Overlapping Montage: a comparative study of mainstream film and moving-image installations

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I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Ph.D is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Overlapping Montage: A Comparative Study of Mainstream Film and Moving-Image Installations

Submitted by Orla Ryan

Abstract

This dissertation develops a discussion on the need for a comparative approach to the study of film and moving- image installations. It addresses the lack of critical attention given to moving-image installations within film studies generally and academic teaching programmes in particular. The development of a comparative approach requires researching a number of interlinking and independent fields of study such as film studies, art history/criticism, photography, literary theory, critical theory, anthropology and philosophy. While arguing against traditional disciplinary boundaries, the discussion critiques the accepted articulations of current interdisciplinary approaches.

The dissertation discusses how an expanded field of comparative film studies needs to concern itself with both diachronic and synchronic axes, requiring a longer historical framework to analyse shifts in technologies of representation and related theories of subjectivity within particular capitalist formations. It is argued that this type of comparative model elaborates a more critically productive and conceptually expansive discussion of cultural products, whether they are mainstream film or moving-image installations. As such it aligns itself with an awareness of the political importance of history, memory and personal experience.

The theoretical ground for a comparative approach is developed through exploring montage and fragmentation. While articulating the significance of theories of fragmentation to discussions of modernity and modernism, the thesis foregrounds the significance of understanding all cultural production as 'montages' – as elaborations of a number of competing discourses, both when they are made and when they are read. A re-conceptualization of montage as a dominant component in cultural meaning making moves away from montage as an aesthetics of form. Rather than understanding film and moving-image installations as rigidly delineated objects, they are explored through

hybridity and overlap, for example through the multiple scopic regimes, which shape and form them. In this enterprise, the significance of an anthropological materialist' approach to cinema and moving-image installations is articulated as a means of developing a critical cognitive engagement with our varied cultural and ever changing social environment.

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Introduction.

The genesis for this research thesis began during a period of study as a Fulbright Scholar at The Whitney Museum of American Art in 1996/1997. This initial research culminated in a multi-screen/projection installation entitled *Discordant... Hum* (1997) which included two monitors, a projected slide series, and still slide projection. The installation's main concerns were urban space, dystopian narratives and seriality in contemporary culture. Starting from a creative attempt to explore the way Hollywood presents new films to the public, *Discordant... Hum* concerned itself with the way in which film posters for horror films addressed its potential audience in the subway. As the project developed *Discordant...Hum* also analysed embodiment and the visual and aural codes deployed to structure fear in the audience, mapping locations, which articulated most clearly this paranoid vision. *Discordant... Hum* will be discussed in detail in Part 3.

The decision to expand this research project in an academic context produced the working title "A Comparative analysis of Fragmentation and the Moving Image." Rather than an overriding theory, the fields of literary theory, critical theory, film history/theory, art history/criticism, photography and philosophy, are all seen as offering important insights towards a development of this discussion? A comparative approach allowed me to analyse film production across a variety of institutional boundaries from mainstream commercial Hollywood cinema directed at a mass audience, to experimental film and film installations made specifically for an art gallery/museum audience. As a comparative model in film studies is not widely applied I want to briefly outline its significance. Discussing the apparent inappropriateness of a model such as the discipline of comparative literature to study an industrialized form such as cinema, Paul Willemen comments on the "complicity" between comparative literature and comparative religion, where Western-Christian values are presented as universal and used to judge regional literary works adherence to this norm. However, he suggests that it is precisely this connection to clerical thought which provides an answer as to why a model of comparative film studies may be useful. This is because of

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the gradual transition in the West from religion as the controlling force with the social power to function as regulators and legitimators to " a more secular notion of 'universal value'." This shift is also intimately connected with the emergence of the 'public sphere'. Willemen writes,

> Given that the force driving this change is the one identified by Karl Marx, that is to say, the gradual elaboration and spread of the capitalist mode of production that set about its triumphal globalization in the second half of the twentieth century, and given that the history of cinema coincides with the industrialization of culture enforced in the West since the closing years of the nineteenth century, it must follow that there is indeed a kind of 'universalism' that informs cinema as a cultural form[...] The universalism at stake that enables 'comparisons' to be made is the universal encounter with capitalism, a process that has massively accelerated since the 1950s.[1]

Willemen refers to discussions on 'national cinemas' and their usual alignment with romantic nationalistic allusions to, as he writes, "the 'spirit' of the nation."[2] He suggests that rather than discussing a film through 'universal values' (Western-Christian) or nationalist "blood and soil" mystifications as a means of differentiating the industrial production of different states, it is more appropriate to consider how the encounter between "national histories and the capitalist-industrial production of culture intersect, generating specific ways of discoursing."[3]

Following on from the possibilities in employing a comparative model, this research project while discussing the selection of cultural texts through the specificities of their own institutional boundaries, also engages with their interconnectedness, through a 'universal' encounter with capitalism. This comparative approach has allowed recognition of the ways in which temporal differences effect the cultural formation of the same geo-political spaces as much as spatial/geographical distance effect the particular cultural forms produced at the

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[1] Paul Willemen, "Detouring through Korean cinema," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 3.2 (2002):167.

[2] Ibid. See also Paul Willemen, "The National," *Looks and Frictions*, (1994): 208-209.

[3] Willemen, "Detouring through Korean cinema," 168. Continuing Willemen also clarifies that the 'universalism that "reduces everybody to their exchange value" is very different to that of religious discourses such as Christianity, which "seek to counter the equalizing tendencies within capitalism in favour of even more oppressively anti-democratic, 'traditional' regimes of power." Ibid.

same time. I follow Giovanni Arrighi's periodisation of history. Arrighi discusses how "the consolidation of capitalism on a global scale happened somewhere between the 1950s and the late 1960s, while the triumph of finance capital over industrial capital took longer and was not consolidated until the 1980s."[4] Raymond William's essay *Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory* (1974), especially in terms of his concept of the residual and emergent is equally important in the development of a discussion on the complexity of temporality in relation to cultural texts.

Technology, Montage and Mimesis

As I have outlined above this thesis emerges from an interest in mainstream film so an obvious field of analysis has been film and cinema studies. Given this, the insistent use of the term moving-image (rather than the more obvious film) requires some explanation. At its simplest, using the term 'moving-image' allows me a bridge between the research areas of film studies and that of art history/practice. Moving-image lends itself to thinking about work made and viewed for art contexts without excluding the more familiar academic frame/s used in thinking about film.[5] This gave me an intellectual space to research the thesis from my own specific vantage point as both an art practitioner and academic formed through two parallel educational traditions and I will return to the significance of this in relation to particular research questions in more detail below.

The importance of Walter Benjamin's theoretical discussions on technological reproduction and modernity provide an important grounding for my research, as does the conceptual expansiveness of his methodological approach. Equally, contemporary theoretical explorations of Benjamin's theories of experience and mimesis have been crucial. Though mimetic resemblance inherent in film has been used successfully by the culture industry

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[4] Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and The Origins of our Times* (2000).

[5] The term moving image also side steps the obvious problems attached with the term video art now that video has been superseded by DVD. As David I. Tafler comments "the move to digital media marks a site of convergence for so called 'experimental/avant-garde' film and video, the two major exploratory moving image canons of the past thirty years." See "When Analog Cinema Becomes Digital Memory..." Wide Angle Vol.21 no.1 (January 1999):184. Timothy Murray also comments on the fact that at the 43rd Annual Robert Flaherty Seminar, 1997 it presented work by film and video artists experimenting with Digital technology. Showing works on CD-ROMS and the internet "challenged the conventions of screening and spectatorship which have been nurtured by cinematic culture since the days of Robert Flaherty." See Timothy Murray "By Way of Introduction: Digitality and the memory of Cinema, or, Bearing the losses of the Digital Code." In *Wide Angle* Vol. 21 No.1 (January 1999): 2-27.

since its emergence, Benjamin's theory of mimesis and his renegotiation of aesthetics as a "discourse of the body," offer an important counter position to that. Theorists, looking at this aspect of his work, such as Miriam Bratu Hansen and Susan Buck- Morss have provided a rich and significant theoretical ground for thinking through what are the issues at stake in relation to theorizing film and audio-visual culture and, more importantly, of articulating a critical practice in the historical context of what some filmmakers and theorists have referred to as "the death of cinema."[6]

Arguably at the present historical juncture, one of the most significant discourses enveloping discussions on the moving-image is the shift from analogue to digital technology (thus the suggestion of 'the end of cinema') and related discussions on shifts in perception, cultural production and subject formation. These discussions have concentrated on the way in which the re-negotiation of the indexical dimension of images has important ramifications concerning technological reproduction, the moving-image, and more importantly how they address the viewer as subjects. These changes need to be understood through the social formation of information technology, convergence, and, as mentioned above, the consolidation of power by finance capitalism as a distinctive entity distinguishable from industrial capital (which loses power in this consolidation). They also need to be understood in terms of the way they overlap with earlier models of production. Martin Jay's discussion of the scopic regimes of modernity offers an important method of tracking the different capitalist formations in play. In this discussion, I suggest that concerns around indexicality and the moving-image, while being obviously related to discussions on perception are also related to shifts in employment and labour. Jonathan Crary, for example refers to the importance of 'attention management' for the control of labour power.[7] Discussions around indexicality and the moving-image also relate to re-conceptualizations of the body. Regarding the last point this should be understood as both a

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[6] In a recent round table discussion, Matthew Buckingham comments on how long "the death of cinema" seems to be taking, suggesting that "it starts, really, in the '50s, with metacritiques from Godard and others. This moment is now often spoken of, in hindsight, as both the height of and the end of cinema." Responding to this Anthony McCall says it is important to make a distinction between cinema (as social institution) and film (as medium) "I can quite easily imagine film as a medium disappearing quietly in the next ten years with scarcely a blip in terms of the practices of cinema." See, Round Table, "The Projected Image of Contemporary Art," *October 104* (Spring 2003):74)

[7] Jonathan Crary, "Modernity and the Problem of Attention," *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, And Modern Culture*, (1999):11-80.

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re-conceptualization of the human body, the social body, and also significantly, the body of the text/film. From experimental film to moving-image installations which employ space as part of their form, through to works which use re-interpretation and appropriation of commercial film as raw material, to CD-ROMs and DVDs which require an analysis of the mode of exhibition, an emphasis on the importance of the fragment and montage operates as the key factor in this comparative analysis. Within all these categories the explicit aim in choosing to use the term moving-image was to allow for a more expansive approach to the way in which montage is immersed in re-conceptualizations of the film body.

The term moving-image, although useful as a link to art discourses, as discussed above, may however be a less useful term than the one suggested by Siegfried Zielinski.[8] Zielinski's study is based on the premise that the study of cinema and television has been artificially separated, a separation which he suggests can only be achieved "[...] through an intellectual act of force."[9] Zielinski refers to the "audio-visual discourse" which encompasses all the practices surrounding audio-vision, from planning, production, criticism and consumption. Following Michel Foucault's use of the term dispositif he suggests that there are four distinguishable dispositifs recognizable so far. The last of these is particularly relevant to our discussion. Here Zielinski writes,

> Advanced audiovision, as a complex construction kit of machines,
> storage devices, and programmes for the reproduction, simulation,
> and blending of what can be seen and heard, where the trend is
> toward their capability of being connected together in a network but
> which, for the time being, at a more advanced stage of development
> display a similar heterogeneity to that which was characteristic of a
> large part of the 19th century.[10]

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[8] Siegfried, Zielinski, *Audiovisions, Cinema and television as entr'actes in history* (1999).

[9] Zielinski, *Audiovisions*, 21. Lauren Rabinovitz and Abraham Geil in a discussion on the historicization of digital culture (or lack of it) comment on the way digitality often gets reduced to communications media. They refer to how this discourse often "ignores the status of movies, video, and the like as audio-visual representations so as to distance them from their technology industries. The result is digital culture merely as a linear history of technological representation and of visual signification. See Lauren Rabinovitz & Abraham Geil (eds) *Memory Bytes, History, Technology, and Digital Culture*,(2004) 3. For an exploration for the way some contemporary artists and filmmakers have thought about film and television see Maeve Connolly & Orla Ryan (eds) *The Glass Eye* (2000).

[10] Zielinski, *Audiovisions*, 19.

The evident link between the current heterogeneous dynamic and that which was apparent within early cinema has many commentators most notably Tom Gunning.[11] In particular Gunning's discussion on avant -garde film's link to an early "cinema of attractions" which will be discussed in **Part 3**. One of the most noticeable ways in which this heterogeneity is apparent is with regard to the emphasis on fragmentation and the moving-image or the audio-visual. Zielinski refers to the culture industry's use of fragmentation as a process where by the audio visual is seen as a "rich quarry" whereby every fragment must be reworked. This process is part of the logic of industrial culture. As Zielinski writes,

> The method of audiovisual reprocessing is cheaper and faster than creating elaborate new constructions. It helps to manage a situation according to economic rationale where, on the one hand, creative resources are at best stagnating and/or artificially kept in short supply, and on the other hand, the multiple markets' voracious and insatiable appetite for material needs feeding. Audiovision has become an amalgam of many media communication forms that used to be separate and is thus, for the interim, the fulfillment of that project to occupy the minds and hearts with culture-industrial commodities, which was begun in the 19th century.[12]

This suggestion by Zielinski of the economic rationale of reprocessing audiovisual data begs a number of questions in relation to the use of reprocessing as a creative strategy by artists and film-makers such as, Jean-Luc Godard, Pierre Huyghe and Douglas Gordon. How, for example, do we negotiate claims for a critical practice in the face of an obvious replication of capital's 'reprocessing' strategies? This will be looked at in detail in **Part 3**.

Montage as a field of research may appear far too broad especially as many would argue that it is a central component or characteristic of all moving-image. Even with due consideration of Andre Bazin's criticism of Sergei Eisenstein's theory of montage or the substantial body of work employing artisanal modes of production such as real time and single reel films which eschew editing, and, not withstanding the provocative but widely criticized discussions of America's Direct Cinema proponents, montage/fragmentation is inherent in the process because we have moved from an ongoing flux "reality" to a

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[11] See also Lev Manovich, "What is Cinema", *The Language of New Media*, (2001).
[12] Zielinski, *Audiovisions*, 14.

representation of that ongoing flux.[13] It is also important to explain the reasoning behind adopting the term fragmentation for the working title for this research rather than, as I said above, the more widely used term within film studies, montage. Even outside of film studies proper, montage is readily used, a recent example would be the description on the book cover of Benjamin's experimental palimpsest model of mapping history in his recently published *The Arcades Project*, which is described as "a vast montage."[14] The term fragmentation is still a productive one although problematic, especially because of the way it suggests an originary wholeness. However as the discussion in **Part 1** makes clear, fragmentation becomes a useful term in thinking of the changes that occur in society because of processes of industrialization, such as, Taylorist models of production. For example in Henry Ford's autobiography, he recounts his own fragmenting fantasy of labour dismemberment, writing of how the Model T required 7,882 operations, of which only 12% needed " strong, able- bodied and practically physically perfect men." Of the operations remaining to construct the Model T, Ford found, "that 670 could be filled by legless men, 2,637 by one-legged men, two by armless men, 715 by one-armed men and ten by blind men."[15]

Fig.1 "Education of the Movements of the Wounded Soldier"
from Jules Amar, The Physiology of Industrial Organization (1918).

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[13] See André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* Trans. Hugh Gray, 2 Vols (1967 and 1971), S. M. Eisenstein *Towards a Theory of Montage (1991)*, Jean Antoine- Dunne & Paula Quigley, *The Montage Principle: Eisenstein in New Cultural and Critical Contexts, Critical Studies 21* (2004). For a critique of Direct Cinema see Brian Winston, "The Documentary Film as Scientific Inscription"in Michael Renov, *Theorizing Documentary*, 37-57, or Paul Arthur, "Jargons of Authenticity (Three American Moments)," in Renov, ((1993):108-134.
[14] See Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (1999).
[15] Henry Ford, *My Life and Work*, (1923):108-9, in Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, (2000):103.

In this thesis I use both terms fragmentation and montage where appropriate although the title *Overlapping Montage* allows me to articulate a way of thinking about cultural meaning making through both a synchronic and diachronic axes.

Cultural Studies

This thesis, by pursuing a comparative approach of cultural products over a wide range of diverse texts departs from a predictable trajectory. Established routes of academic research at this level not only offer but also actively promote a vision of academic authority in one's chosen field on completion of a PhD. This is based on the assumption that the scholar will ring fence her chosen subject and narrow the field so that research questions and answers can be safely guaranteed in advance of the research process itself. However, throughout the process of researching and writing this project, the desire has been to follow a cultural studies methodology and in that regard the introduction to The *Australian Cultural Studies Reader* by John Frow and Meaghan Morris (1993) has operated as a key intellectual directive. Both Frow and Morris refer to the way in which cultural studies challenge more orthodox research methods in the social sciences. Frow and Morris write,

> Unlike much empirical work in positivist social science, cultural studies tends to incorporate in its object of study a critical account of its own motivating questions – and thus of the institutional frameworks and disciplinary rules by which its research imperatives are formed. At the same time, cultural studies is not a form of that 'multi'- disciplinarity which dreams of producing an exhaustive knowledge map and it does not posit (unlike some totalising forms of Marxism) a transcendental space from which knowledge could be synthesised and a 'general' theory achieved. On the contrary work in cultural studies accepts its partiality, in both senses of the term: it is openly incomplete, and it is partisan in its insistence on the political dimensions of knowledge.[16]

This research project employs a cultural studies model recognizing that "questions of culture and power must lead one beyond the realm of culture into fields of inquiry normally constitutive of a number of other disciplines."[17] This methodology effectively makes it difficult to facilitate an engagement with theoretical projects that 'isolate' their

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[16] John Frow, and Meaghan Morris, *The Australian Cultural Studies Reader*, (1993):18.
[17] See Lawrence Grossberg, "Cultural studies, modern logics, and theories of globalisation" in (ed) Angela McRobbie, *Back to reality? Social Experience and Cultural Studies*,(1997): 7.

object because here, the study is always following an internal logic dependent on a partial frame, which is denied. This of course will cause problems, as for example, Jonathan Crary shows, in his debunking of the art historical myth, which suggests that it is the 1870s, which charts the emergence of a new way of looking- *modernism*.[18] It is worth giving a brief account of Crary's discussion which stresses how this argument can only be maintained by separating painting from the other cultural forms of image-making occurring concurrently and shares an obvious similarity to the point raised by Zielinki in his discussion of the way in which academia has separated discussions around film and television.

Traditional art historical discourses that situate a rupture with Renaissance or Classical regimes of vision as occurring with the emergence of impressionism in the 1870s and 1880s suggests an engagement with high art alone. However as Crary suggests, the shift that occurs in the 19th century must be understood as a "massive reorganization of knowledge and social practices."[19]Yet while many art historical narratives define impressionism as a rupture with a classical model of vision, perspectivalism is seen to continue in photography and later cinema. In this division realism "dominates popular representational practices while experiments and innovations occurred in a distinct (if often permeable) arena of modernist art making."[20]This binary opposition between realism and experimentation presents avant-garde experimentation as dependent on the existence of the normative mimetic codes of perspectivalism. Through this conceptualization the subject "remains perpetually the same, or [a subject] whose historical status is never interrogated."[21] Rather than this rigid distinction between modernism and realism, Crary suggests that they, in fact, overlap as "components of a single social surface on which the modernization of vision had begun decades earlier."[22] In other words, just because things don't look the same does not mean that they do not correspond and, equally, as Crary's

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[18] Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer : On Vision and Modernity in the 19th century*.
[19] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer, 3.*
[20] Ibid, *4.*
[21] Ibid, *5.*
[22] Ibid. The discussion continues by stressing that rather than the rupture occurring in the 1870s, Crary, following Michel Foucault's analysis of modernity in *The Order of Things*,(1970), argues that the shift that occurs was already underway in the 1800s when 'man' is invented as a subject and object of knowledge.

discussion makes clear, the fact that there are certain similarities between the camera obscura and the camera should not allow us to collapse two very different things.

Crary's discussion concerning modernism's experimentation as part of a complex social surface rather than separate and distinct takes issue with the way in which intellectual disciplines such as art history and, as I will argue film studies, willingly maintain categories and boundaries – the usefulness of which need to be questioned. Similarly Susan Buck-Morss discusses the ways, in which the Humanities police disciplinary boundaries and writes,

> Images circulate within a specific context. They are "framed", first by the photographic or cinematic medium itself, and then by the socio-historical context in which they are shown. The former is fixed; the latter constantly changes. Both are necessarily implicated in the truth of the image, not just (and not primarily) as it existed in the past, but also as it survives in the present. The image is thus subject to a third frame, the narrative structure that connects the past to the present. Typically, the parameters of this structure are policed by the academic disciplines of the Humanities, the narrative genres of which cordon off specialized areas of the past (social history, art history, history of technology, etc.) in ways that produce blindness as to their connections with each other. It is this third frame, institutionalised in the universities, that so often obscures the present political significance of the cultural inheritance.[23]

While undeniably an important model for this research project, the value of a cultural studies model, which actively promotes a comparative approach and questions some of the boundaries imposed by academic disciplines requires some qualification. In what has recently been referred to as "the anxiety of interdisciplinarity", many theorists have argued against a simplistic model of 'cultural studies' which sees interdisciplinarity as a goal in itself without a thorough appreciation of what is at stake.[24] For an interdisciplinary model to work, there is a need to be grounded in a discipline first. I would argue that what this entails

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[23] Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in the East and the West*, (2000):161. See also Andrew Milner who insists, [...] that many of the older disciplinary boundaries and their attendant theories have in fact become increasingly irrelevant to a society in which everyday life has become progressively media-encultured, and in which hitherto relatively autonomous, non market institutions for the regulation of value have become progressively assimilated into each other by way of the market." Andrew Milner *re-Imagining Cultural Studies the Promise of Cultural Materialism, 6.*

[24] See for example Alex Coles and Alexia Defert, *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity, de,dis-, ex-.* Vol 2, (1998).

is a thorough grounding in the historical and contingent discourses that the discipline is immersed in. The problem of this approach is that it suggests the need to rehearse 'the history of the world' in order to enter the discussion. While there are no easy answers in response to this problem, the examination of the historical discourses in which vision, perception and mimesis are immersed in, is a necessary element of this research method providing a platform for the discussion which follows.

Equally it is important to articulate a concern with the way certain cultural studies proponents fetishize their method and concentrate almost exclusively on the perceived threat to Cultural Studies being "institutionalized" within the academy. Here, as Tony Bennett points out, Cultural Studies is presented as marginal and external to the institution when in fact "[...] the primary institutional conditions of its existence as an area of critical intellectual work have been supplied by the tertiary education sectors of advanced capitalist societies."[25] Bennett suggests that academics need to realize the way in which they are also part of government and therefore need to understand their role in terms of cultural policy.[26]

This brings me back to my own educational route mentioned above. As someone who has been educated through the distinct fields of both art history and film studies and has also taught a number of survey courses in both fields, certain issues have become clear to me concerning these academic subjects. For the most part, MA courses in film offer extremely condensed survey courses where, for example, the History of Film, or National Cinema are taught over a period of one semester. In this context there is little room to manoeuvre in terms of expanding the graduate student's terms of reference. Avant-garde or experimental film is well covered in the wider literary field of film studies. However, within the actual teaching context, explaining the expanded field of film and moving-image practices in all their diversity remains a non requirement on the part of the lecturer. Courses in National Cinema are singularly used as a means of elaborarating on their perceived opposition to

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[25] Tony Bennett, *Culture a Reformer's Science*, (1998):2.
[26] Bennett's discussion on the importance of a policy perspective which he sees as largely absent from cultural studies does however point to historical precedents within cultural studies debates citing Meaghan Morris' discussion on the "traditionally strong ties which have characterised the relations between universities and policy bureaux in all areas of Australian intellectual life (see Morris, 1992) [and] Raymond Williams' strong practical and intellectual engagement with arts and cultural policies." Ibid,5.

the monolithic Hollywood model. In fact, whether the avant-garde or experimental film is covered is dependent usually on the lecturer's personal interest in the subject. Even if experimental film is discussed, moving-image installations are not. Often the lecturer with a partial interest in the area may discuss experimental film as research and development for commercial film. In this case experimental film is understood purely on the level of optical effects and technological motivations rather than an analysis of its potential role as a Counter Cinema as developed by Claire Johnson and Peter Wollen.[27]

In a recent round table discussion published in *October*, Chrissie Iles, curator of film and video at the Whitney Museum, New York, comments,

> [...] I think the relationship between film and art is a one-way love affair. Artists love film, but the film world is largely indifferent to the fact. In fact, it often irritates them – they deride it – because filmmaking is essentially a craft[...] Another aspect to the split I was talking about is the fact that projected images are shown in galleries, which is something the film world finds completely odd and irrelevant, but artists find very compelling. The physical space of the gallery is critical to the discussion, because in the early '70s, artists were focusing our attention on the space of the gallery[...][28]

One of the most obvious effects of this institutional evasiveness, as mentioned above by Iles, is the way this evasion operates to duplicate and entrench further the assumption that moving-image installations are irrelevant to the discussion of film culture. This produces graduates who as an example will give a clear and critically acceptable account of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) or *Vertigo* (1958)but when confronted with Douglas Gordon's *24 hour Psycho* (1993) or his installation of *Feature Film (1999),*[29] students may be at a

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[27] See for example Claire Johnson, "Women's Cinema as Counter Cinema" in Bill Nicholls, *Movies and Methods An Anthology,* (1985): 208-217. Peter Wollen's exploration of two avant-garde models is also relevant here. See his "The Two Avant-Gardes" (ed) Michael O'Pray, *British Avant-garde Film: An Anthology of Writings.* However it is arguable that both the terms avant-garde and experimental film are so immersed in the rhetoric of 'visual effects' that their historical ties to a political practice are completely erased. As the term suggests, its alignment with a linear progress narrative also fails to effectively theorize the complexities of 'emergent and residual' discourses operating in all cultural products. Coupled with a blind spot in relation to commercial culture and indeed colonialism, it becomes apparent why the term third cinema gained currency as a counter to what had become quite a narrow and often Eurocentric term of reference. Throughout my discussion I use the term critical practice. See Paul Willemen and Jim Pine (eds) , *Questions of Third Cinema* (1989).

[28] See Round Table, "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art," *October* 104 (Spring 2003):74-75.

[29] Douglas Gordon's *Feature Film* is a large installation based on the music score of Hitchcock's *Vertigo.*

complete loss in terms of developing a critical vocabulary which would facilitate their ability to interpret the work with a degree of sophistication. This is in large measure to do with expectation. An essay on Hitchcock's *Vertigo* may be written with the confirmed belief that this is after all, 'great entertainment' and that is why it is part of the canon whereas Gordon's *Feature Film* is not entertainment and therefore irrelevant. One of the problems with this scenario is the way it promotes a rigid boundary between commercial cinema and 'high art'.[30] This ignores their interconnectedness to each other. Theordor Adorno in a letter written to Walter Benjamin in 1936 refers to the way in which they both "bear the stigmata of capitalism, both contain elements of change (but never, of course the middle term between Schoenberg and the American film). Both are torn halves of an integral freedom, to which, however they do not add up."[31]

Adorno positions high art and mass culture as dialectically entwined rejecting an uncomplicated and conservative view of culture which places high art above mass cultural because of the cultural objects' intrinsic virtuosity, in other words, using the canon as a model for categorisation. In the introduction to a selection of essays by Adorno, the editor J.M. Bernstein writes of how, "The same forces of fragmentation and reification which have produced the great divide between high art and the culture industry produced the division of labour among the various disciplines."[32]This is particularly significant with regard to the current climate in film studies, which ignores critical interrogation of commercial culture products by artists and filmmakers, such as for example, Pierre Huyghe's analysis of Sydney Lumet's *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975) in his moving-image installation *The Third Memory* (2000). The problems associated with the art and film worlds operating as a "double helix, spiralling closely around one another without ever quite meeting," is also apparent in the study of contemporary art.[33] Chrissie Iles refers to how writers are not knowledgeable enough about the history and theory of film to interrogate these moving-installations. Bringing this up in relation to Matthew Barney's

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[30] Maeve Connolly's "*An Archaeology of Irish Cinema: Ireland's Subaltern, Migrant and Feminist Film Culture* (1973-87) (Ph.D. diss., Dublin City University, 2003), makes an important contribution towards addressing some of the complexities of dealing with spheres of influence which defy academic disciplines in an Irish context.
[31] Ernst Bloch et al.*Aesthetics and Politics*, (1977):123, quoted in J.M. Berstein's *Theodor W. Adorno The Culture Industry, Selected Essays on Mass Culture*,(2002):2.
[32] J.M. Bernstein, *The Culture Industry, Selected Essays on Mass Culture, 3*.
[33] Anthony McCall, Round Table, "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art," 75.

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Cremaster series Iles comments, "[...] there has not been a serious analysis of his films in cinematic terms, and most art world writers are not cognizant enough of film history or theory to attempt it." [34] As Miriam Hansen writes,

> Rethinking the study of the traditional arts from the perspective of mass-mediated culture has already begun to shape research perspectives, for instance, for debates on modernism and modernity. For one thing, we discover in technological media practice forms of modernist aesthetics-configurations of "vernacular modernism"-that elude the lens of traditional criticism and theory. For another, as Andreas Huyssen, Molly Nesbit, and others have demonstrated, the history of modernism cannot be thought without its mass-mediated intertexts and afterlife. From Hollywood musicals to museum shops, from advertising to the fringes of the popular music scene, the icons of high modernism have been disseminated and recycled, disfigured and reinscribed. [35]

A significant example which challenges the more entrenched and acceptable methods of critical exploration in academia, is Jean Luc Godard's audio-visual history of cinema *Histoire(s) du cinema* (1998). This audio visual essay uses a model of montage profoundly influenced by Walter Benjamin's theory of history.[36] Discussing Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinema* Monica Dall'Asta writes,

> Unlike traditional, bookish, film histories, an audiovisual history of the cinema rests on the principle of quotation. And the moment of quotation is precisely the moment when passivity and activity come to coincide, when reading and writing or watching and showing become one and the same thing. While traditional film histories confine themselves to a reconstructive dimension, striving to produce an illusory effect of actualisation, Godard's citational approach can instead be conceived as an activation of the past into the present, where past becomes incorporated into a present praxis.[37]

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[34] Chrissie Iles, Round Table, "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art," 75.

[35] Ibid.

[36] See Monica Dall'Asta "The (Im)Possible History," in *For Ever Godard*, eds., Michael Temple, James S. Williams and Michael Witt, (2004): 350-363.

[37] Dall'Asta "The (Im)Possible History," 360.

This is not to advocate the replacement of critical writing by 'audiovisual' essays but to suggest that academic programmes which ignore alternative ways of 'doing theory' will increasingly become more and more archaic. In discussing these issues of the specialization of production which constitutes the bourgeois world view, Benjamin argues,

> To overthrow |...| the barriers, to transcend another of the antitheses, which fetter the production of intellectuals. In this case, the barrier between writing and image. What we require of the photographer is the ability to give his picture that caption which wrenches it from modish commerce and gives it revolutionary use-value. But we shall make this demand most emphatically when we – the writers – take up photography. Here, too, therefore, technical progress is for the author as producer the foundation of his political progress. In other words: only by transcending the specialization in the process of production which, in the bourgeois view, constitutes its order, is this production made politically valuable; and the limits imposed by specialization must be breached jointly by both the productive forces that they were set up to divide. The author as producer discovers – in discovering his solidarity with the proletariat – that simultaneity with certain other producers who earlier seemed scarcely to concern him|...|[38]

It is also interesting to note that in the 1970s many of the most established contemporary film critics/theorists, such as Jean-Luc Godard, Peter Wollen and Laura Mulvey were also film practitioners. Within the present climate however one of the major problems appears to be the conception of the artist/ or filmmaker, where the artist as genius or filmmaker as *auteur* still reigns supreme as an acceptable doxa.[39] Here a very blinkered model of creativity and subjectivity is constructed and maintained which seems to totally ignore the professionalisation of the arts over the last thirty years. This modus operandi allows for a complete rejection of the artist or film maker as an educated professional who sells their intellectual labour.[40]

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[38] Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Modern Art and Modernism, A Critical Anthology*, eds, Francis Francina & Charles Harrison, (1982):215-216.

[39] While it has been a common assertion in academia that students 'should never trust the ending' of a film, this surely needs to be reassessed in terms of comtemporary production models in which the producer sees the rushes before the director. In this context the financial pressures that directors (even those working within smaller national cinemas) are put under to change the films in line with the producer's desires makes it seem completely myopic to continue with this form of theoretical practice.

[40] This is particularly perplexing given the increase in institutions awarding Ph.D's by practice .For a useful and important discussion on practice- based Ph.Ds see James Elkins (ed) "The New PhD in Studio Art" *Printed Project* (Issue 4) 2005.

To sum up then, this thesis in exploring the subject of montage fragmentation in relation to film studies, historically situates it in terms of larger discussions on modernity. In order to stress the significance of Walter Benjamin's theories of mimesis and technology, this thesis re-examines modes of looking and how these scopic regimes configure a viewing subject. Re-asserting the importance of a cultural studies methodology for the study of moving-images, I also argue for a recognition of the need to understand the connections between mainstream cinema and moving-image installations.

These then, are the general concerns traversing and connecting the chapters in this dissertation. The dissertation is presented in three parts. **Part 1** presents a theoretical and historical perspective on modernity, film, mimesis and fragmentation. This section discusses how the history of perception has developed within cinema studies and the significance of theories of mimesis are explored. Looking at what has become known as "the modernity thesis" in film studies further develops the discussion on mimesis and on the significance of the sensory environment of urban modernity.[41]

In exploring cinema and its relationship to the sensory environment **Chapter 1** will outline the cultural history of mimesis, perception, subjectivity and a number of different scopic regimes of modernity, such as perspective, the regime of digital mimicry, the camera obscura, the baroque and the *Dutch art of describing*.[42] There have been many meanings attached to mimesis as a concept and while conventionally mimesis is limited to imitation, my discussion will concentrate on its anthropological aspects and its interpretation as that which resists boundaries, making new connections "among art, philosophy and science."[43] I will discuss the work of Gebauer and Wulf in which they refer to "the history of mimesis"

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[41] The use of the term "modernity thesis" however does pose problems with reference to its temporal frame. Film theorists developing the modernity thesis usually work in a limited time frame between 1880 and 1920 when arguably, modernity emerges with the Renaissance, which means, that the link between technology, capitalism, subjectivity, and sense perception needs a much longer temporal span in how we define modernity. While Ben Singer gives the useful reasoning behind a limited time span as one which engages with "modernity in full throttle", the term modernity can end up being an ambiguous term describing any number of cultural constellations. Following Richard Ohman I will suggest that the term "the industrialisation of culture" may be a more productive term to discuss the issues at hand. See Richard, Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets and Class at the Turn of the Century*, London: Verso (1996).

[42] Martin Jay, *The Scopic Regimes of Modernity*, 1988.

[43] Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf, *Mimesis, Culture, Art, Society*, 2.

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and its "political dimension [which] is part of the history of power relations."[44]In this chapter I will map out some of the complex correlations between different socio-historical constellations and corresponding concepts of vision and subjectivity. Linear perspective has played a significant part in discussion on film especially for 1970s theorists such as Jean-Louis Comolli, Stephen Heath and Jean Louis Baudry.[45] In presenting a discussion on linear perspective and monocular vision as a scopic regime (following Martin Jay) which denies the heterogeneous viewpoints of a feudal mode of looking, I also look at discussions by Paul Willemen which suggest that as a scopic regime of modernity, perspectivalism also incorporates a feudal mode of looking.[46] This chapter also looks in depth at Martin Jay's discussion of alternative modes of looking in modernity rather than the presumed assumption that perspective is the pre-eminent mode of looking. Jay refers to the Dutch Art of Describing and The Baroque as alternative modes of looking rather than their usual interpretation as sub variants to linear perspective. Also relevant to this discussion is Jonathan Crary's analysis of the camera obscura. Ultimately this chapter attempts to lay the ground for a reconceptualization of montage which allows for the fact that moving images will contain multiple modes of looking.

Chapter 2 continues our discussion on mimesis and aesthetics and its involvement in the public sphere and the industrialisation of culture. The shifts in subjective experience under the rapid transformation of urban industrialisation play an important part in the work of film theorists interested in Walter Benjamin's work on mimesis and technological reproduction. The work of Miriam Hansen and Susan Buck-Morss who have both written significantly on Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936) is of significance here. Both move away from the accepted 1970's interpretative reception of Benjamin's *Artwork essay*. This interpretation of Benjamin's essay was through an interest by '70's film theorists in Bertolt Brecht and his theories of

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[44] Ibid, 3.
[45] Jean-Louis Comolli, "Technique and Ideology," in *Movies and Methods Vol. 2*, ed. Bill Nicholls. Stephen Heath, "Narrative Space," in *Questions of Cinema (1981)* and Jean Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reade*, ed. Philip Rosen (1986.)
[46] Paul Willemen, "Regimes of Subjectivity and Looking," *The UTS Review*, 1:2 (2002): 167-86.

distanciation.[47] Miriam Hansen instead wishes to relate the text to other texts by Benjamin which map out his theories of mimesis, language and experience. Susan Buck-Morss uses the *Artwork essay* to analyse Benjamin's concept of aesthetics which, she argues, lies much closer to its original meaning as a theory of the senses and to a discussion of embodiment.[48]

Part Two examines fragmentation specifically in relation to popular film. Here chapters 3 and 4 are linked to a discussion on mainstream films in which fragmentation quite literally means the body in pieces. In **Chapter 3** I present a critical discussion on the problems of genre theory as an interpretative strategy using a cluster of films I categorize as 'serial killer films' such as *Manhunter* (1988), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1990), *Copycat* (1997), and *Red Dragon* (2002), which are all linked by premeditated or serial killing. My research outlines that these films do not reside in any particular genre but emerge and are categorized as horror, thriller, science fiction, action, comedy and, most importantly, melodrama. The montage of discourses which flow through and are inscribed in/on to the figure of the serial killer are not reducible to particular articulations in a narrative process, but emerge at the intersection of a number of genres. Initial research into exploring why these films emerge in different genres seemed to correspond with Steve Neale's opinion that there is a large potential for overlap and hybridity in genres such as horror, crime, science fiction, adventure and fantasy.[49] This chapter explores the characteristics which seemed to align these films within particular genres. This traces the historical links and shifts in genres such as for example gothic narratives as inversions of modern rationalism; the ways in which 'monsters' such as Frankenstein and Dracula have been linked to industrialization and capitalism; and the link made by Tom Gunning between early theatrical melodrama's reliance on excess and Gothic's fascination with horror.[50]

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[47] See Stephen Heath "Lessons from Brecht" *Screen* vol. 15. no.2. (Summer 1974):103-28,and "From Brecht to Film," *Screen* vol. 16. no. 4. (Winter 1975/6): 34-44 and Dana Polan "A Brechtian Cinema? Towards a Politics of Self-Reflexive Film" in Bill Nicholls (ed) *Movies and Methods*, 661-671.

[48] For a related discussion see Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses, (2000).*

[49] Steve Neale, *Genre* and Hollywood, (2000)

[50] Tom Gunning, "Heard Over the Phone: The Lonely Villa and the De Lorde Tradition of Terrified Communication," *Screen 32.2* (Summer 91): 184-96.

Within the contemporary films mentioned above there is usually a reference made to a foundational trauma within the early family life of the killer. I will argue that this link to a dysfunctional family aligns these films to melodrama which goes beyond the "overlap and hybridity" Neale identifies in horror, crime, science fiction and fantasy mentioned above. An analysis of the ways in which melodrama has been defined within film studies especially, for example, how in contemporary film studies, melodrama is usually studied by examining the 1950s films of directors such as Douglas Sirk, Vincente Minelli etc. may not allow an obvious connection with 'serial killer films'. However recent research by Ben Singer, Tom Gunning and Linda Williams tracing an earlier history of melodrama has clarified further connections to earlier forms of melodrama such as sensation melodrama and the theatre of Grand Guignol. The theatre of Grand Guignol which opened in Paris in 1897 was related to melodrama through sensation which was central to the plays performed. Grand Guignol inverted the world of melodrama were there was a constant undermining of the moral order.

Another very productive area explored in this chapter has been the character in American horror films of the 1970s and 1980s identified by Carol Clover as 'the final girl'.[51] This is the character who usually witnesses the death of her friends but is finally rescued or manages to slay the killer herself. Aware that this character is evident in many of the contemporary films I looked at, I also make a connection with the work of Mary Ann Doane and her work on 'paranoid women's film' of the 1940s such as *Rebecca*, (1940) or *The Two Mrs. Carroll's* (1947).[52] These films are usually domestic melodramas in which the wife or daughter fears that the husband or male family member is going to kill her. One film *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), though not discussed by Doane, is a prime example of the 'the final girl'. Pursuing this area I also found multiple antecedents to the 'final girl' in serial queen melodramas made in the teens of the 20th century following the research of Ben Singer and K. C. Lahue.[53]

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[51] Carol Clover, *Men, Women , and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film, (1992).*

[52] Mary Ann Doane, "Paranoia and the Specular," in *The Desire to Desire, The woman's Film of the 1940s* (1987).

[53] Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity, Early Sensational Cinema and its Contexts (2001).* K. C. Lahue, *Bound and Gagged: The Story of the Silent Serials* (1968).

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By clarifying how 'serial killer films' can be found in a number of genres, especially melodrama, the chapter poses questions in relation to an unguarded acceptance within academia of genre classifications that are in effect made by marketing strategists. While this research aims to expand knowledge in the field of film studies specifically, it also reiterates comments made earlier concerning the academic need to trace historical social formations over a longer time frame in order to fully understand what is set in play by these cultural texts.

