some kind of concrete identification from the woman, which is consistently resisted. And this indeterminacy is replicated at the aesthetic level: Nikki is shot in a standard close-up, her face well-lit and relatively centred. The woman however, while initially shot in a similarly "neutral" way, is gradually –through the imposition of shot and counter shot– drawn inexorably closer to the camera, which begins to produce an uncomfortable "fish-eye" effect, the frame cropping her face in a style reminiscent of Dreyer. Framed in this way, the woman continues her opaque dialogue:
"So… you have a new role to play I hear…"
"Up for a role... but, uh, I'm afraid, far from getting it."
"No no… I definitely heard that you have it."
"Oh?"[12]

Here, the "game" of information begins to take on its critical dimensions, in the introduction of the key theme of Hollywood as a kind of nexus for the selective distribution of information, an information which abides in the presence of a mysterious and *withheld* information, such as forces us –like Dern's character– into a speculative and critical noetic mode. Indeed, it appears that this strange woman has access to some kind of portentous information concerning Nikki, ultimately predicting the "brutal fucking murder"[13] with which the film within the film ends. Nikki's visitor, indeed, possesses a strange mastery over the film's disjunctive temporal structure, which she evokes in a passage of dialogue before appearing to become the very *agent* of its "splitting":

> Yes. Me, I... I can't seem to remember if it's today, two days from now, or yesterday. I suppose if it was 9:45, I'd think it was after midnight! For instance, if today was tomorrow, you wouldn't even remember that you owed on an unpaid bill. Actions do

[11] Lynch, *Inland Empire*.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

> have consequences. And yet, there is the magic. If it was tomorrow, you would be sitting over there.[14]

The woman points, and in the subsequent point of view shot we encounter the first of a series of temporal "splittings" which take place throughout the film: we now see Nikki, inexplicably sitting in another chair, at another time, talking and laughing with her friends. Nikki's butler returns holding the telephone– it's her agent, and Nikki has got the part in *On High in Blue Tomorrows*.

The "magic" to which the woman refers, and which she appears to enact with her pointed finger, is perhaps that of cinema, which, as we have seen, is able to imbricate non-linear temporalities, presenting us with a time which is "impossible" in the context of sensory-motor action. The ostensibly systematised "narrative" we have so far encountered, is problematised by this suddenly inexplicable shot– the interpolation of a temporality which is "meaningless," which is to say *noisy*, in the sense that it emerges from beyond the pre-distributed terms of the scene's initially "realistic" structure.

Indeed this scene, and the sudden temporal shift with which it concludes –the woman is gone, her portentous warnings forgotten, the film continues with Nikki preparing for her role– is indicative of the consistent "uncertainty" which permeates the film. At the semantic level, there is the "game" of information, such that we identify with Nikki in seeking desperately to extrapolate meaningful content from the crumbs of information we are fed. And this uncertainty at the semantic level is replicated on the level of the film's aesthetics, with the obscure, "cropped" framing of Nikki's visitor denying us, in certain key respects, coherent visual content.

We might think about the "uncertainty" produced throughout this scene in the terms with which Weaver identifies information according to the MTC. As Weaver writes:

> Information is, we must steadily remember, a measure of one's freedom of choice in selecting a message. The greater this freedom of choice, and hence the greater the information, the greater is the uncertainty that the message actually selected is some particular one. Thus greater freedom of choice, greater uncertainty, greater information go hand in hand.[15]

Of course, Weaver is here referring to the "desirable uncertainty" of a maximal potentiality of "meaningful" messages. But as we have seen, in the context of an artistic practice deliberately oriented towards aleatory data or "noise," we might read this "uncertainty" as fundamentally entwined with information in an ontological sense. We might also, in this context, return to Deleuze's account of a "thought without image," which depends not upon a "recognition" of pre-distributed terms (good sense), but rather on an encounter with the fundamentally un-thought: "Something in the world *forces* us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*."[16]

These two formulations provide a helpful rubric via which we might read the noetic *complications* which characterise this scene. In opening its systematised informational content to information in that *othe*r sense, as an uncertainty composed of a-signifying,

[14] Ibid.
[15] Shannon & Weaver, p.18.
[16] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.139.

processual data or "difference" –such as we have encountered in Floridi, Bateson *et al*.– the scene forces us, like Dern's character, into a productive form of thought. No longer simply spectators to the unfurling of narrative, we find ourselves confronted with a *problematisation* of narrative, such that we must begin to *think* the very form of the film upon which we have embarked. In the terms of the MTC, we might say that the differential "uncertainty" immanent to the film's "signal" thus dramatically increases the potential "messages" which might emerge from the film, causing us likewise to question the contingency and limits of the shared "alphabet" we suppose that we share with the signal's "sender."

Lynch himself will refer to the relation between spectator and film as "the circle,"[17] a kind of differential circuitry which produces unanticipated feelings, thoughts and impressions in the audience. But might not we identify exactly these functions in Deleuze's time-image, and in the auteur cinema of the 20th century? None of the devices we have so far elaborated depend upon the film's specifically *digital* technics. How might we understand the film as an expression of a uniquely *digital* uncertainty– as productive of a noetic outside which is directly implicated with the new, informational image?

## A Technical Outside

Leaving aside the intractable character of the film's narrative, *Inland Empire* produces and plays with information on more fundamentally *perceptual* and *technical* registers. In the most immediate terms, the film is *dark*, not only conceptually, but also quite literally –with the vast majority of scenes poorly lit and indistinct– a situation which engenders a constantly "strained" spectatorship. Likewise, the "clarity" of the film's image-scape is muddied at a more fundamentally technical level– with frequent instances of pixilation, consistent "slippages" of camera focus, and the ubiquitous wavering movements of hand-held cinematography. In fully embracing this primitive, "glitchy" aesthetic, *Inland Empire* constituted something of a break for Lynch, who had hitherto been known primarily for the austere cinematography of films like *Blue Velvet* (1986) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001), and for his strikingly "cinematic" television show *Twin Peaks* (1990-91, 2017). The film indeed returns to the gritty aesthetic of Lynch's breakout film *Eraserhead* (1977), which used both its film-stock and its black and white palette to explore various strata of its own *materiality*- from the speckled flesh of its prosthetic "monsters" through to a multilayered and distinctly tactile sound design.

But the material dimensions of *Inland Empire* constitute less the meticulous constructions of *Eraserhead* –Lynch and Alan Splet spent around a year, for instance, producing the latter's sound-effects alone[18]– but rather a deferral of certain aesthetic "decisions" to algorithmic, computational and aleatory processes immanent to digital technics. Lynch himself neatly summarises the film's haphazard genesis in his book, *Catching the Big Fish*, in which he explains:

[17] As Lynch explains, in a passage which gives us a good sense of the "open," aleatory and productive elements that determine his conception of the experience of spectatorship: "There is a circle that goes from the audience to the film and back. Each person is looking and thinking and feeling and coming up with his or her own sense of things… So you don't know how it's going to hit people. But if you thought about how it's going to hit people, or if it's going to hurt someone, or if it's going to do this or that, then you would have to stop making films… you never know what's going to happen." (D. Lynch, *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness and Creativity*, Tarcher Perigee, New York, 2016, p.20).
[18] J. Hoberman & J. Rosenbaum, *Midnight Movies*, De Capo, Cambridge MA, 1991, p.234.

> When we began, there wasn't any INLAND EMPIRE, there wasn't anything. I just bumped into Laura Dern on the street, discovering that she was my new neighbour. I hadn't seen her for a long time, and she said, 'David, we've got to do something together again.' And I said, 'We sure do. Maybe I'll write something for you. And maybe we'll do it as an experiment for the Internet.' And she said, 'Fine.' So I wrote a fourteen-page monologue, and Laura memorized all fourteen pages and it was about a seventy minute take.[19]

This typically brief and unassuming account of his directorial practice gives us some key axioms via which we might understand the mechanics of Lynch's film. Firstly, its genesis is quite literally found in a chance "encounter" between two individuals, the relationship between whom will generate a new "individual" in the form of the work. Such an openness to chance, which interposes undetermined and productive forms of "information" at all levels of the film's production, constitutes one of the key themes to which we will return throughout this chapter.

Furthermore, this precis suggests that Lynch, always interested in new forms,[20] had determined to produce a work for the Internet. Indeed, it was only after filming began that Lynch realised, in his words, "[that] I couldn't release it on the Internet because it was too good…"[21] and determined to produce a film fit for theatrical presentation. After shooting the initial 70 minute take with Dern, Lynch assembled the rest of the film himself over a period of three years, filming with a low-tech Sony PD-150 hand held camera, and editing the footage with widely available editing program Final Cut Pro. It was Lynch's first film shot entirely on digital video, a technical device which features prominently not only in the film's "look," but in its very structure, as largely improvised and performance driven– a situation Lynch and his actors have attributed to the efficiency and dynamism afforded by digital shooting.[22]

Importantly, Lynch explicitly uses this digital aesthetic to evoke a variety of other, non-cinematic screen forms– various scenes suggest the aesthetics of pornography, online "meme" culture, and amateurish "home" and "user-generated" content. Furthermore, these disparate images are assembled in such a way as to suggest a "network" of multi-laterally related images, juxtaposed according to a scrambled or inaccessible logic, such as closely resembles the disordered and proliferating informatic relations we experience online. Indeed, Lynch's conviction that these forms have, in some sense, rendered obsolete a traditional directorial practice, inform his (perhaps polemical) claim that it is the last feature film he intends to make.[23] Thus in its very technical gestation, *Inland Empire* is indicative of the

[19] Lynch, *Big Fish*, p.82.
[20] Important to note is that Lynch's artistic practice is far from limited to film production, comprising written works, recorded music, and in particular visual/conceptual art, in which he was originally trained. Lynch's very first experiences with film emerged, indeed, from his work as a visual artist ("I began to wonder if film could be a way to make paintings move…" (Ibid, p.16)), as such, his sensibility is inevitably conditioned by the same "disruptive" concerns with which Eco will associate the "open work" of modern art, which would have formed a significant conceptual component of his training.
[21] Ibid., p.82.
[22] A. Dawtrey, "Lynch Invades an Empire," in *Variety* (Online), May 11, 2005, <http://variety.com/2005/film/markets-festivals/lynch-invades-an-empire-1117922566/> retrieved August 24, 2019.
[23] M. Idato, "David Lynch on the return of Twin Peaks and why he will never make another film," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Online), April 16 2007 (Updated May 5, 2017), <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-

interconnected, multi-platform character of so-called "new media," emerging from the networked and "informatic" images which Deleuze had greeted with some mistrust.

These aesthetic "decisions," as I have suggested, are consistently complicated by the inhuman determinations of digital technics, which form a fundamental aspect of the film's texture. Throughout the film our perception is consistently drawn to the operations of the PD-150 camera, which struggles to autofocus on faces and sets which are shot too closely, or to adapt to changes in lighting beyond its aspect capacity. Frequent pixilation of movement and of shadow, fisheye effects resulting from extreme close-ups, and the movement of the handheld camera thus all contribute to make the *limits* of digital materiality a key dimension of the film. While we are thus confronted with a distinctly *digital* aesthetic, the film's images are far from the totalising, overdetermined "money shots" of *Avatar*, such as we encountered in chapter four. Indeed, rather than the lavish intentionality of spectacular Hollywood productions, the images here suggest our haphazard experience of the digital in a plurality of more quotidian contexts –as user-generated content viewed on smart phones, feature films warped to be viewed on the back of aeroplane seats, or video-chats conducted with the pixelated faces of distant loved-ones– in short, the obscure, private and contingent modes in which we experience digital images daily.

We might turn to a particular scene late in the film, selecting it almost at random in keeping with the film's aleatory, "hyperlinked" texture. Here both Nikki and the handheld camera slowly move down a hallway, so dimly lit as to provide only snatches of decipherable visual content. In the background, we hear the high-pitched, almost ineffable whir of the digital camera's mechanics. Lamps dotted along the hallway are shot so closely as to overwhelm the camera's brightness aspect, becoming abstract shapes and pools of colour. Nikki, her dirtied face shot with inquisitorial closeness, is suddenly approached by an aggressor –"the Phantom"– a sinister male figure who has appeared sporadically throughout the film. Pulling out a gun she fires on her attacker, whose face is suddenly and harshly lit with torches, the brightness of which again overwhelm the aspect functions of the camera, constituting a pixelated blur of light. Nikki fires again, and the face of her attacker, through a cheap looking superimposition effect, becomes her own, contorted by a nightmarish, clown-like smile. Finally, the face becomes a bizarre digital mosaic, centred around the sole discernible feature, a cavernous open mouth, gushing with a blood-like substance.

The scene is by turns vaguely comical and distinctly unpleasant, and at no point do we "understand" what is happening in terms of the logical progression of narrative. Indeed, it exemplifies the film's consistent and performative refusal to communicate "meaningful" or "probable" information –be it at the level of narrative or at the perceptual level of comprehensible "sight"– in any clear or determinate fashion, instead producing flows of "information-as-noise" which overwhelm any determinate interpretative structure. The pixilation and movement of the cheap digital camera thus constitutes a profound "resistance" immanent to digital materiality, a "pure being" of the technical object, exceeding any subjective, human attempt at communication.

The special effects in this sequence –the nightmarish, clown-like "grimace" of Dern's character, followed by the terrifying, bloodied collage of the Phantom's face– offer up a distinct counterpoint to the "excesses" Flaxman rightly identifies in *Avatar*. Here, the effects

and-radio/david-lynch-on-the-return-of-twin-peaks-and-why-he-will-never-make-another-film-20170416-gvlr60.html> retrieved April 19 2019.

do not move towards some idealised or total "virtual reality," but rather are excessive in terms of their being gratuitous, hyperbolic, distinctly *unreal*. At the same time, we encounter a specifically digital aesthetic –blocky, warped, and revelling in the "uncanny valley" between "human" content and the clumsy algorithms of digitisation. Dern's face, with its too-large mouth and pinched, strained eyes, are clearly altered by the cheap post-production effects, foregrounding their algorithmic determinations. These more distinct facial features are situated in a desert of obscure flesh, its only texture the imperfect rendering of the DV camera's software, struggling with the imperative of the harsh torchlight.

In this image, Lynch has opened up an anti-representational space such as we find in non-figurative and abstract art more generally– however despite its continuity with such forms, the image here attains productive forces commensurate only with the new, information image. Dern's face as much resembles Munch's paintings as it does the kind of cheap facial alteration software deployed on Smartphone applications designed to "age," "beautify" or otherwise humorously alter the user's photograph, and the deployment of this image in the context of a work of "artistic" cinema –as well as its deferral to algorithms of aesthetic control or intentionality on the part of the *auteur*– suggests a democratisation of certain "problematic" functions of the image which might constitute a model of "open" creativity moving into the digital age. These "noisy" slippages of intended digital functioning, these "glitchy" informatic openings onto unthought and unthinkable materials, seem, in the context of mass culture participation in digital media, to be in the process of proliferating as the experience of ever larger publics. Like Deleuze's time-image, these "problematic" events at the level of digital materiality might constitute a "mass" production of noetic encounters, provided we are properly able to identify those tendencies in the image which escape pre-determined "control." I will return to, and elaborate this claim at the end of this chapter.

Suffice it to say that Lynch's foregrounding of the digital *as digital* –not in the service of a representational schema of spectacularly "believable" images, but rather as an irreducible technical presence, with operations of its own, over and above the explicit intentions of both *auteur* and spectator– thus evokes the "materiality" of language with which Blanchot begins to sketch the "space of literature." And much like Blanchot's work on language, the import of this intervention derives from the fact that this imperfect technical modality is one through which we conduct our very lives. By resisting "pure" or determinate communication of perceptual information and interspersing its own technical materiality, often in aleatory or *laissez faire* ways, the film introduces the fundamentally inhuman operations of digital technics, which in their imperfection and excess, work to obliterate the "I" in the same ways Blanchot will identify in Kafka. We might here recall that Foucault, in his work on Blanchot, describes the "giant murmuring" of the outside as "the movement of the speaker's disappearance,"[24] and it is just this tendency towards the autonomous, the aleatory and the material dimensions of the digital "communication system" which precipitates the disappearance of Lynch as *auteur*, in supreme command of every aesthetic detail.

But as we have seen across the works of Blanchot, Foucault and Deleuze, the significance of the outside is not simply one entangled with the "death of the author" or the emergence of a particular artistic style. In Foucault's terms, the outside constitutes "the essential hiding place of all being,"[25] the very condition for speech and silence, truth and falsehood, with which certain art forms might afford us contact. In the context of literature, the outside thus

[24] Foucault, "Thought from Outside," p.18.
[25] Ibid, p.57.

constitutes the "the giant murmuring upon which language opens."[26] In the 20th century cinematic movement-and-time-images, it will become an "out of frame" proliferated through irrational cuts and the intolerability of "pure" optical and sound situations. Here, in the context of Lynch's film, we encounter a new outside: no longer "out of frame" but *within* the frame, in an excess of computational materiality which is properly *informatic*.

As we have suggested, we may well read the ontological implications of this outside by turning to the concepts of information theory itself. If we take seriously the conceptual implications of the information theory underpinning these digital technics –whereby predetermined semantic structures constitute the only means by which we might meaningfully distinguish a-signifying, empirical data from "information" conceived as meaningful or desirable– we discover in the film a profound expression of information in its inhuman, aleatory and *productive* guise. By resisting determinate communication of information in favour of digital "noise," *Inland Empire* thus provides distinctly *informatic* moments of noetic rupture– confronting us with uncertain and un-thinkable materials which, in Deleuze's terms, force we, the spectators, into the very act of thinking.

As we have seen, following the work of Gilbert Simondon, once "information" ceases to be of the order of communication –a "neutral" transmission between static and pre-distributed nodes– it becomes *productive*, engendering new individuals in response to the energetic disparities and differences through which it bifurcates and flows. And this interpolation of aleatory, technical devices –be it the algorithms determining the camera's computational (re)composition of data, the wavering of the director's physical presence in the form of hand-held cinematography, or the "imperfect" cross-fades engendered by the use of home editing equipment– ensures that the image circuitries which comprise the film –the relations between different images, and also the relationship between the film and its audience– eschew authorial intent in favour of "differential" relations, which is to say *productive relations*.

This productive "disparity," we have suggested, plays a role at various levels of the film, in terms of our response as spectators, but also throughout its production, during which systematised, semantic and intentional processes are constantly disrupted –which is to say *in-formed*- by the "noise" of random events. We might turn to another scene from the film, set in what Lynch terms "the little house," in order to illustrate this movement from "noisy" events in production through to noetic "events" in spectatorship. Here, Dern –having entered the sound-stage's "dummy door" and now ensconced in an apparently suburban existence as Sue, the "battered wife"– stands in the backyard of a run-down home, only to be confronted by a man (Krysztof Majchrzak), who emerges from behind a tree with a lightbulb in his mouth.

The lightbulb's presence, Lynch explains, was the result of an aleatory process which provides a telling illustration of the creative ethos underpinning the film. Preparing to shoot the scene at Lynch's house, Majchrzak had arrived wearing a pair of "goofy" glasses which he intended to wear in character. Lynch, however, felt that the glasses weren't right, at which point Majchrzak asked for an alternate prop around which he might orient his performance. As Lynch explains:

[26] Blanchot, *Space of Literature*, p.27.

> So I went to my cupboard and saw a little piece of broken tile, I saw a rock, and I saw a red lightbulb, but very transparent like a Christmas light. I took these things out and offered him a choice… and he picked up the bulb.[27]

As Lynch continues, the aleatory and experimental elements constituting this creative process are therefore invariably *productive*, taking place, in his terms (borrowed from his profound interest in transcendental meditation),[28] in the context of a "Unified Field" which might situate disparate, fragmentary images and their relations. Thus:

> I really had this feeling that if there's a Unified Field, there must be a unity between a Christmas tree bulb and this man from Poland who came in wearing these strange glasses. It's interesting to see how these unrelated things live together. And it gets your mind working. How do these things relate when they seem so far apart? It conjures up a third thing that almost unifies those first two.[29]

This "third thing," the equal parts menacing and absurd image of a man emerging from behind a tree with a light-bulb in his mouth, constitutes, on the ontogenetic register, a "new individual," which, in terms of the transmission disparity between image (transmitter) and spectator (receiver) will in turn produce a new individual in the form of an "Idea."

Needless to say, this process will not always adhere –anecdotally, the vast majority of spectators of the film appear to have been above all else *bored*– but given specific conditions of spectatorship –we might think, for instance, of a doctoral student dedicated to the problematic of "control" and of the "outside" in the context of digital image cultures– this encounter with an already differentially produced idea will in turn generate a noetic event which calls for the production of a *solution*. What are we to *make* of this arresting image? Why do its assembled components – *lightbulb* - *mouth* –*tree* – appear so uncomfortably *contemporary*? What, in keeping with the account of thought as creative practise –such as we have elaborated with reference to Deleuze– might it be seen to *produce*? In the context of philosophy, this might be a concept: a digital outside.