Chapter 4 offers an in-depth interpretation and textual analysis of 'serial killer films' concentrating mainly on *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme 1990) and *Manhunter* (Michael Mann 1988). This material develops through a discussion of the ways in which distinct films emphasize particular discourses. The most common definition of Hollywood cinema concentrates on the way in which it is character and narrative driven, a cinema of actions and re-actions. However, as becomes apparent in chapter 3, accepting this definition of how Hollywood itself likes to market its products poses particular problems in the related field of film studies. Here the question arises as to whether, as academics, we should willingly follow this definition (or agreed upon fiction) and commence an interpretative analysis of a Hollywood film from this particular frame of reference. Laleen Jayamanne offers an eloquent and critically rigorous alternative, in which she refers to the importance of describing a film which moves away from a dull "repetition of the object."[54] She continues,

> The kind of descriptive act required cannot be determined before the encounter with a particular object, but certain guidelines [...] seem to emerge through this writing. One is to ride an impulsive move toward whatever draws one to something in the object – a colour, a gesture, a phrase, an edit point, a glance a rhythm, a whatever. Enter the film through this and describe what is exactly heard and seen, and then begin to describe the film in any order whatever rather than in the order in which it unravels itself. Soon one's own description begins not only to mimic the object, as a preliminary move, but also to redraw the object[...] An eccentric, impulsive, descriptive drive will cut the film up and link the

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[54] Laleen, Jayamanne, *Towards Cinema and Its Double, Cross-Cultural Mimesis, (2001): xi.*

fragments differently from the way the film is itself organized. It is through this montage of description that a reading might emerge.[55]

As discussed in Chapter 3 there is a greater intellectual responsibility to find methods of interpreting these films in ways which go against the grain of marketing strategists. For example, mapping the semantic similarities in various films to construct a semblance of genre cohesion does not allow for a discussion of the way in which various 'bundles of discourse' operate within seemingly diverse films. In this chapter while I concentrate on commercial films which have a certain cohesion i.e. "serial killer films", I constantly articulate the ways in which discourses central to these films emerge in a diverse range of films outside of this sub-genre. In this way I hope to extend discussion of the complexities to do with genre theory explored in Chapter 3 by offering distinct examples through interpretation and textual analysis. The following are some of the ways in which particular discourses are articulated in these films.

Gender politics and the role of pedagogy.

This is particularly evident in films where the as-yet-unqualified detective is played by a woman. These films have a strong link to Carol Clover's discussion on the *Final Girl* evident in such films as *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Copy Cat* for example. Where issues of gender are dominant we find that fixed definitions of masculinity and femininity are usually fore grounded as unstable through the character of the serial killer and the *Final Girl* respectively. Here the serial killer is seen to represent gender boundary collapse monstrously while the final girl represents apparent shifts in society. For example in *The Silence of the Lambs* we learn from Clarice's discussion with Hannibal Lecter that the serial killer Buffalo Bill has probably applied for gender reassignment and been refused by the clinics. In his own refusal to accept the decision of the authorities Buffalo Bill refuses sex as destiny, and monstrously creates his own "literal bodysuit to transform his gender." [56]

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Elizabeth Young, "the Silence of The Lambs and the Flaying of Feminist Theory," *Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory* 27 (September 1991):14.

Representation, technology/communication networks and mediations on the *copy* and the *original*.

An important indicator that these films are mediations on representation itself is the frequency with which the killer is represented as an artist. While Carol Clover would posit the importance of Hitchcock's film *Psycho* (1960) to the later emergence of the slasher film, many of these 'serial killer films' have a direct lineage to Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1959), itself a film which is a mediation on cinema, its structures and representational strategies.

Fig.2 Camera as weapon, Peeping Tom, film still

Pertinent to this discussion also is "the modernity thesis" or "the industrialization of culture" as explored in Part 1. Rethinking "cinema's emergence within the sensory environment of urban modernity,"[57] allows a constructive means of relating the ways in which the contemporary epoch moves through these films. Discussions of the fragmentation of the visual environment and how this relates to the experience of modernity allows for an exploration of how global communication networks and increased fragmentation through digital technology are fore-grounded in these films.

In **Part 3** the discussion returns again to questions raised at the beginning of this thesis and to the significance of Benjamin's *Artwork essay.* Here I discuss what Buck-Morss suggests as displacing aesthetics from 'beauty and truth' to a discussion of cognitive

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[57] Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity, Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*, 102.

knowledge or to what Hansen refers to as "an ecology of the senses."[58] This approach to a form of media aesthetics rejects the logic of "distinction" by which museums and art institutions operate. Here, the assumption is that the separate sphere carved out for the museum space (by the museum space) was to do with a perceived threat to 'culture' from commercialization. However whether 'culture' was ever separate from commercialization is questionable and as abundant research makes clear the processes of capital exist in the museum space. As Hansen points out "Picasso is a trademark of modern art just as Chaplin is of modern times, known to people who may never have seen a painting by the former or a film by the latter."[59] **Part 3** offers examples of work (including my own) which I put forward as a critical practice actively engaged with an exploration of media as a counteractive strategy to amnesia. This work includes, Matthew Buckingham's *Situation Leading to a Story* (1998) Pierre Huyghe's *The Third Memory* (2000) Chris Marker's *Immemory* (1998) and Orla Ryan's *Discordant... Hum* (1997).

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[58] Susan Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork essay reconsidered," *October* 62 (Fall 1992): 3-41. Miriam Hansen "Why Media Aesthetics?" *Critical Inquiry*, v30 issue 2 (Winter 2004): 391-395.
[59] Miriam Hansen "Why Media Aesthetics?" 392.

Part 1 Mimesis and Modernity

Introduction

> [...] From which cinema stops being the entertaining spectacle it is
> generally held to be, or the specialist area it is for cinéphiles, to
> appear as it really is: not just the major art form of the twentieth
> century, but the center[sic] of the twentieth century, embracing the
> human totality of that century, from the horror of its disasters to its
> efforts at redemption through art. So its about cinema in the century
> and the century in cinema. This, as you say, is because cinema
> consists of a particular relationship between reality and fiction. And
> since its power made cinema the century's manufacturing plant, or
> in your words made "the twentieth century exist," its as important
> as any major historical event, and can take its place alongside the
> others on that basis. But since those events were determined partly
> by cinema, and were also filmed for cinema newsreels, they're an
> integral part of cinema; and because, as History, those events acted
> on the destiny of cinema, they're part of cinema history.[60]

In this section I will examine the way discussions around the history of perception have
developed within cinema studies and related areas. The theorists who have consistently
researched in this area are often described as putting forward "the modernity thesis."[61]
Since the 1980s many film theorists have concentrated on the writings of Walter Benjamin,
Siegfried Kracauer, Charles Baudelaire and Georg Simmel as a means of examining the
relationship between subjective experience, sensory perception and the emergent
technology of cinema at the turn of the last century.[62]Writers such as Guiliana Bruno, Leo
Charney, Anne Friedberg, Tom Gunning, Miriam Hansen and Ben Singer have all
concentrated on "cinema's emergence within the sensory environment of urban modernity"
in particular, and, as Ben Singer continues "its relationship to late 19th century technologies

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[60] Jean-Luc Godard and Youssef Ishaghpour, *Cinema: the archaeology of film an the memory of a century*,(2005):5.

[61] It is important to clarify that "the modernity thesis" should not be confused with 'modernisation theory'. While both
may use urbanisation as a key component, the modernity thesis attempts to articulate the historical implications of the
processes of urbanisation and the relationship to the industrialisation of culture whereas modernisation theory attempts
to explain these processes through a developmental/ progress narrative. Richard Ohmann comments that modernisation
theory failed and was "scrapped in the 1970s" because "although it predicted the steady development of poor countries
into relatively affluent (and democratic) ones, in fact the gap between rich and poor countries was increasing, resulting in
an absolute deterioration for majorities in many of the latter." Richard Ohmann *Selling Culture, Magazines, markets and
class, at the turn of the century* (1996): 40. In dealing with different societies in isolation the theory failed to deal with
how Western economic power impacted upon development elsewhere. Ohmann however remarks that modernisation
theory is still often used as an account of how European and North American societies became modern in the first
place." Ibid. For a critique of film theorists employing 'the modernity thesis" see David Bordwell, *On the History of Film
Style* (1997).

[62] See for example Charles Baudelaire , *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* and David Frisby and Mike
Featherstone eds., *Simmel on Culture (1997)*.

of space and time and its interactions with adjacent elements in the new visual culture of advanced capitalism."[63] This research provides a rich and thought-provoking model on which to continue working in this area. However, while it obviously makes sense for film theorists (precisely because of the emergence of cinema) to pay particular attention to the way in which sensory perception shifts within the context of urban modernity at the end of the late 19th century, the title 'the modernity thesis' as temporal frame is also a little too 'neat' when discussing sensory perception and cinema's relationship to other technologies, to industrialization in general and to capitalism. There are two distinct problems that need to be clarified concerning this temporal frame.

Firstly within cinema studies, theorists developing the modernity thesis usually work within the historical period between 1880 and the 1920s, considered as "modernity at full throttle."[64]The difficulty with the above temporal frame is that the age of modernity arguably covers a much longer period. The pre-modern is commonly comprehended as the Middle Ages and therefore the Renaissance is understood as the transition to the modern era. In his major study *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of Our Times* (1994), Giovanni Arrighi tracks the shifts in capital accumulation and state formation from the 14th century up to the 1990s referring to four systemic cycles of accumulation.[65] Therefore capitalism and the use of capital to invest in cultural products and capitalism's relationship with new technologies is deeply imbricated in the emergence of Western modernity. The emergence of the printing press in 1455 was a technological development that had a significant impact on subjective experience and is another important marker of modernity. This trajectory of the link between technology, capitalism, subjectivity and sense perception obviously offers a much longer periodisation in defining modernity.

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[63]Singer gives a useful list of key texts in chronological order of publication as follows: Miriam Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema, and Experience: The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology," *New German Critique 40* (Winter 1987): 179-224 ; Tom Gunning, "An Aesthetics of Astonishment: Early film and the (In)credulous Spectator," *Art and Text 34* (Spring 1989):31; Gunning, "Heard Over the Phone: The Lonely Villa and the De Lorde Tradition of Terrified Communication," *Screen 32.2* (Summer 91): 184-96; Hansen,"Decentric Perspectives: Kracauer's Early Writings on Film and Mass," *New German Critique 54* (Fall 1991): 47-76); Giuliana Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari* (1993); Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (1993); Gunning, "The Whole Town's Gawking: Early Cinema and the Visual Experience of Modernity," *Yale Journal of Criticism 7.2* (Fall 1994): 189-201; Gunning, "The World as Object Lesson: Cinema Audiences, Visual Culture, and the St. Louis World's Fair," *Film History 5.4* (Winter 1994): 422-44; Charney and Schwartz eds., *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (1995); Lynne Kirby, *Parallel Tracks: The Railroad and Silent Cinema* (1997); Lauren Rabinovitz,*For the Love of Pleasure: Women, Movies, and Culture in Turn of the Century Chicago* (1998); Ben Singer *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*, (2001):102.
[64] Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 19.
[65] Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of our Time*, (1994).

In his discussion of modernity Ben Singer offers an explanation of why many use the 1800s as a marker for its emergence. Rather than the periodisation mentioned above writers on modernity "[...] often bypass the Renaissance and instead identify the onset of modernity with the moment of self-conscious recognition: the emergence of the scientific method, secular philosophy, and democratic political theory in the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution."[66] Here the argument is that with the industrial application of scientific inquiry we find the most dramatic changes at all levels of society.

> The change was fundamental. Not only did it affect the conditions of industry, the lives of the workers, the means of production; not only did it change the character of the commodities used by man, the entire aspect of many parts of the country, the very character of the worker himself; it changed from the very foundations the whole fabric of society [...] It was the greatest social revolution that had ever occurred. And the changes then set going have since continued with ever- multiplying reactions, the end of which no one can foresee.[67]

Certainly advanced industrialization, the identification of an urban subjectivity markedly different from before and the rise of mass culture through cinema and publishing operated as key interconnecting forces of the period between 1880- 1920s. While Singer's description of this period as "modernity in full throttle" does allow for a more complex and expanded temporal analysis of modernity, for the most part, modernity is often used as a highly ambiguous term to describe a plethora of quite specific socio-economic and cultural constellations. In terms of discussions of this period within cinema studies, Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz are quite right to refer to "cinema and the invention of modern life" (the title of a collection of essays edited by them). It is the self-conscious understanding of the dynamics at play, that is, the "invention" of a life style and image of "modern life" which can be mass marketed, that really defines this period as one in which the *industrialization of culture* increases dramatically.

The "invention of modern life" and the industrialization of culture bring us to the second problem with the modernity thesis and the use of the temporal frame of 1880-1920 mentioned above. The use of the term modernity even "modernity at full throttle" has the unfortunate side effect of colliding too many historical factors together and losing sight of

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[66] Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 18. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (1997).
[67] R. Austin Freeman, *Social Decay and Degeneration*, (1921) quoted in Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 19.

the fact that cinema does not emerge at the beginning of industrialization in western culture. Industrialization was well established and all the factors we may consider that go hand in hand with the processes of industrialization were also well established. For example the migration of the rural peasant to urban centres in search of work in the new factories and the rise and development of transportation to facilitate this expanded mobility. With the increase of the population in urban centres we have the emergent articulation of a mass audience and "[...]the consequent need to re-elaborate modes of address that could cope with this new entity."[68] Cinema emerges as a new mode of address for "this new entity," (itself a construction in which urban populations begin to see themselves as a mass audience). Rather than "the modernity thesis" I will concentrate on the term "the industrialization of culture" as a more constructive term with which to examine the specific force fields of representation and reception.

Central to this exploration of cinema and its relationship to the sensory environment requires a discussion, of the cultural history of mimesis, perception, subjectivity and what Martin Jay refers to as "the scopic regimes of modernity." Paul Willemen alerts us to the significance of re-analyzing "the allegedly in-built perspectival modernity of the cinematic apparatus."[69] Willemen writes,

> Following on from literary studies that show the multiplicity of 'voices' contending with each other and which it is the task of the 'narrational voice' to orchestrate, it is safe to assume that films also operate with more than one regime of subjectivation simultaneously [...]the scopic regime Western intellectuals currently rely on, the perspectival regime, is a composite apparatus that combines both pre-capitalist and individuating modes of looking. Consequently, it inevitably marshals more than one 'speaking-looking' subject position [...] As such, the scopic-discursive regime that orchestrates a text is never the expression of some singular , unified 'point-of-view', some singular 'subjectivity', [...] but always a process[...][70]

What this above quote from Willemen articulates clearly, is how a film's (or any cultural text's) mode of address clearly enacts a provisional solution to a way of thinking of subjectivity.

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[68] Willemen, *Regimes of Subjectivity and Looking, The UTS Review* 1:2, (1995): 107. For example the urban population in the United States "quadrupled between 1870 and 1910, from just under 10 million to over forty-two million." in Ben Singer " Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and Popular Sensationalism" in Charney and Schwartz, *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, (1995):n2,95.
[69] Willemen, "Detouring Through Korean Cinema," 170.
[70] Ibid.
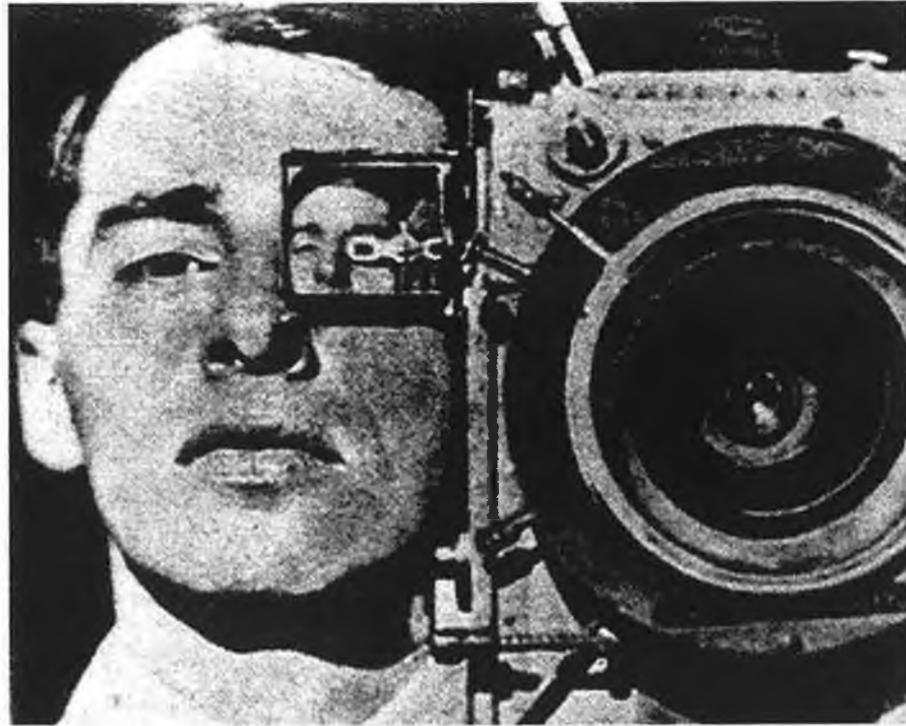
Fig.3 Mikhail Kaufman, cameraman for Man with a Movie Camera, directed by Dziga Vertov (1929)

Following this, Walter Benjamin's theories on mimesis will be explored as will the significance of mimesis to film. In his essay on Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), Malcolm Turvey discusses the role of mimesis in Vertov's film which has canonical status both in discussions on documentary film and as a modernist classic. In this essay, Turvey gives a useful account of how important mimesis has been to film theory generally pointing out the way in which human attributes are metaphorically projected on to the cinematic apparatus because of perceived sensuous and non-sensuous similarities. Turvey continues:

> Consider psychoanalytic film theory, with its notion of the camera as "voyeuristic" and the shot as a "gaze" that "fetishizes" the bodies of women in film as well as the "body" of the film medium itself; and Pudovkin's 1926 monograph *Film Technique* and the filmmaking manuals from Hollywood's classical period which advocate the use of the camera as an ideal, "invisible observer." And then there are the numerous analogies between cinema and the human mind that have dominated film theory since its inception. Eisenstein produced volumes of film theory (and a unique film style) upon the basis of the analogy between cinematic montage and dialectical thinking. And, more recently, Christian Metz founded an entire tradition of psychoanalytic film theory upon the

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analogy between the filmic image and the psychological concept of the Imaginary. Like Vertov, these and many other film theorists and film theoretical traditions mimetically ascribe human attributes and capacities to the camera in order to conceptualize its power.[71]

As Turvey demonstrates, an understanding of what we mean by mimesis is central to a discussion on film and its relationship to modernity and the restructuring of subjectivity. Before developing a discussion of the significance of mimesis to film it is important, therefore, to chart the historical force lines of mimesis and modernity.

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[71] Malcolm Turvey "Can the Camera See? In Man with a Movie Camera," *October 89*, (Summer 1999): 30-31. This last point by Turvey is particularly pertinent to the films I discuss in chapter four, in these films the game of cat and mouse being played out by the killer and victim is mimetically ascribed to the camera to heighten its fear inducing effect.

Chapter 1

The Historical Force lines of Mimesis and Modernity

In their discussion of mimesis Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf remark that the "rediscovery" of mimesis by Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno and more recently, Jacque Derrida occurs at a time when the formal distinctions maintained by modern rational thought are all in question.[72] This poses questions concerning the boundaries that have been used to negotiate cultural production, the breakdown of media specificity for example and how this is reflected in art practices and also mass media.[73]

As a means of engaging with the restructuring of cultural production and the breakdown of accepted forms of categorization and theorization, I will discuss the emergence of modern rational thought on perception and subjectivity, through perspectivalism, the camera obscura and other scopic regimes. Implicit in the term 'regime' is the assumption of a disciplining or ordering of subjects through representational models, what Jonathan Crary refers to as "the management of attention."[74] Understanding different scopic regimes of modernity through the frame of attention management requires engaging with their corresponding regimes of subjectivity; the concept of mimesis beyond representational reproduction to include the ways in which the social world is produced and finally, the way in which this informs the industrialization of culture.

Defining Mimesis

A dictionary or common sense definition of mimesis usually places some emphasis on resemblance, imitation or mimicry as central to the concept. Even in this most condensed understanding of the term we are alerted to ideas of doubling, multiples, original and copy. Mimicry as an action implies a subject who mimics. In mimicking there is also assumed an interpretative audience so we enter the realm of communication. Here then in the most abbreviated form, contains what are central preoccupations for a discussion on technologies of reproduction. Lending itself to a general understanding within the context of art and aesthetics, mimesis as resemblance and imitation implies referring to a world

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[72] Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf *Mimesis: Culture, Art, Society (1995)*.

[73] The crisis in framing and the validity of many categorizations is an area which goes beyond its implications for current art practices and is an issue central to questions of methodology. The need to negotiate cultural practices in relation to the flux of discourses they are immersed in is stressed by many of the cultural theorists referred to in this chapter.

[74] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, Attention, and Modern Culture (1999)

beyond the artistic frame. Artistic production is said to imitate nature. Discourses that are less relevant now to critical discussions on contemporary art, on whether a painting for example is a 'good resemblance' to someone or something in the world are still an active part of many people's language concerning art. Discussions concerning 'resemblance' within aesthetic production automatically raise questions concerning the social world and references the role mimesis plays in that world. This relationship to the social goes far beyond the realm of aesthetics, as it is involved with the way we view the world. Mimesis is central to many different concepts concerning the construction of reality. The creation myth for example is dependent on an idea of mimesis, that man is made in God's image.[75] The emergence of written language where Chinese characters, made up of pictograms depicting the object through resemblance and similarity, or the belief that Egyptian hieroglyphs were the writing of God in imagistic form is also most obviously based on the mimetic. Michel Foucault discussing the epistemological understanding of similitude in the 16th century writes,

> In its original form, when it was given to men by God himself, language was an absolutely certain and transparent sign for things, because it resembled them. The names of things were lodged in the things they designated, just as strength is written in the body of the lion, regality in the eye of the eagle, just as the influence of the planets is marked upon the brows of men: by the form of similitude.[76]

The most basic example of how mimesis is embedded in the 'social world', as a means of both social control and reproduction is to think of children, and how they learn to adapt to the world around them by non verbal observation.[77] They learn by mimicry, imitating what they see and hear. In mimicking the parental role they learn to position themselves in the world through role playing and performative action. They extend the use of mimesis to objects, mimicking trains, animals etc. "A child not only plays at being a grocer or a teacher, but also at being a windmill or train." [78] Subjects imitate objects and objects imitate subjects.[79] The importance of mimesis to the education of subjects and for the reproduction of society is a recorded knowledge that we know goes back to Plato.

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[75] This mirroring of God by a Cartesian subject is further elaborated in Leon Baptisa Alberti's conceptualisation of perspective in his *Della Pittura* (1436) and will be discussed in more detail below.

[76] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 36.

[77] See Walter Benjamin, "On the Mimetic Faculty" *One-Way Street* (1979):160-163.

[78] Ibid, 160.

[79] For a recent discussion on attributing human perceptual traits to machines and specifically in relation to cinema see Michael Turvey, "Can the Camera See? In Man with a Movie Camera,"(1999):25-50. See also Mikhail Iampolski "The Essential Bone Structure: Mimesis in Eisenstein," in *Eisenstein Rediscovered* (1993).

However by referring to the classical world it is important to clarify that mimesis should not be understood as an abstract concept beyond history. The different ways in which mimesis as a concept have been understood at different times means we must be aware of how this concept is intimately connected to the particularities of different historical epochs. As Gebauer and Wulf remark, "it is therefore not enough to simply define the concept; we must follow its historical movement. The changes in 'mimesis' express mutations in social reality."[80]

In developing a discussion of mimesis as central to technologies of reproduction there is an awareness of how the concept is inseparable from art, aesthetics and representation, while equally it is inseparable from the ways in which the subject is reproduced and the way the social world is comprehended. In their discussion of Plato's writings on mimesis Gebauer and Wulf stress that his analysis cannot be separated from the dynamics at play in that society, namely the significant shift from an oral culture to a written culture. It is also important to stress that there is always more than one form of mimesis in operation at a given time. (For example we can discuss social mimesis, aesthetic mimesis, economic mimesis aware that within these categories there will also be competing discourses in operation.)

Gebauer and Wulf stress the variety of meanings which have been attached to mimesis. While conventionally mimesis is usually associated with aesthetics or imitation, its "anthropological dimension" is often overlooked in so much as mimesis is crucial in many areas of human behaviour, in the way we think, how we speak and is central to our capacity to read and write. [81]

> A spectrum of meanings of mimesis has unfolded over the course of its historical development, including the act of resembling, of presenting the self, and expression as well as mimicry, imitatio, representation, and non sensuous similarity. [82]

In discussing their study of mimesis as a "historical reconstruction" of the many different phases of mimesis, investigating the "continuities and breaks in its usage" Gebauer and

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[80] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 9.
[81] Ibid, 1.For an anthropological understanding of Mimesis see Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (1993).
[82] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 1.

Wulf state that it is often its vagueness which has been used to advantage. [83]Referring to the way in which mimesis adapts to the larger historical shifts this signifies for Gebauer and Wulf a "resistance to theory building" rather than "a lack of conceptual discipline."[84] The rarefied and pure intellectual spaces of scientific thought in which everyday life is excluded can be seen to be distrustful of mimesis "which tends toward action and is bound to time's passage and human productive activity."[85]

The rigid boundaries between art, science and the everyday are irrelevant to mimesis. Gebauer and Wulf write,

> It causes accepted differentiations to lose their power to distinguish and strips definitions of their conventional meanings. New connections, distinctions, and orders of thought come into being. Hitherto overlooked mimetic processes come into view; they appear in the entanglements of art and literature, aesthetics and science. The productive side of mimesis lies in the new connections it forges among art, philosophy and science.[86]

Here in this interpretation of mimesis, the concept resists dividing the "human spheres of existence," refusing the split between practical and theoretical. As such, this interpretation of mimesis concentrates on its function as a boundary transgressor. For Gebauer and Wulf, this characterization shows how mimesis loses intellectual credence as rationalism becomes dominant. The emergence of modern rationalism creates the subject as isolated, art and aesthetics as an autonomous sphere, while mimesis on the other hand is always involved in a process. Given this, the history of mimesis should be seen as a "history of disputes over the power to make symbolic worlds, that is, the power to represent the self and others and interpret the world. To this extent mimesis possesses a political dimension and is part of the history of power relations."[87]As Gebauer and Wulf articulate, mimesis should be seen as,

> A highly complex structure in which an entire range of conditions coincide: it is a theoretical and practical bearing toward the world; it encompasses cognition and action, symbolic systems and

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[83] Ibid, 2.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid, 1.
[87] Ibid, 3.

communications media, relationships between I and Other. And to this we must add a final determination, that the relevance of mimesis is not restricted to the aesthetic, that its effects press outward into the social world, taking root, as Plato saw it, in individual behaviour like a contagion.[88]

Linking the concept of mimesis to the technologies of reproduction, the most major shifts in technological reproduction have been from orality to written culture; from written culture to the printing press; from Italian perspectivalism and the camera obscura to the shift that occurs prior to the emergence of photographic reproduction. It is important to state that in discussing these technological shifts I am moving away from a discussion which places perspectivalism, the camera obscura and later photography and cinema as development stages. In this conception or 'progress narrative' each technological development is an advance on preceding technologies. What follows will dispute this understanding of these technologies. In my discussion these shifts in technologies of vision will be related to larger socio-historical shifts. In terms of vision and representation a shift from *mirror of nature* to abstraction/fragmentation, the corresponding and wider shift from feudalism to capitalism, and finally the transitions and shifts within capitalism from industrial capitalism to finance capitalism. Although my discussion may appear chronological and therefore following its own linear trajectory this procedure is merely an aid to mapping out these complex correlations between different socio-historical constellations and corresponding concepts of vision and subjectivity.

Feudal modes of looking and linear perspective

Linear perspective has been seen as a key model in representing depth on a two-dimensional plane and has been an important component within discussions on film. Referring to the importance of perspective to 1970s theorists such as Jean-Louis Comolli and Stephen Heath, Philip Rosen suggests that "in this kind of 1970s film theory,"

> perspective becomes a visualized epistemological ideal, manifesting a standard of reliable visual knowledge and the imagination of a stable subjective position, which is incorporated into cinema even as perspectival composition is integrated with other elements of filmic space, such as movement.[89]

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[88] Ibid, 307.
[89] Philip Rosen, Changed Mummified, Cinema, Historicity, Theory, 15.

The idea of a 'window on to the world' (aperta finestra) is key to the perspectival system and many theorists who have written on perspectivalism link it to the emerging modern world. Samuel Y. Edgerton, for example, comments on how the visual order is replicated in the mathematical order, referring to the recent invention of double-entry bookkeeping used by Florentine businessmen.[90] Although Umberto Eco, makes the important distinction that rather than *recent invention* this should be understood as "the final acceptance of Arab mathematics."[91] John Berger however remarked that rather than "window on the world" the idea of a "safe let into a wall, a safe in which the visible has been deposited" would be more appropriate.[92] Leonardo Da Vinci writing on perspective wrote,

> Perspective is nothing else than seeing a place [or objects] behind a pane of glass, quite transparent, on the surface of which the objects behind the glass are drawn. These can be traced in pyramids to the point in the eye, and these pyramids are intersected on the glass pane.[93]

Da Vinci's comments suggest that from its inception as a scopic regime, the desire to displace emphasis away from the *frame* of representation was important. This discourse of transparency is of course central to the many debates concerned with representation and photography/film. As a system Stephen Neale distinguishes perspectival space as being different from all other visual systems by the way in which it constructs a "rational and cubic space."[94] Monocular perspective regulates space rejecting a "heterogeneous and discontinuous space" evident in Ancient Classical perspective.[95] Neale gives an example of an alternative spatial ordering in Japanese art where "perspective effects function as a means of articulating a surface design rather than erasing the presence of the surface in the interests of suggesting spatial depth."[96] Neale also points out that in medieval art "individual viewpoints are scattered across the picture space rather than unified by it."[97]

Borrowing the term "scopic regime" from Christian Metz in *The Imaginary Signifier*, Martin Jay's essay *The Scopic Regimes of Modernity*, poses the problematic that within modernity there is more than one scopic regime or 'way of looking'. Rejecting the given

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[90] Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr., *The Renaissance Discovery of Linear Perspective*, in Jay, *The Scopic Regimes of Modernity*, 5.
[91] Umberto Eco, "The Return of the Middle Ages," *Travels in Hyperreality*, 64.
[92] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (1972):109.
[93] (J. P. Richter (ed) 1939: 150 in Neale *Cinema and Technology: Image, Sound, Colour (1985)*:13.
[94] Neale, *Cinema and Technology: Image, Sound, Colour, 14.*
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid,16.
[97] Ibid,16.

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assumption that linear perspective is the pre-eminent structure of looking in modernity, most representative of "the experience of sight valorized by the scientific world view," Jay points out that when "the assumed equivalence between scientific observation and the natural world was disputed" so was perspective as the dominant model of vision.[98] Jay cites an earlier presentation of this position being Erwin Panofsky who critiqued perspective as just "a conventional symbolic form."[99] In developing his discussion of a plurality of scopic regimes in modernity, Jay also refers to an essay by Jacqueline Rose in which she discusses Sigmund Freud's writing on the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci.[100]

In a similar discussion on scopic regimes but complicating the plurality of scopic regimes in operation at any given socio-historical juncture, Paul Willemen states that any scopic regime will automatically contain remnants or traces of the preceding scopic regime. Perspectivalism then will contain traces of a pre-capitalist or pre-individual feudal mode of looking. Giving an account of this scopic regime, Willemen writes,

> [...]the feudal-absolutist scopic regime concerns the social, and indeed the existential authentication and legitimation of an individual subject by way of an authority's gaze, by appearing in the authority's field of vision and being recognized and authenticated by that authority, in the way that one talks of recognizing a legitimate child(think of the importance of recognition scenes in early romances and melodramas). The paradigmatic manifestation of the feudal scopic regime would then be the royal audience [...] The feudal scopic regime can thus be seen at work in all those practices where the exposure to the gaze of authority is a significant component of social activity. Practices

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[98] Jay, *The Scopic regimes of Modernity*, 5.

[99] Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in The Visual Arts* (1970).

[100] In this essay Rose explores how Freud's interpretation of one of da Vinci's drawings (in an essay by Freud entitled *Leonardo da Vinci, A Memory of his Childhood*) is discussed through its failure to demarcate sexual difference accurately. Articulating the importance of representation to the adequate sexual differentiation of the subject in psychoanalytic discourse, (referring for example to the boy's refusal to believe the sexual difference he sees) Rose continues her feminist analysis in terms of feminist art practices in the 1980s which posed questions on any neatly assumed and definitive understanding of sexual demarcation. Referring back to the ambiguous bisexuality evident in the da Vinci drawing, Rose writes," we might argue that the fantasy of absolute sexual difference, in its present guise, could be upheld only from the point when painting restricted the human body to the eye." In this allusion to the monocular vision required by perspectivalism, Rose says that a canonical comprehension of vision which reduces visual codes should be resisted and that we should be aware that "our previous history is not the petrified block of a singular visual space since, looked at obliquely, it can always be seen to contain its moment of unease." While Rose is primarily concerned with issues of gender and the related homogenization of a canonically conceived visual space which excludes the female gaze, she is, like Jay articulating the need to examine other modes of looking within modernity. Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (1986): 232-233.

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which prize honour and public 'face' above information betray the persistence of feudal, pre-capitalist ideologies within the current discursive constellation.[101]

Fig.4 Drawing attributed to Leonardo da Vinci

Martin Jay connects Renaissance perspectivalism with "Cartesian ideas of subjective rationality in philosophy," and refers to "Cartesian perspectivalism" which is a useful term.[102] While perspectivalism is usually accredited to Brunelleschi as practitioner in the Italian Quattrocento, Leon Baptista Alberti as interpreter of this perspectival technology in his *Della Pittura* (1436) is also accredited. Jay writes,

> Despite many still disputed issues, a rough consensus seems to have emerged around the following points. Growing out of the late medieval fascination with the metaphysical implications of light [...] linear perspective came to symbolize a harmony between the mathematical regularities in optics and God's will. Even after the religious underpinnings of this equation were eroded, the favourable connotations surrounding the allegedly objective optical order remained powerfully in place. (Jay:6)

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[101]Willemen *Regimes of Subjectivity and Looking*, 119. Brian Hand employing Willemen's feudal-absolutist scopic regime with reference to his discussion on audiences remarks on "a contemporary analogy of the persistence of such feudal power is evident in Paul Mercier's observation that when putting on a production 'one influential member of the Arts Council is worth a thousand Joe Bloggs.'" See Brian Hand "Audience to Ourselves" in *CIRCA* 92, (Summer 2000): 34-37.
[102] Of course Jay's term Cartesian perspectivalism distances it from its emergence in Italian Renaissance as Descartes was French and spent most of his time in Northern Europe, however his ideas were far reaching.

Paul Willemen's account of perspectivalism explores the religious economy involved and discounts the suggestion that the "religious underpinnings" were eventually eroded. Willemen suggests rather than erosion, "God at the apex of a triangle" was merely displaced. He writes,

> Alberti brought God's triangle down to earth and tumbled it through a 90 degree angle, putting an equivalent, mirroring triangle in front of it, both triangle's meeting at their base, which is the place of the picture as object. The triangle Alberti added to the theocratic symbol of God's all-seeing eye thus brings God and the subject face to face, as in a narcissistic mirror, each at their respective vanishing points, and locating the Cartesian subject as the point of reference for perspectival looking in the space where previously there was nothing, merely a field of vision emanating from a higher authority. Feudal or pre-capitalist looking would then be characterized by the absence of the individual subject's triangular cone corresponding to the represented perspective and its vanishing point in the place where God's eye was supposed to be.[103]

For Willemen it is this overlap which accounts for the accommodation of a feudal or pre-individual scopic regime within a "perspectivalised way of seeing." Central to Willemen's discussion here is the importance of bearing in mind that all signifying practices are hybrids, and following on from this, all cultural texts, will be elaborate compromise formations comprised of different scopic regimes and corresponding regimes of subjectivity all constituting varying regimes of address. Referring to these different scopic and subjective regimes within cultural texts, Willemen stresses how scopic regimes cannot "guarantee" their corresponding regime of subjectivity. While stating that the level of reciprocity between scopic and subjective regimes may not be symmetrical the compromise formations formed between the two "[...] will bear the complex imprints of the multi-leveled temporal dynamics and force lines that characterize particular socio-historical moments."[104]

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[103] Willemen, *Regimes of Subjectivity and Looking*, 102.
[104] Ibid, 119.

Following Mikhail Bakhtin, Willemen writes,

> [...] Any text consists of a network of crisscrossing voices, each of
> the voices having its own subject-position, so that in a text, any text,
> we must expect to encounter a wide variety of subjective and
> historical constellations[...] A text, any text, will contain discourses
> relating to aspects of feudal cultures, of pre-capitalist cultures, of
> absolutist cultures and of anticipatory post-capitalist cultures as
> well as capitalist cultures themselves, and the dynamics of a text
> will involve the inflection of the ones by the others in terms
> determined by the time and situation within which the text is
> produced, on the one hand, and read on the other.[105]

The implications of Willemen's argument is that it becomes difficult to discuss particular
cultural forms as exclusively of one period or related to one particular class formation (for
example melodrama as a bourgeois form). Willemen refers to Slavoj Zizek's interpretation
of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) as an "extension of the medieval discourse of courtly
love" which of course complicates significantly the usual definition of the film as a post-
modern classic.[106]

Silvio Gaggi's discussion of Jan van Eyck's *The Wedding of Arnolfini*, 1434, offers a
pertinent example of the way in which multiple regimes of subjectivity, vision and address
can exist in the one cultural product. Following Erwin Panofsky's interpretation of the
painting, he remarks that it is a representation of a *per fidem* marriage. What is significant
about a per fidem marriage is that it does not require witnesses or a priest for validation, an
oath is taken as the bride and groom join hands, the groom raises one hand and a pledge is
offered (a ring for example).[107] The artist's signature just above the mirror, suggests a
signature by the artist of the actual painting but also functioning as a witness to the actual
wedding which creates an anomaly in as much as a "a painting of a *per fidem* marriage
functions as a marriage certificate."[108] As Gaggi continues,

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[105] Ibid, 103.
[106] See Slavok Zizek, *The Metastases of enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* (1994):113–136.
[107] Silvio Gaggi, "The Subject's Eye"in *From Text to Hypertext, Decentering the Subject in Fiction, Film, The Visual Arts and Electronic Media (1997):* 1-30.
[108] Ibid, 5.

> In this light, *The Wedding of Arnolfini* can be seen as representing a transition from the medieval vow to the Renaissance contract, from individual honour to legal accountability, and as an attempt to use the written word to pin down, fix, keep in place the more elusive vocal commitment [...] The particular contract involved is a wedding contract, but it also connotes contracts in general. It is not simply that the painting may function as a 'pictorial wedding certificate', binding Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami. The painting also valorizes contracts themselves.[109]

Gaggi reads the painting as an "allegory of bourgeois ideology," remarking on how it represents the relationship between north and south, the artist from Flanders and the subjects painted from Italy, the oil used as a medium of the north while the perspective used was developed in Italy. Gaggi further suggests that as a painting about contracts it stands as an "emblem for all legal contracts articulating business arrangements that bound Italy and Flanders. This painting [...] has a subtext that valorizes the written contract as a legal document that informs and controls all human relationships. It is an ideological support for the ideology of contracts."[110] Gaggi's interpretation of *The Wedding of Arnolfini* is a very clear example of Willemen's discussion above concerning the ways in which a representation will contain different regimes of subjectivity simultaneously. [111]

Returning to Willemen's discussion of the far-reaching implications arising from Alberti's interpretation of perspectival technology, he suggests that the "functioning of the object picture [is] a Janus-faced device simultaneously secularizing the divine point of view and instituting the picture as a potential obstacle, a point of resistance in the direct narcissistic mirroring relationship between the divine and the human subject."[112] Following from this stems certain representational issues, posing questions concerning "accuracy, founding a relationship between a model, an original and a copy."[113]

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[109] Ibid,5-6.
[110] Ibid, 10.
[111] See also Appendix for an account of Peter Bürger's discussion on the aesthetics of genius in the eighteenth century.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

Fig.5 Jan van Eyck's The Wedding of Arnolfini, 1434

The "homogenous system" of monocular perspective has been so persuasive as a system of conventions that it is often taken as "a translation of reality itself."[114] Denying the binocular vision of the body, monocular vision(based on the idea of one eye viewing) is also static as opposed to the constant movement of embodied vision.[115] This static monocular vision also suggests for Martin Jay a withdrawal of emotional engagement toward the subject being viewed. "The bodies of the painter and viewer were forgotten in the name of an alleged disincarnated, absolute eye."[116] The consequences of this as both Rose, Willemen and Jay articulate is a refusal of what St. Augustine referred to as "ocular desire."[117] Jay remarks that the erotic look of the nude out at the viewer is denied, exceptions to this being evident in the work of Caravaggio and Titian's *Venus of Urbino*.[118]

Not only was this visual order de-erotized, but Jay argues it was also de-narrativized. The abstraction of the space of representation became more important than the subjects painted. Depiction and the visual skills required to do this subsequently became more important. For Jay this separation of form from content, so much a part of twentieth century art discourses is evident here in perspectivalism. The emphasis on depicting reality, offering more and more visual information which does not add to the narrative is linked by Jay to the scientific order, the neutral and objective observer. Stephen Heath refers to this desire for objective clarity as a utopian ideal, writing,

> To say this is not simply to acknowledge that the practice of painting from the Quattrocento on is far from a strict adherence to the perspective system but demonstrates a whole variety of 'accommodations' (in certain paintings, for example, buildings will be drawn with one centre according to central perspective while a separate centre will then be chosen for each set of human figures); it is also to suggest that there is a real utopianism at work, the construction of a code - in every sense a vision - projected onto reality to be gained in all its hoped- for clarity much more than onto some naturally given reality [...] The conception of the

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[114] Neale, *Cinema and Technology: Image, Sound, Colour, 17.*

[115] Stephen Heath gives a useful description of this embodied vision remarking on the: [...]scanning movement to bring whatever is observed to the fovea, movements necessary in order that the receptive cells produce fresh neuro-electric impulses, immediate activity of memory inasmuch as there is no brute vision to be isolated from the visual experience of the individual inevitably engaged in a specific socio-historical situation. Heath "Narrative Space," 78.

[116] Jay, *The Scopic Regimes of Modernity,* 8.

[117] Neale, *Cinema and Technology: Image, Sound, Colour, 17.*

[118] Jay continues by stating that, "only much later in the history of Western art, with the brazenly shocking nudes in Manet's Dejeuner sur l'herbe and Olympia, did the crossing of the viewer's gaze with that of the subject finally occur. By then the rationalized visual order of Cartesian perspectivalism was already coming under attack in other ways as well." Jay, *The Scopic Regimes of Modernity,* 8.