It is important, however, that we do not posit "noise" as a total or *a priori* pre-systematic ground. Noise must always be conceived perspectivally, which is to say that noise is always noise in the context of a systematisation it disrupts, but of which it is simultaneously a condition. Music is "made" of noise, but music strives continually to suppress noise in the form of a systematisation of notes, scales and tone. In this sense –and here we might think once more of Eco's "open work," which would produce consistent, polar movements between noise and systematised "meaningful" content– what prevents Lynch's film from slipping into "an empty aestheticism,"[30] are the shifting and parasitic relations between "meaningful" content and "pure chance." These different registers interfere in such a way as to be genuinely productive, the genesis of new aesthetic and noetic "individuals" as a result of a carefully determined field not of "probability," but rather "impossibility," such as

[27] Lynch, *Big Fish*, p.83.
[28] The term in fact refers both to "unified field theory" in physics –according to which the functions of gravitation and electromagnetism might be understood as different manifestations of a single field (as first theorised by Einstein) and also to what Mahirishi Mahesh Yogi describes, in the context of transcendental meditation, as the "unified field of consciousness," a consciousness of the universe itself, to which practitioners of transcendental meditation might cultivate access. Lynch has been a practitioner of TM since the early 1970s.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Deleuze, *Cinema I*, p.18.

generates necessarily novel "solutions" in the space between radically disparate terms. In this context, we might recall Deleuze's claim that, "it is at the level of the interference of many practices that things happen, beings, images, concepts, all the kinds of events."[31] And it is indeed, as this scene and its effects illustrate, the interference of various registers of both noise and of systematised content which generate events in the context of thought. This process, I have argued, takes place at the level of semantic content, aleatory production methods and at that of *digital materiality*, all of which "interfere" in a co-determination which produces uncertainty, *information*.

## Hollywood's Outside

The outside, however, emerges in forms other than these purely technical and aesthetic devices. In chapter three I argued for a certain "political" conception of the outside, such as advances an auto-critique of the operations of capital and of control in the cinematic image, reveals intolerable situations, and forces the subject (the character, the spectator) to become – both personally and collectively– *other than it is*. And *Inland Empire* indeed couples these functions with its more material experiments, offering a profound meditation on the concrete socio-economic and political implications of the new, "informatic" image.

*Inland Empire's* experiments with digital materiality take place in the context of a concomitant exploration of certain social, cultural and economic circumstances from which these technics have arisen. Indeed, the film's very title evokes a distinct socio-cultural geography. "Inland Empire," refers to the metropolitan area inland of Los Angeles, comprising the cities of Riverside County and San Bernadino. In keeping with the film's meditation on the contemporary status of film, it is telling that this is *not* Hollywood, but rather "Hollywood adjacent." Instead, this is American suburbia, landlocked, fraying and without obvious *raison d'etre*: the "any-space-whatever" which, even in California, has been so profoundly altered by ever wider post-industrial and informatic "networks" of labour. This is where "middle America" begins, in the living-rooms, duplexes and tract housing which constitute the latter part of *Inland Empire's mise-en-scène* –an America which chooses television over "cinema," or, more importantly, which increasingly experiences the globalised culture of images through smartphones, tablets and laptops.

Lynch's exploration of suburbia, and of its surreal, subterranean and incongruous elements is well known.[32] Lynch himself encapsulates this theme as it emerges throughout his work in an interview with Chris Rodley:

> My childhood was elegant homes … green grass, cherry trees. Middle America as it's supposed to be. But on the cherry tree there's this pitch oozing out – some black, some yellow, and millions of red ants crawling all over it. I discovered that if one looks a little closer at this beautiful world, there are always red ants underneath.[33]

Lynch here evokes the opening scenes of *Blue Velvet*, in which the idyllic fields of suburban childhood are transfigured into the Dali-esque locale of severed, ant-covered ears. This

[31] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.287.
[32] See, for instance, Todd McGowan's analysis in chapter four of T. McGowan, *The Impossible David Lynch*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp.90-109.
[33] Quoted in M. Chabon, "David Lynch's Night Truths," in *The Paris Review* (Online), March 20, 2018, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/03/20/david-lynchs-night-truths/> retrieved August 24, 2019.

passage also suggests a practise of "looking" which causes interference between different perceptual schemes– a reorientation of our gaze such that an "official" surface of images (the American Dream) is placed in contact with the "noise" it strives to exclude (following Weiner, we might say the "evil" of disordered, entropic nature: ants, pitch and blood).

The suburbia of *Inland Empire* is of an altogether different order, however this operation of interference recurs. This is "digital suburbia" –a world of interpenetrating flows of information: of informatic socialising (social media), informatic sex (pornography), informatic labour (Silicon Valley is only six hours away) all imbricated in such a way as to produce lives half-lived in virtual space. *Inland Empire's* "ants" are not only the technical "glitches" this space engenders, but also the material violences upon which these "virtual realities" depend: violence against women (domestic abuse, the film's trafficked sex-workers), economic exclusion (the drifters among whom Nikki/Sue eventually "dies" on Hollywood Boulevard), and the fractious pressures it seems to exert on subjectivity.

These auto-critical explorations of contemporary screen culture's "conditions of possibility," are likewise expressed in the film's exploration of Hollywood's own European "conditions," a manoeuvre with particular prescience in the context of a project dedicated to the implications of Deleuze's overwhelmingly European "time-image." The creativity of Hollywood, of course, has long been driven by the European avant-garde's diaspora, its most fertile periods the concrete product of war and dispossession on the Continent. *Inland Empire* may well explore the underbelly of American life, but its simultaneous extension of deep roots into a European *mise-en-scène*, both in the form of the structural device whereby we are constantly returned to mysterious scenes set in the Balkans and Poland, and in terms of explicit and implicit references to European art film (we encounter devices from *Persona*, *Last Year at Marienbad*, *Pierrot le Fou*, *Un Chien Andalou* to name just a few) seeks to establish a continued trajectory of "problematic," temporally experimental cinema from the 20th century into the 21st.

But Lynch's project, as we have suggested, has long been dedicated to marrying these more rarefied experimental traditions with a surrealism and unease altogether closer to home. As we have said, the film contains images which evoke such diverse screen forms as pornography, "user-generated" video, surveillance footage and sitcom, all of which are combined in a nightmarish melange. In this way, the film constitutes a creative criticism of the whole "new media" landscape as it emerges in imbrication with global consumer capitalism, and which has exploded since the film's release in 2006. Furthermore, in terms of this marriage of a European avant-garde tradition with a distinctly "popular" screen aesthetic, Lynch's film perhaps opens up critical territories which elude Deleuze's own analysis in his work on cinema. As Mark Poster observes, in the context of a critique of Deleuze's predilection squarely for "high art" cinema, such an approach does not necessarily orient one towards an efficacious study of contemporary media. In his words, "one cannot come near the problem of media with a view of the everyday as degraded, debased and baleful."[34] And while this criticism may be a little heavy-handed, especially given Deleuze and Guattari's interest in certain forms of "minor" literature, it helps us to differentiate the approach advanced in the Deleuzian cinema books from that of Lynch.

Lynch adores pop-cultural and low-brow screen forms, a love which enabled him to revolutionise them through his surrealistic prime time drama *Twin Peaks* –the huge success

[34] M. Poster, "Afterward," in *Deleuze and New Technology*, p.261.

of which constitutes today something of a retrospective mystery. This obsession affords Lynch a proximity to new, "informatic" screen images which perhaps eludes Deleuze's observations, painting them not only with some admiration –but in the full richness of their horror. Significant to Lynch's approach is a profound awareness of the slippages and surrealisms, in this context we may well say the socio-cultural "noise," already immanent to these forms. The absurd non-sequiturs of overwrought (multi-writer) soap opera dialogue, the stilted, zombie-ish acting of Hollywood's straight-to-video products or of "narrative" pornography, the obscure pace of late-night television –with its whorl of infotainment, evangelism and cheap advertising– are all reworked by Lynch, not merely into a kind of self-aware cultural critique, but into moments of profound beauty.

Lynch, as we have seen, acknowledges this capacity to cause "interference" between disparate perceptual schemas, different forms of "looking," which is symbiotic, in the sense that while it might reify the mundane and even the ugly, it serves likewise to problematize the "beauty" of an official or institutional "surface" (the American Dream). In *Inland Empire*, this tendency to experiment with some of the surrealism(s) immanent to "everyday life" and to popular forms emerges in the infamous "Rabbits" sequences which pepper the film. These scenes, adapted from a 2002 series of web films, feature three humanoid rabbits who share disjointed dialogue in a shabby yet quotidian living room. Lynch's tagline for the series, which, with typical irony, he refers to as a sitcom: "in a nameless city deluged by a continuous rain … three rabbits live with a fearful mystery."[35]

The dialogue shared by the rabbits is, like that of Nikki's polish visitor, comprised entirely of non-sequiturs ("I am going to find out one day," "When will you tell it," "Who could have known?" "What time is it?"[36]). Each of these fragments, subtracted from a series which would meaningfully contain it, serves to "communicate" according to an apparently random distribution which establishes new, and no-longer sensory-motor, relations. These new relations of (non)sense are overlaid with a canned laughter track which likewise appears to bear no relation to the semantic content of the dialogue.

The "fearful mystery" encountered by these rabbits is thus perhaps a mystery at the very heart of communication itself, which teeters on the verge of incoherence, particularly when under the strain of capitalist modalities –the dialogue of a sitcom, or indeed of the suburban living room. The rabbits, in fact, in their anthropomorphic animality, their "sound bite" utterances and their indeterminate affectivity as both menacing and droll, are evocative of online "meme" culture, the very *raison d'etre* of which is an ironic play with (re)distributions of sense. In our terms, "Rabbits" constitutes a kind of multi-dimensional machine for producing information in the non-semantic, Shannon sense, that is to say aleatory and entropic data. Furthermore, in its determination *not* to communicate, but rather to extend these flows of information into various undetermined intellectual and affective responses in the audience – Lynch's "circle"– the rabbits sequences likewise contaminate the audience with its "mystery," which is to say the mystery which surrounds the possibility of "communicating" at all.

[35] C. Marshall, "David Lynch Made a Disturbing Web Sitcom Called 'Rabbits': It's Not Used by Psychologists to Induce a Sense of Existential Crisis in Research Subjects," in *Open Culture* (Online), May 30th, 2018, < http://www.openculture.com/2018/05/david-lynch-made-a-disturbing-web-sitcom-called-rabbits.html> retrieved September 13, 20019.
[36] Lynch, *Inland Empire*.

This "coming apart" of meaning in the context of Hollywood, but also of sitcoms, memes, webisodes, porn and so on, accords with a kind of immanent Marxism we have likewise derived from Deleuze's "time-image." The resistance to new forms of "machinic enslavement," or "control" must take place, to quote again a formulation of Guattari's, "not through a politics of return to archaic territorialities, but through the crossing of an additional degree of deterritorialization."[37] This is to say that capitalism, for Deleuze and Guattari, is constantly engaged in movements of deterritorialisation –the catalytic breakdown of traditions, borders, sensibilities– however attendant to this process is a commensurate reterritorialisation, ensuring that these explosive energies are perpetually re-coded as control and capital. A properly revolutionary deterritorialisation can only emerge if this former tendency escapes and overflows the latter, and in Lynch's film, we glimpse the forms of "pressure" on mass culture's distributions of sense which might participate in such a process.

It is not, however, enough to simply let capitalism continue to proliferate itself (which is to say, destroy life on the planet) trusting in forms of semantic non-sense and narrative breakdown in order to posit new and "revolutionary connections."[38] These processes require, to slip explicitly into Deleuze's terms, the continued intervention not only of philosophy – which might use them to fabricate concepts – but of art –which might use them to fabricate new arrangements of affects and percepts in the context of sensibility. Lynch's film, and the disjunctive assemblages it uses in order to produce information in its aleatory and excessive (differentially productive) sense, constitutes just such a project, and arrives with an imperative that philosophy should follow suit, fabricating new concepts with which we might continue to remodel the always endangered figure of thought.

These themes aside –we will return to them shortly– we must here recall that the agent which might constitute a "revolutionary" thought, a thought from beyond the present –from outside– does not pre-exist this process, but must likewise be *created* in the context of an encounter with the intolerable, in the world and at the heart of thought. In this context, we will turn, finally, to *Inland Empire's* sketch of a new form of "incompossible" digital subjectivity. This subjectivity, I claim –personified in Dern's character– draws on "performative" and technical elements of its identity, simultaneously problematising them through a radical foregrounding of their functioning and limits. This digital subject, I will claim, as it emerges throughout the film, suggests the proliferation of such a subjectivity far beyond "cinema" and indeed "art," orienting us toward the Deleuzian notion of a "people to come."

## Digital Incompossibility

In one of the film's very first scenes, shot in black and white, we encounter a man and a woman, their faces blurred, speaking in Polish. "Do you know what whores do?" asks the man. "Yes," comes the response, "they fuck."[39] This sequence –the first of many featuring sex workers throughout the film– with its indistinct faces and robotic sexual dialogue, is the clear restaging of a similar scene at the beginning of Godard's *Weekend* (1968). The blurred aesthetic and nihilistic eroticism of the scene are also obvious evocations of pornography. The film's persistent motifs of sexual exploitation, be it in the form of pornography, sex trafficking or indeed, in popular cinema, are interwoven into what Lynch has claimed is the

[37] Guattari, *Machinic Unconscious*, p.227.
[38] Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.473.
[39] Lynch, *Inland Empire*.

film's central premise: "[a story] about a woman in trouble."[40] Importantly, this thematic element is profoundly entangled with the "digital," which appears, at least initially, to constitute the next in a long line of image technics used to control and to exploit the female body.[41]

However these digital technics are also deployed in a potential reterritorialisation of this problematic. We have already seen how shooting with a hand-held digital camera determined the film's "raw material:" a powerful lead performance from Dern, filmed using the "short-hand" afforded by digital recording –immense flexibility in terms of shooting, but also the ability to immediately view and re-shoot scenes. As Dern has said:

> We were shooting constantly… there were no large lights to put up, and we had no need to wait between setups for coverage, because David was holding the camcorder – he could cover an entire scene in 20 minutes or an hour. The luxury was incredible shorthand on the set. There was never any downtime.[42]

This "shorthand" results in an excoriating performance from Dern, a mammoth undertaking marbled throughout the film's almost three hours, which re-establishes an indexicality with specifically digital contours. The visceral affective aspects of Dern's performance, her tiredness, the hoarseness of her voice, the tics and twitches of her face –which the camera follows with an almost cruel insistence– suggest the demands and traumas inflicted upon women not only in the context of Hollywood "performance," but, and here we might think of Judith Butler, through gendered "performance" more generally.

In this sense, the film takes up one of Hollywood's oldest, and perhaps most problematic tropes, foregrounding female screen "performance." However its self-aware exploration of this tradition works towards the critical questions Deleuze argues are essential if we are to "go beyond" information considered as control or a proliferation of "order words." We might recall here the film's fictional director Kingsley Stewart, and his claim that in the context of the movie business, the most important commodity *is information*. And indeed the film's identification of the Hollywood studio system as a nexus for the distribution of information in its guise as *control*, which is to say, as an "ordering" function attendant to specific forms of subjectivisation, becomes a key theme. We might return once more to Deleuze's claim, in the context of the ascendance of informatic images, that "[to go] beyond information is achieved on two sides at once, towards two questions: *what is the source and what is the addressee?*"[43] And indeed Lynch's film repeatedly moves towards just these questions –referring to the capitalistic and misogynistic structures of Hollywood in terms of their production of certain highly interested *flows* of information, which, far from "communicating" in any platitudinous sense, "communicate" violently, in the sense of physically communicating a force or imperative.

[40] Dawtrey, para. 4.
[41] For what is undoubtedly the authoritative exploration of this theme, albeit couched in the psychoanalytic terms of the "male gaze," see L. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Screen*, vol. 16, issue 3 (Autumn 1975), pp.6-18.
[42] Quoted in N. Kadner, "Lynch Goes Digital with Inland Empire," in *American Cinematographer* (Online), vol. 88, no. 4 (April 2007), <https://theasc.com/ac_magazine/April2007/PostFocus/page1.html> retrieved September 13, 2019.
[43] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.276.

In Nikki's case, this is an imperative *to perform*, to become a subject through subjection to the realities of the various screen worlds through which she moves. Throughout production of the film within a film, Hollywood communicates this imperative contra Nikki, who is gradually "split" into simultaneous and mutually interfering personalities –Nikki the actress and "Susan Blue" the "battered wife" she is to play in *On High in Blue Tomorrows*. Gradually, through Dern's equal parts extreme and subtle performance, Nikki becomes increasingly impossible to differentiate from her character. She embarks upon an affair with Devon, however the film's dense, allusive nature means that we are never able to fully distinguish on which level of reality this affair is taking place. The Hollywood universe appears to enact a profound and consistent violence against Nikki, who, in a series of non-linear and disjunctive scenes, appears variously to "become" a trafficked sex-worker, a woman trapped in a violent suburban relationship, and ultimately, in a role Lynch seems to suggest is laterally related to these –with particular resonance in a "post Weinstein" world– a female movie star.

The implication of digital technics in this process, in terms of the way in which Nikki/Sue is subjectivised through her constant "capture" –not only by recording technologies but ultimately by the disorienting "network" they form throughout the film– is indeed commensurate with the screen-based forms of control Deleuze has suggested might supplant the creativity of cinema. But it is also suggestive of a potential mode of resistance to these same functions. We've already introduced a key scene, early in the film, in which Nikki and co-star Devon are startled by a presence in the shadows at the back of the vast soundstage. On running to investigate Devon is mystified to find nobody there, the intruder having apparently disappeared into thin air behind a dummy door. It's only later, as we follow Nikki's descent into the madness of her role, that we emerge to view this same scene from the shadows. This "looping" of time effected by the film obviously calls into question the "factual" contiguity of the films topology: we are already given a temporality which is multiple, irreducible to sensory-motor action, as in films of the time-image.

"Time is out of joint,"[44] Deleuze will write, quoting Hamlet, in the context of the cinema of the time-image, and the non-linear, abortive and disjunctive trajectories of the New Waves likewise dislocate truth, contaminating it with the false in a mutually creative expression. As Deleuze explains, in the "crystalline" descriptions of the time-image:

> …narrative ceases to be truthful, that is, to claim to be true, and becomes fundamentally falsifying… it is a power of the false which replaces and supersedes the form of the true, because it poses the simultaneity of incompossible presents, or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts.[45]

The notion of "incompossibility" is taken from Leibniz, and in *Cinema II*, Deleuze introduces it with reference to the Aristotelian paradox of contingent futures.[46] Leaving aside the specifics of this discussion, it suffices to say that Deleuze here recruits Leibniz into the service of his own cine-metaphysical project, to understand actual phenomena as the contingent resolutions of "identity-less" virtual forces. As we have seen, "actual" states emerge only as the contingent contractions of other, virtual temporalities and forces, which are excluded by the interests of perception. In the notion of the "incompossible" however, Deleuze finds a concept by which he might expand this Bergsonian metaphysics, eschewing

[44] Ibid., p.x.
[45] Ibid., p.136.
[46] Ibid.

the "reductivity" inherent to actualisation in the service of habit, in favour of a multiplication of "presents" co-existing in the art object.

These presents are not, after all, "impossible," but rather "incompossible," in the sense that they cannot mutually co-exist in terms of an actualised, sensory-motor horizon. But they can indeed co-exist in the art work, such as we have witnessed in the incompossible looping of time which sees Dern's character confront herself throughout *Inland Empire*. In this context, gone is Leibniz's God as adjudicator of an ultimately "compossible" world, in favour of a mechanical-artistic process which passes through various incompossibilities, causing them to become co-existent in all of their chaotic discord. Time, in the post-war cinema, thus emerges as a Borgesian labyrinth of interwoven temporal trajectories, which abides in such a way as to confound distinctions between the "true" and the "false," creating incompossible space times –which, in keeping with Deleuze's rigorously immanent account of the art work (*vis a vis* thought) are perfectly real, inasmuch as they produce affective and noetic responses of the most concrete order. These space-times may be "false," but in keeping with the "powers of the false," Deleuze will take up from Nietzsche, they are generative of new modes of thought and of life, and as such as real as anything in the order of the "true."