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Quattrocento system is that of a scenographic space, space set out as a spectacle for the eye of a spectator. Eye and knowledge come together, subject, object and the distance of the steady observation that allows the one to master the other, the scene with its strength of geometry and optics.[119]

This ideal of objective clarity or as Jay remarks above the "withdrawal of emotional engagement" suggests that implicit in this ideal of perspectival vision is a phallocentric ordering, where the central point of view refuses the female gaze (as suggested by Jay and Rose earlier). Geoffrey Batchen also comments on this in his discussion of the various histories of the origins of photography.[120] Referring to the inclusion of Albrecht Dürer's woodcut entitled "Italian method for drawing a subject according to the principle of linear perspective" (or the *Draftsman drawing a nude*) in many accounts of photography Batchen remarks that the invention of perspective is presented as a "key event in the medium's history" and Dürer's woodcut is presented as the "archetype proto-photograph."[121] Batchen asks whether the "message of Dürer's print" is of perspective as "encompassing masculine order."[122] The binary of the masculine/feminine, viewer/viewed seems to suggest the subject/ object opposition of perspective. However Batchen refers back to the fact that the draftsman's look, staring fixedly at the nude's genital area is denied satisfaction, by the drape which the nude holds in place.[123]

Batchen suggests that the spectator is aligned with the draftsman because of the perspectival system represented and applied. The spectator is positioned outside of but still "within the draftsman's immediate space of representation, at about the point of intersection where the screen divides the sexes."[124] Referring to the fact that similar to the draftsman we too, are unable to see beyond the "women's drapes" Batchen states that we are not only

[119] Heath, "Narrative Space," (1981):76-77.

[120] Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire* (1997)

[121] Ibid, 107. The nude lies in a restricted and awkward position in front of the perspectival frame her slightly parted legs nearest the frame. Her genital area is hidden from view of the draftsman by a drape. The model's horizontal position is replicated by the view outside the window behind her, which is of long boats in the foreground and hills in the background. Beyond the perspectival frame the draftsman stares intently, sitting upright. Everything on his side of the frame articulates a vertical and phallic ordering, his pencil, the plant on the windowsill and the obelisk, the end point of which is in perfect symmetry with his line of vision.

[122] Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, 107.

[123] Batchen continues, "He will draw her anyway of course, but she has already refused the certainty of his figuring, already frustrated any marking of his grid-ed page beyond a reiteration of her presumed lack." Ibid, 110.

[124] Ibid.

asked "to identify with the draftsman's project [...] but also his dilemma." This dilemma is the impossibility of "perspective's call to order and transparency."[125]

Fig.6 Albrecht Dürer, Draftman drawing a nude, c. 1525.

In his discussion on André Bazin's theories of cinema realism and his many detractors since the 1970s, Philip Rosen concentrates on the way in which Bazin discusses perspective. Rosen does this to highlight the ways in which Bazin actually emphasises referentiality through time (indexicality) rather than space (perspective). Rosen emphasizes the way in which Bazin concentrates on *our* obsession with realism, the ontological status of the image is not through perceptual likeness (iconic resemblance) but rather through the viewer's obsession with its referentiality. In displacing "visual likeness through perspective" Bazin's theory comes close to Charles Sanders Peirce's discussion of the indexical sign as Peter Wollen pointed out in 1969.[126] What is interesting here is that the indexical sign does not necessarily emphasize resemblance (although their can be some degree of iconicity) as Bazin seems to suggest in his essay *The Ontology of the Photographic Image* where he writes that the ontological operates "no matter how fuzzy, distorted or discoloured" the image is.[127] Rosen's discussion refutes interpretations of Bazin which negate a simplistic realism seen as inherent in Bazin's work and suggests that a much more complex relationship between iconicity and indexicality is available here. Rosen writes,

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[125]He continues, " Leaving aside the intentions of its original maker (which are largely irrelevant to its place within the history of photography), Dürer's woodcut can today be read as a telling critique of perspectival representation itself, of its constitutive power but also of its residual failure to "fix" its object firmly in place." Ibid 111. Also apparent in Heath's reference to the various accommodations evident in perspectival painting.

[126] See Wollen's essay which uses Charles Sanders Pierce to discuss cinema as combining indexical, iconic and symbolic aspects. Wollen, "The Semiology of the Cinema," in *Signs and Meaning* in the Cinema (1972):116-154. For a related discussion see Rosalind Krauss, Notes on the Index: Part 1 and 2, (1985)196-220.

[127] Bazin, *What is Cinema?* Vol.1 (1967) 14.

In photography and film, this suggests, [...]the continuing pertinence of investigating the impression of spatial likeness, including the import of perspective systems. But if the peculiarity of photographic and film is that they are indexical, what must be remembered is that codes or perceptual cues for spatial likeness do not in themselves constitute that evidence for the existence of the referent, which is definitive of indexical credibility. It does not matter whether they are conceived as elements of a psychoanalytic process, a perceptual pragmatics, or a discursive formation. No matter how much it matches the spatial organization of a photograph, a painting does not have the formers degree of credibility since it cannot serve as evidence of the presence of the referent at some moment of production of the sign. This credibility, therefore, cannot be completely explicated by the relation of perspective as such to the ideal of spatially centred subjectivity or to purely perceptual schemata or to a discursively constituted observer.[128]

The indexical trace, refers to an actual presence in front of the camera so as Rosen suggests the indexical is always linked to a sense of the past. It is for this reason that discussions around the indexical have been so important to theories of documentary and film and also of course through discussions on the supposed loss of the indexical through the digital process.

Regimes of Digital Mimicry

Referring to how theories of New Media foreground digital's break with a concrete material reality, Rosen comments on how analogue film and photographs are made with technology, however, digital imaging, being made up of algorithms has the potential to dispense with the profilmic event, and "the picture seems infinitely maniputable and the possibilities of picture making limitless."[129] As Rosen remarks, these two factors are the "founding thematics" on which the radical difference of the digital are based. However, internal contradictions are embedded in these digital discussions, as Rosen points out. Rosen goes on to give a number of examples of the way the digital "does not necessarily exclude something that seems very much like the profilmic event of indexicality."[130] The first example he gives is the shift from photography to digital surveillance in military spy

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[128] Philip Rosen, *Changed Mummified, Cinema, Historicty, Theory,* (2001):19.
[129] Philip Rosen "Old and New: Image, Indexicality, and Historicity in the Digital Utopia," in *Changed Mummified*, op. cit., 307.
[130] Ibid, 308.

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satellites, rather than "flat replicas of the world," the computer produces "streams of pure data." Here, however, for this pure data to have value as surveillance there is a need for a pre-existing referential event, suggesting for Rosen, a type of "digital indexicality." Rosen's second example refers to the digital camera, which "does not necessarily exclude all the operations of a photochemical camera." It has a lens to gather light; it configures "pure data" applying pictorial norms associated with photography. As Rosen argues, "this does not make it nonindexical," Rosen refers to it as a form of "digital mimicry."[131]

In this digital mimicry where the indexical is embedded in the digital, Rosen remarks on how the digital can imitate "preexisting compositional forms," not only indexical photographs but also any non-digital image.[132] In discussing the short history of digital technology, Rosen comments on the fact that since the '60s depiction and pictorial verisimilitude have been the dominant tendency, suggesting that this digital mimicry shows how "computer scientists and artists have turned to visual codes already widely diffused."[133] And, as we know, as so much of computer imaging has been two dimensional, the development of a digital simulation, required relying on an old format for representing three dimensional space onto a two dimensional plane – that of single point perspective.

By using Cartesian coordinates, to represent breadth, height and depth, and storing them numerically, a virtual object can be translated into a recognizable image. To see the image on the computer screen the encoded object is translated into a perspective projection. As Rosen writes,

> Not only is Renaissance perspective a culturally familiar and available solution, providing a base for photographic norms, as well as painterly and other graphic traditions; it also has the further advantage of having originated in mathematical (geometric) conceptions of the image surface and of vision, which made it seem ready-made for the translation of number-based imaging.[134]

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[131] Ibid, 309.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid, 310.
[134] Ibid, 311.

The significant importance placed on using perspective in digital imaging indicates for Rosen, the sociocultural importance on using familiar codes in its significant quest for digital mimicry. This suggests that rather than being radically new, digital imaging is in fact immersed in prior histories of mediated representations, which complicate the supposed "opposition between digital and indexical."[135]

The hybridity of digital technology is as significant a characteristic of the digital, as the nonindexicality of pure simulation as its more dominant definition. Of course, a concept of hybridity threatens to break the rhetoric of the new, which is so imbricated in discourses on digital technology. Rosen comments, that this threat is overcome by constantly pointing ahead to a future "purer" era of digitalization, fetishistically disavowing both "hybridity, and temporal complexity."[136]

Rosen's discussion identifies the three main ideals of digital new media discourses as being, infinite mutability of the image, convergence and interactivity. His discussion on interactivity is particularly important to our discussion on scopic regimes as regimes of subjectivity. The discourse of interactivity promotes an understanding of a totally new subject position for the viewer /receiver of images. Here there is the suggestion of a collapse of boundaries, the breakdown of inside/outside oppositions. The subject is placed 'inside" the image through interactivity. However, aside from this activity being a series of pre-programmed and formatted possibilities, the interactivity infact foregrounds the opposition of a subject in real space and her actions in virtual space. And what ever appears in the image as a result of the interactive action by the subject/viewer bears an indexical link to the outside world actions of the viewer. Rosen writes,

> If interactivity is the trump card of the digital utopia, then its claim to radical novelty depends on a claim for new modes of subjectivity. Perhaps it is not so surprising that the historicity of the digital utopia resolves into a historiography of the human subject. The very idea of a post-photographic era embodies the construction

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[135] Ibid,313.
[136] Ibid,317.

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of a historiography whose ground is not radically different from that of figures like Bazin and Barthes, who dealt with indexical spectatorship through accounts of subjective investment, irrationality and fantasy. The ultimate point, then, does not have to do with the validity or limitations of psychoanalytic film theory, but with the fact that the digital does not escape that terrain marked out by the modern project of a theory of the subject. The claims for radical novelty made by the digital utopia remain on that terrain. Elements such as the forecast, digital mimicry, and the hybridity it reveals only indicate that the digital cannot be accounted for within its own closed circuit.[137]

The Camera Obscura and pure reason

In the discussion above on perspectivalism what becomes apparent is an unwillingness by contemporary theorists to view this regime of looking as an objective method of representing the world. Jonathan Crary in his book *Techniques of the Observer* (1992) offers a Foucauldian analysis, insisting that the camera obscura, far from being a neutral technical apparatus, was immersed in a larger "organization of knowledge" which involved the subject. The knowledge that when light goes through a pin hole into a darkened space, an inverted image appears on the opposite wall, was known for at least two thousand years. However in the seventeenth and eighteenth century this knowledge was dominant in "explaining human vision, and for representing the relation of a perceiver and the position of a knowing subject to an external world."[138] Crary discusses how the camera obscura, a model for rational and empirical thought, used to show the value of observation in the search for truth about the world. The actual apparatus was also employed extensively as "an instrument of popular entertainment, of scientific inquiry, and of artistic practice."[139] Though the actual formal structures of the camera obscura remained constant Crary remarks that it's meaning fluctuated dramatically.[140]

Crary rejects the ways in which the camera obscura has been presented as part of the evolutionary development of photography as technological determinism. While not unaware of how the two are obviously related in terms of "structural principles," culturally both are fundamentally different. In discussing the accepted opinions of the camera obscura by art historians as an aid to copying and its relationship to painting, presented as an

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[137] Ibid, 347.

[138] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 27.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Discussing the writing of Karl Marx, Henri Bergson and Sigmund Freud in the 19th century for example, Crary explains how the camera obscura goes from "the site of truth" in the eighteenth century to a "model for procedures and forces that conceal, invert and mystify truth." Ibid, 29.

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"inadequate substitute" for the photographic camera, Crary argues that these are based on 20th Century assumptions.[141] While the process of tracing the image was something the camera obscura was used for, this was not seen at the time as its main use and was, in some cases seen as an unfortunate secondary use.[142]

Though linear perspective and the camera obscura are related they should not be conflated. According to Crary the camera obscura should be understood as a "much broader kind of subject effect" rather than being limited to discussions on picture making. Drawing on contemporary accounts Crary expands on the differences of the camera obscura to perspectival drawing, where people where astonished by the "flickering images" of the representation of movement. For Crary the importance of phenomenological differences make the two incomparable. Of most significance about the camera obscura, for Crary, is the fact that it creates an orderly space in which the observer can view the world, without losing the sense of vitality of that world.[143]

Giovanni Battista della Porta, is usually identified as one of camera obscura's inventors, based on his description in the *Magia Naturalis* (1558). What is significant for Crary is not whether he invented the first camera obscura but rather his transitional location between two different intellectual models. Giovanni Battista della Porta though totally immersed in the discourses of the Renaissance "inaugurates an organization of knowledge and seeing" through the camera obscura, which, in effect undermines "Renaissance science."[144] For della Porta all things were related to each other, the world had a fundamental unity.[145]

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[141] Ibid.

[142] "It throws great light on the nature of vision; it provides a very diverting spectacle, in that it presents images perfectly resembling their objects; it represents the colours and movements of objects better than any other sort of representation is able to do. [...] By means of this instrument someone who does not know how to draw is able nevertheless to draw with extreme accuracy." *Encyclopédia ou dictionnaire des science, des arts at des métiers*, vol.3 (Paris, 1753):.62-64 in Ibid, 33.

[143] A Dutch artist Samuel Van Hoogstraten gives the following account of the camera obscura: "I must say something about the picture-making invention with which one can paint by means of reflections in a closed and darkened room everything which is outside. I have seen this very thing done quite marvelously in Vienna at the residence of the Jesuits, in London by the river, and in other places as well. In Vienna I saw countless people walking and turning about on a piece of paper in a small room; and in London I saw hundreds of little barges with passengers and the whole river, landscape and sky on a wall, and everything that was capable of motion was moving." Quoted in Lisa Jardine's *Ingenious Pursuits: Building the Scientific Revolution*, (1999):105.

[144] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 35.

[145] Michel Foucault writing on similitude in the 16th century and the importance given to resemblance refers to the following quotation from della Porta's *Magie Naturelle*, "As with respect to its vegetation the plant stands convenient to the brute beast, so through feeling does the brutish animal to man, who is conformable to the rest of the stars by his intelligence; these links proceed so strictly that they appear as a rope stretched from the first cause as far as the lowest and smallest of things, by a reciprocal and continuous connection; in such wise that the superior virtue, spreading its beams, reaches so far that if we touch one extremity of that cord it will make tremble and move all the rest. (Fr.trans. Rouen, (1650):22 in Foucault, *Order of Things*, 19. Discussing this form of similitude as emulation, Foucault says that contained in this is the reflection and the mirror. Emulation allows for things separated by great distance to imitate one

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Fig.7 Jurraien Andriessen, Artist with a Camera Obscura, c. 1810.

For Crary this "indistinction between reality and its projection will be abolished by the camera obscura, and instead it will institute an optical regime that will *a priori* separate and distinguish image from object."[146] While for della Porta the contemplation of an object was dependent on a unity in "the subject and the object, the knower and the known, are of the same nature; they must be members and parts of one and the same vital complex."[147] However the camera obscura indicated "the appearance of a new model of subjectivity," articulated by the observer's isolation in a darkened and enclosed space, where one's relation to the "now 'exterior' world" was controlled.[148] Crary aligns the camera obscura with a "metaphysics of interiority: it is a figure for both the observer who is nominally a free sovereign individual and a privatised subject confined in a quasi-domestic space, cut

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another. In this mirrored duplication Foucault poses the question of as to which of "these reflections coursing through space are the original images? Which is the reality and which is the projection?" Ibid.

[146] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 37.

[147] Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* , trans. Mario Domandi, Philadelphia, (1972): 172 quoted in Crary, *Techniques of the Observer* 38. For della Porta the camera obscura was just one means of observing among many. However this conception would change within a matter of decades where as Crary states the camera obscura "seemed to promise an unrivalled and privileged means of observation that was attained fully at the cost of shattering the Renaissance adjacency of knower and known." Ibid

[148] Ibid, 38-39.

off from a public exterior world."[149] The related function of the camera obscura was to "decorporealize vision" where the observer's position is not part of the representation. The space of reason is established by marginalizing the body.

Fig.8 Camera Obscura 1646.

As Crary makes clear, the camera obscura articulates the Cartesian model of ignoring the senses and examining the world at a distance through the form of a representation. Gebauer and Wulf in their discussion of the anti-mimetic currents in Descartes write,

> Descartes represents the first great attempt of modern philosophy to purify language. Whatever exists outside the subject can in principle be a source of error and illusion, Cartesian reflection charts the course from complex forms saturated with daily processes all the way to the ultimate point, the Archimedean point of the completely emptied *I*, from which all traces of quotidian life experience have been purged.[150]

In discussing Descartes' description of the camera obscura in *La dioptrique* (1637) and the way in which he conceived of the camera obscura as a disembodied eye, not only removed from the observer but perhaps not even human, Crary writes,

> If at the core of Descartes' method was the need to escape the uncertainties of mere human vision and confusions of the senses,

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[149] Ibid.
[150] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 145.

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the camera obscura is congruent with his quest to found human knowledge on a purely objective view of the world. The aperture of the camera obscura corresponds to a single mathematically definable point, from which the world can be logically deduced by a progressive accumulation and combination of signs. It is a device embodying man's position between God and the world. Founded on the laws of nature (optics) but extrapolated to a plane outside of nature, the camera obscura provides a vantage point onto the world analogous to the eye of God.[151]

The authenticity of monocular vision was beyond doubt, authenticated by the divine eye. Crary places emphasis on the camera obscura as a "monocular apparatus" where "binocular disparity" was not relevant as of course it would have necessitated an engagement with the body and subjective vision.

Monocularity, like perspective and geometrical optics, was one of the Renaissance codes through which a visual world is constructed according to systematized constants, and from which any inconsistencies and irregularities are banished to insure the formation of a homogenous, unified and fully legible space.[152]

Crary's account of the camera obscura emphasizes not only how it operated as a paradigm concerning the status of the observer but also how it was completely related to contemporary philosophical, scientific and technological discourses of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. He shows how the camera obscura meant different things at different points and how its significance changed from the mechanistic and rationalist Cartesian discourses to the emergence of empirical models, what he refers to as a "post-Copernican framework." Here a privileged point of view gives way to a visibility based on contingency and the mismatching of cause and effect.[153]

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[151] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 48.

[152] Crary, *Modernizing Vision*, 33.

[153] Crary gives the example of G. W. Liebniz who attempted to maintain the "validity of universal truth" while simultaneously aware of multiple points of view. For Leibniz, the monad became "an expression of a fragmented and decentered world, of the absence of an omniscient point of view, of the fact that every position implied a fundamental relativity that was never a problem for Descartes." However for Leibniz the universe was reflected in the monad from its own specific point of view. The camera obscura functions for Leibniz as a reconciliation of a monadic viewpoint and truth. He understood it through its relationship with a "cone of vision," the point of the cone as the monadic point which was able to find the single point of view finding order from disorder and indeterminancy. Leibniz distinguishes between a human body and God as the difference between 'scenography' and 'ichnography' (perspective and bird's-eye view). The camera obscura was perfect for scenography operating as a "metaphor for the most rational possibilities of a perceiver within the increasingly dynamic disorder of the world." Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 50-53.

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Therefore while Crary would agree with film theorists such as Jean-Louis Comolli on how perspective creates an ideal subject/observer he would disagree with the "Renaissance spectatorial ideals emphasized in 1970s film theory" arguing that they had disappeared by the 19th century and the invention of cinema.[154] Multiple view points and an emphasis on contingency clearly break away from the conception of a unified subject observing a unified space, framed but unaffected by his or her own sensory and physiological responses. Philip Rosen discussing Crary's point that a new relativistic model has appeared in the 19th century comments,

> This model was associated with research on perceptual illusions, the bodily temporality of perception, and so forth. It was part of a discursive field staked on the thesis that there is always a subjective shaping of objectivity in visual and other perception, as opposed to a single ideal position of knowledge.[155]

Theories concerning the way in which the camera obscura and perspectivalism construct the ideal of a disembodied observer are central to discussions on cinema. Indeed the dominant discourse within film studies is of a single distant objective viewing position, disavowing the body for full absorption in a fantasy world of image and sound. However as Lauren Rabinovitz points out in her study of early "ride films" such as Hale's Tours and more contemporary multimedia spectacles such as Imax, this alternative form of cinema has always contradicted the understanding of the spectator as a disembodied eye investing instead in an "enlarged sense of corporeal involvement."[156] Rabinovitz writes,

> They do so by appealing to multiple senses through experiences featuring forward movement, wraparound screens, objects or lights flashing in the viewer's peripheral vision, subjective camera angles, semi-sync realistic sound, seat or floor movement, and narratives that alternates danger and command. They foreground the bodily pleasures of the cinematic experience, pleasures already inherent in cinema itself and important in such "body-oriented genres" as pornography, action adventure, horror, and melodrama.[157]

This last point concerning an embodied spectatorship in "body-orientated genres" is particularly relevant to the forthcoming discussion in **Chapter 2**, which explores

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[154] Rosen, *Changed Mummified*, 15.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Lauren Rabinovitz, *More than the Movies: A History of Somatic Visual Culture through Hale's Tours, Imax, and Motion of Simulation Rides*,(2004):101.
[157] Ibid, 102.

Benjamin's theory of subjectivity under 'shock' in modernity; examining the importance of the senses in the perception of the film through a discussion on melodrama and horror in **Chapter 3**, and the articulations of different types of vision in *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Manhunter* in **Chapter 4**.

Non-narrative in 17th century Dutch painting *the art of describing*

Gebauer and Wulf refer to Svetlana Alpers work in their study of mimesis. [158] Here they concentrate on Dutch painting as a method of representation that shows rather than tells through narrativization (as is the case with the Italian Renaissance model). They suggest that given this concentration on 'showing' and describing' seventeenth century Dutch painting should be "especially mimetic."[159] However, because it takes as its model an idea of direct transfer of images from the world to the eye it is in fact anti-mimetic. Gebauer and Wulf see this desire to overcome mimesis as being directly related to scientific and technological developments. The distinction between Italian painters whose activity was based on creating "a new order in the world" to the Dutch who attempted to "depict reality directly" is based on the Dutch painter's replication of "pure seeing." Similar to Descartes theories on optics and vision, Johannes Kepler's optical studies separated the eye from the body and concerned him with images on the retina's surface, involving "extraordinary objectivity and an unwillingness to prejudge or to classify the world so imaged."[160] Following this model in painting, "the painter has no influence in this process but instead subordinates himself so thoroughly to it that he is obliterated."[161]

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[158] See Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century (1983)*.
It is worth mentioning that Crary in developing his discussion of the camera obscura makes clear his disagreement with Alpers' conception of a specific "Northern" visuality which she sees as "inseparable from the experience in the North of the camera obscura." Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, 104 Alpers discusses this northern "art of describing" as exemplifying the optical studies of Johannes Kepler, who improved on the basic idea of the camera obscura by "incorporating a convex lens to enhance the image quality." Ibid. The problem here for Crary is that Alpers does not acknowledge the extent in which "the metaphor of the camera obscura as a figure for human vision pervaded all of Europe during the seventeenth century" and was of central significance to a number of important seventeenth century thinkers mentioning Descartes, Leibniz, Newton and Locke. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 35. In rejecting the desire to distinguish a distinct regional model of visuality, Crary also states that Kepler's work originated out of Prague, rather than Northern Europe. Descartes, who Alpers does not refer to and whose ideas on vision are very similar to Kepler's, on the other hand, lived in Holland for twenty years. Lisa Jardine refers to Descartes as the "honorary Dutchman [...]Descartes had settled in the Low Countries in 1629, to pursue his philosophical thoughts uninterupted by the hurly-burly of urban life in his native France. The more free-thinking Dutch intellectual atmosphere appealed to him[...] Descartes' presence greatly influenced contemporary Dutch experimentalists, and scientific atitudes more generally, particularly his commitment to an entirely mechanistic explanantion of nature."Jardine, *Ingenious Pursuits: Building the Scientific Revolution*, 96.
[159] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*,148.
[160] (Kepler in Gebauer and Wulf,149)
[161] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 150.

perspectivalism rather than a "subvariant."[162] Jay refers to this art as paintings, which extend beyond the "Albertian window." He argues that in Dutch painting, frames are not crucial but arbitrary, saying that "the map with its unapologetically flat surface and its willingness to include words as well as objects in its visual space" offers a useful model for Dutch painting.[163] Rather than rationalized geometrical space of Cartesianism, a more appropriate "philosophical correlate [would be] the more empirical visual experience of observationally orientated Baconian empiricism."[164] Rather than the mathematical order, concern for hierarchy and "analogical resemblances characteristic of Cartesian perspectivalism" the emphasis in Dutch 17th century painting is more fragmentary, concerned with observing the "richly articulated surface of the world" and less with its explanation.

Fig.9 Jan Vermeer Soldier and Laughing Girl 1658

Thus Jay suggests that the art of describing anticipates later visual models. Earlier in his discussion he makes the point that Cartesian perspectivalism "anticipated the grids" of twentieth century art. Although in saying this he immediately refers to Rosalind Krauss's discussion on modernist grids and writes that perspective was "assumed to correspond to

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[162] Jay, *The Scopic Regimes of Modernity*, 11.
[163] Ibid, 12.
[164] Ibid, 13.

external reality," where of course the grids of the twentieth century were not.[165] For Jay the art of describing aligned with the "mapping impulse" (the Ptolemaic or cartographic grid) is perhaps a more appropriate predecessor rather than the Albertian grid. The distinction between these two grids is that rather than the fixed position of the viewer and the frame of Cartesian perspectivalism, the cartographic grid is "[...] viewed from nowhere. Nor is it to be looked through. It assumes a flat working surface. Before the intervention of mathematics its closest approximation had been the panoramic view of artists."[166]

Fig. 10 Jan Vermeer The Glass of Wine 1658-60

Jay suggests that the Dutch art of describing "also anticipates the visual experience produced by the nineteenth-century invention of photography."[167] Here the emphasis on the

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[165] Krauss discussing perspectival grids and their correlation to the grids of the twentieth century writes,
"One has to travel a long way back into the history of art to find previous examples of grids. One has to go to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, to treatises on perspective and to those exquisite studies by Uccelo or Leonardo or Dürer, where the perspective lattice is inscribed on the depicted world as the armature of its organization, But perspective studies are not really early instances of grids. Perspective was, after all, the science of the real, not the mode of withdrawal from it. Perspective was the demonstration of the way reality and its representation could be mapped onto one another, the way the painted image and its real- world referent did in fact relate to one another - the first being a form of knowledge about the second. Everything about the grid opposes that relationship, cuts it off from the very beginning. Unlike perspective, the grid does not map the space of a room or a landscape or a group of figures onto the surface of the painting itself. It is a transfer in which nothing changes place. The physical qualities of the surface, we could say, are mapped unto the aesthetic dimensions of the same surface. " Rosalind Krauss, Grids, (1986):10.

[166] Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, 137.

[167] Jay, *The Scopic Regimes of Modernity*, 15.

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fragment, the fact that the frame is arbitrary and the claims that "the first practitioners expressed [...] that the photograph gave nature the power to reproduce herself directly unaided by man."[168]

In referring to possible criticisms that Alpers' account is open to such as the distinction she makes between the art of describing and the narrative bias of perspectivalism Jay, as we've seen above comments on how this "de-narrativizing impulse" is also evident in Cartesian perspectivalism. The second area in which Alpers account is open to criticism is that,

> If we can detect a certain fit between the exchange principle of capitalism and the abstract relational space of perspective, we might also discern a complementary fit between the valorization of material surfaces in Dutch art and the fetishism of commodities no less characteristic of a market economy. In this sense, both scopic regimes can be said to reveal different aspects of a complex but unified phenomenon, just as Cartesian and Baconian philosophies can be said to be consonant, if in different ways, with the scientific world view.[169]

Arguably, referring back to Paul Willemen's point that preceding scopic regimes will be accommodated in the emergent ones, then, both these points as possible criticisms becomes less relevant. It would, however be worth exploring whether the differences raised above regarding the Dutch art of describing and perspectivalism have corollaries with the rise of high finance from what Giovanni Arrighi refers to as the first, Genoese Systemic Cycle of Accumulation to the second, Dutch, Systemic cycle of Accumulation. He writes,

> Not withstanding its supremacy in high finance, the Genoese capitalist class never distinguished itself in this kind of conspicuous consumption - presumably because of its lack of involvement in state-making activities. Not so the Dutch, who in this sphere too showed their precociousness by leading the way in the consumption of cultural products throughout the Age of the Genoese.[170]

Arrighi suggests that while Venice and Florence were the centre for the Renaissance, Amsterdam was the centre for the transition from the Renaissance of the previous two centuries to the Enlightenment, which would "pervade Europe for the next century and a

[168] Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, 43 in Jay, 15.
[169] Jay, *The Scopic Regimes of Modernity*, 15-16.
[170] Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: money, power and the origins of our times* (1994):135.

half."[171] Like many commentators on Dutch capitalism, most notably Fernand Braudel, Arrighi refers to the reason for its success to maintaining capital in liquid form.[172] This "fluidity of the market" and "speculative freedom of transactions" relates back to the art of describing, as part of the cultural commodities being bought and sold, their fragmentary aspect, the way in which the composition exists in a denarrativized space, articulates a relationship to the economic shifts occurring in Europe in the 17th century.[173]

Fig.11Jan Vermeer, Girl with Pearl Earring 1665-1666

Pursuing the link that Jay makes between the cartographic grids evident in this art to the grids of the 20th century allows for an interesting link to contemporary discussions of digital technology and visual imaging. Returning to the Gebauer and Wulf remarks that the painter subordinates himself to the work of "pure seeing" to the extent "that he is obliterated" and allowing for the "direct transfer of images" which as Gebauer and Wulf state situates the art of describing as a fundamentally anti-mimetic practice, all suggestively point towards the anti-mimetic evident in digital imaging discourses. Both share iconic similarity and the abstraction of the grid, articulated in the mathematical language of the zeros and ones of the binary code. While one can also argue that the mathematical language is more an articulation of Cartesian perspectivalism, following Rosen's points earlier, than the art of describing, if we employ Willemen's methodology, this, then, clarifies the connection. Both also share the concept of direct transfer where in digital imaging the perfect image is not a

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[171] Ibid.
[172] See Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th –18th Century*, (1982). Making this the link between The Dutch art of describing and the economic shift to 'capital in liquid form' suggests that Crary's critique of Alpers,' the way she distinguishes a regional model of vision, does not recognise the ways this shift from Genoese Capitalism to Dutch Capitalism would be articulated in cultural forms. So while this scopic regime is indeed part of the same discourse of vision pervading all of Europe it is particular in its emphasis of a particular economic shift taking place.
[173] Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism* (1982) quoted in Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, 138.

copy but rather the dominant regime is the idealisation of the clone. As Philip Rosen writes, "Digital encoding becomes a perfectly transparent translator among media, because once an image is encoded numerically, those same numbers can be infinitely written anew."[174]

Presenting the art of describing as anticipating later scopic regimes such as digitization, suggests making a slight reorientation to the discussion of the art of describing by Alpers and Jay as one, which anticipates photography. While the fragmentation of photography mentioned above is also obviously a component in digital imaging, the ways in which narrative works within photographic practice is an important distinction. A distinction could equally be made as to the way in which the vast majority of photographs lend themselves to being handled, (gallery prints aside), while circulation is an important component in the discourse of photography and digital imagery, the main difference is that photographs are circulated and physically handled while digital imagery does not require this physical involvement. (Although of course one could argue that there is physical awareness of one's body in the act of accessing the images, the feel of one's fingers on the key pad for example.) Paradoxically it is the indexical dimension of photography, the inherent "direct transfer" of nature which distinguishes most accurately the supposed 'direct transfer' of the art of describing or digitization, the indexical dimension being a component of neither. As Crary writes concerning this,

> If these images can be said to refer to anything, it is to millions of bits of electronic mathematical data. Increasingly, visuality will be situated on a cybernetic and electromagnetic terrain where abstract visual and linguistic elements coincide and are consumed circulated and exchanged globally.[175]

The Baroque
The Baroque is referred to by Martin Jay as the third scopic regime of modernity or as the second "moment of unease," (using Jacqueline Rose's point), within the dominance of perspectivalism. Discussing the standard etymology of the word as meaning an oddly shaped pearl, he writes, "The Baroque connoted the bizarre and the peculiar, traits which

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[174] Rosen, *Change Mummified*, 328.
[175] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 2.

were normally disdained by champions of clarity and transparency of form."[176] Michael Ann Holly points out that the Baroque "appeals to a postmodern sensibility" because of its excess, its emphasis on theatricality and allegory, because of the way in which it disrupts the dominance of perspectivalism.[177] Emphasizing the way in which the Baroque rejects the Platonic emphasis on clarity and "essentialist form" Jay writes that,

> Baroque vision celebrated instead the confusing interplay of form and chaos, surface and depth [...] As a result it dazzles and distorts rather than presents a clear and tranquil perspective on the truth of the external world. Seeking to represent the unrepresentable, and of necessity failing in this quest, baroque vision sublimely expresses the melancholy so characteristic of the period.[178]

The Baroque emerged with the Catholic Church's Counter Reformation against Protestantism and "the manipulation of popular culture by the newly ascendant absolutist state."[179]The Catholic Church aimed to win the support of the masses through sensual visual seduction, which was also apparent in the "theatricalized splendour of the Baroque court throughout Catholic Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."[180] In their discussion of artistic mimesis under French absolutism, Gebauer and Wulf stress how mimesis acquires the function of aiding the authority of the king. Here mimesis authorizes individuals such as "historians, dramatists, painters and architects of palaces and gardens" away from an individual style toward the concerted effort of constructing and legitimizing political power through the imagination.[181] They write,

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[176] Jay, *The Scopic Regimes of Modernity*, 16. Michael Ann Holly writes of how the term was originally a term of abuse, besides the etymological route to the Portuguese mentioned by Jay Holly also refers to the Italian barocco which referred to "tortuous medieval pageantry." See Michael Ann Holly "Imaging the Baroque," in *Past Looking*, (1996): n1.91.

[177] The canonical text in relation to a postmodern sensibility is by Craig Owens *The Allegorical Impulse: Towards a Theory of Postmodernism (originally published in 1980)*. Owens following Benjamin refers to the way Modernism denies allegory, and it is the re-emergence of allegorical practices that makes 'postmodern art' so different from a Modernist "criteria of value." Rather than autonomy this art declares categorically its "contingency, insufficiency and lack of transcendence." Owens in *Art in Theory – 1900-1990, An Anthology of Changing Ideas*(1998)1051-1059. Allegory's appeal to a postmodern sensibility is also evident in Gilles Deleuze's study, *The Fold: Liebniz and the Baroque*,(1993) where he writes, "The Baroque refers not to an essence but rather to an operative function, to a trait. It endlessly produces folds[...]Yet the Baroque trait twists and turns its folds, pushing them to infinity, fold over fold, one upon the other. The Baroque fold unfurls all the way to infinity." Ibid,27. This "operative function" referred to by Deleuze becomes the defining characteristic of process orientated art practice emerging in the '70s. Here the work cannot be contained by the documentation of its existence, there is no object as such, the documentary evidence will always be a substitution.

[178] Jay, *Downcast Eyes* (1994): 47-48.

[179] Holly "Imaging the Baroque,"91.

[180] Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 46.

[181] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*,145.

> In the absolutist state, the producers of mimetic worlds are
> overseers of symbolic power; their essential concern is to produce
> the "portrait of the king." [...] Absolutist power is essentially
> representation, and representation in the Baroque period must be
> considered in its relationship to power.[182]

Using a variety of spectacles such as tournaments, fetes, firework displays, water spectacles
as a diversion from political unrest for, as Louis Marin suggests in his *Portrait of the king*,
"war is the fete continued by other means, as diversion is politics pursued on another
register."[183]

Susan Buck Morss writing of Walter Benjamin's study of the Baroque, *The Origin of
German Tragic Drama*, refers to how he concentrates on the importance of allegory to this
cultural form.[184] Employing different emblems such as the skull and the ruin signifying the
vanity and transitoriness of earthly existence, Benjamin sees the "[...] core of the allegorical
way of seeing, and the Baroque secular exposition of history as the suffering of the world;
it is meaningful only in periods of decline."[185] Buck-Morss states how for Benjamin the
mythology of Antiquity resided in the Baroque in a debased form. The Gods of Antiquity,
become reduced through the triumph of Christianity, emptied but remaining as demons and
monsters represented on Tarot cards, printing emblems, etc. The fragmentation and
arbitrariness of the Baroque was associated with the plurality of meanings invested in
authorative cultural texts "in which meaning was believed to reside" but had become "laden
with a multiplicity of meanings."[186]

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[182] Ibid,121.

[183] Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King*, (1977)197 in Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 123.

[184] Susan Buck Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing, Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (1991).In her discussion of
mimesis and Bilderverbot(the ban on graven images) Gertrude Koch refers to the use of fragmented figures such as
cherubs which have only heads and wings in medieval Jewish art. As hybrid figures they conform to the ban on any
likeness because of "creations likeness to God." Koch continues, "They are depictions that in some curious way have
carried out the 'determinate negation' of empirical matter without degenerating into iconoclasm. The modernity of these
depictions- which point to characteristics which Benjamin not accidentally finds in Baroque tragic drama – is closely
connected with the prohibition on showing the whole figure, whose perfection would signify a likeness to God:
fragmentation, the image as 'unsensuous likeness', successfully generates such mimesis as would be compatible with the
Bilderverbot." Koch, "Mimesis and Bilderverbot." *Screen* 34-3 (Fall 1993): 219.

[185] Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, (1977) 343, in Buck-Morss, 161.

[186] Buck-Morss continues, "The impulse for systematic completion of knowledge came up against a semiotic arbitrariness
intensified by "the dogmatic power of the meanings handed down from the ancients, so that one and the same object can
be an image just as easily of virtue as a vice, and can eventually signify everything." Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of
Seeing*, 172)

The effect of this endless deferral within the context of Christian allegoricists is to "choose a variant that represented intended meanings of their own."[187] Multiple meanings are signified by the Antichrist, the resolution to this hell and lack of coherence is to be found in God, were the knowledge of "evil" is resolved by theological revelation. This affirmation of God through negation has many correlations   here with mediaeval Christian rhetoric. Discussing this tradition, David Williams' writes,
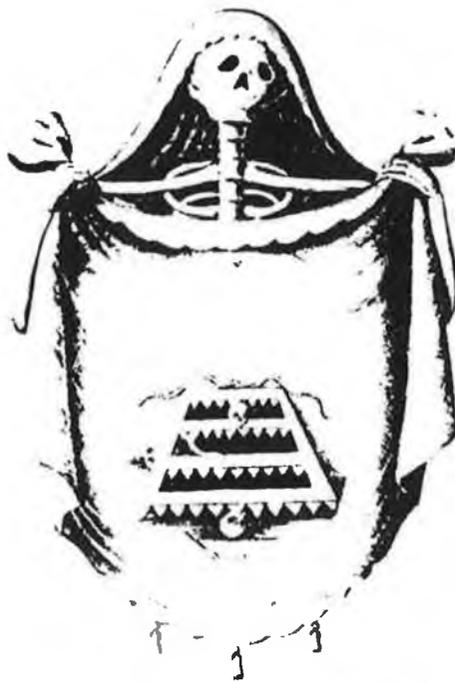
Quos diversa parit SORS, MORS *inamabilis æquas, Et pede metitur* TE *PARI cæca pari. At major virtus majori funere donat.* MAIOR ADÆQUATOS *sic PARIS inter erit.*

Fig.12 Baroque emblem with the common motif of a human skull, signifying the equalizing power of death.

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[187] Ibid.

This tradition taught that the mind must rise progressively from cumulative affirmations about reality to the purgative negations of them until it transcends the limitations of its own discourse and comes to know in silence. It views art as heuristic and self-reflexive, pointing always to its own process of representation, and it regards all languages as striving ultimately toward the revelation of that which is not. Unlike simple mimesis and the realistic representation it entails, this highly symbolic mode represents wholly new creations arising from its own discourse.[188]

In Buck-Morss' outline of Benjamin's critique of the Baroque she articulates that the mourning of the allegoricists was a result of their loyalty for the material world, a world they knew was transitory, thus their mournfulness. "The forsakenness of nature, understood as a theological truth, was the source of the melancholy of the allegoricists."[189] Their only hope is in affirming the hereafter, which does not contain "even the imperceptible breath of the world."[190] In this scenario "political action is judged as mere arbitrary intrigue [...] allegory deserts both history and nature and (like the whole tradition of idealist philosophy that comes after it) takes refuge in the spirit.[191] The Baroque method of taking the devalued and turning them into its opposite is seen as betrayal for Benjamin. If the trials, hardships, wars and catastrophes of human life are turned into their opposite, they cease to exist and become irrelevant in terms of change and political action. Benjamin writes,

> Evil as such- exists only in allegory, is nothing other than allegory, and means something other that it is. It means in fact precisely the nonexistence of what it presents. The absolute vices, as exemplified by tyrants and intriguers are allegories. They are not real.[192]

In this mournful abandoning of "the spectacle of history as a 'sad drama'" by the Baroque allegoricists for the spiritual redemption of the beyond, where evil is understood as a "self-delusion" and the material world is "not real" then, as Susan Buck-Morss writes, "for all practical purposes allegory becomes indistinguishable from myth."[193]

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[188] Williams, *Deformed Discourse*, 107.

[189] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 174.

[190] Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 246 in Buck Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 175.

[191] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 174-75.

[192] Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 406 in Buck Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 175.

[193] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 175.

Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini comment on José Antonio Maravell's theories of the baroque in relation to Spanish History.[194] Maravell discussing the baroque as a period concept does not focus on the styles evident in baroque art nor in the connection between the baroque and the Counter-Reformation. Maravell's definition of the baroque is of a culture in crisis not just evident in Spain but apparent through out Europe.

Fig.13 "Melancholia. I," woodcut, Albrecht Dürer, sixteenth century.

For Maravell, then, it is the perception of crisis and instability found among the groups in power and among the individuals in the middle strata of society [...] who identified with them that brings about the political program of the baroque around 1600.In Spain, it is a culture contrived and manipulated for the benefit of the monarchical- seigneurial sectors of society for the purpose of facing

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[194] *Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini, The Culture of Literacy (1994).*

up to a world in which changes had seemed to turn things upside down. In this sense, it is a culture of reaction against the mobility and change that, for much of the sixteenth century, had threatened to erode the "hierarchical construction of estates." Maravell would argue that, ultimately, it is the perception of change that counts. For whether change is perceived as progress or retraction, as liberation or repression, it implies a degree of transformation in the system of social mentality that, in turn, brings with it the potential for a displacement of values, rank and authority.[195]

Within this social transformation the baroque world in Spain used both openly repressive strategies and propagandist tactics. As well as the Inquisition and the states use of the Church to mould "individual consciences" there was also a massive propaganda campaign. Here a spectacle culture aimed at "captivating minds" employed a variety of displays directed at the anonymous and "potentially disruptive" city dwellers disciplining through persuasion what Godzich and Spadaccini suggest is a major transformation one in which "the entry of the state upon the stage of culture [becomes] a major force."[196]

As mentioned at the start of this section on the Baroque its appeal to a 'postmodern sensibility' is usually described in terms of its formal stylistics or its operative function as endless deferral. As we have seen the use of allegory diminishes fixed meanings and truths— one thing standing in for another in an endless metonymic chain. Jay also suggests that the aesthetics of the sublime operating within it are erotic as well as metaphysical. For Jay in this way "the body returns to dethrone the disinterested gaze of the disincarnated Cartesian spectator."[197] As a scopic regime Jay concludes that "baroque vision" as the "palimpsests of the unseeable [...] has finally come into its own in our own time."[198] In thinking about why this scopic regime is so pervasive in the contemporary moment it is important to move away from semantic similarities and to ask why this operative function of endless deferral or multiple meanings should be relevant to the current socio-historical situation. Aware that if we historicize "postmodern" discourses this "baroque vision" can be seen to emerge in the 1960s. If "baroque vision" is to be equated with baroque as a political program as in the actual baroque period where the elites in power perceive a threat to their power base what does this "baroque" vision signify in relation to contemporary culture?

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[195] Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini, *The Culture of Literacy*,(1994):69.
[196] Ibid, 94.
[197] Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 18.
[198] Ibid, 19.

Paul Willemen in his discussion of the periodisation of history in his essay Regimes *of Subjectivity and Looking* remarks that in the 1950s the bourgeoisie finally "triumphed" in their struggle against a "relentlessly reclining but stubbornly resisting feudal aristocracy."[199] However this victory was immediately superseded by an internal conflict between the industrial bourgeoisie and the financial bourgeoisie, which resulted in finance capitalism finally achieving control so that "[...] since the 1960s we now live under the hegemony of finance capitalism rather than of industrial capitalism." [200] Following from this Willemen suggests that this shift in control within the bourgeoisie has implications for discussions related to the enlightenment. Referring to the enlightenment, Willemen writes:

> The enlightenment |was a| complex ideological movement
> designed to further the rising industrial bourgeoisie's challenge to
> the still massively dominant feudal aristocracy and its semi-
> religious organization of the hierarchical, divinely ordered and
> revealed Order of Things. In the process, intellectuals of the period
> forged an ideology presented as an effort to further rational modes
> of thought and of social organization in the pursuit of human
> emancipation, but with obvious and by no means incidental spin-off
> benefits for the process of industrialization.[201]

From this the enlightenment can be seen to have two important facets. The first was as a forceful discourse in displacing feudal absolutism with its dependence on myth and superstition in upholding a rigid hierarchical power base. The second was a more abstract intellectual programme developed around universal rights and an imagined emancipated space anticipating the defeat of feudal absolutism. In discussing these two facets Willemen points out that given that enlightenment discourse had to function both as an immediate weapon against feudalism and as an anticipatory discourse it should come as no surprise that within enlightenment thought there are many internal inconsistencies. Willemen also suggests:

> [...] Neither should we be surprised that, when the bourgeoisie
> finally achieved its triumph in the middle of the twentieth century,
> it tried to jettison those aspects of its discourse of modernization,
> which continue to relate to an anticipation of emancipation.[202]

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[199] Willemen, *Regimes of Subjectivity and Looking*, 102.

[200] Ibid.

[201] Ibid, 107.

[202] Ibid. Susan Buck-Morss pursuing a similar trajectory writes,"[...] the mass democratic-myth of industrial modernity – the belief that the industrial reshaping of the world is capable of bringing about the good society by providing material happiness for the masses – has been profoundly challenged by the disintegration of European socialism, the demands of capitalist restructuring, and the most fundamental ecological constraints. In its place, an appeal to differences that splinter

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Willemen's discussion of the enlightenment offers a useful insight into some of the dynamics in operation when baroque vision is discussed in terms of 'postmodern" theory. The internal shift in power within the bourgeoisie is also evident in the struggle against the emancipatory demands of the baby boomers in the sixties and the forceful struggle against those demands. This perspective also gives a very different reading of much of the theory originating in the 1970s aimed at dismissing and attacking the "emancipatory thrust of enlightenment thinking," suggesting as Willemen points out how this attack within academia actually aligns itself with the financial bourgeoisie.[203]

Conclusion

As a means of looking at the historical force lines of mimesis this chapter has examined the complexities of thinking through what Jay refers to as the alternative scopic regimes of modernity   and Rose calls "its moment of unease." This exploration has alerted us to the abundant literature, which critiques an acceptance of perspectival vision as representing reality. What has been reiterated over and over again is an understanding that perspectivalism is as Panofksky pointed out just another "conventional symbolic form." Here perspectivalism is discussed as a scopic regime amongst many. Perspectivalism, rather than objective, is immersed in ideologies, which have a direct impact on the subject. Rather than representing reality, then, perspectivalism is seen as normalizing vision.

What emerges through this analysis of perspectivalism, the camera obscura, the Dutch art of describing and the Baroque is the need to acknowledge the quite specific contexts and conditions for their historical emergence, while at the same time identifying the ways in which discourses attached to these scopic regimes continue to assert themselves in the present. In trying to comprehend what we mean by "digital vision" for example it is important to recognize the complexities required in mapping the multiple scopic regimes in operation at any given social-historical juncture. Rather than relying on a linear trajectory we need to incorporate a horizontal metaphor, which allows for a conceptualization of the sort of complex montage, which is in operation. By doing this we have a conceptual

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the masses into fragments now structures political rhetoric and marketing strategies alike – while mass manipulation continues much as before. Commodities have not ceased to crowd people's dreamworlds; they still have a utopian function on a personal level. But the abandonment of the larger social project connects this personal utopianism with political cynicism, because it is no longer thought necessary to guarantee to the collective that which is pursued by the individual. Mass utopia, once considered the logical correlate of personal utopia, is now a rusty idea. It is being discarded by industrial societies along with the earliest factories designed to deliver it. Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastophe*, (2000): x.

[203] Ibid 108.

framework that allows for a horizontal discursive spread and which is diverse and often pulling in different directions, "a compromise between contending archaicizing and modernizing forces," as Willemen puts it.[204] This horizontality should not, however, be understood as replacement for linear metaphors – in fact we need both if we are to attempt with any complexity an exploration of the layers of meaning which accumulate over time, which will also of course be wide ranging in their ideological affinities and pulling in different directions. In thinking about the 'voices' addressing us in particular films as archaizing and modernizing forces in operation within the film (text) we are alerted to the way "tensions manifested in relation to the (in) coherence of the narrational voice thus come to function as the indices of the social 'field' presiding over and shaping the speaking positions it is possible for subjects to occupy in a particular place/time."[205]

[204] Willenmen, "Detouring through Korean Cinema," 171.
[205] Ibid.

Chapter 2   The Crisis of Mimesis in Modernity*

> Aesthetic comportment, however, is neither immediately mimesis
> nor its repression but rather the process that mimesis sets in motion
> and in that, modified, mimesis is preserved.

> Ultimately, aesthetic comportment is to be defined as the capacity
> to shudder, as if goose bumps were the first aesthetic image. What
> later came to be called subjectivity, freeing itself from the blind
> anxiety of the shudder, is at the same time the shudder's own
> development; life in the subject is nothing but what shudders, the
> reaction to the total spell that transcends the spell. Consciousness
> without shudder is reified consciousness. That shudder in that
> subjectivity stirs without yet being subjectivity is the act of being
> touched by the other. Aesthetic comportment assimilates itself to
> that other rather than subordinating it. Such a constitutive relation
> of the subject to objectivity in aesthetic comportment joins eros and
> knowledge. [206]

Aesthetics and the Bourgeois Public Sphere

In Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, he discusses the emergence of aesthetics
in Germany as a "discourse of the body" suggesting aesthetics initially was not specifically
framed within art discourses but related to "human perception."[207] Its delineation was not
between art and life but between "sensations and ideas."[208] Eagleton suggests that
philosophy "suddenly wakes up" to the body, arguing that in Alexander Baumgarten's
Aesthetica (1750) while concentrating on the hitherto excluded "terrain of sensation" also
opened up "in effect the colonization of reason."[209] For Eagleton the knowledge of the
particularities of sensate life are of importance to politics and the ruling order. Eagleton
writes,

> What is at stake here is nothing less than the production of an
> entirely new kind of human subject – one that, like the work of art

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* Chapter title taken from Laleen Jayamanne *Towards Cinema and Its Double*, (2001)183.

[206] Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, (1997):331, quoted in Jayamanne, 205.

[207] Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, (1990): 14.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid, 13.

itself, discovers the law in the depths of its own free identity, rather than in some oppressive external power.[210]

Eagleton's suggestion that the body was ignored prior to this historical moment equally ignores the ways in which the body was disciplined and managed through both religious discourses and also with perspective as a scopic regime that disciplines the body through displacing its significance. As we have seen in the last chapter's discussion, the disembodied eye of perspectivalism, religious myths and superstition all maintained control on corporeality. However within the transition to enlightenment discourses religion is displaced as the central disciplinary technique and aesthetics arguably ends up as the discourse were "the irrational [...] can be monitored and, in case of need controlled (the aesthetic is in any case conceived as a kind of safety valve for irrational impulses)."[211] Susan Buck-Morss in referring to this reversal away from the empirical towards the imaginary, states how this requires a "critical, exoteric explanation of the socioeconomic and political context in that the discourse of the aesthetic was deployed."[212] As such, looking at the emergence of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois public sphere expands our understanding of the role of mimesis and aesthetics in forming subjectivity and constructing strategies of disciplining subjects. The change from absolutism to the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere and how mimesis is used in artistic production for the development and construction of new subjectivities "anticipates the social mode that mimesis will tend to operate in the 19th century."[213]

The bourgeois public sphere emerges in the eighteenth century as a space that distinguishes itself from the state and the private life of citizens.[214] This public sphere "comprises a realm of social institutions – clubs, journals, coffee houses, periodicals" that allows the free exchange of ideas and the development of public opinion.[215] Both discourse and communication are central components of this space, where it is the power of argument that

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[210] Ibid,19

[211] Frederic Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic*, (1990):232 quoted in Susan Buck Morss, *Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered,* " *October* 62 (Fall1992):3-41.

[212] Buck Morss, *Aesthetics and Anaesthetics*, 7.

[213] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 154.

[214] See Jurgen Habermas's influential *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere : An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962)

[215] Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism*, (1984):9.

is of significant value rather than the social power or the privilege of birthright. Power and privilege go   unacknowledged in this public space, as Peter Uwe Hohendahl writes, "status was suspended so that a discussion among equals could take place."[216] Through public opinion that is formed through debate and discourse among equals, a new power bloc emerges against the absolute state, undermining "the authority of the state not so much through actions but through public discussion." [217] As an "intermediary space between the private individual and the sovereign state" the public sphere regulated public discussion.[218]

In this new configuration rather than coercion under absolutism, the bourgeois public sphere emerges where social order is maintained through consensus bound by "habits, pieties, sentiments and affections."[219] For Eagleton it is through this mechanism, that power becomes aestheticised. However as the previous discussion on Baroque culture in Spain suggests, theatrical displays of power were channeled effectively as propaganda tools in parallel with coercion. This in itself suggests that we should be wary of seeing the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere as a linear shift to a new model of aestheticised power and consensus bound through the senses. What appears to be the case is that within this shift of power there is a certain hybridity in that elements also connected with older forms of power take a more dominant emphasis within society. So for example, the disciplinary techniques of state control under absolutism, where the body is disciplined through admiration of the sheer grandeur of the spectacle are reconfigured and re-articulated where power is totally immersed in the body's desires, affections and impulses, the "minutiae of subjective experience." As Enlightenment society develops, coercion, while always available, plays a less dominant role as the inscription of power through the body's desires becomes the more dominant form of disciplining subjects. Here the possibility that one would "transgress the law would signify a deep self-violation." It is in this context that   the bourgeois subject emerges modelled on the "aesthetic artefact."[220]

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[216] Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *The Institution of Criticism*, (1982):52, quoted in Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism*, 13.

[217] Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Recasting the Public Sphere," *October* 73, (1995):31.

[218]Brian Hand, "Audience to Ourselves" in *CIRCA*, Vol 92, (Summer 2000):.36.

[219] Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism*, 21.

[220] Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism*, 21. In Luke Gibbon's discussion of Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry in the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) he places significant importance on the colonial situation in Ireland as central to an understanding of Burke's theory of the sublime. What Gibbon's book articulates clearly is that while state coercion and terror may indeed have gone underground in the context of 'polite society' in England, as Burke articulated so well, in places like India and Ireland, the use of force and physical terror were central components of the

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When balance of power shifts and compromises were reached with the aristocracy, customs become the socially binding force as an integral part of "social conditions of the bourgeoisie"[221] As the political institutions of absolutism undergo a process of reorganization and/or are dismantled the bourgeoisie need to reinvent the institutions that "organized social life."[222] Eagleton writes,

> The question therefore arises as to where it is to locate a sense of unity powerful enough to reproduce itself by. In economic life, individuals are structurally isolated and antagonistic; at the political level there would seem nothing but abstract rights to link one subject to another. This is one reason why the 'aesthetic' realm of sentiments, affections and spontaneous bodily habits come to assume the significance it does.[223]

The separate spheres located above by Eagleton as the economic, the political and the aesthetic were in actually much more imbricated in each other, however their purposeful distinction as separate spheres marks an increased fragmentation and instrumentalism within society. The acceptance of this increased compartmentalization within society situates a particular historical point of transition whereby fragmentation will facilitate an increased inability to comprehend 'the big picture' or interpret the way that society functions.

In charting the emergence of the Enlightenment subject, the formation of the bourgeois "I" Gebauer and Wulf give a useful mapping of Enlightenment drama that articulates the importance of the interiorized space of the subject, the emotions, feelings etc. of the new rising class. This "bourgeois cult of emotion," of the postabsolutist period articulated and formed subjects through coded processes of self-legitimation. These processes of self-legitimation moved mimesis beyond artistic production into the expanded arena of the public sphere. Here emotions such as compassion while still retaining universal status are

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colonial situation. See Gibbons, "The sympathetic sublime: Edmund Burke, Adam Smith and the politics of pain" *Edmund Burke and Ireland*, (2003): 83-120, which is particularly pertinent to this discussion on mimesis and society.
[221] Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism*, 22.
[222] Ibid, 23.
[223] Ibid.

controlled. This is because the terminology of the universal "is designed specifically for bourgeois purposes."[224]

> Altruism, fellowship, and philanthropy are bourgeois virtues; a man who pursues a profession, provides for a family, and arranges his life according to the bourgeois ethic is capable of these virtues. We are seeing here the emotional side of the bourgeois idea of competition: subject to relentless conflict over social position, the bourgeois reserves for himself certain spheres that are exempt from competition, spheres in which he is able to live out his emotions [...] Family feeling, care for one's own, love for wife and children and for fatherland and hometown [...] these are not duties taken over from previous generations, as in feudalism, but one side of the comprehensive ethic of a new social class. The other side includes the professional ethic and the obligation to act in accord with an instrumental calculus.[225]

Gebauer and Wulf make the point that all these traits mentioned above are characteristic of the bourgeoisie, as distinct from the nobility and the lower echelons (the working class did not exist at this stage) who, it was presumed, were incapable of these virtues.[226] In this context, the bourgeois cult of emotion, though not explicitly political in terms of the content of its drama nevertheless has a political significance by exclusively addressing the bourgeoisie.[227] In referring to the *Comedie Larmoyante*, the *Comedie Serieuse*, and the bourgeois tragedy, Gebauer and Wulf stress how they all function according to the same principle "they summon the audience to participation and, at the same time, supervise the right to participate."[228]

In presenting their social practices, bourgeois drama, with its emphasis on the everyday world of the bourgeois subject "facilitates audience identification." For Gebauer and Wulf it is this " social mechanism that functions to admit and exclude spectators" and bourgeois drama is also employed for pedagogy.[229] Apprentices and lower social groups

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[224] Gebauer and Wulf, *Mimesis*, 162.

[225] Ibid, 165.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Referring to the work of Denis Diderot for example Gebauer and Wulf write "the thematic constellation that Diderot presents as the veritable discovery of his bourgeois comedy, the *pere de famille*, the man of the house with his concern over the absent son and the enamoured daughter, takes on a political significance in that it is addressed exclusively to the bourgeoisie. It simply passes over other social classes. Ibid, 165

[228] Ibid, 166.

[229] Ibid, 167.

are taught how to conform and behave in the new bourgeois society. The bourgeois sees himself represented on stage but he is also meant to be transformed on leaving the theatre. The theatre offers " new dramaturgical and choreographic devices, that will be of use in his private life."[230]

In offering self-presentation of the bourgeois subject and everyday life the emphasis is on presenting typical believable characters. As Gebauer and Wulf write, "Under the rubric of the 'probable,' all modes of action are brought together that manifest conformity to the norms of the social situation and status of the bourgeois."[231] Referring to the work of Michel Foucault , and the effects of processes of normalization in enlightenment societies, they point out that in defining 'normal' means actively defining and classifying deviant behaviour. Bourgeois theatre escapes the ever increasing "net of normative control." The audiences' pleasure and enjoyment is catered for through presenting what would other wise remain hidden in bourgeois society. (As we will see in **Chapter 4**, this is also evident in serial killer films, which also actively define 'normal' and 'deviant' behaviour in an extreme way.)

In theatre an imaginary space is opened up, where repressed desires and drives are permitted to triumph; though they might be condemned in the end, they have at least made their appearance. Bourgeois theatre displays repeated opportunities for breaking free of bourgeois society; it lets the mind play out scenarios of escape from the bourgeois world. This escape arguably takes different flight paths one in the direction of a more advanced form of capital accumulation the other towards the recognizable privileges of status existing in feudalism and probably coveted by an emerging bourgeoisie. Contemporary examples of this in celebrity culture articulate clearly the divergent pull in operation, an ever increasing need to accumulate more wealth as an 'ordinary' person who has achieved economic success (the 'anyone can if you follow your dream' discourse), and then, how the status and privilege of stardom, what Benjamin refers to as the "spell of the personality"

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[230] Ibid, 168.
[231] Ibid, 169.

contradict this model through discourses of brilliant individual, special from birth etc.[232] The star/celebrity requires different superior modes of travel, food, accommodation and security than the ordinary citizen, the rationale being that they cannot have a 'normal private' life unless they are separated from their fans. Here the distinction fuelling the mystique of the star is accentuated by magazines such as *Hello* and of course the celebrities. In this context the so-called 'private' life of the star becomes a highly prized commodity seen for example in the prices paid for exclusive rights to celebrity weddings. Here the star's 'friends and family' are checked to make sure they are not carrying cameras while those who make up the guest list with their A list rating become part of the sellable package. These weddings usually tap in to earlier forms of romance, honour and chivalry by being located in castles and country estates.

The above discussion of Enlightenment drama and the bourgeois 'cult of emotion' offers an example of the ways in which mimesis moves beyond the artistic realm to include the ways in which the enlightenment subject is produced. Here we see clearly an early example of how 'culture' adumbrates the formation and maintenance of particular forms of subjectivity.

Industrialization of culture

The public sphere and the enlightenment are "deeply implicated in the industrialization of culture."[233] As noted above the historical emergence of the public sphere should be understood within the context of a "struggle between the rising bourgeoisie and the absolutist state," however as we will see below with the arrival of a third player, the working class, conceptions of the public sphere would need to be re-drafted. The need for this re-conceptualization was understood by Brecht, Benjamin and the Frankfurt School. Later on, Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge also realized that the public sphere had to be

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[232] In the *Art Work essay*, Benjamin writes, "The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person, but the 'spell of the personality,' the phony spell of a commodity." See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", 231.

[233] Willemen, *Regimes of Subjectivity and Looking*, 108.

"radically re-thought and that an invocation of the organs and institutions pertinent to the bourgeoisie versus absolutism struggle are no longer pertinent."[234]

The industrialization of culture in Europe and North America is related to the shift in power evident in the mid 19th Century leading to the bourgeoisie superseding the aristocracy as the ruling class (although as Willemen points out following Arrighi they don't finally triumph until the mid 20th Century). In this new social order, capitalism emerges as the dominant system controlling both the means of production and actively attempting to control the "means of mental production."[235] In this interpretation, it is because of the need to control mental production that mass culture emerges. The bourgeoisie attempts to legitimate its rule "making its interests seem natural, inevitable, and universal, so that the other classes will accept their subordinate positions."[236] Culture, from a bourgeois perspective must maintain a rigid class system, *mass culture* must function to create a docile working class, who are no longer controlled by fixed hierarchies as were, for example, serfs in the feudal system. This account is obviously aligned to the Frankfurt School's theory of the culture industry, where leisure time must also be controlled in an effort to subdue critical thinking and organized rebellion. Though the Frankfurt School's pessimistic account of social relations within capitalism has remained unfashionable within academia, as Richard Ohmann points out, this theory has many advocates. For example Miriam Hansen referring specifically to Adorno and Horkheimer's account

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[234] Willemen, *Regimes of Subjectivity and Looking*, 108. Willemen writes, "that the notion of public sphere has to be radically re-thought and that an invocation of the organs and institutions pertinent to the bourgeoisie versus absolutism struggle are no longer pertinent when we are referring to a situation in which the bourgeoisie has finally triumphed and has to address, besides the need perpetually to renew the defeat of the working class, the newly arisen antagonism between the industrial bourgeoisie which spearheaded the triumph and the financial bourgeoisie which promptly made a bid for global hegemony, wrecking much of the industrial bourgeoisie's achievements in the process [...] the very phrase 'the public sphere' is so loaded with the centuries-long history of capitalism's challenge to and eventual triumph over feudal absolutism, that we probably have to think of a new term to indicate what is at stake in the current situation. Willemen, *Regimes of Subjectivity and Looking*, 107-108. Willemen also suggests that this directly relates to conceptions of 'modernisation'. Returning to the point made in the introduction that the industrialisation of culture preceded cinema in Europe and the USA , in other places the parallel development of cinema and the industrialisation of culture were synchronous. Because the socio-historical forces would be specific to the different territories, Willemen argues that it is impossible to analyse the "development of the public sphere in non-Western countries" in the same way. Rather than a comprehension of modernisation as an undisputed and abstracted narrative of progress and development within this frame work, modernisation should be understood in relation to specific socio-historical constellations and modes of production and the corresponding regimes of subjectivity.
[235] Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets and Class at the Turn of the Century*,42.
[236] Ibid, 42-43.

writes: "[...] Horkheimer and Adorno's pessimistic assessment has not only been vindicated in retrospect but is daily being surpassed by political reality."[237]

In his influential essay entitled *Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory*, Raymond Williams moved away from the perceived rigidity of the Frankfurt School by arguing against definitions of 'base' as a fixed and static economic abstraction stressing the importance of seeing it as a dynamic process open to multiple variations.[238] Dismissing definitions that would situate the base and primary productive forces only within capitalist economic relations, Williams suggests that a broader understanding of 'base' and 'primary production' to one that includes the reproduction of society itself complicates an understanding of superstructure as secondary. Williams argues that the importance of the concept of base and superstructure [rather than 'social totality' following Lukács] is that it maintains a strong emphasis on intention, that otherwise is in danger of disappearing. He writes:

> Intention, the notion of intention, restores the key question, or rather the key emphasis. For while it is true that any society is a complex whole of such practices, it is also true that any society has a specific organization, a specific structure, and that the principles of this organization and structure can be seen as directly related to certain social intentions, intentions by that we define society, intentions that in all our experience have been the rule of a particular class.[239]

Moving on from this, Williams comments on how Gramsci's theory of hegemony, while incorporating the idea of a 'social totality' stressed how the experience of social reality is constituted at such a depth, "saturating the consciousness of a society." The value of hegemony is in how it clearly articulates social reality more usefully than base and superstructure while still emphasizing "the facts of domination."[240] Rather than an understanding of hegemony as opinion making or of manipulation it should be understood

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[237] Miriam Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology'," New German Critique 40 (Winter1987): 223. See T.W. Adorno and m. Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," James Curran et al. (eds), *Mass Communication and Society*, (1977).
[238] Raymond Williams "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" in *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, (1974). This essay was hugely influential in the theoretical developments of British Cultural Studies.
[239] Williams "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," 36.
[240] Ibid,37.

as a whole body of practices and expectations." [241] Hegemony acts as "a set of meanings and values that as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming." [242]

Related to this discussion Richard Ohmann in his book *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets and Class at the Turn of the Century*, gives a clear account of the forces in operation within capitalist expansion in the United States at that time. The "chaos of competition" though tempered by various attempts to control it, such as "gentlemen's agreements, trade associations, pools, cartels, trusts, outright monopoly," always managed to resist control. [243] The relationship between the industrialist and their workers was also extremely volatile leading to violent confrontations, though force "failed to tame workers more than temporarily, while it periodically shook the faith of others in the legitimacy of big business." [244] Ohmann refers to the fact the national institutions that would allow a harmonious business environment to flourish did not yet exist. A sense of nationhood was still tentative and open to question and as a result there was not a united ruling class. Though the business ruling class was powerful, disorder threatened the desire to amass wealth comfortably. In this context an emphasis on consumption and marketing became important. [245]

A new relationship emerges between the capitalists and the workers, although they continue to be workers, they also become potential consumers. Firstly encouraging the middle classes to bring more and more consumer goods into their homes and then all workers. Through social, political and financial networks and organizations this corporate ruling class consolidates its interests. Ohmann points out that a new class emerges as this ruling class delegate's management to employees "who along with the growing force that managed money, the law, education, government agencies, and other key institutions of the

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[241] Ibid, 38.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ohmann, *Selling Culture*, 58.
[244] Ibid
[245] As Ohmann writes:"[…] Although this strategy would not end competition, it could moderate it in two ways. First, through market research, salesmanship, and product differentiation, companies could divide customers up into 'shares' of the market, and develop brand loyalties among them, so that competition would no longer be a voracious struggle ending in total domination or extinction. Second, the companies in any field that first achieved integration and rational management would squeeze out smaller competitors and make it hard for new ones to gain entry. That would mean a more stable environment with known dangers. And eventually it would lead to collaborative pricing, and the tacit agreement that prices could regularly go up but rarely come down." Ohmann, *Selling Culture*, 59.

new society, emerged as an identifiable middle class – the 'professional-managerial class'."[246] [PMC] After 1900 Ohmann suggests that shopkeepers and farmers though still in existence were not as important. He writes :

> The industrial working class swelled with immigrants and with country girls and boys who gave up on farm life; and the sales effort created an army of deskilled wageworkers harder and harder to distinguish from their counterparts in factories.[247]

Ohmann discusses the way the home as a site of production transforms into site of consumption and emphasizes how millions of people looked to the class above them to see how they should develop this new domestic culture and leisure time with socially appropriate activities that reflected their aspirations. Discussing advertising at the end of the century, he offers two hypotheses of how the industry enabled the rise of the mass circulation magazine. Firstly, the manufacturers began advertising their products on a mass scale when they realized their products fitted into "the new way of life" experienced by the professional managerial class. He suggests that "national advertisers helped to *create* the new way of life, as well as seizing the opportunity it offered them." Secondly, the national advertisers wanted to make full use of their machines, avoid the dangers of competition, and use sales as a means of developing. Ohmann writes:

> The hegemony of the integrated corporation reached out *beyond* final sales of commodities, to a metamorphosis of aspirations and imaginations. In this, corporations were no less powerful because those who took up their messages *wanted* to be consumers [...] In building the apparatus of mass production, capitalists had brought millions of people together in cities and towns, and so created the conditions that marginalized home production [...] Their reforming of production made urgent a new kind of consumption, and they were quick to shape needs that their own project had created.[248]

Ohmann's account maps clearly the pivotal role advertising played in creating what we know as consumer culture, developing a discourse about "objects, persons and social relations" that would affect millions of people. In this discourse of power (which Ohmann

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[246] Ibid,75.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid, 91.

refers to as being "of world historical consequence") millions of peoples' wants and desires where envisaged and created amicably by ad agencies. As Ohmann points out in order to look after their own interests the ad agencies aligned themselves with the interests of a more powerful elite. Ohmann discusses how in this new social order people were redefined away from being citizens or workers to being just consumers remarking that addressing us only as consumers "was a pivotal act of mystification, taking the fetishism of commodities well beyond the stage it had reached when Marx made his brilliant observations. "[249]

Ohmann suggests that the mass circulation magazine [1890-1905] was the first real example of mass culture that was made primarily for profit.[250] It was the first time profit was made selling attention and, as Ohmann points out, it was the beginning of a transaction between audiences and advertisers that has been "embedded in many forms of cultural production since, along with the new social relations of marketing and advertising."[251] He strongly suggests that a "new hegemonic system" emerges from a crisis in capital development and that this aligns it with "the now familiar idea that modernity and mass culture were thrown up, not by unique contingencies in one society, but by a process of crisis and reconfiguration in world capitalism."[252]

As was mentioned in the introduction to this section subjective experience under these conditions of rapid transformation, through industrialization, fragmentation and the corresponding population growth in cities, becomes the main focus in the social theories of Georg Simmel, Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin. Ben Singer comments that this theoretical focus "might be called a neurological conception of modernity."[253]

The theories of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin while related to a socio-economic understanding of modernity and the industrialization of culture, concentrate to a large

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[249] Ibid, 215-216..

[250] Ohmann defines mass culture as the "voluntary experiences, produced by a relatively small number of specialists, for millions across the nation to share, in similar or identical form, either simultaneously or nearly so, with dependable frequency; mass culture shapes habitual audiences, around common needs or interests, and it is made for profit." Ibid, 351.

[251] Ibid

[252] Ibid, 353.

[253] Ben Singer " Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and Popular Sensationalism" in Charney and Schwartz (eds), *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, (1995):72.

extent on the transformation of "the texture of experience."[254] Tom Gunning suggests that this perceptual shift was dependent on the change in the modes of production brought by the industrial revolution. Gunning writes:

> It was [...] characterized by the transformation in daily life wrought by the growth in capitalism and advances in technology: the growth of urban traffic, the distribution of mass-produced goods, and successive new technologies of transportation and communication.[255]

year	1600	1650	1700	1750	1800	1825	1850	1875	1900	1925
Berlin				113	172	222	446	1045	2424	4013
Chicago								405	1717	3564
London	187	410	550	676	861	1,335	2,320	4241	6480	7742
New York					63	170	682	1900	4282	7774
Paris	250	455	530	560	547	855	1,314	2250	3330	4800
Edo/Tokyo	350	500	500	509	492	530	587	780	1497	5300

population (thousands)
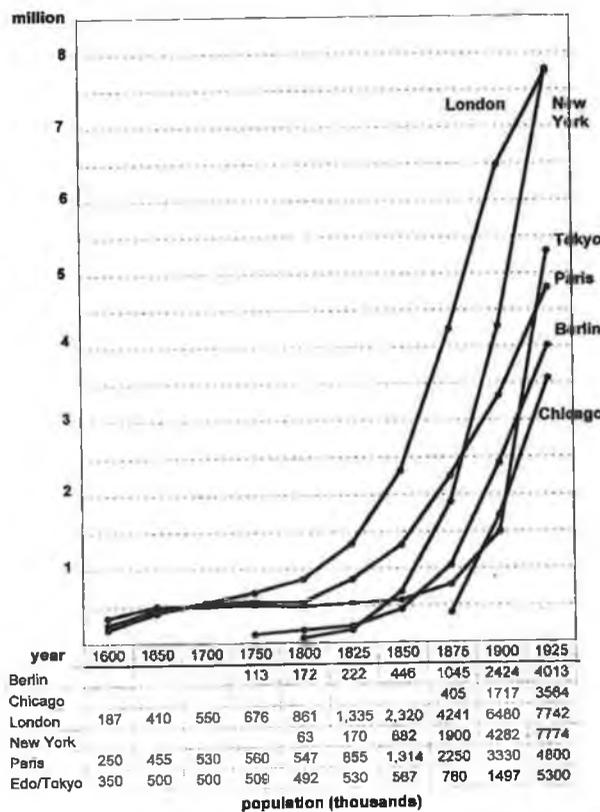
Fig.14 Urban Population Growth in Selected Cities, 1600-1925

Technologies such as the railway, telegraph and telephone, photography and cinema all had dramatic effects on the perception of space and time.[256] The crowds, the increased noise of

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[254] Ibid.

[255] Tom Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body: Photography, Detectives, and early Cinema," in Charney and Schwartz (eds), *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, (1995):15.

[256] See for example Wolfgang Schivelbusch , *The Railway Journey: Trains and Travel in the 19th century*, (1979). Stephen Kerns, *The Culture of Space and Time*, 1880-1920, (1983). Mary Ann Doane " ' When the Direction of the Force Acting on the Body Is Changed': The Moving-Image," Wide Angle 7. 1&2 (1985).

the cities and the increase in visual stimuli in the form of window displays, billboard advertisements, etc., created an "intensification of nervous stimulation."[257]The new labour intensive practices in factories of "repetitive and limited tasks" along the assembly line posed distraction as a physical danger to workers surrounded by machinery (not to mention the loss of profits lost from stoppages).[258] Distraction, conversely, as Walter Benjamin discussed, also offered a mimetic protection from the sensory overload of these environments.[259] To fully appreciate the importance of theories of 'distraction in modernity' we must also consider them in relation to what Jonathan Crary refers to as "the disciplinary regime of attentiveness."[260] Similar to Ohmann's discussion above, Crary also refers to the industrialization of culture in terms of the creation of new needs, new technologies of production and new forms of consumption, remarking that perception in this context of ceaseless transformation is in constant crisis. While the logic of capitalism breaks down any stable "structure of perception" it also requires attention management. Crary writes:

> It is possible to see one crucial aspect of modernity as a continual crisis of attentiveness, to see the changing configurations of capitalism pushing attention and distraction to new limits and thresholds, with unending introduction of new products, new sources of stimulation, and streams of information, and then responding with new methods of managing and regulating perception.[261]

The following discussion will attempt to map theories of the "texture of experience" and subjectivity on the one hand, while relating these to the management of attention on the other. As my main concern is with the moving-image the primary emphasis will be in exploring regimes of subjectivity and attention management through cinema. Again it is important to point out that while cinema is often discussed as a pre-eminent example of modernity and the industrialization of culture in Europe and the United States, cinema was "only one element in an array of new modes of technology, representation, spectacle,

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[257] George Simmel,"The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, Kurt H. Wolff (ed) (1950): 10.
[258] Tom Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body: Photography, Detectives, and early Cinema," 17.
[259] Walter Benjamin's theories on distraction will be discussed in more detail below.
[260] Jonathan Crary "Unbinding Vision:Manet and the Attentive Observer in the Late 19th century" In Charney and Schwartz, .46-71.
[261] Ibid, 47.

distraction, consumerism, ephemerality, mobility, and entertainment."[262] While cinema can indeed be seen as embodying the characteristics of modern life, as Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz comment "cinema formed a crucible for ideas, techniques and representational strategies already present in other places."[263] Gunning also refers to the way cinema had "a national system of distribution by 1909" which exploited earlier railway networks pioneered by vaudeville circuits and circus trains."[264] The logic of capitalism's increasing modes of mass production and consumption assured the circulation networks, which compressed space and time and were portrayed by the "technical innovation of moving pictures." However, as Gunning remarks, "this had been anticipated by the commodification of still photographs, especially the postcard and the stereoscope."[265]

Benjamin's Theory of Experience

Walter Benjamin's theses on the historical significance of photographic/film reproduction in his 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,"[266] has become a key text in film studies to such an extent that, as Miriam Hansen points out it is "[…] probably the single most often cited text by Benjamin or any other German writer on film."[267] His discussion of the spatial and temporal shifts occurring through reproduction link photography and film to social change through the concept of "shock". Benjamin employs the term distraction (first used by Kracauer)[268] as a means of discussing the possibilities in film of subverting bourgeois concepts of art such as contemplative absorption by the individual. Written at a time when fascism was gaining ground in Europe, Benjamin's essay participates in an earlier theoretical and utopian discussion

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[262] Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, "Introduction" *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, 1.

[263] Ibid, 2.

[264] Gunning, "Tracing the Individual," 16.

[265] Ibid, 17.

[266] In *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt (ed), trans. Harry Zohn (1969). Hereafter referred to as the artwork essay. Referring to this edition of Benjamin's essay Hansen writes, "Whether in response to criticism by Theodor W. Adorno, the unsympathetic reception of the essay on the part of friends such as Gershom Scholem and Bertolt Brecht and the Paris organization of communist writers, or the increasingly grim political situation, Benjamin kept revising the text between 1936 and 1939, hoping in vain to get it published in the Moscow literary exile journal Das Wort. It is this (third) version that first appeared in Illuminationen (1955), edited by Adorno and Friedrich -Podszus, and that entered the English-speaking world, in a rather unreliable translation, with the 1969 publication of *illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt. It is this multiply compromised and, for Benjamin, still unfinished version that has become known all over the world as the Artwork essay." See Hansen, "Room-for- Play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema" in *October* 109, (Summer 2004):4.

[267] Miriam Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology'," 179.

[268] See Siegfried Kracauer, "Cult of Distraction", *New German Critique* 40, (Winter 1988).

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concerning the revolutionary potential of cinema. It is aligned therefore, with the avant-garde of the 1920s such as the Dadaists and Surrealists, and their privileging of earlier cinema, seeing possibilities in earlier forms of the medium to frustrate the advance of narrative film with its overt concern with viewer absorption.[269] By 1936, the revolutionary potential of film and photography were instead being used by "social and political forces" as a method of oppression. This occurred not only in the "restoration of myth" employed in fascist mass spectacles and propaganda "but also in the liberal-capitalist marketplace and in Stalinist cultural politics."[270]

While earlier discussions of Benjamin's concept of shock concentrated on how it was aligned with political modernism most notably Bertolt Brecht's theory of distanciation, more recent interpretations of the *Artwork essay*, by Hansen and Buck-Morss have explored how Benjamin's theory of shock relied on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic research into the subject. While Freud's work had dealt with the aftermath of the First World War, Benjamin's engagement with the concept of shock was expanded as a means of explaining experience within modernity, exploring the conditions of quotidian life from the street to the factories. Referring to the fact that Benjamin was influenced by Brecht at the time of writing the essay, Hansen suggests, that this helps explain its reception by an English speaking audience in the 70s largely through "debates on Brechtian cinema" in the film journal *Screen*. Hansen argues however that this earlier reading of the Artwork essay through Brecht obscures its "more incongruous and ambivalent features" namely, a negotiation of experience and sensory perception in industrial society.[271]

The Artwork essay presents the argument that art works that can be technically reproduced through photography and film lose qualities such as their uniqueness. By losing their 'aura' through reproducibility, the social privilege, truth-value, and cultural tradition that attaches

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[269] As Hansen remarks some of Benjamin's discussion touch on what Tom Gunning has referred to as a "cinema of attractions," a form of spectatorship evident in early cinema. Here attractions that play on the illusionist possibilities of the new media (George Méliès) and the actors frequent look at the camera as opposed to the increasing importance of character development and linear narrative that came later and demanded a different form of spectatorship. Hansen "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," 180. See Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectators and the Avante-garde," *Wide Angle* 8.3/4, (1986) 63-70.

[270] For Hansen the belated critique in the artwork essay aligns it with Benjamin's "redemptive criticism" evident in his work on Baudelaire and the Passagen-Werk. Hansen "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," 181. See "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" in *Illuminations*, 155-200.

[271] Ibid, 180.

itself to art is potentially destroyed.[272] Given the importance technical reproducibility plays in terms of the reorganization of the urban masses and its use by avant-garde movements such as Dada and Surrealism, Benjamin presents technological reproduction as a progressive force. Within this configuration "aura" and "masses" become "opposite poles of the political field of force"[273] Benjamin defined aura as that which presents itself as distant no matter how close it is and the masses as desiring to bring things closer, writing,

> Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its image or, rather, its copy its reproduction. Unmistakably, reproduction as offered by illustrated magazines and newsreels differs from the image. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely linked in the latter as are transitoriness and reproducibility in the former. To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose "sense of the universal quality of things" has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of its reproduction. Thus is manifested in the field of perception what in the theoretical sphere is noticeable in the growing importance of statistics.[274]

As Hansen points out the above maps out Benjamin's discussion about "large-scale historical shifts in the collective organization of human perception" and in doing this articulates three interdependent aspects of this shift: "its manifestation along spatial and temporal registers (distance/proximity, permanence/transitoriness), and the modality of an object in relation to others, defined by the register of singularity vs. multiplication, similarity or likeness." [275]

> The adaptation of human perception to industrial modes of production and transportation, especially the radical restructuration of spatial and temporal relations, has an aesthetic counterpart in the formal procedures of the photographic media – the arbitrary moment of exposure in photography and the fragmenting grip of framing and editing in film. With its dialectic of continuity and discontinuity, with the rapid succession and tactile thrust of its sounds and images film rehearses in the realm of reception what the

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[272] See also Samuel Weber's The 1992 Mari Kuttna Lecture on Film, *Mass Mediauras, or: Art, Aura and Media in the work of Walter Benjamin* (1996):76-107.

[273] Hansen "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," 183.

[274] Benjamin, *The Artwork in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility," Gesammelte Schriften1.2 rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhausser, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, (1974),* trans. Miriam Hansen quoted in "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," 183-184.