This production of mutually "incompossible" realities is one of the time-image's fundamental effects, but in the context of digitation, and of digital recording technologies, the looping of time in *Inland Empire* suggests a more generalised form of "incompossibility" which effects subjects as constituted through contemporary information image-networks. To be "captured" in the network of contemporary information –be it through the recording of biometric data, surveillance footage, or in the more subtle forms of social media "performance"– is increasingly the experience of everyday life under control capitalism. To use Deleuze's terms, the subjects of such a capture are indeed *dividual*, "split" as an effect of the unique retentional capacities of recording technologies, which the digital paradigm has proliferated beyond cinema into all walks of life. And while such "split" personalities, *Inland Empire* suggests, have long characterised the female pop-culture icon –we might think of a whole tradition of "doomed starlets," from Jean Harlow to Marilyn Monroe– it appears that the pressure of "appearing" arrested in various idealised contexts (looking fit, young, good, on holiday and so on) and living in a fractious "reality" which leaves each of these retained temporalities behind, is increasingly the experience of anybody who maintains a curated, online identity in the context of social media.

The functions of capital and of control immanent to this operation are perhaps self-evident. As Rob Horning has noted, in a conversation with the artist Amalia Ulman,[47] social media identities are constructed in response to market forces, which depend upon the unpaid labour of "self-creation," insomuch as it is indexed to the consumption of certain branded commodities:

> Consumer culture relies on the ideological fiction that self-expression brings personal fulfilment and 'self-actualization,' so that the injunction to reveal oneself is not a burden, but bliss. This makes us both consume more—the self is articulated through

[47] Ulman's widely publicised Instagram work *Excellences & Perfections* (2014), in which the artist took and posted 175 photos –of her brunch, selfies in lacy underwear, getting apparent (but ultimately fake) breast implants among a range of other social media clichés, before revealing the entire enterprise as a staged work– suggests the kinds of practice which problematise distinctions we might make between art and non-art in the context of what Matthew Fuller will describe as contemporary "media ecologies." We will return to this contention shortly.

> branded commodities that have ever-shifting signifying potential—and provide more undercompensated labor (often the sort of 'immaterial' labor that invests commodities with their signification capacity, giving brands their 'meaning').[48]

This "undercompensated labour" –the "liking" of certain pages, the production of online "content" which keeps users engaged online and as such brings them into potential contact with more advertising, advertising which increasingly inter-bleeds with ostensibly non-commercial "content"– is equally the labour involved in the construction of a certain "self" through dividual relationships with these various commodities.

However, these "dividual" functions, in keeping with the plurivocal use of the term throughout Deleuze's work, perhaps suggest other subjectivising modes, immanent to digital image culture, but altogether less amenable to the imperatives of control and of capital. While this might appear an initially dark portrait of digital subjectivity –a discharge of our responsibilities to be self-critical or *genuinely* self-creative– in favour of a rootless participation in the market which might relieve us of these burdens, this kind of impossibly "split" subjectivity might also be thought of in terms of the creative "splitting" Deleuze will valorise in the context of both *thought* and *time*.

We have already seen that a certain temporal disparity –such as Deleuze elaborates with reference to the third syntheses of time– likewise "splits" the subject, impelling it to become other than it is. Rather than a process of "prosumer"[49] self-creation, this is indeed a genuine creativity, immanent to temporality once it is properly understood as the interplay of intensive forces in the context of virtual-actual relations. The subject, conceived as such, must constantly become "other than it is," incorporating the trauma of an intolerable event into the creative actualisation of a *new individual*. And indeed, this is exactly the movement we witness throughout *Inland Empire*, in the context of the digital, "informatic image."

Dern's character does not, after all, meet with an unhappy ending. Something indeed *happens* throughout the film, such that the dividual "splitting" of Nikki/Sue, albeit the result of malevolent forces immanent to Hollywood, and as such, we may extrapolate, to a whole paradigm of subjectivising neo-liberal control technics, is ultimately recuperated into a kind of *victory*. After the bloody trauma of the film's later scenes –Nikki/Sue's descent into madness, her ultimate "death," and the killing of "the Phantom"– Nikki returns to her home, and smiles warmly at her Polish visitor, whom we have not seen since the beginning of the film. A one-legged woman, using crutches, walks slowly across the following shot, and looking around her, at what we soon realise is Nikki's opulent house, smiles and whispers "sweeeeet."[50] The camera pans across to an unnamed character (Laura Harring), who blows Nikki a kiss. Nikki returns the kiss, and serenely looks on as a group of women dance and mime to Nina Simone's *Sinner Man*, and the end credits roll.

[48] R. Horning & A. Ulman, "Perpetual Provisional Selves: A conversation about authenticity and social media" in *Rhizome*, December 11 2014, URL: <https://rhizome.org/editorial/2014/dec/11/rob-horning-and-amalia-ulman/> retrieved August 24, 2019.
[49] Alvin Toffler's term, developed from the work of Marshall McLuhan and Barrington Nevitt, designates a consumer whom, in the context of mass production and automation, is deployed in various processes of "production" (customisation, value creation etc.) in order to continue the expansion of profit margins after basic consumer demands have been met. See A. Toffler, *Future Shock*, Bantam Books, New York, 1971.
[50] Lynch, *Inland Empire*.

This final scene, replete with references to Lynch's other films,[51] is one of the most arresting not only in the film but in Lynch's *oeuvre*, and consummates the function whereby the film's characters, while "split" through their participation in this network of digital images, appear to emerge victorious, happy, having refashioned themselves in an immanent resistance to the imperatives of control. Nikki, in killing "the Phantom," appears also to have destroyed *herself*. But this was a self that was always-already problematic –a clutch of sensory-motor habits, trapped by the circuitries of a relentlessly *actual* space-time. In confronting her *digital* self –which is to say by simultaneously *becoming* this self, and no longer viewing this simulacrum as an external malevolence which might threaten a pre-determined, "real" individual– Nikki has opened up potentialities for genuinely creative participation in digital space-times, a *becoming digital*, no longer the reactive function of control, but rather the creative eschewal of *any* pre-determined individuality.

Of course, we must distinguish between simply "opening up" a potentiality and actualising it in a new and radically unforeseen form. Alongside our "openness" to new forces, what is likewise required is a noetic model informed by an ethics of affirmation, which sees us embrace the "encounter" with the unthought in all of its problematic –and potentially painful– dimensions. The thinker, in order to become the *agent* or *author* of such a subjectivity, must embrace the forces of the outside, deploying them in the service of a creativity which might bring about new modes of both thought and life. It is this "methodological" presupposition which has, indeed, conditioned my own thinking on the digital in the context of this dissertation.

In other words, while we may well say that the experience of being a subject "spit" across information networks is indeed "intolerable," at the same time as being "impossible" –in the sense that we find ourselves noetically spread across disparate, simultaneous and aberrant space-times– these are indeed the very conditions which Deleuze will argue, throughout the *The Time-Image*, might impel us into the creative act of *thought*. Lynch's film, and Dern's trajectory throughout it, provides us not only a demonstration of how such traumatic subjectivity might be played out, but suggests that the only pathway towards genuine creativity –cinematic or otherwise– is to throw ourselves into these new, "impossible" forms, such that we might fully experience their tensions, slippages, noises and incompossibilities, emerging refashioned and as such victorious.

We might begin to think this process by returning to Deleuze's infamous claim that "the brain is the screen," and by suggesting that the loops of non-chronological digitime laced throughout *Inland Empire* afford us the opening onto a thought, which is to say a mode of *life*, feed from the straitjacket of the sensory-motor schema. These hyperlinked, glitchy images exemplify the Deleuzian contention that:

> A flickering brain, which relinks or creates loops – this is cinema… everything can be used as a screen, the body of a protagonist or even the bodies of the spectators; everything can replace the film stock, in a virtual film which now only goes on in the head, behind the pupils… a disturbed brain-death or a new brain which would be at once the screen, the film stock and the camera, each time membrane of the outside and the inside…[52]

[51] In the centre of the room, for instance, a lumberjack saws a log in time to the music, a reference to the persistent motif of logs and log cutting in Lynch's work (*Twin Peaks*, *Blue Velvet*, *Industrial Symphony No.1*).
[52] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.221.

What does Deleuze mean here? As I have argued throughout this dissertation, for Deleuze, the cinema affords us a thought which is no longer strictly "human," but instead inhuman, multilaterally implicated with an "outside" of un-thought materials and virtual potentialities, comprising in turn an indeterminate and shifting "inside" which might recombine and redeploy their energies in a catalytic *kino-thought*. But, as I have argued, digital images may likewise possess such irreducible material and virtual elements, as I have defined them by rereading the concept of "noise" in the context of Lynch's film. In this sense, it would seem strange not to afford the new digital image, in all of its imperfections and excess, similar powers.

Such a thought, I have suggested, need not be strictly cinematic. Indeed the digital images which comprise *Inland Empire* constitute a network of disparate media which re-assembles and differentially interconnects with the processes of thought, understood in Deleuze's sense, as the a-centered noetic experience of an encounter. As Justus Nieland has written:

> The film's media ecology (projection, phonography, the performing body, radio, television, the Internet) is wildly impure, upping the ante on Marshall McLuhan's axiom that media always take as their content another medium, and embedding its characters in a vast digital c*ombinatoire*, a network of fractal worlds...[53]

This "impurity" of *Inland Empire's* worlds thus indeed calls into question the hitherto circumscribed world not just of cinema but of "art." We might think, here, of Matthew Fuller's contention that in the context of various "massifications" of art since the 1960s, "art is no longer only art. Its methods are recapitulated, ooze out and become feral in combination with other forms of life."[54] Fuller's argument, that there has been a proliferation of what he provisionally terms "art methodologies" into all walks of life, from popular music and television, to self-reflexive productions of the self through erotic subcultures, social media and fitness regimes,[55] indeed appears to problematise a modernist-inflected Deleuzian account of "art" as the privileged workshop for the production and reterritorialisation of sense and thought, developed across his *oeuvre*. As Fuller writes, in the context of what he describes as the "media ecologies" of the 21st century:

> A diffusion is occurring in which art methodologies can pop up unexpectedly, not even recognizing themselves as art, indeed possibly not even having that filiation in a genealogical sense, but connecting to it by means of arrival via a different phylogenetic route…[56]

Contemporary examples abound. There is pop music, which since the 1960s has often presented itself as "high art."[57] There are contemporary "cinematic" television series, which (abiding in the long shadow of *Twin Peaks*) take cues from surrealist, New Wave and experimental cinema. More recently, there are social media practices like Instagramming which, in its structural emulation of a retro, square photographic image, complete with filters to degrade image quality, evokes the polaroid experiments of Andy Warhol and David

[53] J. Niedland, *David Lynch (Contemporary Film Directors)*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 2012, p.137.
[54] Fuller, "Art Methodologies," p.45.
[55] Ibid., p.46.
[56] Ibid., p.45.
[57] Notable in this respect is the reception of both The Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* (1966) and The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) as "works of art," alongside the Velvet Underground's late 60s collaboration with pop-artist Andy Warhol.