[275] Ibid, 184.

conveyor belt imposes upon human beings in the realm of production.[276]

As suggested above central to Hansen's discussion on Benjamin's theory of experience is a reframing of the artwork essay away from its interpretative associations with Brecht towards an exploration of the "problematic slippages" she finds in it. These slippages are identified by the way Benjamin positions himself with regard to auratic experience. As we have seen above while it is evident in the artwork essay that the auratic image, associated with bourgeois reception is denigrated in favour of the copy or reproduced image associated with the masses,[277] this position however goes against his writings that attempt to "redeem an auratic mode of experience for a historical and materialist practice."[278]

> We define [the aura] as the unique appearance [Erscheinung] of a distance, however close it may be. Resting on a summer afternoon and letting one's gaze follow a mountain range on the horizon or a branch that casts its shadow on one – that means breathing the aura of those mountains, that branch.[279]

As a mode of perception the aura is a relationship to nature that suggests a disinterest in history, however Benjamin also situates auratic experience within a historical frame, as he discusses the loss of the aura in relation to the art object. For Hansen the important point here is that while perception of the aura "[…] refers to a particular appearance of nature in potentially all objects, it is also conceptualized […]as dependent on the social conditions of perception, as contingent upon historical change."[280] Hansen suggests that the reason why

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[276] Ibid.

[277] As Hansen points out that this binary opposition effectively denies the masses an aesthetic experience and "thus, like the Communist party during the 1920s, risks leaving aesthetic needs to be exploited by the enemy." Ibid, 186. More recently Hansen has pointed out that binary oppositions evident the Artwork essay is a strategy that "arrests the dynamic of Benjamin's distinctive – and distinctively productive – mode of thinking in that concepts are hardly ever stable or self-identical; rather, they tend to overlap, blend, and interact with other concepts, just as their meanings oscillate depending on the particular constellations in which they are deployed." Hansen, "Room-for- Play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema," 5.

[278] Hansen "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," 186.Hansen continues, "Relevant here are above all his essays on Surrealism, on photography and on the 'mimetic capability'; his work on Proust, Kafka, Leskov and Baudelaire; his epistemological remarks on the 'dialectic image' in the Passagewerk; and finally, his first-hand account of the effects of hashish. Whether concerned with aesthetic, psychological or historical questions, all these texts contribute to a theory of experience in that the phenomenon Benjamin calls 'aura' plays a precarious yet indispensable part."

[279] Benjamin, *Artwork essay*, 222-23, trans Hansen "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," 187.

[280] Ibid, 187.

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auratic perception plays such an important part to Benjamin's theory of experience is "the anticipated reciprocity of the gaze." [281]

> The person we look at, or who feels he is being looked at, looks at us in return. To experience the aura of a phenomenon means to invest it with the capability of returning the gaze. This experience corresponds to the data of the mémoire involontaire." [282]

Memory and history are central to Benjamin's theory of experience and his idea of the aura. For Benjamin, auratic experience is on the decline in the context of industrialization, urbanization etc. However as Hansen remarks the aura can only be recognized in this "process of disintegration" as a "component of (past) experience.[283]

> The traumatic reorganization of perception that masquerades as modernity manifests itself most obviously in spatial terms, as an uprooting of the subject from a human range of perception, that Mary Ann Doane describes as a "destabilization of subjectivity." Since for Benjamin, however, time has a conceptual priority over space, this shift is ultimately and more crucially a matter of detemporalization.[...]The reification of time not only has eroded the capability and communicability of experience – experience as memory, as awareness of temporality and mortality – but the very possibility of remembering, that is imagining, a different world.[284]

While referring to the linear historical-materialist trajectory of Benjamin's thinking here, Hansen also emphasizes the trajectory of fall and redemption characteristic of Jewish Messianism that is evident as a strong force in Benjamin's theories. Benjamin puts forward an allegorical model employing fragmentation and quotation as a means of redeeming an auratic mode of experience away from "the dead-end of cult and social privilege."[285] Fragmentation and quotation provide a process that allow objects, theories knowledge etc to be removed from the "empty continuum of history," allowing for the utopian potential of awakening the 'dreaming collective." The dream for Benjamin is, the "historical nightmare of capitalism" explored in his unfinished *Passagenwerk/ Arcades Project*, his

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[281] Ibid.

[282] Benjamin *artwork essay*,188, trans in Hansen, 187-8.

[283] Hansen "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," 189.

[284] Ibid. See Also Mary Ann Doane, "'When the Direction of the Force Acting on the Body Is Changed':`the Moving Image," *Wide Angle* 7. 1&2 (1985):44.

[285] Hansen "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," 191.

study of Paris in the 19th Century. Here Benjamin discusses capitalism as "a natural phenomenon with that a new dream- filled sleep came over Europe, and, through it, a reactivation of mythic forces."[286] Using the Parisian Arcades with their forlorn second hand goods from an earlier moment in capitalism as a research tool,[287] these spaces provided dream images, where objects that once promised a classless society "gave corporeal form to the wishes and desires of humanity."[288] Buck- Morss continues:

> Because they were "natural" phenomena in the sense of concrete matter, they give the illusion of being the realization of those wishes rather than merely their reified, symbolic expression. [...] It was as "dream-images of the collective" – both distorting illusion and redeemable wish-images – that they took on political meaning.[289]

In her essay *Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered, (1992)* Buck-Morss pursues a discussion on mimesis and aesthetics related to Benjamin's writing on 19th century phantasmagorias. Here she explores Benjamin's desire for a reconfiguration of aesthetics through 'shock', where he calls "[...]for the transformation of art from illusory representation into an analysis of illusions."[290] Like Hansen, Buck-Morss is interested in developing Benjamin's theory of experience and rather than entering into a discussion of aesthetics as 'art, beauty and truth' proposes a

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[286] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (1999): [K1a,8] 391. The use of the word "natural" to describe capitalism may appear jarring and Adorno was critical of this aspect of Benjamin's writing however Hansen explains how nature and history were dialectically mediated in Benjamin's thinking rather than antithetical here "while man's historical subjection of (both inner and outer) nature left nothing in nature that was not historical (and hence alienated), history itself had assumed the appearance of nature, masking its social and economic relations as mythical fate. Hansen, Benjamin Cinema and Experience, 191. See also Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (1977).

[287] Benjamin's interest in objects that had lost their value in the urban landscape was a shared interest with the Surrealists. Writing on Surrealism, Benjamin remark's that André Breton was "the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the 'outmoded', in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue had begun to ebb from them. The relation of these things to revolution – no one can have a more exact concept of it that these authors. No one before these visionaries and augurs perceived how destitution– not only social but architectonic, the poverty of interiors, enslaved and enslaving objects – can be suddenly transformed into revolutionary nihilism." Benjamin 1997:229) Referring to Benjamin's project of redeeming auratic experience as a cognitive mode Hansen remarks that Benjamin's interest in Surrealism because of "the anti-aesthetic impulse of its manifestos, collages and performances – in the radical crossing of the artificial flowering of images of second nature with a mode of experience traditionally reserved for those of an ostensibly more primary nature." Hansen, "Benjamin Cinema and Experience,", 193. See also Hal Foster, Compulsive Beauty, (1993).

[288] Buck-Morss, Passagen-Werk,214-215, quoted in Hansen, ""Benjamin Cinema and Experience,"," 192.

[289] Ibid.

[290] Susan Buck-Morss, "Benjamin's Passagen-Werk: Redeeming Mass Culture for the Revolution" In *New German Critique*, Vol.29 (Spring/Summer 1983)

return to the original conception of aesthetics as related to "corporeal, material, nature," to reality rather than art.[291] She writes:

> It is a form of cognition achieved through taste, touch, hearing, seeing, smells – the whole corporeal sensorium. To be alive is to feel – pain as well as pleasure. It is the a priori condition of existence, the precondition for both culture and history.[292]

Buck-Morss emphasizes how the corporeal sensorium's main function is to protect the "biological apparatus." Distancing her discussion from traditional conceptions of the human nervous system where it is "artificially" distinguished from its environment, Buck-Morss concentrates on the role of the senses operating on the surface of the body and functioning as mediation between inside and outside.[293] She refers to this as the *synaesthetic system* writing:

> If the "center"[sic] of this system is not in the brain, but on the body's surface, then subjectivity, far from bounded within the biological body, plays the role of mediator between inner and outer sensations, the images of perception and those of memory. For this reason, Freud situated consciousness on the surface of the body, decentered from the brain.[294]

As mentioned above Walter Benjamin following Freud, articulates the modern experience through 'shock.'[295] Here Benjamin stresses how consciousness can block external stimuli from over exciting or damaging the organism. This filtering process protecting the organism from over stimulation separates present consciousness from past memory. However "without the depth of memory, experience is impoverished. The problem is that under conditions of modern shock– the daily shocks of the modern world– response to stimuli without thinking has become necessary for survival."[296] In modernity the

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[291] Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*, (2000):101.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Concentrating on the surface of the body She refers to the Sir Charles Bell's "fifth nerve" that of expression. Buck-Morss describes the "expressive face" as a mimetic language in that "three aspects of the synaesthetic system -- physical sensation, motor reaction and psychical meaning' converge." Giving a description of Bell's response to Waterloo that is at variance to his social milieu's acceptance of its success, on account of the sights, sounds and smell of death his "excess of sentiment" is accounted for by Buck-Morss as a sensory mimesis. "A response of the nervous system to external stimuli that was 'excessive' [resisting] intellectual comprehension." Buck-Morss "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 14-15.
[294] Buck-Morss "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 13,n39.
[295] Freud was interested in war neurosis solders ' suffered after World War I "shell shock". Benjamin's understanding of shock was that it was "[...] the very essence of modern experience." Buck-Morss "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 16.
[296] Ibid.

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technological landscape "exposes the human sensorium" to shocks both physical and psychical.[297] In this situation mimesis becomes a "defensive reflex," giving the example of the factory workers who are turned into an automatons mimicking the machines.[298] For Benjamin exploitation is not just economic but involves the destruction of the worker's senses "paralyzing the imagination."[299] The repetitive actions involved in this form of labor in the factory destroys memory and replaces it with conditioned response. This mimetic defense by the worker, adapting to machine technology was a "work requirement" it was also a means of protection "against the shock of machine labour itself."[300]In this situation perception is separated from experience, devoid of memory. Because of the excessive pressure put on the organism this results in the synaesthetic system changing its function. Rather than being a mediation process between outside and inside the body its new function is to "deaden the senses."[301]

Thus the simultaneity of over stimulation and numbness is characteristic of the new synaesthetic organization as anaesthetics. The dialectical reversal, whereby aesthetics changes from a cognitive mode of being in "touch" with reality to a way of blocking out reality, destroys the human organism's power to respond politically even when self-preservation is at stake: Someone who is "past experiencing" is "no longer capable of telling...proven friend...from mortal enemy." [302]

In making this link between aesthetics and anaesthetics, Buck-Morss goes on to discuss the ways anaesthetics developed in the 19th century, distinguishing between self-anaesthetising of the synaesthetic system as voluntary in comparison to its manipulation.

> To the already-existing Enlightenment narcotic forms of coffee, tobacco, tea, and spirits, there was added a vast arsenal of drugs and therapeutic practices, from opium, ether, and cocaine to hypnosis, hydrotherapy and electric shock.[303]

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[297] Ibid, 16.
[298] One immediately thinks of Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*. Chaplin will be discussed at the end of this chapter.
[299] Ibid, 17.
[300] See also Buck Morss *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, 105.
[301] Buck-Morss, *Aesthetics and Anaesthetics*, 17.
[302] Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, trans, Harry Zohn (1983):143, quoted in Buck Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 18.
[303] Buck- Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 18.

The disease of neurasthenia that usually involved the prescription of opium, was often described in similar ways to Benjamin's description of the experience of modernity as shock. The language of *breakdown, shattered nerves* etc was often used to describe the effects of neurasthenia. However anaesthetics were not only used for this very modern disease caused by an excess of simulation but were also used by mothers working in the factory to pacify children left at home and as a means of controlling the insane. There were little restrictions in terms of buying and selling of these drugs and many surgeons were drug addicts.[304] Writing about the prevalence of drug addiction, Buck-Morss writes that it is a "characteristic of modernity" referring to it as a "counterpart to shock."

> The social problem of addiction, however, is not the same as the neuropsychological problem, for a drug-free, unbuffered adaptation to shock can prove fatal. But the cognitive (hence: political) problem lies still elsewhere. The experience of intoxication is not limited to drug-induced, biochemical transformations. Beginning in the 19th century, a narcotic was made out of reality itself.[305]

The term used to describe this is phantasmagoria— originally employed in the early 19th century to describe the optical illusion achieved with magic lanterns. Here, offering an appearance of reality, technology is used effectively to disarm the senses. Buck-Morss makes the point that as new technologies emerged so did the possibility of increased phantasmagoric effects. While Benjamin tracks these 19th Century "phantasmagoric forms" in the Parisian shopping arcade, Buck-Morss comments: "these 19th Century forms are the precursors of today's shopping malls, theme parks, and video arcades."[306] The relationship of these forms of technology to our senses and perception cannot be separated from our understanding of reality. They are "'natural' from a neuro-physical point of view." Yet as technoaesthetics :

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[304] Buck-Morss also refers to Freud's experimentation with cocaine. Ibid, 21.

[305] Ibid, 22.

[306] Ibid. Buck-Morss continues her description of contemporary phantasmagorias as the totally controlled environment of airplanes (where one sits plugged in to sight and sound and food service) the phenomenon of the "tourist bubble"(where the traveler's "experiences" are all monitored and controlled in advance), the individualized audiosensory environment of a "walkman," the visual phantasmagoria of advertising, the tactile sensorium of a gymnasium full of Nautilus equipment. Reference Anne Friedburg (sp) book here.

> [...] Their social function is in each case compensatory. The goal is manipulation of the synaesthetic system by control of environmental stimuli. It has the effect of anaesthetizing the organism, not through numbing, but through flooding the senses.[The experiences of this altered consciousness, unlike drugs are collective.] Everyone sees the same altered world. [...] As a result [...]the phantasmagoria assumes the position of objective fact. [Here] the intoxication of phantasmagoria itself becomes the social norm. Sensory addiction to a compensatory reality becomes a means of social control.[307]

Buck-Morss' discussion on "sensory addiction to a compensatory reality" stresses again the political reasoning behind Benjamin's utopian desire to pull fragments of the everyday world out of the "continuum of history", "the nightmare of capitalism" allowing the possibility of a mode of auratic experience to emerge counter to an alienated form of experience in modernity that, as we have discussed above, promoted not only historical forgetting but also makes it possible "for humanity to view its own destruction with enjoyment."[308] In this context Buck-Morss'emphasis on aesthetics and its original relationship to the senses allows for an important elaboration on Benjamin's writings on experience, mimesis and language. In doing this she also elaborates on the question of how to use the camera in a non-auratic manner? How to use "[...]this technological apparatus as an aid to sensory comprehension of the external world, rather than as a phantasmagoric, or narcissistic , escape from it,"[309] or, as Hansen writes, an alternative "[...] film practice that would give aesthetic expression to the scars of human self-alienation."[310]

Hansen suggests towards the end of her essay that while Benjamin may not have made them explicit "[...] yet several lines of argument suggest a position that the camera could be redeemed – for film history, film theory as well as film practice – as a medium of experience."[311] For Hansen this is related to "the question of human-self representation," and as Benjamin writes "to maintain one's humanity in the face of the apparatus." [312]

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[307] Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 22.
[308] Ibid,37.
[309] Ibid, 39.
[310] Hansen, "Benjamin Cinema and Experience," 206.
[311] Hansen, 207.
[312] Benjamin in Hansen, "Benjamin Cinema and Experience," 205.

Central to the discussion here is the emergence of a self-conscious recognition by individual members of the population that they are also part of the "mass". Concurrent with this, 'society' was perceived by the new theories of Herbert Spenser and Emile Durkheim as a "body."[313] In her discussion on the recognition of being part of "the masses", Buck-Morss looks at the aesthetics of surface unity (for example art nouveau) and its obvious relationship to phantasmagoric effects. She also refers to how surface pattern was also used to represent the social body, with schematic technical drawings presenting an abstract orderliness of society. Here in these images "the aesthetics of the surface" reassures the viewer by the rational order of the social body, that however when viewed from the individual's "[...]particular body is perceived as a threat to wholeness." Buck –Morss continues:

> And yet, if the individual does find a point of view from which it can see itself as a whole, the social techno-body disappears from view. In fascism (and this is the key to fascist aesthetics), this dilemma of perception is surmounted by a phantasmagoria of the individual as part of a crowd that itself forms an integral whole – a "mass ornament" to use Siegfried Kracauer's term, that pleases as an aesthetics of the surface, a deindividualized, formal, and regular pattern [...] [314]

Buck-Morss also refers to the temporal connection between the Artwork essay written in 1936 to Jacque Lacan's paper on the Mirror stage that he presented the same year at a conference in Marienbad. In this paper Lacan discusses the misrecognition of bodily unity by the infant, concealing its own lack, and leading to a retrospective fantasy of the body-in-pieces (corps morcele). Buck-Morss maintains the theory of the mirror stage can be read as a theory of fascism.[315] In the 1949 version of "the mirror stage" Lacan cites Roger Callois' essay "Mimicry and Legendary Psychaesthenia." [316]In this text Callois likens insects merging and assimilation into space with that of schizophrenia:

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[313] Buck-Morss continues "Labour specialization, rationalization and integration of social functions, created a techno-body of society, and it was imagined to be as insensate to pain as the individual body under general anaesthetics, so that any number of operations could be performed upon the social body without needing to concern oneself lest the patient – society itself– "utter piteous cries and moans." Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 29-30.

[314] Ibid, 35.

[315] Ibid, 37.

[316] Allen Meek, "Benjamin, the Televisual and the 'fascistic subject', *Screening the Past* 4, (1998).

to these dispossessed souls, space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them and digests them [....] it ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at himself from any point whatever in space. He feels himself becoming space.[all of that] shed light on a single process of depersonalization by assimilation to space, i.e., what mimicry achieves morphologically in certain animal species." [317]

Lacan uses this to explain how the subject is formed "as an optical effect as a body attempts to conform to an encoded visual surface and to inhabit a landscape constituted as the field of the other's gaze."[318] As Meek points out, Lacan refers to camouflage as a means of explaining an imagined gaze of the other in war. For Meek, Lacan's theory of the subject, following Callois, already indicates that the "self image has begun to take the detour of the photographic technology that will increasingly recode the surface of the urban environment and the military field of vision.[319] The "Mirror stage text offers an explanation of subject formation within a cultural world dominated by spectacle technologies." Both Benjamin and Lacan discuss the conditions of subjectivity in which one is disciplined by the field of the others gaze, an effect of mass spectacle technologies.[320]

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[317] Roger Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia", *October* 31, (1984):30.

[318]Meek, "Benjamin, the Televisual and the 'fascistic subject', 6.

[319] Ibid, 7.

[320] Hansen referring to Terry Eagleton's attempt to read Benjamin's concept of the gaze through Lacan (Of the Gaze as Object Petit a) in *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (1981) comments, "Undoubtedly, there are a number of contiguities between Benjamin and Lacan's concept of the gaze (perhaps owing to a common phenomenological undercurrent), but there are also crucial differences: Benjamin, like Freud, was obsessed with questions of temporality and memory; Lacan's concepts, as far as I can tell, fundamentally rely upon spatial models, that may account for their often criticized lack of historicity." Hansen, "Benjamin Cinema and Experience," n61 216.

Fig.15 Tiller Girls, Berlin, Weimar period (1920s).

Buck-Morss suggests that fascism offered the masses both the role of observer and also that of an "inert mass being formed and shaped."[321] The masses mis(re)cognize themselves, separated from the potential pain, they are not disturbed by the "spectacle of their own manipulation." Referring to Leni Riefenstahl's 1935 film *Triumph of the Will*, which as Buck-Morss points out Benjamin was surely aware of, she writes,

> [...] The mobilized masses fill the grounds of the Nuremberg stadium and the cinema screen, so that the surface patterns provide a pleasing design of the whole, letting the viewer forget the purpose of the display, the militarization of society for the teleology of making war. The aesthetics allow an anaesthetization of reception, a

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[321] Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 36.

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viewing of the "scene" with disinterested pleasure, even when that scene is the preparation through ritual of a whole society for unquestioning sacrifice and ultimately destruction, murder and death. [322]

Buck-Morss also comments on the fact that Hitler practiced his facial expressions to get the right effect under the guidance of the opera singer Paul Devrient. She suggests that rather than expressive, Hitler's exaggerated expressions should be understood as reflective, returning an image of the viewer as the "narcissistic image of the intact ego, constructed against the fear of the body-in-pieces."[323] Referring back to photographs in Charles Darwin's publication *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (1965) she comments on the way in which Hitler's expressions rather than suggesting anger and rage offer instead two very different emotions – *fear* and what Darwin describes as "suffering of the body and mind: weeping."[324] She makes clear that juxtaposing Darwin's illustrations with photographs of Hitler's face will not give us an historical understanding of what Germany was like at that time but rather the juxtaposition "creates a synthetic experience that resonates with our own time."[325] She writes,

It shocks us into awareness that the narcissism that we have developed as adults, that functions as an anaesthetizing tactic against the shock of modern experience – and that is appealed to daily by the image-phantasmagoria of mass culture – is the ground from which fascism can again push forward. To cite Benjamin: "In shutting out the experience [of the inhospitable, blinding age of big-scale industrialism], the eye perceives an experience of a complementary nature, in the form of its spontaneous after-image." Fascism is that afterimage. In its reflecting mirror we recognize ourselves.[326]

[322] Ibid , 38. This "anaesthization of reception" will come up for discussion in relation to 'serial killer films' discussed in chapter 4.

[323] Ibid, 39.

[324] Charles Darwin, *The Expression of The Emotions in Man and Animals*, (1965), 291, quoted in Buck- Morss, Aesthetics and Anaesthetics, 39. Darwin's description of fear is as follows: "As fear increases into an agony of terror… the wings of the nostrils and wildly dilated …there is a gasping and convulsive motion of the lips, a tremor in the hollow cheek … eyeballs are fixed on the object of terror… the muscles of the body may become rigid …hands are alternately clenched and opened …[the] arms may be protruded, as if to avert some dreadful danger, or may be thrown wildly over the head." (p291) and on weeping: "The raising of the upper lip draws upward the flesh of the upper parts of the cheeks, and produces a strongly-marked fold on each cheek – the naso-labial fold – that runs from near the wings of the nostrils to the corners of the mouth and below them. This fold or furrow may be seen in all photographs, and it is very characteristic of the expression of a crying child." (149) Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, preface Konrad Lorenz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) in Buck-Morss p39

[325] Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 41.

[326] Benjamin, Charles Baudelaire, 111, in Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics," 41.

The above outline of the way in which Fascism used technology to construct mass spectacles as part of their militarization of society clearly indicates what was at stake for Benjamin and Adorno in their exploration of mass culture. As commentators such as Buck-Morss and Hansen make clear the questions they raise go beyond the specific historical context. As Hansen reminds us "[...] The imbrication of technology and violence still prevails."[327] The way in that the entertainment industry is implicated is made immediately apparent in Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi's account of in the collaboration between Hollywood and The Pentagon in creating military training simulations.[328] In a conference that took place in 1997 in Monterey, California one conference participant clarified the desire to use "entertainment realism" for the development of military training simulations by stating that,

> The entertainment industry has tended to promote visual fidelity and uses principles of good storytelling to help participants suspend their disbelief about the reality of a synthetic experience(whether a VR attraction or a film).[329]

Benjamin's theory of mimesis

Benjamin's theory of experience and the restructuring of subjectivity in modernity revolve around his theory of mimesis. With this in mind we should elaborate explicitly what Benjamin's theory of mimesis and language involves. It is important to stress that Benjamin's (and the Frankfurt School's in general especially Adorno's) theories of mimesis are very different from the traditional Platonic concept of mimesis. Critical theory's concept of mimesis has little to do with realist aesthetics but rather "[...]envisions a relationship with nature that is alternative to the dominant forms of mastery and

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[327] Hansen "Of Mice and Ducks: Benjamin and Adorno on Disney", *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 92:1 (Winter 1993):28.
[328] Ghamari-Tabrizi, "The Convergence of The Pentagon and Hollywood: The Next Generation of Military Training Simulations," in Rabinovitz and Geil (eds) *Memory Bytes*, (2004):150-173.
[329] National Research Council, "Modeling and Simulation: Linking Entertainment and Defense," (1997):5 in Ghamari-Tabrizi, 151. Tabrizi discusses a training package developed in 1999 by Richard Lindheim, executive vice president of Paramount Digital Entertainment entitled *Final Flurry*. This multimedia package "[...] Includes video and audio clips produced by an entertainment director and actors, a networked information system and database that gives players access to maps, (fictitious) intelligence assessments, teleconferencing, and email. It was designed to mimic a national security (i.e. interagency) information network that senior political and military officers would employ in the course of their future duties." Ghamari-Tabrizi, "The Convergence of The Pentagon and Hollywood," 160. See also the section in Michael Moore's *Farenheit/ 11* that interviews US soldiers in Iraq who discuss the music they like to listen to when they are bombing targets from their tanks

exploitation, one that would dissolve the contours of the subject/object dichotomy into reciprocity and the possibilities of reconciliation."[330] Martin Jay in an essay specifically writing on Adorno's use of mimesis (but equally relevant to our discussion) stresses its relational character, mimesis works as a way of "bridging but not collapsing differences." Jay continues:

> The crucial difference is [...] between what are traditionally called subjects and objects (or at least the "other" of subjects) in the world. Conceptual thought can be understood as an act of aggression perpetrated by a dominating subject on a world assumed to be external to it; it subsumes particulars under universals, violently reducing their uniqueness to typifications or exemplars of a general or essential principle. Mimesis in contrast, involves a more sympathetic, compassionate, and noncoercive relationship of affinity between nonidentical particulars that do not then become reified into two poles of a subject/object dualism. Rather than producing hierarchical subsumption under a subjectively generated category, it preserves the rough equality of a subject/object involved.[331]

Benjamin's theory on mimesis and language are explored in a brief essay entitled *On the Mimetic Faculty* (1935).[332] Here he refers to how "nature creates similarities" and that the human capacity "of seeing resemblances" is very high. However it is important to stress that Benjamin's 'resemblances' should not be confused in terms of iconic similarity. Benjamin's discussion of mimesis, as Hansen suggests, relates to the semiotic distinction of the indexical used by Charles Sander's Pierce. Here the mimetic correspondence is based on the material contingency of temporality.[333]

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[330] Hansen, "Benjamin Cinema and Experience,"195. Relevant to this discussion is Adorno's theory of mimesis in his posthumously published book *Aesthetic Theory* (1970)

[331] Martin Jay, *"Mimesis and Mimetology: Adorno and Lacoue-Labarthe,"* (1998): 122-123. In his introduction to this essay Jay gives a brief but interesting account of the way theorists usually defined as poststructuralists have discussed mimesis in ways that confine its meaning to a "straightforward imitation of the external world." From Roland Barthes' *S/Z*, to Jacque Derrida's *The Double Session*, to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Gauttari to Jean-Francois Lyotard to Paul de Man all have concentrated on mimesis as ideologically suspect [...] a false belief in the fixity of meaning and the possibility of achieving full presence, a language game that fails to see itself as such. Lacan's warnings against the misrecognitions of the mirror stage would be yet another instance of this critique. Whereas in the much older Platonic critique of mimesis its danger was understood to be the undermining of a stable notion of truth, that is threatened by duplicitous copies of mere appearances, here it is precisely the opposite worry that is at work: the anxiety that mimesis means privileging an allegedly 'true' original over its infinite duplications." Ibid, 120-121.

[332] Benjamin, "On The Mimetic Faculty," *One Way Street,* (1997):160-163.

[333] In his study of Bazin, Phil Rosen comments on the fact, that, though two, very different thinkers, Bazin and Benjamin place importance on the indexical dimension of photography and cinema. Rosen refers on how Benjamin "[...] yokes together in productive tension two seemingly opposed functions of indexicality: its pluralization of imaged objects in mass distribution over and above any imputed authentic origin, and yet their culturally reliable transmission of a real

Benjamin comments on how the mimetic faculty has a history and that this faculty is now on the decline. He asks: "The question is whether we are concerned with the decay of this faculty or with its transformation." [334] Hansen points out that this question overlaps with the decline of the aura discussed in the Artwork essay.[335]

Central to Benjamin's thinking on the mimetic faculty is "the concept of non-sensuous similarities" that he connects to language. Benjamin is not interested in pursuing a Saussurean view of language as a arbitrary system, nor is he interested, as Hansen points out, in an onomatopoetic view of language but rather moves instead to look at the way writing operates.[336] Benjamin discusses how writing has become an archive of "non-sensuous similarities or non-sensuous correspondences. Language and the "[…]perception of similarity is bound up with the temporality of reading, the momentary and ephemeral configurations of meaning, their "flashing" into a constellation."[337] Hansen suggests that Benjamin's thoughts on the mimetic faculty are actually a theory of reading rather than a theory of language.[338] Indeed as she points out Benjamin refers to reading the surface of the sky to reading "what has never been written" and to a "critical reading of the 'natural' phenomena of nineteenth-century capitalism."[339] Concentrating on the importance of this mimetic "non-sensuous similarity" that she argues is as central to Benjamin's vision of cinema as montage, Hansen writes;

> As we could see from his genealogy of the mimetic faculty, the
> category of similarity itself has undergone a change of meaning. It
> has withdrawn into non-sensuous, i.e. figurative, correspondences,
> not only because the subjective and intersubjective capability of
> perceiving similarity has declined, but because, for related reasons,

object that serves as an origin." Though Rosen points out that Bazin and Benjamin offer two very different concepts of temporality, Bazin's based on phenomenology and Benjamin's materialist understanding of a construction of modern temporality. Rosen comments that "Both Benjamin and Bazin posit a spectatorial demand: for recovery of the distant, in time at least as much as space. From very different viewpoints and to different theoretical ends, they both suggest that the film image is sought as a document in vision, but a document achieved in relation to time, as preservation from a past, as widespread availability and exhibition of sights of past existents." Rosen, *Changed Mummified*, (2001):167-168.
[334] Benjamin, "On The Mimetic Faculty," 161.
[335] Hansen, "Benjamin Cinema and Experience," 196.
[336] For a related discussion on the significance of Sergei Eisenstein's theories of cinema to contemporary semiotics see Vjaceslav Vsevolodovic Ivanov "Eisenstein's Montage of Hieroglyphic Signs," in *On Signs* (ed)Marshall Blonsky (1985): 221-235.
[337] Hansen, "Benjamin Cinema and Experience," 198.
[338] Hansen also suggests a comparison between Benjamin's mimetic dimension of reading and Roland Barthes "third" or "obtuse" meaning. See Roland Barthes *The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Eisenstein Stills* (1970).
[339] Ibid, 198.

the status of sensuous, i.e. obvious and literal, correspondences is irrevocably compromised by the effects of universal commodity production and a concomitant standardization of social identity and subjectivity.[340]

As referred to earlier, Hansen and other Benjamin scholars (Samuel Weber for example) refer to the widely known version of Benjamin's Artwork essay in *Illuminations* (1968) as problematic partly because of Harry Zohn's unreliable translation. For Hansen what was left out in this version is also significant and she refers to an earlier version of this essay (in volume three of the Harvard edition of Benjamin's *Selected Writings*, 1989) that incorporates a discussion of technology and play, which is linked to the mimetic faculty.[341] Again it is important to stress clearly that the importance placed on the mimetic in film by Benjamin is not to be understood in terms of the images' ability to resemble, the iconicity, but rather it is its indexical relationship with the material world.[342] This is made evident in his concept of the "optical unconscious" that suggests that the camera captures reality invisible to the human eye or captures moments the photographer was neither aware nor concentrating on, in other words placing significant import on the role of contingency in photography/film. This contingency should be understood not only in terms of what the apparatus captures but also concerns itself with the mimetic reading of non-sensuous similarities and correspondences by the audience. While as Hansen points out a film theory concerning itself with the indexical may be problematic now in the age of digital imagery she refers to the way in which Benjamin complicates matters by concentrating on Mickey

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[340]Hansen, "Benjamin Cinema and Experience," 199-200. Benjamin proposes a different kind of similarity to confront the "reified forms of similarity" and explores the idea of similarity and sameness in the essays *Image of Proust* (1929) and *Hashish in Marseilles* (1932) however Hansen suggests this distinction between similarity and sameness is abandoned by the time he writes The Artwork Essay "collapsing the mimetic faculty into the manifest 'obvious' iconicity of photographic representation." (Hansen: 2002) A very clear recent example of a mimetic reading of non sensuous similarities is available in Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Tower'*, (2004). In an essay at the end of the book Spiegelman's writes of how in the weeks after September 11th he could find no comfort in music or poetry but instead started looking at old comic strips from "the optimistic dawn of the 20th century."In this brief essay Speigelman reads (and writes) his present into the comic strips. Referring to one such comic strip *Little Nemo in Slumberland* Spiegelman writes, "In our September 29, 1907, example an outsized Nemo and his companion, a Jungle Imp, are lost in the Canyons of Lower Manhattan, and make their way to the South Street piers along the East River. A giant-sized Flip, their cigar-chomping associate, scrambles to catch up with them, knocking over the tall buildings near where the twin towers would fall 94 years later." Further on discussing another cartoon strip Krazy Kat, Spiegelman writes, "It presented an open-ended metaphor that could contain all stories simultaneously; and after September 11th, Ignatz started looking a lot like Osama Bin Laden to me!" The comics were also produced on Park Row which was a block away from the World Trade Center.(Spiegelman 2004:12)
[341] Hansen, "Room for Play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema," 35.
[342] See Benjamin's *Little History of Photography* (1931), in *One Way Street.*

Mouse and animation that "does not require, or need to pretend to, a preexisting, stable referent."[343] As Hansen writes,

> For Benjamin, Mickey Mouse not only undermines the hierarchy of genres but also, by defying the laws of gravity along with the boundaries between animate and inanimate, organic and mechanical, disrupts the entire "hierarchy of creatures culminating in mankind." Benjamin's Mickey Mouse points toward the general imbrication of physiological impulses with cybernetic structures that, no longer limited to the imaginative domain of cyber-fiction, has become common practice in science and medicine, architecture and design, and a host of other areas.[344]

Mickey Mouse is important to Benjamin because he, like his audience, needs to rely on improvisation to get through whatever challenges he faces. For Mickey Mouse too, experience and memory are abandoned in response to the impact of modernity as discussed earlier. While Mickey Mouse, an animated character from the '30s can obviously be discussed through an indexical relationship with the animator (the lines of the drawing are a temporal map to an event in the material world) for Benjamin the animation's significance is the way it "[...] turns on a relation of reference with the material, historical world" not through the indexical relationship of draft and draftsman but through the non sensuous correspondence the animation has with the audience's material reality. Mickey Mouse rehearses the "repressed pathologies of technological modernity" and for Benjamin the hope is that the collective laughter Mickey Mouse provokes may prevent the destructive potential of these repressed pathologies. For Hansen, while this utopian position was finally dropped, settling for a discussion on distraction instead, the importance of Benjamin's work today in relation to media politics is the "peculiar structure of his thinking and writing" and his ability to think through apparently antithetical positions.[345] For both Hansen and Buck-Morss the most productive use of Benjamin's thoughts on cinema is the continued investigation of aesthetics as a "political ecology of the senses."[346]

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[343] Hansen, "Room for Play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema," 41.
[344] Ibid, 41. See Paul Willemen's "Of Mice and Men: reflections on Digital Imagery, *TwoNine Two* , Edinburgh, Edinburgh Projects, Edinburgh College of Art, (2000):5-20.
[345] Hansen, "Room for Play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema," 49.
[346] Ibid.

This is something, which we will return to in our discussion of moving-image installations in **Part 3**.

Laleen Jayamanne in her essay *A Slapstick Time: Mimetic Convulsion, Convulsive Knowing* discusses the "slapstick body" of Charlie Chaplin as a body that uses mimesis to confront "the mighty power of modernity itself" Jayamanne comments that "the figure of Chaplin [is] a preeminent emblematic figure of cine-mimesis who performs the crisis of mimesis in modernity in an exemplary fashion."[347] As a means of exploring the way Chaplin's mimetic performances destabilize subject/object relations Jayamanne gives an analysis of the assembly line sequence in *Modern Times* (1936). Here Chaplin as Tramp gets a job tightening bolts on the assembly line, finding it difficult to conform to the machine's "temporal rhythm." When lunchtime arrives "his arms continue to move in an involuntary mimetic spasm." Referring to the fact that the Tramp eventually gets sucked into the machine, Jayamanne writes,

> Through the mimetic performance the Tramp draws out gestures and movements that were previously unavailable both to him and to the machine as well. So when the machine spits him out he has become mimetically charged to such an extent that he begins to see wild correspondences between widely different things that have a circular shape and tries to tighten each of them, whether it be a nose, a button on a woman's bosom, or a fire hydrant.[348]

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the historical emergence of aesthetics in the context of the shift from absolutism, the emergence of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois public sphere. As a significant part of the wider field of Enlightenment philosophy, aesthetics engagement with the body shows how mimesis became significant as a means of not only forming the bourgeois subject but also as a disciplinary strategy. Pursuing a discussion on Enlightenment drama and the bourgeois 'cult of emotion' made evident the ways mimesis needs to be understood beyond the artistic realm to include a wider anthropological reading of how mimesis operates in the social world.

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[347] Jayamanne, "A Slapstick Time: Mimetic Convulsion, Convulsive Knowing," (2001):181.
[348] Jayamanne, "A Slapstick Time: Mimetic Convulsion, Convulsive knowing," 193.

Our discussion of the public sphere articulated briefly the struggle of power between absolutism and the rising bourgeoisie and the significance of this struggle to the industrialization of culture. In this context capitalism operates as the dominant system controlling the means of production and attempting to control mental production through mass culture. In articulating what Raymond Williams' refers to as the ruling classes "intention", his reading of Gramsci's theory of hegemony shows clearly the complex nature in which numerous cultural practices have a non-sensuous resemblance and confirm established forms of power, control and domination. Looking at large scale increases of urban populations and the transfer of the home from being a site of production to one of consumption foregrounds discussion on cultural production by and for mass audiences. Examining the effects of these conditions of rapid transformation on subjectivity and the way the "texture of experience" is significantly changed through processes of industrialization, urbanization and population growth or to use Ben Singer's expression, "modernity at full throttle" involved a close reading of Benjamin's theories of mimesis and experience.

The study of Benjamin's theory of experience shows the importance he places on memory and history and in this context fragmentation becomes a strategy for rupturing the "historical nightmare of capitalism." For Benjamin the factory worker's synanesthetic system, her mimetic faculty, has to shift from mediating the outside world to inside the body through the senses, in order to protect the worker from the sensory overload and deaden the senses. This of course results in perception being separated from experience, the worker performs her task like a machine and memory is irrelevant. In this context the subject blocks out reality and her political agency is compromised.

As we found in her complex and insightful argument on Benjamin's theory of experience, Buck Morss refers to the individual subject's misrecognition (following Lacan's theory of the infants mirror stage) of herself as a mass body, the surface unity of this powerful mass giving a false sense of power and safety to the individual body.

Benjamin's theory of experience and the restructuring of subjectivity in modernity revolve around his theory of mimesis, which has little do with realist aesthetics. His discussion of non-sensuous similarities and resemblances downplays iconic resemblance for a contingent temporality that foregrounds the indexical dimension of the image. However relating Benjamin's theory of mimesis to Pierce's indexical sign needs to be qualified by concentrating on the contingency of reading. Commodity production has compromised the relevance of obvious and literal correspondences and because of this Benjamin seeks out ways in which non sensuous correspondences will give the audience a means of reading, as in the example of Mickey Mouse for example, the "repressed pathologies of technological modernity" and capitalist oppression.

As we have seen above, the issue for the moving-image in relation to mimesis is whether we can begin to extrapolate why certain films look for a response close to what we might call, following Buck-Morss, anaesthetics of reception. This will be important to our discussion of serial killer films in **Part 2 Chapter 4.** In **Part 3** we will also examine how mimesis allows for a "political ecology of the senses" in relation to experimental films and moving-image installations.

Part 2   Overlapping Montage and Mainstream Cinema

Introduction

In this section our attention is directed to a discussion of montage in relation to mainstream Hollywood film. Here the discussion of montage concerns an analysis of the way certain film theories can be seen to overlap and fragment.

In **Chapter 3** contemporary debates and theories concerning genre theory are explored and developed. My identification of what would normally be seen, as a sub-category of horror "the serial killer film" is used as a case study to present an argument concerning the problematic overuse of genre theory within academia. The argument is made that when one looks at these films with any depth, the discourses that are apparent within them also exist in a number of other genre categories. Introducing the problems of identification for these "serial killer films" by film critics and academics alike, the chapter traces the way in which these films can be seen to traverse multiple genres such as crime/thriller, horror/gothic, science fiction/action, comedy and melodrama.

The first example is Gothic fiction. Discussed as an inversion of modern rationalism, the gothic marks a crisis in categories and the inability to narrate or the inability to tell. Its historical emergence at the early stages of industrialization suggests it is a "literature of alienation." Presenting discussions by theorists on possible ways of interpreting gothic monsters for example Frankenstein and Dracula suggests possible ways of reading the serial killer in these films and the killer's relationship to the processes of finance capitalism.   The way in which gothic has operated in film is examined by thinking through Mary Anne Doane's discussion of 1940s films she identifies as "paranoid women's films" and suggests a means of historically tracking Carol Clover's "final girl" which she identifies in 1970s horror/slasher films. This historical exploration suggest that not only do we find the final girl in contemporary films such as *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Copycat* but we also find her in the earlier serial dramas such as *The Perils of Pauline.*

The significance of melodrama to these "serial killer films' is also apparent and the notion of excess in both gothic and melodrama suggest a relationship. Beyond the obvious way in which these films may articulate discourses associated to melodrama, the foundational family trauma for example, our discussion develops a relationship to melodrama's theatrical roots. In doing this, the chapter also looks at how melodrama has been discussed in film studies, based on the '70s reappraisal of '50s films by Douglas Sirk and Vincent Minelli. This understanding of melodrama is expanded upon by recent research by film theorists such as Tom Gunning and Ben Singer. Significantly Tom Gunning's examination of the historical connection between sensational melodrama and its inversion the Théatre du Grande Guignol. The sensational excess in grande guignol targets the audience physically. The physical sensation created in the viewer links them to "body genre's" such as pornography. Linda William's discussing how, horror, melodrama and pornography as "body genres" may be perceived as "low" culture because of the way the audience member can be seen to mimic the emotions or the sensation of the body on film either through, cringing, weeping or orgasm. The relationship between the bodily response of the spectator and the film connects to the discussion on mimesis in **Chapter 2**.

Looking at action cinema, its excess both in terms of destruction and physical power there is a suggestion made, following Willemen that there is non- sensuous similarity in operation which charts fantasies of power and control by the finance capital that funds these films production. Following on from this allows for an examination of what particular fantasies are being articulated through these "serial killer films."

Chapter 4 gives a close reading of *The Silence of the Lambs* to expand on the way a number of discourses are in operation in this film. The problems attached to reading films through one discursive frame, such as national cinema or gender etc operate to close down other possible interpretations. For example, in how we can discern the possibility of an empowering feminist interpretation of *The Silence of the Lambs* while alternatively we are aware of the demonstrations that took place on the film's release because of its overt homophobia. This is a very clear example of the way films as an accumulation of different discourses can pull in different directions at the same time as was discussed in **Part 1**. In

this chapter I extrapolate some of the discourses such as class and labour which seem to be displaced or ignored by an overt concentration on gender. In looking at the role of mentoring in the film I suggest that this film can also be seen to have similarities with other films such as *Working Girl*, which rather than horror falls into the category of romantic comedy.

The need to explore and expand on interpretative strategies even when they pull against each other is further explored through a reference to a discussion by Laleen Jayamanne who concentrates on perception, the senses in modernity and mimesis emphasizing the significance of jumping into a film at any point rather than concentrating on the narrative alone. Jayamanne offers a useful way of employing Benjamin's theories of mimesis , which allows for an exploration of "the ecology of the senses." Employing this method of perceiving the film mimetically I explore how the sound track offers an important knowledge of Clarice that confuses the way in which address is usually comprehended through point of view alone.

As evident in our discussion on the significance of gothic in relation to the serial killer, the alignment of the killer with artist/genius is of interest to our discussion on representation and meaning. This discussion is extended to include the killer's relationship to technology by looking at *Manhunter*. Central to a discussion on *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Manhunter* is a desire to explore how these films both represent and incorporate larger cultural dynamics. This chapter explores these films as 'dramas of modernization' and tries to articulate a variety of concerns around modernity evident within them.

Chapter 3

Genre Theory and Hollywood film: 'Serial Killer films' – A Case Study

> Before Romanticism what was Generic was Literature. The rest, the
> 'popular culture' of political pamphlets, ballads, romances,
> chapbooks, was not only not generic; it escaped the law of genre,
> was excluded by that law, suffering a kind of rhetorical exclusion
> by inclusion in the classical distinction between high, middle, and
> low styles. It was seen as a kind of anarchic, free area,
> unconstrained by the rules of polite society and decorum, by genre
> in fact.[349]

As the above quote makes clear there has been a distinct shift in the way genre is conceptualized, how it is clearly related to popular culture and industrial production, indeed, within film studies applying genre theory automatically situates an interest in commercial or popular film.[350] Engaging with film through genres emphasizes "cinema as a cultural and economic institution."[351] Here categories such as the gangster film, the western, and the horror film articulate mass production rather than the *once off* 'work of art'. Though Steve Neale points out, if genre is understood simply as a means of clarifying a type of film then non-Hollywood films, both commercial and non commercial should not be excluded from this type of categorization.[352] Neale however accepts that an engagement with genre usually implies an engagement with Hollywood.

Critical interest in genre occurred in the late sixties and early seventies as a means of side stepping some of the problems apparent in *auteurism*, which was at the time the dominant theoretical model within film studies.[353] Originating from the French film journal *Cahiers du cinéma*, auteurism had initially broken with an elitist distinction made between film

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[349] T. Threadgold, "Talking about Genre: Ideologies and Incompatible Discourse," *Cultural Studies 3*, (1989): 101-26.

[350] See Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, London, Routledge, (2000), and, B.K. Grant (ed) *Film Genre Reader*, Austin, University of Texas, (1986).

[351] Grant, "Introduction," *Film Genre Reader*, ix.

[352] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 9. Later on in Neale's chapter "Definitions of Genre" he quotes the work of Mary Louise Pratt who extends genre beyond the literary and cultural field. Pratt writes " the concept of genre applies to all verbal behaviour, in all realms of discourse. Genre conventions are in play in any speech situation, and any discourse belongs to a genre, unless it is a discourse explicitly designed to flaunt the genre system." Mary Louise Pratt, "The Short Story: The Long and the Short of It," *Poetics* 10, 3 (1981): 175-94 in Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 24.

[353] See John Caughie (ed) *Theories of Authorship*, (1981, reprint 1996), which includes a comprehensive selection of writing on the subject.

from Europe seen as art film and Hollywood cinema. At its most simplified auteurism promoted the idea that the director of commercial films was as capable of imprinting his/her own artistic expression on a film as an artist or author. This resulted in a concentration of writing on individual directors without taking account of the overall range of Hollywood's production or "in charting broader trends and developments within it."[354] Another problem with auteurism as Neale points out, was how it separated films and directors from the institutional frame in which they worked.

Genre theory concentrates on placing films within a cycle or genre rather than separating them out. Erwin Panofsky's theory of iconography (a system used in the analysis of visual motifs within art history)[355] was employed by film theorists interested in genre who wanted to emphasize iconography or the visual conventions of a film. This distinguished them from those theorists who concentrated on the literary aspects of the film, character development, plot etc. While visual characteristics may appear definitive in such genres as the western and the gangster, as Neale points out many genres such as "the psychological horror film" do not have "a specific iconography."[356]

In the 1970s theorists such as Tom Ryall and Andrew Tudor did try to shift the discussion away from taxonomic exercises towards an engagement with genre, which concentrated, on ideas to do with convention and expectation.[357] Directing attention to the unproblematic way the term 'genre' is often used by audiences and the industry alike, Ryall and Tudor stressed that the concept of genre was not at all transparent. Referring to their work Neale writes,

> It raises questions about the nature and purpose of genre criticism. And, implicitly at least, it raises questions as to how 'a common cultural consensus' is established. What agencies and institutions are involved? What is the role of the film industry? What is the role of film critics, film reviewers and the like? On the one hand it helps underline [...] the importance of distributors, reviewers and critics.

[354] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 11.
[355] See Panofsky,*Meaning in the Visual Arts*. (1970):51-81.
[356] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 16.
[357] Tom Ryall, "Teaching Through Genre," *Screen Education*, 17 (1975-76): 27-33) and Andrew Tudor, *Theories of Film*, (1974).

On the other it helps stress the culturally relative, and therefore the culturally contingent, nature of genres themselves.[358]

Rick Altman writing in 1984 distinguishes two methods employed in genre theory both of which he argues are ahistorical.[359] Altman suggests two distinct directions genre theory has taken since the '60s, one, following Claude Lévi-Srauss, concentrates on the ritual relationship an audience has to a film, implicit in this approach is an understanding that the audience is in control of Hollywood production. By revealing their preferences, Hollywood is obliged to respond to the audience's desires. The other direction, influenced by the Frankfurt school concentrates on the way in which Hollywood manipulates audiences, deploying the audience's psychic investment to their own ends. Aware that these positions are opposed Altman suggests that what is required is a theory that deals with the apparent contradictions. Following Tzvetan Todorov and Fredric Jameson, he distinguishes between the semantic and syntactic approach to genre.[360] The semantic approach concerns itself with the "common traits, attitudes, characters, shots, locations, sets" while alternatively the syntactic approach "privileges the structures into which they are arranged."[361] The semantic approach offers "broad applicability" but has little capacity for explanatory power; the syntactic stresses the "specific meaning-bearing structures" while losing broad applicability.[362] Altman suggests that rather choosing one or the other a semantic/syntactic approach should be developed. Altman writes:

> A dual approach permits a far more accurate description of the numerous intergeneric connections typically suppressed by single-minded approaches. It is simply not possible to describe Hollywood cinema accurately without the ability to account for the numerous films that innovate by combining the syntax of one genre with the semantics of another.[363]

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[358] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 18.

[359] This ahistorical approach relates to the theoretical concentration on the synchronic within semiotics generally. See Rick Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," [1984] in Grant (ed) *Film Genre Reader*, 26-39.

[360] See Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic : A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre,* (1975) also, Fredric Jameson "Magical Narratives: On the Dialectical Use of Genre Criticism", *The Political Unconscious, Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, London, Methuen, (1981), 103-150.

[361] Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," 30.

[362] Ibid, 31.

[363] Ibid, 32

The importance, for Altman, of the semantic/syntactic relationship is the way it functions as the site for ongoing negotiations between Hollywood and its audience and between ritual and ideological functions. Altman argues that rather than seeing Hollywood as acquiescing to the public's desires or of merely manipulating the audience, particular genres reach levels of accommodation where audience desire fits with Hollywood's priorities. "Because the public does not want to know that it is being manipulated, the successful ritual/ideological 'fit' is almost always one that disguises Hollywood's potential for manipulation while playing up its capacity for entertainment."[364]

Paul Willemen however suggests that rather than audience expectations *fitting in* with industrial priorities through mutual negotiation, audiences are in fact disciplined to find their position in relation to generic labelling.[365] Distinguishing between different methods of genre categorization Willemen refers to *Variety's* "headline capsule descriptions of films," suggesting that these captions address producers, distributors and exhibitors.[366] Willemen writes,

> The generic brand image tells us how a film's profit-making potential has been calculated into its very design at the production stage by the way it adheres to or varies from generic formula, while its marketing brand image advises distributors and exhibitors on how best to realize and maximize that profit.[367]

Willemen differentiates between two generic menus, production genres and marketing genres. Production genres can be understood as the generic categories analysed by film students such as melodrama, science fiction, the western, horror etc. While marketing strategies on the other hand are concerned with whom to sell the product to, 'youth market', and 'action market' etc. For Willemen the problem with genre theory as practiced is that the "industry's audience-marketing categorizations" are not discussed.[368] How a film is

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[364] Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," 34.
[365] Paul Willemen, *Action Cinema, Labour Power and the Video Shop, Conference Paper,* (2003) Manuscript.
[366] Ibid, 5.
[367] Ibid, 5-6.
[368] Ibid, 7. Later in his paper Willemen also discusses the way in which the emergence of video stores employing the most basic genre categories effected the way in which critics and students "with only the dimmest memory of cinema prior to video [...]retroactively incorporate[d] films into a genre that, in effect, was invented by video stores and fed back into the production sector." (Willemen:16)

generically defined will depend on "which sector of the industry, production or distribution/exhibition, is doing the assigning. A western may be marketed as an action film to 'low IQ' audience sectors. Generic categories will thus vary according to the power relations between these sectors of the industry."[369] In a study by R.E.Kapsis (1991) "the relationship between generic production, box-office success, audience preference and industrial practice at a specific and particular point in time," is researched.[370] This study seems to confirm Paul Willemen's discussion of the way in which audience expectations rather than fitting in with industrial priorities through mutual negotiation are in fact disciplined in relation to generic output. Kapsis' study emphasis the way in which an "inter-organizational network of production companies, distributors, mass media gatekeepers, and retailers" mediate between production and consumption.[371] It is this network's perception of audiences' desires, which control the genres, which get made. His research looks at horror films made between the 1970s and 1980s. Tracking information from box offices and reviews, which proved these films popularity, the situation changes by 1980 however as concerns of market saturation led producers to cut down on production. Though domestic rentals where high, perceptions of the foreign market were that these films were in decline. Fewer films were made which affected the quality of those that did get made and as a result a noticeable box-office decline did occur. As Neale writes,

> Neither the end of the cycle nor the ensuing long-term decline in horror production were due to any observable decline in the popularity of horror films among audiences in America, or to any identifiable change in the basic nature of the films themselves. Although their cultural significance changed with their increasing notoriety, it is unclear how – or whether - that notoriety altered the perceptions of the audiences who saw them [...] What *is* clear is that economic factors and industrial decisions played a crucial part.[372]

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[369] Ibid, 7. This becomes an extremely important issue within film education in terms of the ideological ramifications of ignoring this distinction. As Willemen points out, "The theoretical coherence of a genre is not something that unduly troubles the people who market films to us. And academics performing theoretical summersaults and high-wire acts in an effort to endow current or past marketing categories with some semblance of intellectual coherence offers a rather sad spectacle." Ibid, 5. These points will be developed in the conclusion of this chapter.

[370] R. E. Kapsis, "Hollywood Genres and the Production of Cultural Perspective," in B. A. Austin (ed), *Current Research in Film: Audiences, Economics and the Law*, vol.5, Norwood, Ablex, (1991), 68-85, in Neale, Genre and Hollywood, 228.

[371] Ibid, 70, quoted in Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 228.

[372] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 229.

Neale suggests that this emphasis on the "production of cultural perspective" may provide more "convincing accounts of the socio-cultural significance of genres and cycles" than either ritual or ideological theories.[373]

'Serial Killer Films'

In the following discussion of 'serial killer films', an analysis of how these films traverse different genres is developed. This would also appear to accommodate recent discussion on 'New Hollywood' production as markedly hybrid in comparison to the studio era.[374] However as Neale's research of Hollywood output under the studio era indicates, indeterminate generic categories like " 'drama and 'costume picture'" were common.[375] Neale argues that while much is made of hybridity in relation to New Hollywood film "bolstered by the tenets of post-modern theory," it is important to note that intertextual cross referencing is evident in the 1930s and that "hybridity is as common in old Hollywood as it is in the New Hollywood."[376] The suggestion that new Hollywood is "post-generic" ignores the way in which all meaning production is dependent in some way on expectation and convention articulating the point made by Jacque Derrida that "every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text."[377] In the following discussion I will clarify the way in which the serial killer film "participate in several genres at once."[378]

The term serial killer was first coined by Robert Ressler, the co-founder of the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit in 1974.[379] In coining this term he had two things in mind, one the

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[373] Ibid.

[374] See J. Collins, *Architecture of Excess: Cultural Life in the Information Age*, (1995): 125-56; J., Hill "Film and Postmodernism," in J. Hill and P.C. Church (eds), *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies* (1998): 101; P. Philips, "Genre Starand Auteur: An Approach to Hollywood Cinema," in J. Nelmes (ed), *An Introduction to Film Studies*, (1996): 134-7. and J. Sartelle, "Dreams and Nightmares in the Hollywood Blockbuster," G. Nowell-Smith (ed), *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, (1996):516-26.

[375] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 238.

[376] Ibid, 248-249.[...] There was a multi-media environment in the 1930s, an environment that included vaudeville and popular theatre, radio and comic books, pulp magazines, newspapers and the music of Tin Pan Alley and Broadway. This was not the same environment as that of the 1980s or 1990s, nor was it as extensively cross-owned by media corporations. But it was one in which a number of majors had a stake. [...] And it did constitute an extensive field of multi-media consciousness, institutional cross over and inter-textual cross- reference, as a glance at any comedian comedy and almost any revue, musical comedy or low budget action film or serial will verify. Ibid.

[377] The term "post-generic" is from Sartelle, "Dreams and Nightmares in the Hollywood Blockbuster," 516. See Jacque Derrida, "the Law of Genre," in D. Attridge (ed), *Acts of Literature*, (1992):230.

[378] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 25.

[379] Robert K. Ressler, *Whoever Fights Monsters*, 1992):29-30, in Mark Seltzer, *Serial Killers, Death and Life in America's Wound Culture*, (1998):16.

"crime in series" and the "serial adventures we used to see on Saturday at the movies."[380] John Douglas, (who also worked in the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit) in his book *Mindhunter*, also refers to the importance of fiction and film in defining the serial killer. "Our antecedents...actually do go back to crime fiction more than crime fact".[381]

Though the serial killer is 'officially' defined through crime fiction, placing 'serial killer films' within a particular genre proves more difficult.[382] Films such as *Copycat* (1997) or *Seven* (1995) fall easily within the register of the suspense thriller, and while detection is often central to the 'serial killer film' this is not always the case. Kim Newman, writing in *Sight and Sound* differentiates Henry *Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986) from "other entries in the serial killer cycle" because the film "has no interest in the cocktail of issues that surround the killing. It never cuts away to the police, the media or the politicians."[383] Remaining outside an engagement with the law, *Henry...* falls most probably within the boundaries of drama, as does Minus *Man* (1999).[384] While Variety described *The Silence of the Lambs* upon its release as a "mesmerizing thriller" (1991) Judith Halberstam in her book 'Skin Shows' refers to it as a "postmodern horror movie," relating the film to the gothic horror of Frankenstein.[385] Carol Clover writing on slasher films in 1992 refers to films such as *The Silence of the Lambs*, as "slasher movies for yuppies".[386] Jeffrey A. Brown situates *The Silence of the Lambs* within the action genre relating it to a number of other films with "action heroines."[387] Christopher Sharrett referring to the film's neo-conservatism remarks that this derives "from a hoary reference: the Western. *The Silence of the Lambs* is one of many films of the last decade that re-incarnates that genre and its

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[380] Roger Hagedorn gives a useful description of the serial form:"A serial is, by definition, an ongoing narrative released in successive parts. In addition [...] serial narratives share elements [...] These include refusal of closure; interwined subplots, large casts of characters incorporating a diverse range of age, gender, class, and, increasingly, race representation to attract a similarly diverse audience." Hagedorn, "Technology and Economic Exploitation: The Serial as a Form of Narrative Presentation." *Wide Angle 10* no.4 (1988):4-12.

[381] John Douglas, *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit*, (1995):95.

[382] It is difficult to find out when the industry started using the term serial killer as a category, however interestingly Steve Neale refers to "the serial killer films of the '70s" which as far as I can determine was not a term used at the time. Neale, *Genre and Hollywood, 96.*

[383] Kim Newman, "Henry Portrait of a Serial Killer", *Sight and Sound,* (1991):65.

[384] Edward Guthmann, "Minus is less than desired", *San Francisco Chronicle*, (1999) URL: http://www.sfgate.com/eguide/arts/movies-19042.html.

[385] Halberstam, Judith, *Skin Shows, Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, (1998): 163.

[386] Clover, Carol, *Men Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*, (1992):232.

[387] Jeffrey A. Brown, "Gender and the Action Heroine: Hardbodies and the Point of No Return," *Cinema Journal* 35,3 (1996):52.

conventions. The older man/young acolyte construct so basic to many Westerns is central here (*The Tin Star* is a point of reference)."[388]

In his book Serial *Killers*, Mark Seltzer refers to *Virtuosity* (1995) and *Copycat as* "serial killer movies,"[389] although arguably one could say *Virtuosity* equally resides in science fiction and on its release *Copycat* was reviewed as a "psychological thriller."[390]*The Hitcher* (1986) is described as "cross genre horror/thriller/road movie." [391] The advertising copy on the video release of *The Cell* (2000) describes it as both a "riveting science fiction thriller" and also a "psychological thriller." Atom Egoyan's *Felicia's Journey* (1999) is described as a suspense-thriller. On the other hand both Cindy Sherman's *Office Killer* (1997) is a comedy, as is *Man Bites Dog* (1992). Peter Wollen in an article on Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* suggests the film combines three sub genres, "the serial killer film, the film about film and the psychoanalyst or clinical psychologist film."[392] He continues:

> The serial killer film has a long pedigree. Beginning obliquely in Weimar Germany with *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Pandora's Box*, it reached its culmination in Fritz Lang's *M*. It has included classics as weirdly diverse as Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux* and Laughton's The *Night of the Hunter*. It is a major force in contemporary cinema, encompassing Hollywood movies as different as Bigelow's *Blue Steel*, Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* and Stone's *Natural Born Killers,* as well as midnight cult films such as *Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer*, and off-beat documentaries such as Nick Broomfield's *Aileen Wournos: The selling of a Serial Killer*.[393]

As the examples above suggest, the industry and academia have no consensus on where to place these films and yet there is a tacit, if somewhat tentative agreement of what a 'serial killer film' is. This is based, in large measure on the type of killing involved, the serial killer being described by the FBI " as one who commits at least three murders over a

[388] Christopher Sharrett,"The Horror Film in Neoconservative Culture," *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 21, no.3 (Fall 1993):103-4)
[389] Seltzer, *Serial Killers*, 263
[390] Stark, Susan, "Movie Review: 'Copycat' is a grisly original", *The Detroit News*, (October 27,1995), URL: http://detnews.com/menu/stories/21982.html.
[391] See www.Allmovie.com
[392] Peter Wollen, "Michael Powell's Peeping Tom," *Sight and Sound 12* (1994):19-21.
[393] Wollen, "Michael Powell's Peeping Tom," 20.

period of time with a cooling off in between, indicating premeditation for each one."[394] That this term has become an acceptable definition for the industry is clear from the descriptive label on the video cover, which now has definitions such as "serial killer/ thriller" in many cases. For example, the copy on the video cover of *Eye of the Killer* (1999) states, "A gripping serial chiller…The Sixth Sense meets The Bone Collector." Although Andy Black writing on *Seven*, refers to the director David Fincher as reinventing "the somewhat stale serial killer genre," what becomes apparent, however, is that the 'serial killer film' does not reside in any particular genre but emerges in the thriller, horror, science fiction, action, the western, comedy and melodrama.[395] The discourses, which flow through and are inscribed in/on to the figure of the serial killer are not reducible to particular articulations in a narrative process, but emerge at the intersection of a number of genres. One explanation of why 'serial killer films' emerge in different genres is the potential for overlap and hybridity in genres such as horror, crime, and science fiction, adventure and fantasy.[396] However, as I will argue later, understanding these films in terms of melodrama is also important if we want to understand what is at stake in them. For example, within these films there is usually an allusion at some point to a foundational trauma within the family.

Returning to the 'naming event' of serial killing mentioned above, and its perceived relation to crime fiction, is to partially explain why so many 'serial killer films' are detective films, where "disruption is always figured literally- as physical violence."[397] Discussing the western, the gangster film and the detective film's relationship to physical violence as 'disruption' Neale continues:

> In each case, equilibrium and disequilibrium are signified specifically in terms of Law, in terms of the presence/absence, effectiveness/ineffectiveness of legal institutions and their agents. In each case too, therefore, the discourses mobilized in these genres

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[394] Seltzer, *Serial Killers*, 105.
[395] Andy Black, *Necronomicon Book Two*, (1998):145.
[396] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 92.
[397] Neale, Stephen, *Genre*, (1980):21.

are discourses about crime, legality, justice, social order, civilization, private property, civic responsibility and so on.[398]

From Neale's points above we can see that 'Serial killer films' such as *Manhunter* (1988), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1990), *Copycat* (1995), *Red Dragon* (2002), *Seven* (1995) and *Night Watch* (1997) all articulate a worry around what he refers to as the "effectiveness/ineffectiveness of legal institutions and their agents."[399]

All the above films can be defined as suspense thrillers, which Tzvetan Todorov situates as emerging historically as a transition between an earlier form of detective fiction, the whodunit and the post World War II noir thriller.[400] For Todorov the whodunit works as two stories, one present and one absent. The absent story is usually the event (murder) preceding the narrative's present, which is the story of unfolding knowledge accumulation by the reader about the circumstances to do with the 'absent' story, the murder. The two stories are merged in the thriller, where the "narrative coincides with the action", the reader no longer looks back but forward to what will happen. With the whodunit the detective/narrator is safe but with the thriller the detective loses her/his immunity. In the suspense thriller 'mystery' is still activated, as the reader's curiosity is directed towards the past and also to the future. The mystery as that aspect of the story before the present action in the murder establishes the nascent 'killer' series, and the question of whodunit is standard to the 'serial killer films' mentioned above. Usually, however at some point midway in the narrative, we as viewers are given knowledge regarding the serial killer's identity. It is from this point that suspense becomes dominant usually arising over questions as to the safety of the targeted victims and/or the detective. Kim Newman's comments on the psycho-thriller also offer some explanation regarding the limits of the whodunnit formula in analyzing these films. He writes,

> Considered as a sub genre of horror, the psycho-thriller [...] deals with the horrors of madness. The pure mystery is uncomfortable with homicidal mania, since a motiveless criminal sabotages the

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[398] Ibid.
[399] Ibid.
[400] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetic of Prose*, (1977): 164.

essential puzzle element of a whodunnit... Anyone can secretly be a psycho.[401]

Tzvetan Todorov's definition of the fantastic also throws light on a certain elements within these films, namely the difficulty of how to adequately define and place the serial killer as either human or supernatural evil. In Todorov's discussion sustaining ambiguity between truth or illusion, dream or reality is central to the fantastic. Casting doubt on our knowledge of the world, either by posing questions to our rational thoughts or a questioning of our senses, the fantastic is precisely the ambiguity or doubt created and sustained through the narrative. For Todorov once a decision is made with regard to what is raising the doubt - such as the appearance of the devil for example, by deciding that the devil does or does not exist we have moved to a different genre in making that decision. The Fantastic resides in "the hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature."[402]The supernatural presents itself and a choice must be made to accept the supernatural or revert to natural causes for the event. In this way the fantastic acts as a dividing line between two other genres, the uncanny and the marvellous. Referring to Roger Callois' comment on the fantastic as that which seeks "incoherence as a principle and reject[s] any signification, Todorov explains the conditions required for the fantastic.[403] Firstly the reader must be obliged to hesitate between "a natural and supernatural explanation of the events described."[404] Secondly a character may also hesitate, and thirdly the reader "must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as 'poetic' interpretations."[405] Serial killer films do not fall definitively within the realm of the fantastic and yet the potential 'hesitation' is presented in the way these films actively maintain an incoherence as to what sort of human does these monstrous premeditated acts, the serial killer/monster appearing normal and human for the most part and yet, evidently, violating accepted registers of normality through the specifics of his

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[401] Kim Newman, "Thriller, qu'est-ce que c'est?" in *British Horror Cinema*, eds.,Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley, (2002): 71-81.

[402] Todorov, *The Fantastic : A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* ,15. Todorov's theory of The Fantastic is also important in terms of genre theory as it explicitly moves away from models based on taxonomies within the text to include the audience as part of the process of genre definition.

[403] Roger Callois in Todorov, *The Fantastic*, 19.

[404] Ibid.

[405] Ibid. Steve Neale comments that, "although many works involve the hesitation to which Todorov refers, very few sustain it throughout." Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 35. Neale offers cinematic examples of *Vampyr* (1928) and *The Birds* (1963)

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murderous activities.[406] Arguably the *hesitation* is also echoed in the killer's last stand after presumed death, a mainstay of teen slasher films of the '70s and early '80s but also evident in *Copycat* and more recently in *Red Dragon*.[407] While contemporary audiences do not necessarily assume a link between the serial killer and the supernatural the inability to explain how society constructs such an individual suggests a hesitation or doubt toward the assumed powers of rational society as progressive narrative. [408]

The serial killer is discussed as a figure, which cannot be fully comprehended. In nearly all these films there is moment in which someone asks who or what could have done this only to be told there is no name for what he is. This formulates the serial killer in a supernatural discourse while remaining very much just a man. On the one hand the serial killer is "alarmingly normal" and on the other "indefinable." In *Manhunter* referring to the serial killer we are told "psychoanalysts call him a psychopath...they don't know what else to call him."

The serial killer's identity very often functions as an empty category, as John Doe says in *Seven* "It doesn't matter who I am.... who I am means absolutely nothing". Even the killer's name John Doe registers this, as it is universal term for an unidentified body, in other words, Mr. Anonymous. And yet normality is a key issue in negotiating the serial killer in these films, a point recognized by Judith Halberstam in her discussion of *The Silence of the Lambs*, referring to Hannah Arendt's "Report on the Banality of Evil" and Arendt's realization that Eichmann, rather than conforming to a recognizable and comforting "abnormal monster" was "terribly and terrifyingly normal".[409] Normality at its most obvious is based on the appearance of the serial killer/monster who is physically normal in the extreme (normality= white male),[410] but also in his everyday behaviour, he is "alarmingly normal,"[411] Seltzer remarks "one detects in the tendency towards resemblance

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[406] Kim Newman comments that it is " [...] a long established tradition in horror, especially at the most disreputable margins of an already disreputable genre that human evil or madness can substitute for the supernatural if horrific and gruesome enough." (Newman 2002)

[407] *Red Dragon* is an adaptation of a book written in the '80s. This date may explain why the killer returns one last time as this was a popular situation in the preceding teen slasher films..

[408] See José Monléon's discussion of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein this chapter, 118-19.

[409] Hannah Arendt, "Report on the Banality of Evil," (1963) in Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 161.

[410] The obvious exception being the all over body tattoo of the killer in *Red Dragon*.

[411] Seltzer, *Serial Killers*, 35.

a basic non distinction [...] a failure of distinction which means that forms of personation (self-making) are scarcely separable from a radical depersonation (self absorption in space).[412] Seltzer refers to Roger Callois' account of imitation as that which "extends beyond the protective mimicries of camouflage to a tendency towards simulation," implying that the serial killer exceeds a similarity based on protecting life, but rather that "life takes a step backwards."[413] This amounts to what Seltzer defines as a "corporeal mimesis." In this way the subject, the serial killer, is not similar to anything in particular just similar. Rather than advancing towards life, the inanimate is desired.[414]

What Callois' discussion opens up for Seltzer is how the serial killer over-identifies with processes of socialization in society, which he refers to as the "mass in person". Here the "armoured" subject is over socialized. "The formation of the killer with a machine-like or divivified periphery: the man whose interior has lost its meaning in its utter dependence on the mechanical drills relentlessly binding him to external and social forms."[415] In extension, Seltzer develops an argument whereby the serial killer and serial violence are intimately connected to "media technologies of relay and communication." [416] In *The Hitcher* when Rutger Hauer playing the emotional-less psychopath is asked by detectives where he comes from he replies, "Disneyland." In Copycat, the serial killer copies the most notorious serial killers in recent American history down to the finest detail. Reminiscent of Manhunter, *The Silence of the Lambs*, (and also evident in *Red Dragon)* the serial killer on the outside is in communication with one behind bars. Referencing the importance of being caught to achieve full fame and recognition for the crimes perpetrated, in *Copycat,* the imprisoned serial killer publishes a book on his activities.

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[412] Ibid, 49.

[413] Roger Callios, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," trans. John Sheppley, *October 31* (Winter 1984):30). For Discussions on Callois' account of mimesis see Denis Hollier, "Mimesis and Castration,1937," *October 31* (Winter 1984):3-15 and Hollier, "The Word of God: 'I am Dead'," October 44 (Spring 1988): 75-87;Rosalind Krauss, "Corpus Delicti," October 33 (Summer 1985): 31-72 and Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes* (1993): 342-43.

[414] Seltzer, *Serial Killers*, 50.

[415] Ibid, 51.

[416] Ibid, 69. Jane Caputi refers to Mark Branch who murdered Sharon Gregory in Massachusetts in 1988. "Branch at the time, was undergoing psychological counselling due to his obsession with slasher films[...] When his home was searched, police found over 75 slasher videos, and 64 similar books..." (Caputi 1990:9)

The chameleon like character of the serial killer who performs a "corporeal mimesis" is apparent on the one hand by the ability to act normal in the extreme extending to the killer's inability at self distinction in a 'mass' urban society, which is in effect "countered in the media spectacle of public violence: hence his autograph or 'signature' crimes."[417] It is this 'signature' crime, which allows the killer to distinguish himself from the mass, the notoriety gained from the media giving him legitimation or access to a televisual identity beyond anonymity. This desire for recognition through mass media technologies is of course a dialectical relationship, for as Seltzer points out; gaining the 'celebrity status' of being *somebody* is also what makes the serial killer similar to everybody else. Within an "anonymous mass society," we all arguably aspire to being recognized, as being somebody famous, what Adorno and Horkeimer have described as pseudo individuality in a homogenizing culture industry.[418] Paul Willemen refers to this as the "authentication of ones being," a process which is a pre-modern form of recognition a "feudal-absolutist scopic regime [which] concerns the social, and indeed the existential authentication and legitimation of an individual subject by way of an authority's gaze, by appearing in the authority's field of vision and being recognized and authenticated by that authority".[419] The authority in this case is the telecommunications and media networks.

Gothic

Judith Halberstam, in her book *Skin Shows* (1995) places these films within the category of gothic.[420] While there are many links between detective fiction and gothic fiction, in gothic, as Halberstam points out "crime is embodied" in the form of the monster. "Gothic, is the breakdown of genre and crisis occasioned by the inability to 'tell', meaning both the inability to narrate and the inability to categorize.[421] Gothic [...] marks a peculiarly modern

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[417] Seltzer, *Serial Killers*, 135.

[418] See T.W. Adorno and m. Horkheimer, 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", (1977).

[419] Willemen, "Regimes of Subjectivity and Looking," 104.

[420] As a literary definition 'Gothic' refers to novels written between 1760 and 1820. Authors include Horace Walpole, Matthew Lewis, C.R. Maturin, Sheridan Le Fanu, Mary Shelly and Ann Radcliffe. The term itself goes back further than this literature to a means of describing the northern European tribe of the Goths, considered barbaric. Goth was expanded to include all things Teutonic or Germanic. By the eighteenth century gothic became a descriptive term for all things medieval. See David Punter 1996.

[421] See also Tania Modleski "The Terror of Pleasure: The Contemporary Horror Film and Postmodern Theory," in Modleski (ed) *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass, Culture,* (1986):155-66. Modleski comments on how these films (slasher films primarily) are unconcerned with character and plot development. Also the open-endedness explicit in the films besides satisfying the industrial potential for sequels disrupts "expectations of closure." These contemporary horror films are the "other film" to classical narrative film. Ibid.

preoccupation with boundaries and their collapse."[422] Elizabeth Napier also refers to Gothic's "liminal status."[423] In Napier's discussion of 18 [th] Century gothic fiction she suggests that gothic fails as a genre and this failure is marked by the reader's response to the gothic narrative. Napier writes,

> Allured and then stupefied by an excess of horror, he [sic] cannot, finally, entertain the complex response of ambivalence that the form ideally demands. It is not, as in the figure of the classical Greek gorgon, the mixture of beauty and horror that petrifies, but the exhaustion at being tantalized by meaning, and finally being denied it that is so vexing.[424]

Julian Petley also makes links between gothic and horror, referring to the ways in which both gothic fiction and horror film have similarly been attacked by critics for their "negative connotations."[425] Referring to Gothic's critical reception, Petley comments that it was seen in direct opposition to the "highly valued ideals of the Enlightenment, with its stress on harmony, order, rationality, symmetry proportion and classical rule governed forms."[426] The gothic narrative emerges as the inversion of modern rationalism. However, elements of the gothic narrative emerge again and again in both literature and cinema haunting "the progress of modernity with counter narratives displaying the underside of enlightenment and humanist values."[427]David Punter examining the persistence of gothic suggests that in order to explore the cultural anxieties depicted and its continuation as a cultural motif we need to return to its literary emergence at a time "in which the early forces of industrialization were producing vast changes in the ways people lived and worked."[428]He suggests that a means of situating the historical specificity of gothic is by "seeing it as a literature of alienation."[429] Using an early work by Marx in which he lists four types of alienation related to the formation of capitalism, Punter explores their relationship with gothic narratives. *Frankenstein* and The *Island of Dr Moreau* speak of

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[422] Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 22.
[423]Elizabeth R.Napier, *The Failure of Gothic, Problems of disjunction in an Eighteenth Century Literary Form,* (1987):4.
[424] Elizabeth R.Napier, *The Failure of Gothic, Problems of disjunction in an Eighteenth Century Literary Form,* 149.
[425] Julian Petley, Introduction, (eds) Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley, *British Horror Cinema,* London, British Film Institute, (2002):24.
[426] Ibid.
[427] F., Botting, *Gothic.*London(1996):2.
[428] David Punter, The Literature of Terror Vol 1 The Gothic Tradition, London, New York Longman (1996):193.
[429] Ibid, 197.

alienated labour, where monsters are created by creative techniques, which are not controllable by their makers. Referring to man's alienation from nature, Punter refers to the gothic landscape where reality is eclipsed by a dark expressionism. Secondly, he refers to fragmentation where man is alienated from his 'human-ness' separated from the community into the "realms of the divine or the diabolic."[430] The final form of alienation is from the self where it becomes "impossible for the psyche to hold together in the face of the violence offered to it by capitalistic regimentation: thus the psychotic heroes and heroines of *Peeping Tom* and *Repulsion* [...] thus the already collapsed heroes of *Red Dragon, The Wasp Factory* and *The Idea of Fun.*"[431] The cultural specificity of terror and horror and its relationship to subject formation under capitalism is also located in "alienating bureaucratic and technological reality."[432] This is evident in Cindy Sherman's *Office Killer*, Michael Mann's *Manhunter* and Kathryn Bigelow's *Strange Days* (1995).

Following Franco Moretti, Monléon writes that,

> Frankenstein [was] the embodiment of industrial production: he was built, literally, as a result of scientific and material advances. [...] Frankenstein's monster travelled through the European countryside not only retracing the Napoleonic invasions but also incarnating the incursions of industrialism into the 'harmonic' universe of peasants and fishermen, inspiring fear and chaos by his mere presence. The response that the monster's intrusion elicits from the people is reminiscent of certain attitudes toward industrialization, in particular that of the Luddite movement.[433]

While the monster is recognized as a criminal because he kills innocent peasants Victor Frankenstein must take responsibility also as he invented the creature. For Monléon, what this internalization of otherness points to is that monstrosity is not only real but resides in reason. "Victor and his creature, the representation of science and progress and the projection of crime and destruction were all part of a single unit standing in a precarious equilibrium."[434]

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[430] Ibid.
[431] Ibid.
[432] Botting,, *Gothic.*13.
[433] Ibid,23.
[434] Ibid.

This internalization of otherness was articulated in the 19th century as a worry around the interpretation of reality, "reality was a problematic entity with several, and even contradictory, layers of signification."[435] Following Todorov's discussion on the fantastic, Monléon stating how representations query "the egalitarian vision of the Enlightenment" where what is negotiated is precisely a "problem of vision, of recognition."[436] He refers to Edgar Allen Poe's work as the most significant of this period of the fantastic. Here reason is never presented as the highest order and a return to order is not necessarily guaranteed. In addition the internalization of the monstrous is not restricted to the characters in the story but includes "unreliable or mad narrators" undermining reason where it was considered most secure, through writing itself.[437] This poses difficulties in making a clear distinction between reason and unreason. Monléon distinguishes the monster of gothic as one who is quite obviously a monster however; the monster in the fantastic appears normal, indistinguishable from "other members of society except for slight deviations."[438]

> In general, the monster was offered as a simple perversion of the human image, as a physical or psychological distortion of the human norm. In this sense the image of the monster did not differ much from the conception that the dominant culture imposed upon the lower classes.[439]

Monléon discusses how in the 19th Century the worker, alienated through industrialization becomes a threat to bourgeois society and therefore becomes part of "the universe of unreason." Monléon quotes Proudhon's remarks,

> When the worker has been stupefied by the fragmentary, the division of labour, by serving machines, by obscurantist education; when he has been discouraged by low wages, demoralized by unemployment and starved by monopoly [...] then he begs, he filches, he cheats, he robs, he murders.[440]

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[435] Ibid, 25.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Ibid, 26.Posing questions of representation itself is something which is also evident in serial killer films which I will discuss later on in this chapter.
[438] Ibid.
[439] Ibid.
[440] Louis Chevalier, *Labouring Classes and Dangerous Classes*, [1973] quoted in Monléon, "1848: the Assault on Reason", 27.

Within this categorization as monstrous, the workers are both "created by reason in its own image" and its negation reflecting a "concave" image of bourgeois order. Monléon referring to this caricature remarks on how the implied resemblance meant more stringent forms of categorization were required to distinguish the rich from the poor "to justify social difference."[441] Criminal types were recognized by certain physical characteristics and these characteristics were often applied to the worker.[442] Fantastic monsters had distortions such as ape-like agility, sharp teeth (vampires) or hairy bodies etc. For Monléon these distortions were part of a process of a blurring of boundaries between real and unreal. He remarks that while the distortion offered a means of marking the monstrous it also presented these images as familiar. The monstrous was very much within the self and for this reason within Fantastic literature there is an engagement with psychology.

While Monléon discusses monsters in relation to industrialization Franco Amoretti comments on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as "capitalism personified," remarking that contrary to the apparent noble lineage "Count Dracula is an aristocrat only in a manner of speaking." [443]Remarking on Jonathan Harker's incredulity to the fact that Dracula does not have servant's Moretti continues,

> Dracula also lacks the aristocrat's conspicuous consumption: he
> does not eat, he does not drink, he does not make love, he does not
> like showy clothes, he does not go to the theatre and he does not go
> hunting, he does not hold receptions and does not build stately
> homes.[444]

Though the articulation of Count Dracula as a metaphor for capital while undoubtedly evident as many interpretations of the text suggest, what is equally apparent is how the text functions within a textual economy whereby Count Dracula represents a compromise

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[441] Ibid.

[442]Tom Gunning in his essay "Tracing the Individual Body, Photography, Detectives, and early Cinema" refers to the significance of photography to fixing a criminal identity in the 19th century. He writes, "The early proponents of police photography recognized that the new procedure both mimicked the earlier application of the branding iron and improved upon it technologically. In 1854, the inspector general of French prisons, Louis-Mathurin Moreau- Christophe, promoted the adoption of photographing the prison population as the "infliction of a new mark."
Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body" in Charney and Schwartz (eds), *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, (1995):21.

[443] Franco Moretti, "Dialectic of Fear" in *Signs taken for Wonders*, [1995] Reprinted in (ed.), Ken Gelder *The Horror Reader*, (2000):148-160.

[444] Ibid, 148.

formation between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. Referring to Stoker's vampire as an example of capital in 1897, Moretti comments on the recession of the previous twenty years and how capital "rises again to set out on the irreversible road of concentration and monopoly." Remarking on how Dracula will not tolerate competition Moretti writes,

> Like monopoly capital, his ambition is to subjugate the last vestiges of the liberal era and destroy all forms of economic independence [...] The vampire, like monopoly, destroys the hope that one's independence can one day be brought back. He threatens the idea of individual liberty. For this reason the nineteenth-century bourgeois is able to imagine monopoly only in the guise of Count Dracula, the aristocrat, the figure of the past, the relic of distant lands and dark ages. [...] Monopoly is *the past* of competition, the Middle Ages. He cannot believe it can be *its future*, that competition itself can *generate* monopoly in new forms.[445]

This retracing of the map charting the rise of industrialization by Frankenstein mentioned above and monopoly capital in the guise of Count Dracula above is of value to us in thinking about serial killer films. Here we very often see the killer stalk at the heart of consumer culture, the urban and suburban environment. Arguably it is worth pursuing the links between the serial killer film and processes of finance capitalism.