Hockney, in its content oscillating between "photographic" treatments of landscape in the style of Ansell Adams and the eroticism of Helmut Newton or Maripol.

The algorithmically determined aesthetic of Dern's "clown face," suggesting as it does "popular" digital image manipulation practises more generally, might be read in just this context. Its aesthetic and affective dimensions suggest a broader theme which emerges throughout *Inland Empire*, that we may no longer be justified in locating the "outside" in the productions of high art –be they those of cinema, literature or painting– rather, the outside – as an ungrounding condition of thought– might better be located in the circuitries that abide between an ever more aesthetically literate public[58] and ever more mutant consumer-capitalist-art objects.

As I have argued, a helpful rubric via which we might understand these developments is the concept of "noise," which constitutes not a totalising but rather a perspectival designation, engendered in the context of a closed information system which confronts disruptive forces from "outside." What must therefore be developed –and *Inland Empire*, although an "auteur" work in the traditional sense, suggests this– are practices which precipitate this kind of interference, which are open to the "noise" of disparate information systems, and which might redeploy them in such a way as to change qualitatively the distribution of terms in the initial system. As the example of the time-image, and of its informational successor suggests, this would be, at least in part, both the task and also the form of a kind of thought no longer dedicated to the pre-distributed parameters of an "actual" state of affairs. It would be a thought conceived as immanently creative, drawing on virtuality, and capable of generating new worlds in which the old rules do not apply. A veritable thought from outside.

We return, finally, to our refrain, that "going beyond information is achieved on two sides at once, towards two questions: *what is the source and what is the addressee?*"[59] Lynch's constant presentation of information *as information*, the digital *as digital*, enacts a movement towards just these questions. The answer, here, to the first part of Deleuze's question is simple. Hollywood. Or, more properly, a fissure or break in Hollywood, as it is called into question by new media and the overdeterminations of capital. The answer to the second, as to whom the information is addressed, is more difficult. We might of course answer "the spectator;" understood in the most prosaic and unproblematic sense. On another level, as I have suggested throughout this section, we might describe the film's addressee as "a viewer to come," a kind of spectator or subject of the digital age that we are yet to properly understand or realise. The film might constitute, in Deleuzian terms, "not the myth of a past people, but the story-telling of a people to come."[60]

[58] As Fuller notes, at the very least, a huge proliferation of fine arts degrees means that, "to take the British Isles, if we assume that most graduates from art schools since the 1960s are largely still alive that means that there are several tens of thousands of people around with some kind of art training. Clearly not all of them are now artists or designers in a way that is recognized by art systems…" (Ibid, p.46) This institutionalised aesthetic literacy however is merely the tip of the iceberg, with greater numbers of people than ever afforded material means of access to galleries, cinemas, public art events and recorded music. The exponential increase of this trend, since the advent of the Internet and its easily accessible glut of archived cultural materials, is self-evident.
[59] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.276.
[60] Ibid., p.229.

## A Digital "People to Come"

Is it, as I opined in the introduction to this thesis, naïve to think that a circumscribed work of cinema (or even cinema in general) might have political consequences, either as affective experience or as some form of generalised noetic critique? Again, the answer to this question must be a resounding "perhaps." But the fact is that *Inland Empire* must not be read as so circumscribed an "event." Indeed, what makes the film so appropriate for philosophical discussion in the context of the themes of this dissertation –information, control, capital, noise, resistance– is the extent to which its images and problems are those of a much broader cultural-technological-political *milieu*.

The problematics of informatic "control" and of potentially resistant "noise" adhere across the new digitised-image space, and the attendant forms of subjectivisation of which it is the harbinger. We have touched briefly on interventions like those of Nicholas Carr, who suggests that a new and inescapable hyperactivity of networked information mitigates against our capacities for critique and depth reflection. But this spectre of "too much information" assumes, as I have suggested, *a particular kind* of information, which is to say an information which is hyperactive only along pre-distributed channels of information transmission and exchange. But what if, following Simondon, Floridi and the other thinkers we have encountered in our discussion of information, we were to begin to conceive of this information overload in terms of its being a-signifying, chaotic and indeed ontologically *productive*.

This would thus be a form of information which might constitute new individuals, or in Deleuze's socio-political terms, perhaps even a "people to come." While Deleuze will thus associate the new, informational image with a certain form of subjectivisation –neo-liberal control– for Lynch, the unique practices of discontinuity afforded by digital technologies and networks allows for a greater distribution of singular aesthetic terms according to no over-arching logic of "control" or of representation. The "people to come" in Lynch, like Dern in her final, serene surveillance of the chaos of dancers and odd-ball characters crowding her ballroom, might inhabit a new form of post-digital subjectivity, subjected to a series of dividual "splittings" and traumas, but ultimately, through a process of affirmative creativity within the digital *milieu*, constituting a new form of individual. We might explain this individual, and its genesis, in Deleuze's own words:

> The forces within man enter into a relation with forces from the outside, those of silicon which supersedes carbon, or genetic components which supersede the organism, or agrammaticalities which supersede the signifier… What is the overman? It is the formal compound of the forces within man and these new forces. It is the form that results from a new relation between forces.[61]

This process need not constitute the uncritical embrace of an "accelerationism" whereby new forms of humanity defer their noetic operations to cybernetic networks –we might think here, of the work of Nick Land.[62] As we have argued throughout, such an "image of thought" indeed continues to evoke an all-too-human model, according to which thought constitutes a computational mode of synaptic transmission between already pre-distributed (actual) terms.

[61] Deleuze, *Foucault*, (translation modified), p.131.
[62] See N. Land, "Circuitries," in *The Accelerationist Reader*, R. Mackay & A. Avanessian eds., Urbanomic, Falmouth, 2014, pp.251-274.

This "overman" (or woman), would instead constitute a processual being, capable of problematising its existence –and indeed its *milieu*– in terms of an affirmative openness to aspects of virtuality and the "outside." As Deleuze has suggested, such development(s) might take place through human noetic participation in the cinematic image, such as causes the brain and the screen to occupy a plane of shifting and indeterminate relations. But this "screen" might also be the *digital* screen, which, in the ruinous yet unbridled desiring-production with which Deleuze and Guattari associate capitalism, remains irreducible to any given reterritorialisation or "control." That such individuals would lack a "revolutionary" consciousness in any party-political, 20th century model, is a fact which animates Deleuze and Guattari's entire project in the "cold years" after May 1968.[63] Deleuze's work on cinema, his elaboration of the themes of "belief in the world" and "a people to come," indeed stems from his conviction, as I have argued, that revolutionary political praxis must be identified in modalities immanent to capitalism's own cultural productions.

We might then ask what "world," or rather what "link with the world" does *Inland Empire* impel us to believe in? Perhaps, I contend, this might be a world in which the universe of networked digital images within which we find ourselves might be other than simply a "control" mechanism of marketing or of neo-liberal subjectivisation. It might rather be a universe redolent with virtual and intensive energetic tensions, such as bubble in a metastability just beneath the skin of each image, ready to be provoked into the revolutionary production of the genuinely *new*. This would not be the quantitative "new" of capitalist innovation, of "prosumer" self-creation or a production of consumer technics, this would be the qualitatively new, the as-yet unthinkable, the outside.

We began in quoting Deleuze, and his claim that "a work of art does not contain the least bit of information…" *Inland Empire*, however, *overflows* with information, saturating us in its overwhelming presence. In combining the dual senses of "noise" –conceived both as an empirical presence in information technologies, and as a chaotic grist which guarantees the "openness" of art– *Inland Empire* works to problematise any simply utilitarian, coercive or reactionary function of information. *Inland Empire* achieves this by making a virtue of its "noise," and by presenting "noisy" information systems which consistently and explicitly refer to themselves *as information*. The film's use of digital technology –the shaky, hand-held camera, the glitchy, autonomous operations of software– constitutes a technical riposte to the charge that digitisation necessarily equates to a clarification or simplification of the image. The images of *Inland Empire* in fact undergo a constant *complexification*, tending towards obscurity, proliferation of noise and, in the terms of the MTC, of information. And while we may well object that a film like Lynch's occupies a rarefied and relatively esoteric place in the ecology of contemporary "information images," which are far more likely take the form of Hollywood special effects, endless scrolling of user-generated online content, or worse, the sinister satellite and digital imaging of globalised commerce and war, the film gestures towards those "shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions,"[64] to which Deleuze attributes the source of his own philosophy, and out of which new forms of thinking and of acting might emerge.

[63] For a clear elaboration of Deleuze's work in relation to the "problem" of May '68, see the introduction to Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*, pp.xxxi-xliv.
[64] Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p.7.

# Conclusions

I began by suggesting that my goal was to place Deleuze's cinematic philosophy in dialogue with contemporary screen cultures, which have undergone a profound change in the years since Deleuze wrote. This change –digitisation– which Deleuze anticipates in his remarks around new "electronic," "numerical," and "informational" images, has seen the cinematic image not only altered in its materiality, but in its narrative and aesthetic content, its economic and cultural distribution, and in the conditions and practices of its spectatorship.

Deleuze, as we saw in the introduction, was wary of these (then nascent) developments, claiming that the new "electronic" images "no longer have any outside."[1] According to my reading, this is because, conceived as information, they are no longer "open" to aesthetic and noetic forces of indeterminacy and virtuality, but rather "communicate" *actual* content, determined by a pre-distributed regime of cultural sensibility. This argument, as we saw in chapter four, is taken up by Gregory Flaxman, who argued that:

> Today, more than ever, we ought to lay claim to the concept of the outside as the most rigorous description of the cinema and the most unrelenting critique of the digital means and media that claim to have superseded it.[2]

It is in response to this key claim that this dissertation proceeded, attempting, by contrast, to identify a uniquely "digital outside"– in keeping with the affirmative and "optimistic" contours of Deleuze's own philosophy.

To this end, in chapter one, we developed a cartography of the concept of the "outside," tracing it through the works of Blanchot, Foucault and Deleuze. For Blanchot, the outside is the condition of literature, an "impersonal" space we might glimpse not only through the materiality of language, but through a function whereby the "subject" of literature gives up saying "I," becoming instead an effect of assemblages of pre-personal language. We then saw how Foucault takes up this concept, couching it in explicitly ontological terms, and positing the outside as "the hiding place of all being."[3]

Furthermore, the outside, as a presence in literature radically irreducible to interested discursive categories like "truth," "falsehood," "law" and "reality," suggests to Foucault the ways in which we might re-think the prescriptive functions of these very categories, allowing for a play with different and counter-hegemonic modes of life. Deleuze, we saw, inherits this same concept of the outside in his work on Foucault, suggesting that the Nietzschean figure of the "overman" might emerge from formal compounds between human beings and various material and virtual forces from "outside" itself.