Gilles Deleuze has marked a shift from what Foucault defined as a 'disciplinary' society to what he refers to as "societies of control" where the nomadic and "ultra rapid" flow of control and capital changes our "manner of living".[446] Deleuze's discussion is similar to what Manuel Castell refers to as the "space of flows, superseding the space of places." Manuel Castell writes:

> The new international economy creates a variable geometry of production and consumption, labour and capital, management and information – a geometry that denies the specific productive meaning of any place outside its position in a network whose shape

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[445] Ibid, 149.
[446] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October 59* (1992):3-7.

changes relentlessly in response to the message of unseen signals
and unknown codes.[447]

The emergence of finance capitalism as the most dominant within a variety of capitalist
formations parallels "life styles" which reflect the mobility of fluid capital, with mobile
populations much less tied to older structures of community. This is arguably central to the
subject formation of the serial killer. For example, in *Henry… Portrait of a Serial Killer*,
Henry is the nomadic killer, tied to no one and no particular place.[448] No history. A fluid
mobile identity, Henry guards his anonymity explaining to his 'friend', Otis, the necessity
of continuously changing the murder weapon to avoid detection.

In his discussion of the restructuring of capitalism, Castell suggests that this process
follows a logic of avoidance. What capitalism seeks to avoid are the restrictive
"historically established mechanism of social economic and political control by the power
holding organizations".[449] In this restructuring what emerges rather than a "totalitarian
universe" is a more subtle and un-quantifiable force.

> There is no tangible oppression, no identifiable enemy, no centre of
> power that can be held responsible for specific social issues. Even
> the issues themselves become unclear, or paradoxically so explicit
> that they cannot be treated because they constantly refer to a higher
> level of social causality which cannot be grasped.[450]

This level of social abstraction evident as a contemporary cultural phenomenon is the
ground from which these films about serial killing emerge and one with which we will
return to. Citing possible antecedents, MonLéon's account makes a distinction between
gothic and the fantastic, because of the moment of hesitation where reality is not easily
read and defined. Punter refers to the concept of paranoia being a "continual recourse" to

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[447] Manuel, Castells, *The Information City*, (1989):494.
[448] This mobility is equally apparent in many of these films such as *Manhunter* and *The Silence of the Lambs*. In the
unsuccessful sequel *Hannibal*, Dr. Lector's mobility is transnational at the risk of narrative credibility.
[449] Ibid, 495.
[450] Ibid.

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gothic narratives.[451] Paranoia in these narratives as described by Punter seems to embody elements of the hesitation existing in the fantastic. Punter makes the point that paranoia seems a more appropriate link with a modern subjectivity. Referring to 'paranoiac fiction' Punter writes of the implicated reader who,

> [...] Is placed in a situation of ambiguity with regard to fears within the text, and in which the attribution of persecution remains uncertain and the reader is invited to share in the doubts and uncertainties which pervade the apparent story. It is this element of paranoiac structure which marks many of the better Gothic works off from mere tame supernaturalism: they continually throw the supernatural into doubt, and in doing so they also serve the important function of removing the illusory halo of certainty from the so called natural world.[452]

As mentioned earlier, Mary Ann Doane also discusses gothic narratives in relation to paranoia in her study of a cycle of films made in the 1940s, beginning with Alfred Hitchcock's Rebecca (1940) an adaptation of Daphne Du Maurier's novel and ending with *Caught* (1949).[453] Doane labels these films as "paranoid women's films."   [454] Here the domestic space is a fearful and terrifying space in which the murderer is often the woman's husband, for example *The Two Mrs. Carrolls* (1947). Here the potential murderer and potential for violence strikes at the centre of everyday life, the element of hesitation or doubt is not so much explained by supernatural discourses but rather the interior psyche of the heroine. Doane's discussion concentrates on the way these films negotiate the women's gaze. Rather than being the object of knowledge, the heroine in these films is the subject of knowledge.[455]

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[451] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror Vol. 2 The Modern Gothic*, (1996):183.
[452] Ibid.
[453] Mary Ann Doane, "Paranoia and the Specular," in *The Desire to Desire, The woman's Film of the 1940s* (1987). While
[454] Doane, "Paranoia and the Specular," 134. While Doane notes that these films are produced over a very short period of time, Gothic narratives continue in paperback form. While these paperbacks differ from the films in so much as the author is usually a woman, there is a strong link which can be observed in the iconography of the book covers, which usually contains a "frightened woman in the foreground, in the background is a mansion, castle, or large house with one window lit, and whatever is occurring is occurring at night."Ibid, 125.
[455] The active gaze of the heroine in the paranoid gothic films discussed by Doane will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter especially as potential precedents to Carol Clover's *final girl*.

Doane also discusses these films in terms of their generic transgression. Commenting on how these films were not especially seen as "women's films" (unlike gothic paperbacks, which were very definitely understood as targeting a female audience), Doane writes, "For the woman's film is usually associated with excessive emotionality but not fear, love and sacrifice but not violence or aggression."[456] Doane comments that besides their connection to the women's film these films are also "infiltrated by the conventions of the film noir and the horror film."[457]

This collapsing of boundaries as suggested by both Halberstam and Doane poses questions in terms of genre legibility.[458] Monleon's point about "the problem of vision," and Napier's of the reader's exhaustion through being "tantalized by meaning" suggest that from its earliest fiction in the 18th Century to the present, gothic narratives self consciously examine the representation of representation itself.[459] "Gothic devices are all signs of the superficiality, deception and duplicity of narratives and verbal or visual images. [...] One of the principal horrors lurking throughout gothic fiction is the sense that there is no exit from the darkly illuminating labyrinth of language."[460]

Examining Gothic's emphasis on representation itself and its "general opposition to realist aesthetics"[461] points towards an important facet of why gothic and horror so often merge. For example in his discussion of horror films of the '70s and early '80s, Philip Brophy concentrates on the textuality of these horror films commenting on how "it is a genre which mimics itself mercilessly."[462] Referring to contemporary horror film as being aware of itself as a "saturated genre" Brophy discusses how horror "knows you've seen it before" and plays on the textual awareness of its audience creating a "strange suspense [...] not only is one wondering 'is he or she going to get it?' but also 'how far is this movie going to

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[456] Ibid.

[457] Ibid.

[458] Punter also refers Gothic's attempt to "incorporate within itself elements drawn from diverse literary and sub literary traditions." See David Punter "Mutations of Terror: Theory and the Gothic," *The Literature of Terror Vol. 2*, 182.

[459] Doane also remarks on the ways in which the paranoid gothic films of the 1940s can be seen as exploring issues of representation commenting on how they function within the women's film genre as well as acting as a meta-commentary on it. Doane, "Paranoia and the Specular," 125.

[460] Botting, *Gothic, 14*.

[461] Punter *The Literature of Terror Vol. 2, 182*.

[462] Philip, Brophy "Horality – The Textuality of Contemporary Horror Films," *Screen* 27, (1986):3

go?' "[463]This emphasis on narrative excess identified in both gothic and horror narratives directs us towards older forms of realist critique, the mediaeval concept of the monstrous and the Baroque as explored in **Chapter 1**. The discourse of the monstrous in Mediaeval Christian thought (mainly important between the 8th and 14th Century) distinguished itself from earlier concepts of the monster which where understood as "omen and magical sign."[464] This had its origins in "the pre-Christian tradition of philosophical negation, which in turn, finds its mediaeval expression in Dionysian negative theology."[465] These Neoplatonic roots of what Williams refers to, as the "deformed discourse" are evident in "the theories of symbolism and representation articulated within Christian Neoplatonism which valorized the grotesque and monstrous."[466] The grotesqueness and monstrosity of the sign was used to make sure that no one mistook the sign for the reality, which it was attempting to represent. The totality of God could not be comprehended through signs or rational thought but required acceptance of the limitations of representation to access this higher reality. As Williams points out, concepts such as "paradox, negation, contrariety, non-limitation and related ideas were equally important to aesthetic theories as to philosophical ones evident in the negative theology of pseudo-Dionysus and both proposed "a fundamental critique of rational discourse."[467]

This critique of rational and logical thought was facilitated by deforming the conventional signs for things and making a very definite distinction between showing and representing, (monstrare means to "show forth"). The deformed sign of the thing being described calls into question the adequacy of the intellectual concept of the thing in relation to its ontological reality."[468] As Williams writes,

> Thus the monstrosity of a human figure with three heads or a tree
> with the power of speech functions to upset the mental expectations
> about the relation of the sign to what it is supposed to signify and to
> underscore the element of the arbitrary in the relation of the two.[469]

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[463] Ibid,7.
[464] David Williams, *Deformed Discourse, The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature*, (1996):3.
[465] Ibid, 4.
[466] Ibid.
[467] Ibid.Williams refers to The Areopagite as offering the most expanded articulation of Pseudo-Dionysian thought.
[468] Ibid.
[469] Ibid.

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Williams distinguishes two types of signifying practices in the Middles Ages, the monstrous discourse being part of the apophatic tradition, which employed rhetoric and allegory, pointing always to the process of making the sign and therefore following a self-reflexive model of art. Unlike the "cataphatic" tradition, which uses logic, the powers of the mind and a mimetic conception of art based on accurate representations of reality. The apophatic tradition's conception of mimesis, (unlike the Aristotelian model) "attempts to communicate representations, not of particulars of a material world, but rather of an absent world of forms."[470] The effect desired was to call into question "the mind's confidence in similitude and mimesis as criteria of language and cognition."[471]

Williams discussing the significant connection between monsters and language remarks that in many ancient legends concerning teratology the monster's appearance in the world is often traced to the collapse of the Tower of Babel.[472] Referring to the loss of "linguistic unity" contained in the legend of the Tower of Babel, Williams remarks,

> Like language, the monster is a sign of unity now lost, the unity of being dispersed in the multiplicity of forms and the plenitude of creation, and like language, the monster is the possibility of the reconstruction of the very thing that, it, itself, has been deconstructed. As complementary opposites, language and the monster signify contrast and counterpoint, in which the grotesque union of disparate forms functions as a negation and a corrective to the rational ordering of discursive analysis. In this perspective the relation of language to the monstrous in the story of Babel is in harmony with the standard mediaeval method of Scriptural allegory in which the idea and its opposite are always present together.[473]

The connection being made by Williams between language, the monster and mediaeval monstrous discourse as a discourse critiquing rationality and a transparent comprehension of language serves as a means of tracking the ways in which an excess of meaning beyond

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[470] Ibid.
[471] Ibid, 451.In the chapter '"Language of the Monstrous" Williams writes "The limitations of discursive language seem to have been recognized almost from the beginning of philosophical thought[...] In modern thought, the most influential insight is that of Saussure, who enunciated the principal of the arbitrary nature of the sign, but this general perception existed long before Saussure's formulation." Ibid,85-86.
[472] Ibid, 61.
[473] Ibid, 63.

realist tropes developed through gothic narratives. Williams's remarks that negative theology decreased in significance with the Renaissance and an increasing support for rational thought. While the Enlightenment promoted rationalism and the scientific method became the dominant model, the emergence of literary tropes such as gothic functioned as both a means of disputing rationalism and as a repository for older cultural positions which rather than disappearing were displaced into popular cultural forms. Equally Gothic's labyrinthine excess of meaning and questioning of language is also aligned to both the baroque and melodrama.[474] Referring to early theatrical melodrama and excess Tom Gunning remarks that this excess "leads back to Melodrama's earliest sources in the Gothic fascination with horror." [475]

Melodrama

The relationship between melodrama and gothic based on horror and excess is important in negotiating 'the serial killer film'. We may accept this assumption considering the emphasis to do with the family apparent in both gothic narratives and melodrama and, as mentioned earlier in this chapter the way in which 'there is usually an allusion at some point to a foundational trauma within the family in serial killer films'. However there are many important ways in which melodrama is important to these 'serial killer films', which relate to melodrama's theatrical routes and the ways melodrama functioned in early cinema. Before developing this, I want to briefly trace the ways in which contemporary film studies have developed discussions around the term.

Within film studies since the mid '70s, melodrama generally refers to films which deal with excessive emotions, where the family and domestic sphere takes precedence over the wider issues in society and for this reason they are often termed 'the woman's film' 'the weepie' or 'tear-jerker'. The family melodramas of the 1950s directed by Vincente Minnelli, Douglas Sirk and Nicholas Ray have become the standard introduction within film studies to a discussion of "deployed form, style and rhythm, camera movement, colour and

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[474] See Chapter 1 for discussion on Baroque Tragic Drama..

[475] Gunning,"Heard Over the Phone: The Lonely Villa and the De Lorde Tradition of Terrified Communication," 184. Thomas Elsaesser also refers to how "melodramatic motifs persistently crop up" in the English Gothic novel. In mapping the genealogy of Melodrama Elsaesser comments on the importance of the mediaeval morality play, oral narratives and folk songs. Tomas Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury, Observations on the Family Melodrama." In ed C. Gledhill, *Home is Where The Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Women's Film*, London, British Film Institute, [1972] (1987):166-167.

mise–en–scène" of melodrama as a genre.[476] Thomas Elsaesser also refers to the importance of music to melodrama and writes,

> In its dictionary sense, melodrama is a dramatic narrative in which musical accompaniment marks the emotional effects. This is still perhaps the most useful definition, because it allows melodramatic elements to be seen as constituents of a system of punctuation, giving expressive colour and chromatic contrast to the storyline, by orchestrating the emotional ups and downs of the intrigue. The advantage of this approach is that it formulates the problems of melodrama as problems of style and articulation.[477]

The stable meaning within film studies of melodrama as family drama was not standard currency in the early days of the film industry or in the 1950s. Ben Singer points out that many early films, which by contemporary generic classification would be considered definitively 'melodrama' was not understood this way. The interpretative emphasis on sentimentality that now exists was not the pre-requisite of early melodrama.[478] Rather than the excess of sentiment that we associate with it today, the melodrama of early film following on from its place in theatre deployed in equal measure, thrills, scares and action sequences which explains its "low brow connotations."[479]

Contemporary understanding of melodrama within film studies is in large measure as a result of the re-evaluation of 1950s melodramas in the 1970s.[480] At this time many essays also appeared on the subject. There was a special issue on the subject in *Screen*.[481] Jon Halliday and Laura Mulvey edited a publication on Douglas Sirk (1971) and Paul Willemen's essay "Towards an Analysis of the Sirkian System" appeared in *Screen* (1972-73). Neale refers to Thomas Elsaesser's account of Melodrama "Tales of Sound and Fury, Observations on the Family Melodrama,"(1972) as deliberately distinguishable from the

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[476] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 182.

[477] Elsaesser, "Tales of Sound and Fury," 172.

[478] In fact the term melodrama was often avoided, "because of the genre's low brow connotations." Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, n4 :301. Singer quotes a contemporary text which describes how "The very word melodrama has so fallen into disrepute that nowadays when a man puts forth a melodrama he usually pretends that it is something else..." (Hamilton [1911] in Singer, n4:30.

[479] This will be developed in more detail below.

[480] This was "conditioned in part by a renewed interest in Sirk and his films, evident in the seasons held at the Edinburgh Film Festival and at the National Film Theatre in London." Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*,182.

[481] See *Screen* Vol. 12 no.2(1971).

model emerging in *Screen* where an analysis informed by Brecht and semiotics was prioritized. Neale suggests that the above writing on Sirk and Elsaesser's account of melodrama "played a key role not just in establishing melodrama as a topic of investigation [...] but also in establishing a basic set of terms, concerns and definitions and an initial canon or corpus of films."[482] Following on from this, articles by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (1977) and David.N. Rodowick (1982) pursued family melodrama "as a basis for discussions about ideology, class and Oedipal conflict.[483] Alternatively Laura Mulvey used the same canon of films to discuss issues of gender and to concentrate on these films in terms of women. (Mulvey 1977/8, 1987, 1986) Many feminist film theorists have explored melodrama and as Neale points, out feminist theory has become a "cornerstone of the standard account."[484] Here discussion has concentrated on issues to do with female audiences, on a female point of view and the possibilities available to appropriate patriarchal contexts and concerns.

Within the parameters of the above account of melodrama within contemporary film studies there is certainly the possibility of an interpretation of 'serial killer films' as operating within the discursive terrain of the family. This is evident by looking at the film *Psycho (1959)* that is generally considered as a very definite shift away from the type of horror films that preceded it. *Psycho* is seen as the film "which located horror film firmly and influentially within the modern psyche, the modern world, modern relationships, and the modern (dysfunctional) family."[485] It is worth digressing slightly in order to clarify or at least mark a problem in the theorization of the shift represented by *Psycho* and also Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* released the same year in Britain. While these films do indeed mark a significant shift there is a need for a more specific exploration of what this

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[482] Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 182.

[483] Ibid.See also an interesting essay by Chuck Kleinhans "Notes on Melodrama and the Family under Capitalism" *Film Reader* 3 (1975):40-47.

[484] Ibid, 164. See Doane (1987), Gledhill (1985, 1987), Linda Williams (1987) Modleski (1982) Some of this material will be explored later in the chapter.

[485] Neale, Genre and Hollywood, 196. See M. Janovich, *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950s* , for an alternative reading of *Psycho* which sees the film as incorporating a number of earlier trends.(1996) There does seem to be a genre of film criticism that claims particular horror films as the film which changed the horror genre completely. For example David Sanjek writing of George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) comments on the "visceral" emphasis on the violence and the fact that "the film's victims in several cases became themselves monsters, thereby muddying the distinction between the monstrous and the normal as well as locating terror in the everyday world." See David Sanjek, "Twilight of the Monsters: The English Horror Film 1968-1975 in *Film Criticism*, Vol. XVI, Nos. 1-2, Fall/Winter 1991-92: 111)

shift was about rather than employing the term 'modern' as an explanation. For example James Twitchell offers a more expansive conception of 'modern' remarking on the rise of printing presses in the 18th century and their importance in bringing horror to a mass audience. Commenting on when "make belief horror became modern" Twitchell looks to the engravings of William Hogarth, whose work appeared twenty years before the emergence of Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*. Writing that Hogarth gives form "to what has really become the stock in trade of the modern horror: specific and highly located images of human perversion and transformation," he suggests that Hogarth's *The Four Stages of Cruelty* can almost be read as storyboards for modern horror film.[486]

Discussing particular films as landmark films by virtue of their ability to capture the 'modern' moment is problematic as it acts as a means of offering an explanation. When we unravel this explanation in terms of a more extended long-term understanding of modernity we are still left with the problem of explaining the shift that occurred.[487] Clover suggests that in *Psycho* the psychological thriller and horror began to merge and it was to influence the later slasher and stalker films of the '70s, '80s and '90s, which is undoubtedly true.

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[486] J.B. Twitchell, Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror, (1985): 28-38.
[487] This problem of the 'modern tag' and its flexibility in usage relates again to the discussion on 'the modernity thesis' in chapter one. The specific problem will be discussed later in the chapter.

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Fig.16 William Hogarth, The Four Stages of Cruelty 18th C.

Very often the deviant subjectivity of the serial killer is articulated through an original dysfunctional relationship to his family. In her discussion on melodrama, Laura Mulvey remarks, "the family is the socially accepted road to respectable normality, an icon of conformity, and at one and the same time, the source of deviance, psychosis and despair," in other words the source of the serial killer's abnormality.[488] In *Manhunter* the detective comments on the killer's early life and says, that as an abused child, of course he has sympathy for the killer, but as an adult he is irredeemable. In *The Silence of the Lambs*, Hannibal Lecter tells Clarice of how the serial killer was not born a monster.[489] In *Henry Portrait of a Serial killer*, although alternating between different narratives, Henry articulates a dysfunctional relationship with his mother as a child. The voice of Dollarhyde's abusive grandmother is also a constant refrain in Michael Rafter's *Red Dragon* (2002). It is worth noting that while most popular cultural explanation for serial killing relates it to the killer's early dysfunctional relationship with the mother, research indicates that there is more often than not a story of paternal abuse.[490] Exceptions to these representations are evident in the *Cell*; here the child abuse inflicted on the serial killer Carl by his brutal father is presented in graphic detail. Equally in *Peeping Tom*, we are offered an explanation of the killer's behaviour through the experiences he had to endure as a child, Mark's academic father fashioning his son as the perfect case study for his research into fear. Peter Wollen discussing the way in which *Peeping Tom* explores Mark Lewis' early child abuse writes,

[488] Laura, Mulvey, "Melodrama inside and outside the home', in *Visual and Other Pleasures*,(1989):74. Interestingly in the film *Blue Steel*, (1990) Megan, the police woman who falls for and eventually slays the serial killer Eugene, does not resolve the dysfunctional problems in her own family. Anna Powell writes, "Her parents remain shackled together in domestic horror after she has failed radically to break their bondage by arresting her brutal father. This family unit has already clearly been revealed to us as fundamentally unsound[...] Eugene is dead but Megan's family remains a source of horror and social disease." Powell, "Blood on the Borders – Near Dark and Blue Steel," Screen 35.2 (Summer 1994):136-56.

[489] In an interview with Amy Taubin, Jonathan Demme suggests an interest in representing a link between serial murder, child abuse and the family structure although this is not readily apparent in the film, both Lecter and Gumb remain removed from an explanation of their psychopathology within society. See Amy Taubin "Demme's Monde, *Village Voice* (19 Feb. 1991):64.

[490] See Maria Tatar, *Lustmord, Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany*, (1995): 28-30. K.E.Sullivan in a well researched paper tracing the popular cultural fascination with transsexuals/transvestites and monstrosity refers to the way in which films such *Psycho* and more recently *The Silence of the Lambs* are indebted to the cultural representations of the real life crimes of Ed Gein who was also represented as having an unhealthy attachment to his controlling mother. However as Sullivan comments "ironically, Gein described his father not his mother as abusive,indicating that George Gein was an alcoholic who drank excessively and abused both Ed and his brother. Sullivan, "Ed Gein and the Figure of the Transgendered Serial Killer," *Jump Cut*, 43: 42.

Professor Lewis [mark's father], like the psychiatrist in *Spellbound*, is an ambulatory psychotic whose pathology is socially acceptable and indeed socially honoured. It is only when it is transferred on to his son, its original victim that it mutates into a psychosis, which is socially condemned. Scientific scrutiny and veiled child abuse are transformed into voyeurism and murder, the penetrating gaze twinned with the penetrating switchblade. Thus the respected psychologist mutates, in the next generation, into the serial killer. But whereas in Psycho Norman Bates has an aggressive mother and an absent father, Mark Lewis has an aggressive father and an absent mother. Norman Bates ends his career by becoming his mother, by being absorbed into her; Mark Lewis by killing the father-in-himself, finally eliminating him in a bizarre self-execution."[491]

Feminist research as mentioned above has elevated melodrama because of the greater emphasis on a "female protagonist's point of view" and its examination of "tensions in the family, and between the sexes."[492] Coupling this with Carol Clover's point that horror tends to give special emphasis to the victim's fear we can see how discourses pertinent specifically to melodrama begin to slide and merge with that of horror to produce the 'serial killer film'. Clover's brief description of Hitchcock's *Psycho* is also appropriate: "the killer as the psychotic product of a sick family, but still recognizably human; the victim is a beautiful, sexually active woman; the location is not-home, at a Terrible Place; the weapon is something other than a gun; the attack is registered from the victims point of view and comes with shocking suddenness."[493]

The Final Girl

Clover's discussion of teen slasher films identifies a character, which she suggests emerges in the seventies –"the final girl." Clover's marker is Sally in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* directed by Tobe Hooper in (1974).[494] The final girl is the character who having witnessed the death of her friends realizes the danger she is in, her body shot through with 'abject

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[491] Wollen, "Michael Powell's Peeping Tom", 20.

[492] Laura, Mulvey, "Melodrama inside and outside the home', 40. Elsaesser also concentrates on the importance of the victim's point of view in melodrama however in his discussion of the family melodramas of the 50s he remarks on the exceptional way all characters are presented as victims. Evil and the question of responsibility are placed in the wider social domain rather than individualised. It is this potential within melodrama which makes it capable of reproducing "the patterns of domination and exploitation existing in a given society, especially the relation between psychology, morality and class consciousness, by emphasising so clearly an emotional dynamic whose social correlative is a network of external forces directed oppressingly inward ..." Elsaesser, *Tales of Sound and Fury*, 185.

[493] Clover, *Carol, Men Women and Chainsaws*, 23-24.

[494] Ibid,35.

fear' and tormented by the killer in a seemingly unending game of cat and mouse, finally, after a series of harrowing near misses kills her attacker. One of the most significant things about the final girl in these films is that she is the one "whose perspective approaches our own privileged understanding of the situation. We register her horror as she stumbles on the corpses of her friends... When she downs the killer, we are triumphant. She is by any measure the slasher film's hero."[495] Clover suggests the precursor of the final girl role exists in the role of Marion's sister, Lila in *Psycho*.[496] As noted above Clover situates *The Silence of the Lambs'* ancestry as the slasher film (it being "a slasher movie for yuppies"). The most obvious reason for this is the character of the final girl, which is inscribed into the character of the detective Clarice Starling. The final girl also recurs in *Copycat*, again split between the criminal psychologist Helen Hudson (Sigourney Weaver) and Detective Monahan (Holly Hunter). In the television serial *Profiler (NBC 1996-1997- DVD 2003)*, a female forensic psychologist Dr Sam Walker who is pursued by a serial killer "Jack of All Trades" also conforms to Clover's final girl.[497] If we return to Todorov and the detective's loss of immunity in the suspense novel, what Todorov calls the "story of the vulnerable detective [...] who gets beaten up, badly hurt, constantly risks his life, in short he is integrated into the universe of the other characters",[498] in *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Copycat*, the vulnerable detective can be seen to merge with the final girl.

According to Clover, to function as 'victim' in horror is to be female,[499] (or male victim feminized) suggesting, "gender inheres in the function itself." The final girl's function allows the male (adolescent) viewer to identify with the final girl in her moments of 'abject fear' because ultimately she survives. A young male audience has the opportunity to play out taboo masochistic fantasies by identifying with the final girl through her ordeal, as she will eventually take on a masculine position through slaying the killer. This is emphasized

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[495] Ibid,45.
[496] I suggest further on that the final girl's antecedents can be found beyond Lila to characters in the 1940s paranoid melodrama right back to early cinema and the serial queen melodramas such as *The Perils of Pauline*.
[497] The androgynous name "Sam" also links this to Clover's points concerning the final girl who also usually have androgynous names.
[498] Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose*, 164.
[499] In most of the teen slasher movies of the '70s the male victims are dispensed with quickly in contrast to the elaborate chase and torture of the female victims. This is also evident for example in *Manhunter* where Rebo's co-worker is killed by Dollarhyde in a swift perfunctory manner (as is the husband and children of his female victims) which is distinctly different to the elaborate and slower deaths his female victims are subjected to. The exception to this is of course the journalist Lounds, who is tortured mercilessly, presumably because he writes derogatively on the killer's sexuality.

by the final girl having masculine characteristics such as her name, and often her physical appearance. Requirements which she needs to survive. She is also usually both sexually inactive and/or unavailable. All or most of these key markers are applicable to the female characters in the films mentioned above. The way sexual inactivity and/or unavailability are mapped are usually articulated as a temporary disruption for example, Clarice Starling's studies. In Clover's discussion the final girl's sexual ambiguity, mapped in the form of her 'tom boyish' qualities and her sexual disinterest is linked to the killer's sexual ambiguity. Clover suggests these films are in the main targeting a teenage audience and the emphasis on sexuality is a negotiation of a teenager's sexual separation from his/her parents and emergence in to the adult world. What links the killer to the final girl, articulated through a sexual ambiguousness, is this struggle to separate from the parents. The final girl manages to slay the killer, finally, and emerge triumphant into the adult world, while the killer never attains this separation. From this Clover suggests that men and women invest the character with different meaning, that the final girl is literally female for the women in the audience and on the other hand the apparent agency of the female victim "is an agreed upon fiction" she is really a vehicle for the male viewer's own sadomasochistic fantasies."[500] One could also argue of course that the final girl's survival is an agreed upon fiction in so much as endings have historically often been at odds with the rest of the narrative in Hollywood film. In this case the long torturous and sadistic assault on the final girl is only acceptable because she wins out in the end.

Tracing the evolution of the final girl from the woman who witnesses everything but is still saved, by a man, to the final girl that emerges in e.g., Laurie in *Halloween* (1978) or Alison in *Friday the Thirteenth* (1980)(who not only manage to save themselves but out do the killer in terms of gore (Alison for example decapitates the killer), Clover finds an explanation for this development in the cultural changes taking place in terms of the woman's movement. Discussing this she says:

> The fact that the typical patrons of these films are the sons of
> marriages contracted in the sixties or even early seventies leads me
> to speculate that the dire claims of that era - that the woman's

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[500] Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws*, 53.

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> movement, the entry of women into the workplace, and the rise of
> divorce and woman-headed families would yield massive gender
> confusion in the next generation- were not entirely wrong. [...] The
> fact that we have in the killer a feminine male and in the main
> character a masculine female - parent and every teen respectively -
> would seem, especially in the latter case to suggest a loosening of
> the categories...these films show us gender in irregular
> combinations.[501]

While Clover's contribution is generally recognized as being significant in this area of research there are valid criticisms to her analysis. For example Judith Halberstam suggests that Clover's account remains "caught in a gender lock." Clover's account maintains a very rigid equation between agency = masculinity and feminine = passivity.[502] Lynda Hart for example asks "what is it that we are seeing when we see women who are not 'really women'? From Clover's perspective it is the projection of male fantasy. However another answer is that women who are 'really men' e.g., not passive in their performance of the feminine, are, lesbians.[503] In a similar vein Halberstam, employing queer theory, expands discussion of gender away from discussions of male/female, boy/ girl to one of monstrous gender. "The technology of monsters when channeled through a dangerous woman with a chainsaw becomes a powerful and queer strategy for enabling and activating monstrosity as opposed to stamping it out."[504]

Other arguments rest with the fact that Clover assumes that the principal audience for horror is male. While this assumption is generally accepted, Clover's discussion is not backed up by quantitative research into audience figures and there are studies, which suggest we should keep an open mind with regards to whether or not horror has a sizeable female audience. R.J Berenstein offers empirical research "to suggest that women attended and enjoyed horror films in considerable numbers in the 1930s" [505]Linda Williams' essay on the reception of *Psycho* in 1960s London is also instructive in the way it renegotiates

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[501] Ibid.

[502] Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows, Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, (1998):143.

[503] Lynda Hart, *Fatal Women: Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression*, (1994) referenced in Isabel Cristina Pinedo, *Recreational Terror, Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing*, (1997):82.

[504] Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 143.

[505] Berenstein, R.J., *Attack of the Leading Ladies: Gender Sexuality and Spectatorship in Classic Horror Cinema*, (1996) in Neale, *Genre and Hollywood*, 99.

rigid gender identification discourses.[506] As mentioned earlier Mary Anne Doane relates the paranoid melodrama's in the '40s to the hugely popular gothic fictions which specifically targeted female audiences.[507] Isabela Cristina Pinedo, like Clover also contextualizes the slasher film within the wider cultural context of feminist discourses. However she suggests, "the slasher film is an imaginary staging of women who fight back with lethal force against male figures who stalk and try to kill them." [508] For Pinedo these films represent male anxiety in the face of an onslaught of female agency. In Slasher films the women who don't fight back are the ones who die. She refers to *The Stepfather* (1987) as an important film in presenting a feminist position of agency in the face of male violence. Pinedo also suggests provocatively that for those women who find no pleasure in these films of violent spectacle the issue at stake is not just about "fear of victimization" and vulnerability but actually the fear of identifying with violent aggression.

Pinedo's discussion of representations of female agency offers a potential to link to antecedents of the final girl in earlier cinematic representations aware, as we are that feminism and the women's movement did not just appear in the '60s but has a much longer history. One potential link is Doane's research on "paranoid women's films" of the 1940s for example. These domestic melodramas in which the wife or daughter fears that the husband or male family member is going to kill her are about a crisis in trusting what one sees, "is the husband really what he appears to be?"[509] While Doane comments on the fact that these films merge with horror and suspense narratives and stresses the female point of view I would like to extend her argument as a means of examining female agency/the final girl and the character's configuration at particular periods.

One film not mentioned by Doane's but relevant to her discussion and my own is Alfred Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943). Here the eldest daughter of a small town couple anticipates the character of final girl. An unplanned visit by the mother's brother "Uncle Charlie" is seen as a welcome surprise by everyone. The daughter, (also called Charlie)

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[506] Linda Williams, "Learning to Scream," *Sight and Sound* (December 1994):17.

[507] For a recent critique of Mary Ann Doane's discussion of the paranoid gothic films see Pam Cook "The Women's Picture from Outrage to Blue Steel." (1998):229-246.

[508] Pinedo, *Recreational Terror*, 85.

[509] Doane, "Paranoia and the Specular," 124.

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feels she is linked to the Uncle because "they think similarly" and initiates a close relationship with the uncle based on this presumed affinity. However under the pretext of a survey, two detectives are keeping close watch on the uncle and soon the daughter's suspicions are raised about the true life style of uncle Charlie. The detective's suspect him of being 'the merry widow murderer' who has killed three widows and Charlie is alerted to their suspicions. Although initially she does not want to consider the possibility of her uncle as a murderer eventually, however, he admits as much to her as the likelihood of his arrest beckons. The situation changes when another suspect dies trying to escape arrest and it is assumed by the detectives that this suspect was the murderer. Charlie knowing otherwise is morally torn between the right action in terms of the law and what sort of devastating effect the truth about her uncle would have on her family. The uncle is off the hook except for the fact that Charlie knows. Her life is therefore in danger and a number of so-called accidents happen to her in the home. She falls down a stairs that he has tampered with. He also tries to kill her by locking her in a garage as the fumes of a running car overpower her. The uncle plans to leave town and it is intimated that he has another widow victim lined up who is also taking the same train out of town. Finding a pretext to get Charlie on the train it quickly becomes clear that he plans another 'accident'. In the ensuing struggle it is the uncle who is pushed on to the tracks of an oncoming train. We can easily read Charlie as an example of the final girl, from the masculine name, to her access to knowledge, to the   more significant fact that she kills and survives the killer becoming one herself.

There are multiple antecedents to the final girl in serial queen melodramas from the teens of the 20th Century. Here sensational melodrama explored new ideas of womanhood. Action and adventure were employed in ways that emphasized female heroism. One of the best-known serial heroines was Pearl White who starred in *The Perils of Pauline*, which began in 1914. The concept behind it was that of a (bookish) young girl who wants to be a writer. Harry Marvin (Crane Wilbur) wants to marry her but she will not get married until she has spent a year 'pursuing her dream' (so she is sexually inactive). Her step father has left half his fortune to Pauline and the other half to his secretary Owen, also stipulating that if anything happens to Pauline, Owen will get her share unless she has married Harry. In

the twenty episodes that followed Pauline is involved in plenty of action, car-racing, going up in a balloons, being attacked by gypsies, pirates etc.

Fig.17Lobby card for The Lass of the Lumberlands, 1916-17

Fig.18 Publicity still for unidentified episode of The Hazards of Helen, 1915

Fig.19 Pearl White in Plunder, 1923

Pathé's idea behind the serial was to put her in hazardous and dangerous situations, which was also evident in other serial adventures. Such as *The Hazards of Helen*, A *Lass of the Lumberlands*, *The Perils of Our Girl Reporters*, *The Adventures of Dorothy Dare*, *The Exploits of Elaine*. We witness both female agency and the spectacle of female victimization by sadistic male characters out to destroy the serial queen heroines. Ben Singer sees these films as "an index of female emancipation… as wish fulfillment, a fantasy of power which articulated how tentative that emancipation actually was, and also "as an index of the anxieties that such social transformations and aspirations created in a society experiencing the sociological and ideological upheavals of modernity."[510] These films were definitely targeting a female audience apparent in the tie-in with newspaper serials and also in competitions advertised in women's magazines and sewing pattern monthlies. Fashion was usually emphasized in these films, the heroine regularly seen at the beginning in some spectacular gown before changing into practical clothes for her adventures. The serial queen heroine explored the world beyond the domestic space stressing the physical prowess and strength of the action heroine often shown rescuing the hero. Singer also comments that in the late 19th Century, dime novels and sensational theatrical melodrama anticipated these serial queen heroines targeting a young working class audience. In particular he refers to August Daly's *Under the Gas Light* (1867) where "the heroine hacks her way out of a locked woodshed and saves a man tied to the railroad

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[510] Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 222.

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tracks (directly anticipating "Helen's Rescue of Tom"). The rescued man declares, "Victory! Saved! Hooray! And these are the women who ain't to have a vote."[511]

Peter Brook's re-examination of melodrama emphasizes its relationship to meaning production and excess.[512] Tom Gunning has described Brook's work as revealing the importance of "the play of signs."[513] Rather than being "plays of blood and thunder, sound and fury [they] are in fact dramas of significance, and even *signifiance*, the construction of meaning."[514] Referring to the melodramatic imagination and how "it conceives its representations," Brook suggests that here all "the gestures of life" are interrogated to uncover the "meaning implicit in them." [515]Meaning is extracted to the full in order to explore the narratives full potential as parable. Rather than the banality of real life, the narrative is saturated with drama whereby all gestures potentially signify larger themes of "life and death, perdition and redemption, heaven and hell."[516]

Commenting that within the melodramatic mode the desire is to express not just the reality of the event but the reality that lies just below the surface, here "nothing is left unsaid; the characters [...] utter the unspeakable, give voice to their deepest feelings..."[517]Melodrama examines the forces of good and evil and in doing so is concerned with what Brooks calls "the moral occult." He writes,

> The moral occult is not a metaphysical system; it is rather the repository of the fragmentary and desacralized remnants of sacred myth. It bears comparison to unconscious mind, for it is the sphere of being where our most basic desires and interdictions lie, a realm which in quotidian existence may appear closed off from us, but which we must accede to since it is the realm of meaning and value. The melodramatic mode in large measure exists to locate and to articulate the moral occult.[518]

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[511] Ibid, 243.

[512] Peter Brook, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, (1985).

[513] Gunning,Tom. "The Horror of Opacity The Melodrama of sensation in the plays of André Lorde." In *Melodrama Stage Picture Screen*, eds. Jacky Bratton, Jim Cook, Christine Gledhill. London: BFI, 1994, 50-64.

[514] Ibid.

[515] Brook, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, (1985):1.

[516] Ibid,2.

[517] Ibid,4.

[518] Ibid,5.

Here all the activities that occur in the real world carry an extra weight of meaning acting as metaphors for the "spiritual realm" and morality. Nothing stands for itself alone but rather everything within melodrama functions as conduits to "another kind of reality."[519]In referring to melodrama's origins as a distinctly modern form emerging during the French Revolution and its aftermath Brooks writes,

> The Revolution can be seen as the convulsive last act in a process of desacralization that was set in motion at the Renaissance, passed through the momentary compromise of Christian humanism, and gathered momentum during the Enlightenment – a process in which the explanatory and cohesive force of sacred myth lost its power, and its political and social representations lost their legitimacy. In the course of this process, tragedy, which depends on the communal partaking of the sacred body – as in the mass– became impossible."[520]

Brook suggests that melodrama articulates and explores ethics in a world, which has lost its referents to truth through the Church and the Monarch.[521] While communal acceptance of sacred myth lost its power the sacred is figured within personal choice – the ethics of the individual. "Melodrama represents both the urge toward resacralization and the impossibility of conceiving sacralization other than in personal terms."[522] Here ethical questions are addressed through characters that represent either extremes of purity or evil. This again links melodrama with gothic and also of course horror. The loss of a transcendent higher authority and personalisation and "sentimentalization of ethics" leads to an exploration of the forces operating in the mind and unconscious. Referring to the characteristics melodrama and gothic share Brook comments on a preoccupation with "evil as real, irreducible force in the world, a constantly menacing outburst."[523]The distinction for Brook is that while "[melodrama] expresses the anxiety brought by a frightening new

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[519] Ibid, 9.

[520] Ibid, 15-16.

[521] In the Aftermath of the French Revolution there were major structural changes in the theatrical world. Prior to the Revolution only certain officially sanctioned theatres could employ dialogue, the rest built up pantomime shows where music, dance costume, scenery, gesture and the audiences' foreknowledge (by using folk tales for example) compensated for this restriction. In 1791 this restriction was overturned and dialogue was allowed in all theatrical venues which resulted in *pantomime dialoguée*. Singer, Melodrama and Modernity, 132.

[522] Brook refers to Rousseau's Confession's and the importance placed on the individual saying all found in a different way in Sade's detailing all the potential crimes that can be committed. Brook, *Melodramatic Imagination*, 15-16.

[523] Ibid, 20.

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world in which the traditional patterns of moral order no longer provide the necessary social glue" it searches for ethical answers rather than a desire to re-instate transcendence.[524]

While Elsaesser would also suggest that melodrama needs to be understood as a "distinctively modern form" his account suggests that the romantic dramas after the French Revolution would be "unthinkable without the 18th Century sentimental novel and the emphasis put on private feeling and interiorised (puritan, pietist) codes of morality and conscience. Elsaesser also comments on how historically, melodrama seems to be at its height of popularity during "periods of intense social and ideological crisis."[525]

In his discussion of melodrama Ben Singer pursues a definition of melodrama recognising the fragmentary nature of such an undertaking. Moving away from a distinct foundation such as for example 'moral occult' he suggests analyzing melodrama as a "cluster concept." [526]Singer continues,

> That is to view melodrama as a term whose meaning varies from case to case in relation to different configurations of a range of basic features or constitutive factors. If a word has a set range of applicable features, the meaning of the word in any given instance will depend on precisely which features come into play, and in what combinations. Charting melodrama's genealogy has proven so problematic, and the literature on melodrama is so inconsistent, because over the last two hundred years the genre's basic features have appeared in so many different combinations.[527]

Singer goes on to identify five constitutive factors: pathos; overwrought emotion; moral polarization; non-classical narrative structure and finally sensationalism. Briefly I want to condense Singer's account of these basic features.

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[524] Ibid.
[525] Elsaesser, 167.Discussing the 18th-century work and their ideological messages he writes, "They record the struggle of a morally and emotionally emancipated bourgeois consciousness against the remnants of feudalism. They pose the problem in political terms and concentrate on the complex interplay of ethical principles, religious-metaphysical polarities and the idealist aspirations typical of the bourgeoisie in its militant phase, as the protagonists come to grief in a maze of economic necessities, *real politik*, family loyalties, and through the abuse of aristocratic privilege from a still divinely ordained, and there fore doubly depraved, absolutist authority." Ibid, 168.
[526] Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 44.
[527] Ibid.