In this same chapter, we linked these Deleuzian observations to his well-known noetic critique, his postulation of a "dogmatic image of thought," and attempts to identify a contrary "thought without an image."[4] The dogmatic image, we will recall, raises a set of postulates to the level of philosophical principles, taking a reactive and conservative model of

[1] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.272.
[2] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p. 134.
[3] Foucault, "The Thought from Outside," p.57.

[4] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.132.

"recognition" and "representation" for the totality of thought. This model, Deleuze claims, is however un-philosophical, inasmuch as it fails to realise philosophy's project of breaking with *doxa* and effecting new modes of thought and life.

In order to achieve this latter task, philosophical thought must rather be creative, and it is for this reason that Deleuze evokes Kant's aesthetic philosophy (the sublime) in suggesting that the condition for philosophical thought is rather an initial shock or bewilderment, an encounter with a "sign" which impels us into the creative production of new ideas and concepts. In this context, I argued, the "encounter" is double— a confrontation not only with the unthought as an external object which can only be sensed, but also with thought's fundamental "impower"[5] —the impossibility of thinking in any pre-ordained way.

Attendant to this noetic account, we saw Deleuze's delineation of three "syntheses" of time, the first, a contraction of temporality such as constitutes habitual repetition in the present. Second, the synthesis which serves as the condition for the first —the past in general— into which different presents "pass," and which serves as virtual reservoir for counter-actualisations in the present. The third synthesis, that of the future, constitutes not only a serial distribution of past, present and future, but sees the subject "split" in time, a function of its encounter with "events" which call for it to become *other than it is*. This third synthesis, which calls for an ethics of affirmation, such that the thinker embraces the forces which precipitate its own splitting, drawing on forces from "outside" in order to become the author of its future, saw Deleuze's noetic philosophy call not just for a renovation of thought, but of the very identity of the thinker.

However, as I here argued, Deleuze remains doubtful as to philosophy's ability to stage such noetic "encounters," profoundly imbricated as it is with the dogmatic model of recognition and representation. For this reason, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze suggests that in order to pursue its renewal, philosophy might stage encounters with the materials of "other arts," looking to cinema, theatre, literature and painting for ways in which they might confront us with new arrangements of sense and matter. In this context, albeit some twenty years later, Deleuze consecrated his long-standing interest in cinema, turning to its forms and functions in a series of "commentaries" on Bergson.

In drawing on Bergson's account of the image as a metaphysical category –no longer a *reflection* or *representation* of matter but *the very identity of matter*– Deleuze suggests that the cinematic image might therefore constitute a laboratory dedicated to experimentation not only with perception and thought, but the differential and productive virtual-actual relations obscured in any "dogmatic," "sensory-motor" exercise of them. Deleuze here referred to the framed cinematic image as a "set," which collects and arranges constituent "parts" in such a way as to "communicate information" to the viewer. However, by virtue of its simultaneous production of an "out-of-frame," this function of communication is consistently problematised by the image's "openness" to a qualitatively evolving "whole" within which it is situated.

In this same chapter, we saw how Deleuze argues that this "whole" disappears in the context of the post-war cinema, giving way to an "outside." While the "whole" or "open" might still be thought according to the sensory-motor paradigm, as a condition for the evolving trajectories of narrative or action, the profound shattering of the sensory-motor schema

[5] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.129.

following the horrors of the Second World War (in film, as in life more generally) pre-empts the emergence of an inhuman "time-image," composed of "pure" optical and sound situations, no longer tethered to the exigencies of action.

This development, Deleuze argues, provides cinema with an opening onto "virtuality," the genetic condition for the actualised states of affairs to which sensory-motor action is oriented, and which it tends to obscure in its operations. We here saw how in post-war "time-images" like those of Chris Marker's *La Jetée*, cinema is able to draw the virtual and actual sides of the image into catalytic, indeterminate, crystalline forms, such as produce new and fundamentally problematic images of time and movement, impelling us into a "thought from outside," beyond all habitual mentation.

In chapter three, I argued that Deleuze identifies this cinematic operation with profound political functions, such that contact with the "outside" of thought provokes us to rethink our relation(s) with any pre-determined "world." I further argued that Deleuze's brief remarks around the relation between capital and cinema, its "time-money conspiracy,"[6] accord with a Marxism we might trace throughout his work —particularly that with Félix Guattari— according to which the productive forces which might lead to a qualitative alteration of the structures of capitalism must be conceived as immanent to capitalism itself. This claim oriented my subsequent determination to uncover those forces which might "resist" informational "control" within the very images produced by information and communications technologies.

I further argued in this chapter that Deleuze's "political" speculations in the cinema volumes, his postulation of a contemporary situation in which "the people are missing,"[7] and in which we have lost our "belief in the world,"[8] are imbricated with his earlier interventions regarding the operations of thought, and his evocation of thinking's "outside." It is only by going beyond the pre-distributed categories of a sensory-motor *status quo* —by plunging into virtuality and the hitherto unthought— that we might emerge with new ideas, and as such, in keeping with the pragmatics of Deleuze's philosophy, new ways of living. Again, the provocation for such a creativity is an "encounter"— this time an encounter with the "intolerable" and "impossible" situations of the post-war world, such as outstrip all sensory-motor response.

In the fourth chapter, I turned to the more contemporary problematic of "the digital," focussing my discussion on the protracted critique of the concept of "information," as it emerges across Deleuze's later work. In introducing this critique, and its relations with the concept of the outside, I outlined Gregory Flaxman's argument, and his compelling use of the example of James Cameron's *Avatar* to extend some of the claims made by Deleuze around new "electronic" and "numerical" images.

Flaxman, we saw, argues that *Avatar* is emblematic of a "new idea of cinema"[9] such as embraces a "spectacular," hyper-representational form, using a powerful new technology for the fabrication of images to unwittingly squeeze out those spaces of indeterminacy and errance (the unseen) with which Deleuze identifies the cinema of the movement-and-time-images. In seeking to differentiate itself from small-screen forms, the contemporary, digital

[6] Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p.81.
[7] Ibid., p.223.
[8] Ibid., p.207.
[9] Flaxman, "Out of Field," p.129.

cinematic image thus becomes "overdetermined,"[10] both in terms of algorithmic manipulation and of capital, in a cinematic model according to which all content "*must be represented*."[11]

I drew from Flaxman's argument one key claim, that this new technology for the fabrication of images eschews the cinematic "shot" in favour of an immersive data space which takes as its material "information." Following this claim, I broadened my discussion into a tracing of the concept of "information" throughout Deleuze's work more broadly, particularly as it emerges in the final chapter of *Cinema II*, and in the lecture "What is the Creative Act?" Here, Deleuze is explicit in identifying information with the model of cybernetic "control," suggesting that information, far from a neutral assemblage of "facts," "tells us what we are supposed to believe,"[12] functioning as a collection of "order words," which structure and guarantee certain (conservative) social forms.

And while this conception, I argued, appears to evoke what Luciano Floridi describes as "semantic information" —which is to say meaningful or "informative" data— I pointed to Deleuze's implication of information in these terms with information in the *technological sense* of computing and communications systems, paradigmatically in his "Postscript on the Societies of Control." For Deleuze, such apparently "neutral" systems are equally implicated in control, in particular, in subjectivising process which produce neo-liberal subjects— through (self) surveillance and the algorithmic collection of data.

I argued, however, that this reading of information theory and technology perhaps breaks with Deleuze's broader philosophical method, which I have characterised both in terms of a kind of "immanent Marxist" approach to new techno-social forces, and in terms of an "affirmative ethics" according to which we must re-deploy new and apparently hostile forces in the process of "mastering" them. In this context, I suggested that philosophy is already moving towards such a task, drawing on the work of Floridi and of Ashley Woodward to suggest the emergence of an "informational turn" in contemporary thought, such as seeks to think the structure and functioning of information *in its own terms*.

Pursuant to this same task, I turned to various "probabilistic," "statistical" and "technical" concepts of information, emerging from information, communications and cybernetic theory. In particular, I explored some of the implications of Shannon and Weaver's "Mathematical Theory of Communication," according to which information must be radically untethered from any semantic category, instead becoming the measure of "uncertainty" removed in the context of a probability space distribution.

But this "uncertainty," I claimed, the condition for a maximum of potential —but as-yet unknown— messages in an information transmission system, draws unwittingly on certain interested semantic criteria in its delineation of "wanted" and "unwanted" forms of uncertainty, the latter emerging in the form of noise. Shannon's work, indeed, is dedicated to reducing the presence of empirical, environmental "noise" in information transmissions. However, as we saw in turning to the work of Floridi and of Bateson, this manoeuvre betrays a radically a-semantic conception of information, conceived as an entropic production of differences at the fundamentally ontological level. According to this latter model, *noise is also information*, a fabric of "differences" taken up and transmitted as data by an information

[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, p.320.

system. In embracing such a conception of information, "uncertainty" is no longer indexed to the "possible" (and to a reduction of data deficit) but rather to a *productive* uncertainty, an energetic disparity which might provide the conditions for new and radically unforeseeable signals. It is in these latter terms that we saw Simondon posing information as an ontogenetic category, the opening whereby stable individuals are in contact with the aleatory variations of metastable (pre-individual) states.

As such, it appeared as though information, conceived both technically and ontogenetically, need not necessarily be implicated in conservative operations of control and command. Rather, if we *affirm* the presence of noise in information systems, we might conceive of these systems as producing new "individuals" —signals, messages, ideas— beyond the pre-distributed terms of the "neutral" transmitter-receiver model. In this context, we turned to the idea of noise as it emerges in the context of art, tracing a genealogical filiation whereby, as in information theory, the term designates a certain "failure to communicate." However, whereas in information theory, this "failure" is a problem to be overcome, in the context of art —as we saw with reference to the likes of Russolo, Cage and Eco— it is valorised as the very condition for the production of new forms, the disordered, entropic and undetermined "material" which forms an "outside" to a given artistic systematisation.

Equipped with this "productive" model of information, we returned to the digital cinema, and to a discussion of "noise" as it appears in David Lynch's film *Inland Empire*. Here, I argued that at various registers —semantic, technical, in terms of the conception and realisation of scenes— Lynch interposes aleatory, impersonal and "noisy" presences, such as determine the very content and structure of the film. In using a cheap hand-held camera which struggles to keep up with the empirical demands of the shoot, in deploying consumer editing technology such as "imperfectly" renders and juxtaposes the images, and in using widely available and unsophisticated image manipulation software in order to achieve the film's thoroughly unbelievable "special effects," Lynch foregrounds the technical materiality of the digital, in such a way as to draw our attention to its impersonal and ubiquitous presence. I identified these aspects of Lynch's film not only with certain material and impersonal dimensions of Blanchot's literary "outside," but also with the noetic "outside" such as Deleuze advances across *Difference and Repetition* and into the two *Cinema* volumes.

But the outside, I claimed, has functions beyond these purely technical and aesthetic dimensions. It is also political, which is to say it is involved in the process by which the present becomes problematic, and our thinking must search for virtual and differential forces with which it might produce the *new*— in thought, and as such in life. *Inland Empire*, I argued, likewise advances a "political" problematisation of the actual present, drawing attention to the technological, economic and cultural forces which produce certain forms of information.

In its dark portrait of Hollywood as a nexus for the selective distribution and withholding of information, and its communication of imperatives towards performance and certain forms of (gendered) subjectivisation —such as causes the character Nikki Grace to "split" into multiple and interfering identities— the film advances a kind of auto-critique not only of contemporary film production, but of a whole ecology of recording technologies which participate in the construction of 21st century subjectivity.

However this "critique," like that of Deleuze, is also *productive*, suggesting new modes of life which might overcome the limits and imperatives of a given cultural *milieu*. In Nikki's

simultaneous confrontation with, and embrace of, her structuration through the film's malevolent digital-image-space, I argued that we catch a glimpse of an "affirmative ethics" of the encounter, such as we likewise find in Deleuze. In what I have dubbed Nikki's "becoming digital," we encounter a model of contemporary subjectivity which, while structured through informational networks of control and capital, might embrace their ruinous productivity, re-deploying it in the creation of genuinely new modes of life.

Put differently, I have argued that in order to overcome subjectivising process of "control" and of marketisation immanent to contemporary digital image technics (and here, we turned briefly to the example of social media), our strategy cannot be a "return" to a pre-digital, pre-determined model of the "human." Rather, we must explore those elements of informational technics which are not yet fully determined —their noisy, material and aleatory dimensions— in order fabricate new and radically unforeseeable becomings. This approach, I have argued, is perhaps more properly Deleuzian than Deleuze's own thinking on information, which broadly remains dedicated to a critique of its forms and functions from the perspective of a pre-digital conception of art, thought and the subject.

## Research Significance

This approach, I have claimed, helps us to bring Deleuze's philosophy into a more fulsome dialogue with the "digital revolution" which has exploded in the years since he wrote. Deleuze, I have suggested, following others like Stephen Zepke[13] and Matthew Fuller,[14] remains subtly wedded to a broadly "modernist" account of art, according to which it is a culturally privileged site of experimentation with concretised percepts, affects and sensations. This vocabulary, as I have suggested, does not necessarily orient us toward the most efficacious study of contemporary forms of art, or —as the borders between art and non-art become ever more intractable— certain aestheticised forms of life.

This is not to say that Deleuze's sophisticated philosophy of the image does not have a great deal to tell us in these contexts, particularly in a world in which techno-aesthetic "images" proliferate to an ever more bewildering extent. It is for this reason that my work has sought to reread certain key Deleuzian concepts —in particular that of the outside— in the context of the digital media ecology, picking up some of the threads which appear to have been left unexplored in Deleuze's own thinking.

Such a project is significant in several key contexts. Firstly, it helps those engaged in the study of Deleuze's work on film to more seamlessly draw on it in the context of a cinema which is today overwhelmingly "informational." The concept I have tried to fabricate and defend, the "digital outside," is one to which those working in the field not only of scholarship dedicated to Deleuze and film, but also to the intersection of Deleuze's philosophy and technology, new media and contemporary aesthetics, might draw in overcoming a potentially limited discussion of information in Deleuze's own work.

Likewise, my arguments around certain political dimensions of this concept, its implication with the Deleuzian notions of "a people to come" and "belief in the world," will be of some use in the context of study dedicated to Deleuze's philosophy and contemporary, "late

[13] See Zepke, "A work of art," p.237.
[14] See Fuller, "Art Methodologies," p.46.

capitalist" politics, profoundly imbricated as it is with globalised information and screen based technologies.[15]

Finally, despite Deleuze's reticence on this point, I am convinced that theoretical works on art are of the utmost utility in the context of the *production* of art, and I hope to have provided, in my own modest way, a resource upon which those involved in "image production" —understood in the broadest possible sense— might draw in the context of producing new works. The "co-creation" engendered between art and philosophy seems to me a most tangible fact, and in providing a conceptual vocabulary for artists grappling with the themes, aesthetics or technicity of the digital, I hope to have contributed a resource with which they might, at the very least, reflect on some of the implications of their practice.

## Possible Future Research

In researching and writing this dissertation, I was frequently confronted with "open questions" which I was aware I would have neither the time nor space to treat. First and foremost, it remains to be seen to what extent this work might be extended beyond a discussion of digital cinema to digital screen forms more generally. How would the concept of a "digital outside" be played out in the context of a discussion of contemporary, "cinematic" television, for instance? Are the functions of "social engineering" which Deleuze attributes to television still present in contemporary, artistically-minded television? Have they in fact attained new powers of ubiquity and efficiency? Or do the flagship productions of HBO or Netflix constitute a new form of image, such as might provoke our thought into concomitant new becomings?

Likewise, while I touched briefly on the images and networks of "social media," this theme appears particularly ripe for discussion in terms of the concepts I've advanced throughout this dissertation. How might we understand cultural forms of "noise" as emerging re-deployed in the context of online, ironic "meme" cultures, which appear likewise to problematise intentional, "meaningful" semantic signals? Would it be possible to fabricate valuable philosophical concepts in response to such practices and image types, or are they simply social distractions, an effervescence on the waves of control?

Finally, in opening up a discussion of new forms of digital subjectivity in the final chapter of this thesis —couching it specifically in terms of Deleuze's discussion of temporality and an affirmation of the "event"— I have clearly touched on the extensive debates around "posthumanity;" an area in which Deleuze is often evoked. I have necessarily left these

[15] We might think, in this context, of Paul Virilio's work on the imbrication of contemporary politics and "information," particularly with regards to optical and screen technologies used to project power globally. This paradigm, in which the globalised technics of war —which string vast networks between satellites, propagandistic mass-media projects and embedded operatives — and affords the possibility of an immediate global projection of violence in the form of drones and missiles— indeed appears to begin with a totalising premise which, in Virilio's terms, marks not an "end of history" but rather an "end of geography." Indeed, in *The Information Bomb*, Virilio will draw explicitly on a vocabulary of the "outside," in approaching this situation, writing: "since the early 1990s, the Pentagon has taken the view that *geostrategy is turning the globe inside out like a glove*… For American military leaders, the global is the *interior* of a finite world whose very finitude poses many logistical problems. And the local is the *exterior*, the periphery, if not indeed the 'outer suburbs' of the world… All this contributing […] to the inversion of the usual conceptions of *inside* and *outside*." (P. Virilio, *The Information Bomb*, trans. C. Turner, Verso, London, 2005, p.14).

debates to one side, given the limits and focus of the present work. However it remains to be seen to what extent my reading of the digital, and in particular its immanent, “inhuman” aspects (noise), might be used to reflect upon the future of humanity in imbrication with technics. Indeed a meditation on those inhuman and “self-causal” aspects immanent to information technics, and the role they play in determining the conditions and parameters of thought, constitutes a pressing area of contemporary scholarship, and to my knowledge a well-defined concept of “noise” has yet to be applied in this context. These themes lurked “out of frame” throughout my work on this dissertation, and it remains to be seen to what extent they might structure and inform future study.

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# Filmography

*2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968)

*8½* (Frederico Fellini, 1963)

*The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer, Christine Cyn & Anonymous, 2012)

*Andrei Rublev* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1969)

*Armageddon* (Michael Bay, 1998)

*A Woman of Paris* (Charles Chaplin, 1923)

*Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009)

*Blue Velvet* (David Lynch, 1986)

*The Butterfly Effect* (Eric Bress, J. Mackeye Gruber, 2004)

*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920)

*Un Chien Andalou* (Luis Buñuel, 1929)

*Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941)

*The City of Lost Children* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 1995)

*Contempt* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1963)

*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (David Fincher, 2008)

*Daybreak* (Marcel Carné, 1939)

*Die Hard* (John McTiernan, 1988)

*Dog Star Man* (Stan Brakhage, 1961-64)

*Donnie Darko* (Richard Kelly, 2001)

*Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969)

*El Topo* (Alejandro Jodorowsky, 1970)

*Eraserhead* (David Lynch, 1977)

*Europe '51* (Roberto Rossellini, 1952)

*Germany, Year Zero* (Roberto Rossellini, 1948)

*Go! Go! Go!* (Marie Menken, 1964)

*Hitler: A Film from Germany* (Hans Jürgen Syberberg, 1977)

*Hostel* (Eli Roth, 2005)

*Inland Empire* (David Lynch, 2006)

*Jurassic Park* (Steven Spielberg, 1993)

*The Lady from Shanghai* (Orson Welles, 1947)

*Last Year at Marienbad* (Alain Resnais, 1961)

*Lights* (Marie Menken, 1966)

*Michael Clayton* (Tony Gilroy, 2007)

*Mothlight* (Stan Brakhage, 1963)

*Mulholland Drive* (David Lynch, 2001)

*Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau, 1922)

*Passion* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1982)

*Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, 1966)

*Pierrot le Fou* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965)

*Pink Flamingos* (John Waters, 1972)

*Raman Raghav 2.0* (Anurag Kashyap, 2016)

*Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954)

*The Room* (Tommy Wiseau, 2003)

*Saw* (James Wan, 2004)

*The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980)

*Stalker* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1979)

*Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (Nicholas Meyer, 1982)

*Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977)

*The State of Things* (Wim Wenders, 1982)

*The Structure of Crystal* (Krysztof Zanussi, 1969)

*Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995)

*Tron* (Steven Lisberger, 1982)

*Ugly* (Anurag Kashyap, 2014)

*Umberto D.* (Vittorio de Sica, 1952)

*Waltzing with Bashir* (Ari Folman, 2008)

*Weekend* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1968)

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YouTube user "Ontologist," "I am Sitting in a Video Room 1000," YouTube, published 2010, accessed on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qKz5YW5J-U> retrieved August 9, 2019.