Pathos involves creating feelings of pity in the audience. Singer bases his description of pity on Aristotle's; pity comes into play as a sense of sadness or anguish at someone else's misfortune and recognition that such an event/experience could befall the viewer. Because the viewer incorporates a sense of identification with the victim, Singer suggests there is always an element of self-pity and that the "power of pathos derives from a process of [...] association, whereby spectators superimpose their own life (melo) dramas onto the ones being represented in the narrative."[528]

Overwrought emotion obviously overlaps with pathos as a feature however Singer distinguishes heightened and raw emotional states portrayed by the characters such as greed, lust, jealousy, compassion, envy etc that raises the level of "dramatic intensity" without necessarily evoking pathos.

Moral polarization between good and evil as discussed above especially in relation to early stage melodrama. Melodrama places questions of ethics as requiring clear demarcations at precisely the moment when both religion and the monarch lost their position as defining the terms of moral behaviour.

Non-classical narrative structure. Commenting on the fact that melodrama does not follow the standard model of cause and effect but employs "outrageous coincidence, implausibility, convoluted plotting, *deus ex machina* resolutions and episodic strings of action that stuff too many events together to be able to be kept in line by a cause-and-effect chain of narrative progression."[529]These preferences are usually considered the reason why melodrama was traditionally placed in such low esteem.[530] Continuity was not the most important requirement but rather the shocks incorporated in the twists and turns and cliffhanger ending offered different pleasure to the audience and was related to the

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[528] Ibid, 145.

[529] Ibid, 46.

[530] Singer cites a contemporary critic Harry James Smith who wrote in 1907:"To attempt to give an account of the plot would be useless. The more you examine it, the less there is [....] when you try to work out the interrelations you are doomed to failure. It would take a higher intelligence to answer all the hows and whys [...] if your mind is sophisticated enough to insist on logic, it is bound to be left in some confusion." Smith, "The Melodrama," *Atlantic Monthly* 99 (March 1907):324 in Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 47.

fragmentary nature of entertainment experienced in vaudeville. This is usually referred to, following Tom Gunning as a "cinema of attractions."[531]

> The aesthetics of attractions address the audience directly, sometimes as in the early train films, exaggerating this confrontation in an experience of assault. Rather than being an involvement with narrative action or empathy with character psychology, the cinema of attractions solicits a highly conscious awareness of the film image engaging the viewer's curiosity. The spectator does not get lost in a fictional world and its drama, but remains aware of the act of looking, the excitement of curiosity and its fulfilment. Through a variety of formal means, the images of the cinema of attractions rush forward to meet their viewers [...] this cinema addresses and holds the spectator, emphasising the act of display.[532]

The final constitutive factor of melodrama proposed by Singer follows on from the last and relates to Gunning's theory of a cinema of attractions. The actual term sensation emerged to describe a new form of theatre in the 19th Century "whose spectacular appearance and technical virtuosity was devised precisely to thrill the audience."[533] Sensationalism prioritising action, violence, fear, physical danger and spectacular displays. A contemporary description describes melodrama's iconography as: "Trap-doors, bridges to be blown up, walls to be scaled, instruments of torture for the persecuted heroines, freight elevators to crush out the lives of the deserving characters, elevated trains to rush upon the prostrate forms of gagged and insensible girls."[534] Singer makes the point that an important aspect of sensational melodrama was the requirement that all spectacles achieve a high level of realism. Rather than naturalism what was desired here was what A. Nicholas Vardac described as "Romantic realism" which aimed at creating "credible accuracy in the depiction of incredible extraordinary views."[535] While this was often considered a base form of realism too superficial to be valued, others suggest that melodrama cut to the core

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[531] See Gunning "An Aesthetics of Astonishment: Early Film and the (in)credulous Spectator" in *Art and Text 34* Spring (1989).

[532] Ibid, 121.

[533] Gunning, "Heard Over the Phone: The Lonely Villa and the De Lorde Tradition of Terrified Communication," *51 check pg no.*

[534] Montrose J. Moses, "Concerning Melodrama," *Book News Monthly* 26.11 (July 1908):846 in Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 49.

[535] Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 50.

of an underlying 'truth of experience'. The discontinuity evident in sensational melodrama articulated the experience of working class life.

Gunning suggests that though Brook registered the decline of melodrama in the mid 19th Century as related to an increased desire for thrills and suspense, that perhaps "Melodrama might be best seen as a dialectical interaction between moral significance and an excess aimed precisely at non-cognitive affects, thrills, sensations and strong affective attractions."[536] For Gunning, similar to Singer, the persistence of Melodrama requires an historical examination exploring the relative balance of how this combination is figured as well as a specific examination of the nature of those sensations for particular periods.

Sensational Melodrama

Complementing Brook's discussion of the melodramatic 'tableau' Gunning refers to the emergence of the 'sensation scene' in the mid 19th century. The 'tableau' Brook suggests, is apparent in most melodrama usually at the end of scenes and acts. There tends "to be a resolution of meaning in tableau, where the characters' attitudes and gestures, compositionally arranged and frozen for a moment, give, like an illustrative painting, a visual summary of the emotional situation."[537] Offering Dion Boucicault's theatrical extravaganzas as examples of these types of spectacular scenes Gunning maintains that the effects of the sensation scene on the audience does not exclude Brook's discussion of the 'moral occult'. The difference lies in the fact that it is not dependent on moral order as "it is physical and emotional sensation rather than moral cognition that counts."[538] The significance of the melodrama's change in address is related to broader changes in society. Gunning writes,

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[536] Gunning, "The Horror of Opacity The Melodrama of sensation in the plays of André Lorde," 51.

[537] Brook, *Melodramatic Imagination*, 48. Brook continues "[...] In the tableau more than in any other single device of dramaturgy, we grasp melodrama's primordial concern to make its signs clear, unambiguous, and impressive."(Ibid) The arresting of narrative action has also been described as "situation' – as characters take in the changed circumstances and the audience has the pleasure of relishing the 'shock' of this moment. Ben Singer discussing 'situation' cites a critic from 1907 who writes,"what people have always come first to care for [in melodrama] is dramatic situation.... They [are] eager to see something happen; they want to have their emotions stirred, their blood quickened...there is an abundance, an inordinate abundance of situation." Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 43. See also Lea Jacobs "The Woman's Picture and the Poetics of Melodrama." *Camera Obscura* 31 (1993):121-47. As will become obvious both the tableau and situation are particularly relevant in relation to serial killer films discussed in the next chapter.

[538] Brook, *Melodramatic Imagination*, 52.

The sensation drama presents the modern environment as a series of shocks, filled with assaults on the senses. Late melodrama's fascination with the urban milieu and its staging of the wonders and disasters of technology shows that this entertainment based in sensation both portrayed and helped mediate the new abrasive experience of modernity.[539]

In Ben Singer's account of the rapid changes occurring in the late 19th Century he comments on the discourses of 'hyperstimulus', descriptions of sensory violence and the intensity of urban life which where discussed in both contemporary academic essays and also sensational newspapers.[540] Illustrated cartoons in the press (what Singer refers to as "grotesque sensation") ranged from cityscapes saturated with advertisements to depictions of tram accidents. As Singer writes,

By far the dominant dystopic motif around the turn of the century highlighted the errors of big-city traffic, particularly with respect to the hazards of the electric trolley. A plethora of images representing streams of injured pedestrians, piles of 'massacred innocents', and perennially gleeful death figures focused on the new dangers of the technologized urban environments. [...] Sensational newspapers had a particular fondness for 'snapshot' images of pedestrian deaths. This fixation underscored the sense of a radically altered public space, one defined by chance, peril, and shocking impressions rather than by any traditional conception of continuity and self-controlled destiny.[541]

Perhaps the most extreme form of grotesque sensationalism in England at that time, is however, found in the press coverage of Jack the Ripper's murders, which took place

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[539] Gunning, "Heard Over the Phone: The Lonely Villa and the De Lorde Tradition of Terrified Communication," 52-53.
[540] Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*, 59-99.In a similar discussion Susan Buck-Morss refers to the way in which Doctors were generally horrified by the "grisly body count of the industrial revolution. The rates of injuries due to factory and railroad accidents in the 19th century made surgical wards look like field hospitals[...] Threatened bodies, shattered limbs, physical catastrophe – these realities of modernity were the underside of the technical aesthethics of phantasmagorias as total environments of bodily comfort." Buck Morss, *"Aesthetics and Anaesthetics,"* 27.
[541] Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity*,69-70.Singer commenting on the sort of grotesque sensationalism which he suggest besides selling newspapers also, "through their meticulous attention to the physical details of accidental death" seems to articulate the sense of "physical vulnerability" which saturated urban consciousness. He cites an 1894 article which appeared in the Newark Daily Advertiser: "Isaac Bartle, a prominent citizen of New Brunswick, was instantly killed at the Market street station of the Pennsylvania Railroad this morning. His body was so horribly mangled that the remains had to be gathered up with a shovel and taken away in a basket...He was ground into an unrecognisable mass under the wheels of a heavy freight engine. The engine struck Mr. Bartle in the back and dragged him several yards along the track, mangling his body in a horrible manner. Almost every bone was broken, the flesh was torn away and distributed along the track, and so completely was the body torn apart that the coins and knife in the trousers pocket were bent or broken, and the checkbook, pocketbook and papers were torn in pieces." "Ground to pieces on the Rail," Newark Daily Advertiser, (May 9, 1894):7 in Ibid, 73-74.

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between August to November 1888, in the East End of London. Referring to the sensational cultural identity of Jack the Ripper, Maria Tatar refers to the relationship of the murderer to the press. While Scotland Yard has 350 letters from the Ripper only two or three of these are suspected of being from the real killer. The press took an unprecedented interest in the crimes. One penny weekly, *The Illustrated Police News*, "devoted a total of 184 cover pictures to the Ripper crimes and was still writing of the case in 1892."[542] Jane Caputi comments it was one of the first media events.[543] Referring to the media sensationalism around Jack the Ripper, Judith Walkowitz writes, "One cannot emphasize too much the role of the popular press, itself a creation of the 1880s, in establishing Jack the Ripper as a media hero, in amplifying the terror of male violence, and in elaborating and interpreting the meaning of the Ripper murders to a 'mass' audience." [544]

As suggested by the above, the potential of Jack the Ripper as "news' by the popular press is directly related to the amount of gore and grizzle that could be extracted from the story, creating a form of 'sensational news'. Within theatrical representations of this period Gunning refers to the work of the playwright André de Lorde as offering a significant example of sensation theatre. De Lorde was the playwright of the Théatre du Grande Guignol, which opened in Paris in 1897. Gunning relates the plays of Grande Guignol to melodrama, where sensation and the "undermining of moral order" were central.[545] These plays were self consciously modern using contemporary technology "[...] the telephone, the motor car, the X-ray, the operating theatre and the examining rooms of Salpetriere." Grand Guignol inverted the world of melodrama, here there is no hope for the victim and

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[542] Tatar, *Lustmord*, 23

[543] Jane Caputi, "The New Founding Fathers: The lore and Lure of the Serial Killer in Contemporary Culture," *Journal of American Culture 13, 3* (1990):1-12.

[544] Judith R. Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence," *Feminist Studies* 8(1982):550. Vanessa R. Scwartz in her essay "Cinema Spectatorship before the Apparatus: The Public taste for Reality in Fin-de- Paris" writes of how the city Morgue in Paris became a popular destination as a"sight." The Morgue constantly featured in the newspapers covering unsolved crimes and murders which meant that large crowds gathered at the Morgue, thus the news papers continued the story. Shwartz writes, "In a time of increasingly private and commercial entertainment, the Morgue was open and free, and the display of dead bodies existed for the public to come and see. As a municipal institution, however the Morgue's principal goal was to serve as a depository for the anonymous dead, whose identity, administrators hoped, might be established by their being publicly displayed. Yet the Paris Morgue was like no other institution [...] its deliberately undramatic façade, and its seemingly somber subject matter, the Morgue was 'one of the most popular sights in Paris'. The identification of dead bodies was turned into a show." As Shwartz remarks while the pretence may have been "civic duty" this was a form of public voyeurism and sensationalism. In *Cinema and The Invention of Modern Life* eds., Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, 299.

[545] Gunning, "Heard Over the Phone: The Lonely Villa and the De Lorde Tradition of Terrified Communication," 53.

the villain is the one who is rewarded.[546] Rather than moral order these plays "actually display a vertiginous image of order destroyed and discourse rendered meaningless." [547]

The Grand Guignol creates sensation, which by passes issues of morality to target the audiences physically. Rather than the excess in melodrama as a necessary requirement to make virtue and vice legible in a decaying desacralized world, Gunning suggests, "In Grand Guignol one encounters not simply the collapse of a sacred world, but its liquid putrescence. The moral occult has literally decomposed into elements of sensation." [548]

Gunning suggests a parallel between the Grand Guignol and melodrama's (and the 19th Century milieu in general) desire to uncover and decipher the truth. Rather than a transcendent moral order, at least desired in melodrama, de Lorde "deals with the remnants of the great myths [dealing with the most] dominant discourses of his time, medicine and law."[549]Gunning makes the point that both discourses, incorporating discussion on madness and crime respectively are centred around uncovering the truth similar to the melodramatic form itself and suggests that this sheds light on the direction melodrama takes in the twentieth century stating, "the central conflict of later Hollywood melodramas become clearer if we view them as arenas in which opposing discourses with separate claims to the truth contend for legitimation." Referring to the way in which these plays often represent rational discourses as obscuring "any access to truth" and leading to the static tableau of death as a sensational spectacle. "The drama of signs ends in the contemplation of a corpse."[550] Vision and attempts to uncover all obstruct interpretation "sensation overwhelms significance."[551] Referring to how Brook interprets the increasing emphasis on sensation in 19th century melodrama as " the decadence of melodrama" Gunning writes,

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[546] Gunning refers to the ways in which earlier sensational Melodrama such as Boucicault's *Jessie Brown* 1858 influenced de Lorde's *Le Dernier Torture*, 1904. The scene referred to is one in which in *Jessie Brown* defenders are preparing to kill their women rather than let them get caught by their Muslim attackers, however rescuers arrive at the last moment and the women are saved. In de Lorde's *Le Dernier Torture*, a French Consulate in China surrounded by Bower rebels shoots his daughter rather than leave her to be raped and murdered by the attackers. The sound of the rescue party is heard as the Consulate holds his dead daughter, driven insane.
[547] Ibid
[548] Ibid, 54.
[549] Ibid, 55.
[550] Ibid, 59.
[551] Ibid.

> [This] is really its necessary trajectory, as the moral occult becomes a tangle of contradictory discourses and the sense of personal identity and integrity on which a new moral order rested becomes dissolved by a growing sense of the precariousness of reason and the materiality of consciousness. In this sense the latest heir of the melodramatic tradition, and certainly of the theatre of de Lorde, would be the horror film of the '70s and '80s, which rediscovered a visuality of horror through physical effects and a sensational approach, which produced thoroughly grisly works of art.[552]

The use of contemporary technology in Grand Guignol is also evident in many serial killer films which as argued have a direct lineage to Michael Powell's Peeping *Tom* itself a film which is a mediation on cinema, its structures and representational strategies. Equally relevant to this discussion is Walter Benjamin's linking of the camera person to the surgeon in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." (1988) The surgeon equipped with his surgical tools to cut up bodies relates to the mutilated bodies left behind by the serial killer in these films and the cutting, splicing and editing techniques of the cinema in general for as Diana Fuss writes, "film has always been a technology of dismemberment and fragmentation."[553] Referring to the ways in which film is put together through 'cutting', 'splicing' 'taped together/ suturing' and the similarity of technical terms between film and surgery, suggests for Fuss the filmmakers ability to examine in detail the human body which is similar to the surgeon. For Fuss, the emphasis on bodily mutilation in serial killer films reference back to early film.

> Contemporary serial killer films represent not so much the emergence of a new or mutant cinematic form as the revival of an old or dormant one. These films return us to the earliest stages of the cinema and to the medium's fascination with the mutilation, fragmentation, and reconstitution of body parts. Amputations, decapitations, and other forms of bodily disfigurement were commonplace in early cinema; indeed they were one of the stock themes of the trick shorts by Edison, Biograph, Méliès, and Pathé.[554]

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[552] Ibid, 59-60.
[553] Diane Fuss, "Monsters of Perversion: Jeffrey Dahmer and The Silence of the Lambs," Marjorie Garber, Jann Matlock, Rebecca L. Walkowitz *Media Spectacles*, (1993):180.
[554] Ibid, 202 n.27.

Body Genres

While the above discussion of Grand Guignol makes a connection between horror and melodrama Linda Williams also links it to pornography referring to how these three "body genres" explore sensation and excess. Williams writes,

> It would not be unreasonable, in fact, to consider all three of these genres under the extended rubric of melodrama, considered as a filmic mode of stylistic and/or emotional excess that stands in contrast to more "dominant" modes of realistic, goal-orientated narrative. In this extended sense melodrama can encompass a broad range of films marked by "lapses" in realism, by "excesses" of spectacle and displays of primal, even infantile emotions, and by narratives that seem circular and repetitive.[555]

For Williams the three genres share "the spectacle of a body caught in the grip of intense sensation or emotion."[556] In melodrama it is the fixation on the weeping body, in pornography the orgasmic body and in horror the violated, terrorized body. Williams also extends this shared feature of excess to include ecstasy, referring to its Greek origin as "insanity and bewilderment" as well as the more contemporary sense of rapture.

> Visually, each of these ecstatic excesses could be said to share a quality of uncontrollable convulsive or spasm – of the body 'beside itself' with sexual pleasure, fear and terror, or overpowering sadness. Aurally, excess is marked by recourse not to the coded articulations of language but to inarticulate cries of pleasure in porn, screams of fear in horror, sobs of anguish in melodrama.[557]

Within these three genres it is the bodies of women, which usually function as the embodiment of excessive pleasure, terror or sadness, regardless of whether the genre is addressing the senses of male or female spectators. Williams comments that while other genres also offer sensational bodies, the distinction here is the "low cultural status" of these

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[555] Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, eds. Mast, Cohen and Braudy, (1998):715.
[556] Ibid, 703.
[557] Ibid, 704.

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particular body genres. Her suggestion is that possibly the reason these genres are "low" is in how the spectator is "caught up in an almost involuntary mimicry of the emotion or sensation of the body on the screen along with the fact that the body displayed is female."[558] Here it would appear that the success of these genres depends on the measurement of an equally excessive bodily response by the spectator.[559] Their low cultural status rests on the way in which these texts make a direct connection with our synesthetic system. Moving away from discussions of manipulation Williams asks "how shall we think of these bodily displays in relation to one another, as a system of excess in popular film?[560] Suggesting that psychoanalytic theory with feminist film theory employs the categories of fetishism, voyeurism, sadism and masochism to explain the pleasure of watching while presenting these 'perversions' as inappropriate. Williams comments that within Freudian theory all sexuality is understood as perverse. These body genres all articulate gender fantasies in some way and rather than understanding these fantasies as "wish fulfilling linear narratives" Williams refers to the work of Jean Leplanche and J.B Pontalis (1968). Here fantasy occupies a less rigid linear narrative suggesting more fluid subject positions. Williams suggests that the body genres of porn, horror and melodrama are connected to Freud's concept of origin fantasies, the means by which children resolve "major enigmas" confronting them. In this case porn is the genre related to primal seduction, horror to castration/ sexual difference and melodrama, the loss of origins. For Williams these body genres rather than being understood as "evidence of a monolithic and unchanging misogyny" rather situate the particular shifts and "rapid changes taking place in relation between the "sexes." Williams writes,

> The fantasies activated by these genres are repetitious, but not fixed
> and eternal. If traced back to origins each could probably be shown
> to have emerged with the formation of the bourgeois subject and the
> intensifying importance to this subject of specified sexualities.[561]

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[558] Ibid.

[559] Williams writes:" Examples of such measurement can be readily observed: in the 'peter meter' capsule reviews in Hustler magazine, which measure the power of a porn film in degrees of erection of little cartoon penises; in horror films which measure success in terms of screams, fainting, and heart attacks in the audience[...] and in the long standing tradition of women's film measuring their success in terms of one-, two-, or three handkerchief movies." Ibid.

[560] Ibid,706.

[561] Ibid, 713.

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The anxieties about categorization and boundaries evident in 'serial killer films' are also apparent within action films and sci fi action films. Action film and science fiction are also of course part of what Williams refers to as a "system of excess" where sensational bodies are displayed and there is often an excess of destruction. In these films there is a negotiation of boundaries concerning what is 'human' and 'non-human' usually played out on the human body, which again suggests a connection to melodrama given Williams' point above that melodrama is a genre concerned with loss of origins. Mary Douglas' discussion on the body as a model of organization in primitive society offers a useful means of analysis in understanding why body boundaries and their dissolution are so regularly employed. Douglas writes,

> "The body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries, which are threatened or precarious. The body is a complex structure. The function of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures.[562]

Douglas also stresses the significance of the breakdown of categories as emblematic of the monster, impurity functioning as a signifier in the transgression of categories. Hybrid forms in creatures such as lobsters etc. who are of the sea but who also crawl are impure as are things which are ambiguous in relation to definable boundaries such as "me/not me, inside/outside, and living /dead [and also] spittle, blood, tears, sweat, hair clippings, vomit, nail clippings, pieces of flesh."[563]Discussing the usefulness of applying Douglas's analysis to the study of the monster Noel Carroll comments "For they are beings or creatures that specialize in formlessness, incompleteness, categorical interstitiality, and categorical contradictoriness."[564]

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[562] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo*, (1966):115.
[563] Ibid, 32.
[564] Noel Caroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart* ,(1990):31. David Williams referring to one of the earliest taxonomies of the monster by Isidore of Seville stresses the importance placed on the body as "the most useful model for a taxonomy of the monster." Williams, *Deformed Discourse*, 108. The reasons for this relates to the way the human body functions as "the most complete paradigm for order" and by extension the disorder which is prioritised in monstrous discourses. Symbolically it is related to the concept that "the cosmos is contained in the 'little cosmos' of the world and both are represented in miniature in the human body." Ibid. For a further discussion on the grotesque as aesthetic system in folk culture of the Middle Ages, see M.M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky, Cambridge Mass, MIT Press, 1968.

In science fiction film there is an opposition between creation and destruction, and by extension a negotiation of creation, biological reproduction versus technological reproduction, the cyborg etc. Writing on the similarities between the cyborg in films such as *Terminator* (1984) and Klaus Thewelit's two volume study of the fascist soldier male (based on the German Friekorps between the world wars) Claudia Springer refers to way in which protection of the "masculine subject against the onslaught of a femininity feared by patriarchy now involves transforming the male body into something only minimally human", i.e. the cyborg.[565] However, ironically this requires the replacing of male body parts with technology, as Springer writes, "pumping up the cyborg into an exaggerated version of the muscular male physique hides the fact that electronic technology has no gender."[566]

In serial killer films, the serial killer still physically resembles a human, most often male, although as mentioned before there is obviously a question posed in relation to this resemblance. Rather than the cyborg's exaggerated "muscular male physique" there is a heightened emphasis on the killer's 'intellectual' ability. The serial killer out manoeuvres everyone with an omniscient god like knowledge.[567] In effect this omniscience suggests very clearly a residual feudal or pre-modern regime in operation. This emphasis on an all-knowing intellectuality though, is often combined with an intense physical strength too, as in *Manhunter* where the serial killer towers over everyone. In *The Silence of the Lambs* this distinction is split between Hannibal Lechter, the intellectual and Buffalo Bill who uses physical strength to overcome his victims.

In a recent conference paper entitled *Action Cinema, Labour Power and the Video Shop* Paul Willemen critiques many of the recent academic discussions on masculinity and

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[565] Claudia Springer "the Pleasure of The Interface", *Screen*, (Autumn 1991):317. See also Klaus Theweleit, *Male fantasies, volume one*, (1987).

[566] Ibid, 318.

[567] In Noel Carroll's discussion of horror employing Mary Douglas's theories of impurity mentioned above he also refers to a 'puzzle' in horror. Commenting on the fact that often the monster does not look like it is physically capable of overpowering anyone at will and yet their "unstoppable" nature is "psychologically acceptable to audiences." Carroll suggests that this may be explained by Douglas's "claim that culturally impure objects are generally taken to be invested with magical powers, and, as a result, are often employed in rituals. Monsters in works of horror, by extension, then, may be similarly imbued with awesome powers in virtue of their impurity." Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 34.

action cinema.[568] Willemen argues that the suggestion that Hollywood action cinema is more about masculinity than the western or war movie or indeed any other category of film denies the ways in which all Hollywood films "are about masculinity in the sense of being 'about' the demarcations between genders."[569] Willemen's point echoes Linda Williams' suggestion above that body genres all articulate gender and origin fantasies. Willemen referring to Yvonne Tasker's Spectacular *Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema* (1993) where she suggests that muscular male bodies visible in action cinema in the 80s perform notions of masculinity and also femininity articulating for Tasker a splitting of masculinity. On the contrary Willemen writes that this,

> Is the appropriation of femininity into a more totalizing notion of masculinity. [...] By endowing the testosterone-driven bullies with aspects of a simplistic notion of femininity such as desire for narcissistic display allied with manifestations of 'caring affects', Hollywood has given itself the green light to celebrate brutal aggression as an ideal of masculinity as long as it is done peacock-style by men who possess an appropriate, that is to say, a not too pronounced degree of what passes for caring or nurturing femininity."[570]

The type of film criticism that repetitively rediscovers that masculinity, rather than being monolithic is in fact "an unstable nexus of social and political phenomena" is both disingenuous and redundant.[571] As Willemen points out the fact that there are easily apparent contradictions to the constructions of masculinity and femininity packaged by Hollywood is a phenomena articulated clearly by many feminist film theorists such as Claire Johnson in the 1970s. For Willemen rather than suggesting a crisis in patriarchy, the ideological contradictions traced by theorists such as Yvonne Tasker and Ina Rae Hark are "nothing more than the contours of the various elements which the film-texts are stitching together [...] in order to achieve [...] the simulation of cohesion required if the ideological

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[568] Paul Willemen "Action Cinema, Labour Power and the Video Shop" paper presented at Action Conference Hong Kong, January 2003.
[569] Willemen "Action Cinema, Labour Power and the Video Shop," 7.
[570] Ibid, 8.
[571] Ibid, 9.

construct is to have maximum effectiveness. None of this has anything to do with the inscription of an anti- or a non-patriarchal voice into the textual fabric."[572]

In David Cook's account of the changes that took place in the 1970s in Hollywood he comments on the way in which investors who had previously made funds available to the studios who then in turn made the decision on how to allocate the funds, shifted the ground and started funding individual films on a "picture by picture basis, with the films themselves as collateral."[573] Cook suggests that this shift from industrial to finance capital brought "exploitation cinema into the mainstream." Employing marketing strategies which have now become standard such as simultaneous release and franchising attached to the blockbuster, here the films produced also adopt elements of a "cinema of attractions" where the main emphasis is on thrill and visceral sensation and only the flimsiest narrative frame.[574] Willemen points out that a question arises from this emphasis on "visceral impact" as to whether the "industry is reverting to an older moment in the industrialization of culture" or that sensationalism is its logical destination as Susan Buck Morss argues in her recent book *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and Wes (2000)*.[575] Returning to the work of Giovanni Arrighi and his account of the way in which one cycle of capitalist accumulation "supersedes another by reviving aspects of" the earlier phase Willemen makes a correlation to the revival of a cinema of attractions and also the way in which Free Trade discourses which had surfaced at the emergence of the British Empire were re-deployed by Thatcher and Reagan in the 1980s.[576]

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[572] Ibid. Willemen continues: " The notion of femininity detected by Tasker and Hark in Hollywood spectacles and action films is rather like the notion of communism secreted by Senator McCarthy's rants: a necesssary 'other'. That 'other' is now constructed a little differently from the way this was done in the days of Rudolf Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks, or Raoul Walsh and Howard Hawks. But talk of a crisis in masculinity when pathological forms of it are being reasserted as the norm in the era of Reagan, Clinton, Bush Sr. and Jr., deserves, at best, a hollow laugh.

[573] David Cook, History of American Cinema Vol. 9: *Lost Illusions: American Cinema in the Shadow of Watergate and Vietnam*, 1970-79, (2000):304.

[574] Discussing these changes Willemen writes: "This dimension of the restructuring of Hollywood in the 1970s had major effects well beyond the mainstreaming of exploitation cinema: at the Brighton Conference of FIAF in 1978, assorted academics and cultural institutions dutifully followed suit and turned their attention towards identifying and legitimating the cinema of attractions as (imaging this to be for curatorial or theoretical purposes.) " (Willemen: 18)

[575] Willemen "Action Cinema, Labour Power and the Video Shop," 18.

[576] It is also important to point out that the mainstreaming of exploitation was facilitated by a number of strategies by the industry such as simultaneous release as mentioned above. Other stratgeics included, "censorship regulation, subsidies[...] not only were the exhibition and distribution sectors forced into line [...] the 'informal advertising' sector consisting of newspaper reviewers, television programmes, film magazines and the like were also brought more directly under control." If these outlets did follow the marketing line, they were refused material. As Willemen continues this restructuring by finance capital also effected film criticism within the academic frame, he gives the example of BFI, publishers of *Screen*, who, by implementing a policy of "profitable in their own right[subordinated them] to the blackmail of film-

In a related discussion Richard Maltby examines the way in which David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson in *The Classic Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960s (1985)* insist on the ability to read films in terms of the history of narrative form and an evolution of stylistic norms in a "diachronic object 'Hollywood'."[577] Maltby in contrast examines the way in which films are part of a larger project of entertainment production in which media corporations employ a horizontal axis in which entertainment can be viewed across a multiple and varied number of platforms. Maltby writes,

> The major Hollywood corporations are now equally involved in the production and distribution of a chain of inter-related cultural products: books, television shows, records, toys, games, videos, T-shirts, magazines, as well as tie-ins and merchandizing arrangements with the entire panoply of consumer goods.[578]

Maltby suggests that within this context film theorists should immerse their critical energies analyzing these films as "complex objects" within this commercial matrix rather than convoluted explorations of narrative, gender etc. In a similar vein to Willemen's earlier point of genre definitions being dependent on which section of the industry is doing the assigning, Maltby comments "The energies of these objects are often directed more to the pursuit of synergy than to that of narrative coherence."[579] Referring to the changes in Hollywood sine the 1970s he writes,

> A history of Hollywood constructed as the history of a narrative form may not be able to account satisfactorily either for these changes or for their effects: the phenomena of multiple formats, repeat viewing and modularity question the centrality of narrative

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marketeers." See Willemen, *Action Cinema*, 17-18. The controlling hand of finance capital is still very much in operation in academic circles. While researching *The Silence of the Lambs*, I came across one paper by Carol Watts, "From Looking to Coveting: The 'American Girl' in The Silence of the Lambs," in *Women : a cultural review* 4.1 (1993):69, which carried the following statement in a blank space where an image could have been, "Orion Pictures Corporation does not feel that it would be in the best interests of the film to allow the stills, submitted to accompany this article, to be published."

[577] Richard Maltby, " 'Nobody Knows Everything' Post-classical historiographies and consolidated entertainment," In (eds) Steve Neale and Murray Smith, *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*, (1998):21-44.
[578] Ibid,26.
[579] Ibid.

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and the concept of a 'univocal reading' solicited by the classical film. An alternative historical framework, privileging economic relations rather than product styling, would provide a different account. Such an alternative account should not eliminate questions of form; but it will place them differently, constructing them in terms of what I have elsewhere called a 'commercial aesthetic'.[580]

In developing his discussion on action cinema Willemen suggests that one of the most dominant structuring fantasies in them is one that addresses " the three main strategies of capital to combat the falling rate of profit [...] the intensification of the exploitation of labour power, geographical expansion and the destruction of capital values."[581] Willemen identifies three main fantasies of labour power in operation, the *Hercules* body, the *James Bond* body, and the *Robo-cop* body. Rather than understanding these as progressions Willemen suggests that they are in fact apparent from before the advent of cinema. The Herculean body is a muscular body an "eroticized fantasy of labour power, " there to be looked at. As Willemen writes, "Often the camera lovingly caressed the body with slow pans and tilts detailing the sweating torso, the arms and biceps, the bulging, hairy thighs, and so on. The actor if he moves at all, does so slowly, signifying the expenditure of massive quantities of energy."[582] Willemen makes a distinction between the athletic body and the Herculean body, remarking that the athletic body articulates different discourses based on mobility and expertise, suggesting 'militarized labour power" whereas the Herculean body suggests fantasies to do with the "management of labour power."[583] In discussing the James Bond body, Willemen comments on the importance of technological gadgets as a complement to labour power. Here the Bond-body is a transnational capital fantasy where wealth and power are not an issue but rather what is at stake is the mapping of how "the destruction of capital values accumulated 'elsewhere' [is needed] in order to clear the ground for new markets."[584]The Robo-cop body incorporates the fantasies of finance capital that is "massive quantities of labour power and equally massive information

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[580] Ibid, 27. For a related discussion see Thomas Elsaesser "Film Studies in Search of the Object" *Film Criticism* Vol XVII. Nos 2-3 (Winter Spring 1993): 40-48.

[581] Willemen "Action Cinema, Labour Power and the Video Shop," 5.

[582] Ibid, 20.

[583] Ibid,21.For a recent example of the camera lovingly caressing the athletic body of militarised labour power see Clair Denis' *Beau Travail* 2000.

[584] Ibid,22.Arguably the immersed in the bond body is the link to specific governments and the re-alignments within and configurations within transnational capitalism. The Bond name also aligned to associations of other bonds - government bonds for example.

processing capacities."[585] While these descriptions of different type of labour power can be seen as chronological, from agricultural labour to industrial labour to transnational corporations to an emphasis on information processing Willemen points out "that the chronology relates to the (non-linear) development of the relative dominance at any given time of a particular sector of the bourgeoisie."[586]

Commenting on the way in which action movies (and also disaster and science fiction movies) present "orgies of capital value destruction" as fantasies of de-industrialization, Willemen states how films,

> [...] Do indeed talk to us of capitalism's fundamental systemic aspects: they do so in the form of fantasies of labour power and stored 'value'; and they do so at times by way of the fantasy scenarios represented, or by way of the technological means deployed in the making of the films (such as digital effects) [...] or by both at the same time.[587]

As Willemen makes clear at the beginning of his discussion the fantasies of labour power articulated most vividly in action film will also be present in other types of film whether they operate under different guises or not. Taking that as the case how does Willemen's discussion advance interpretations of what may be at stake in serial killer films. Whereas in action film the representations of labour power mapped on to the male body is for the most part heroic, what sort of fantasies of labour power is articulated in and through the serial killer? Do these films represent finance capital fantasies of omnipotent power articulated through mobility; the ability to have omnipotent power above and beyond the law; and, most importantly the ability to downsize without feelings of emotional or ethical responsibility to the workers who are left without livelihoods? Does the presence of serial killer allow state institutions and agencies to mimic the killer's omniscient knowledge and repetitive killing?

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[585] Ibid.
[586] Ibid.
[587] Ibid, 23.

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Conclusion

This chapter has offered a discursive exploration of the way in which multiple discourses operate within the cycle of films I have categorized as "serial killer films." Depending on which discursive strands are considered the most dominant within the film text, will in effect decide the genre in which the film is primarily identified. As discussed in the **Introduction** and **Part One**, if we assume that a cultural text does contain a "corridor of voices," then we must accept that this will be also evident in the way, cultural texts assume genre categorization depending on the discursive emphasis placed on the text by the interpreter. Through a working definition of serial killing as a type of repetitive murder devoid of an emotional register and with a 'cooling off' period in between, this chapter has identified a type of film as the "serial killer film." However it is also apparent that the serial killer resides in a number of different genres from the western, to comedy, to horror, to crime/thriller, to supernatural/gothic, to science fiction, to action film and melodrama. Particular emphasis has been placed on a discussion of melodrama. Looking at its historical emergence, its theatrical origins and elaborating on the way most Hollywood genre's currently defined can be incorporated into melodrama, because as referred to earlier they are as Willemen writes, "dramas of modernization." Linda Williams suggests we should refer to melodrama as a dramatic "mode" rather than a genre because of its centrality to mainstream American cultural production.[588]

Moving on from the discussion in **Part One**, which outlined a number of regimes of looking (or scopic regimes) operating synchronically within modernity and its emergence, this chapter has also articulated the way different regimes of looking are prioritized in different genres. Equally this chapter extends **Chapter Two's discussion** of mimesis and experience and restructuring of subjectivity through the industrialization of culture. As a means of critiquing the significance placed on genre cohesion within film studies, this chapter has offered a brief account of the historical context of the emergence of gothic narratives and melodrama as a means of clarifying what was at stake at the time. This clarification also allows us to determine what discourses may be put in play when they are articulated in contemporary cultural texts such as serial killer films. Here the significance

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[588] Linda Williams, "Playing the Race Card": *Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson*, 2001.

placed on non-sensuous correspondences by Benjamin in his theory of experience and mimesis is important. Benjamin's theory of experience immersed, as it is in discussions of the restructuring of subjectivity in the context of the industrialization of cultural allows for a reiteration of what is critically at stake in terms of a re-evaluation of genre theory and its uses. As became apparent in our discussion in this chapter an important consideration raised by Paul Willemen is the question of which definitions are assigned by which section of the industry, the production or the distribution/marketing section. What becomes apparent in this question of assigning film labels is the need for a re-appraisal of the way in which genre categories within film studies might be taught. Willemen's discussion puts forward an important argument against the way in which film studies as an academic discipline takes its cues from the film industry itself. And as Maltby suggested above, a history of Hollywood through a narrative history offers film students a very partial frame of reference. By placing an importance in this chapter on developing a 'working' map, which articulates a historical context for a number of competing discourses operating in any cultural text, will allow for a much more expanded field of reference when offering a textual analysis of some of these serial killer films. As with this chapter, in the following I hope to make apparent the significance of Raymond William's concept of the emergent and the residual as discussed in the Introduction. As a working method, this expanded field incorporates an historical dimension to regimes of looking and also places significance on projected fantasies, which are also articulated, in the cultural text. In the next chapter I will analyse how these fantasies often occur doubled by a seemingly contradictory layer in which the serial killer manifests characteristics of the downsized worker or occupies spaces of de-industrialization. This however could be interpreted as a message, the serial killer lives in these post –industrial wastelands, the message being don't pursue them further, don't go there and above all don't analyse the reasons behind there existence.

Chapter 4

Fantasies of Psychic and Physical Fragmentation in Mainstream Cinema

As the last chapter discussed, mapping the semantic similarities in various films to construct a semblance of genre cohesion does not allow for a discussion of the way in which various 'bundles of discourse' operate within seemingly diverse films. In this chapter I will concentrate on interpretative strategies for films I have defined as "serial killer films." I will also demonstrate the ways in which certain dynamics also occur in films, which would not normally come under this definition. The aim of this is to extrapolate the way semantic similarities can operate through discursive bundles rather than narrative structure or character development. This offers a means of linking a seemingly diverse range of films, which nevertheless share similar discursive constellations. As Mark Seltzer writes,

> Serial murder and its representations, for example, have by now largely replaced the Western as the most popular genre-fiction of the body and bodily violence in our culture. And recent splatterpunk Westerns, such as Cormac MacCarthy's novel *Blood Meridian* or films like Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* or Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man*, make the case that the Western was really about serial killing all along.[589]

As was suggested in the last chapter one of the most obvious discourses in these films is the way in which monstrousness is articulated through the killer's sexuality and of course paralleled in many instances by a more culturally sanctioned benign sexual deviance through the role of the final girl. The killer's sexual deviancy is characteristically articulated through his relationship to women, especially his maternal relationship and this is seen to be the dominant factor in his dysfunctional and violent aggression towards women and yet paradoxically is very often dressed in homosexual stereotypes as a particularly facile way of positioning the killer as monstrous 'other'.

While this uncomfortable device of employing homosexuality as a means of fixing rigid cultural constructs is viewed by many as a commonplace occurrence, it becomes an area of

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[589] Seltzer, *Serial Killers*, 1

major discussion in relation to the box office success of *The Silence of the Lambs*. On its release there were many demonstrations against the film on account of its homosexual portrayal of the serial killer Buffalo Bill eventually resulting in the Academy Awards Ceremony being picketed because of the films multiple nominations for awards that year.[590]

As Janet Staiger points out both gay activists and feminists found themselves divided in relation to this film. For feminists the film represented a strong representation of a " working woman" and as Amy Taubin points out women viewers could take pleasure in "the two hour spectacle of a woman solving the perverse riddles of patriarchy– all by herself."[591]On the other hand, for gay men the film was homophobic in the extreme suggesting a link between serial murder and gay sexuality.[592]

> The narrative suggests that he [Buffalo Bill] is monstrous not so much through his killing (after all, Lecter kills, too) but because he is a man, who sews, wears makeup and desires a sex change operation. In this sense, then, the terms monster and transsexual collapse, the latter becomes a privileged signifier for the former.[593]

The Silence of the Lambs is not the first film to link monstrosity with the transexual/transvestite.[594] Recent examples include Brian De Palma's *Dressed to Kill* (1981) and Neil Jordan's *In Dreams* (1999),[595]going back to Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). The killer in *Psycho* was based on the media representation of the activities of Ed Gein. The author of

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[590] Adrienne Donald writes "before its official premiere, Richard Jennings of the Los Angeles chapter of Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation called the film "an atrocity against women and one more instance of an industry that can't seem to create a positive gay character." Michel Angelo vilified one of the film's stars, Jodie Foster, for being involved in such a homophobic project. Indeed, it's possible to see the Academy's decision to honor [sic] *The Silence of the Lambs* as the industry's professional refusal to bend to outside political pressure." Donald, "Working For Oneself: Labour and Love in The Silence of The Lambs," Michigan Quarterley Review 31,no.3 (1992):347. For a discussion on the gay communities response to Jodie Foster and a discussion on 'outing' see Douglas Crimp, "Right On, Girlfriend!" *Social Text* 33 (1992):2-18. *The Silence of the Lambs* was not the first film to generate demonstrations from the gay community. William Friedkin's *Cruising* (1980) in which Al Pacino plays an undercover cop tracking a serial killer who is operating in the world of New York's gay S& M scene created hostility from its negative depiction of gay culture. "[...] The film aroused a storm of protest in the gay community, beginning with several near riots during location shooting on Christopher Street. [...] The film met with picket lines and demonstrations, and did terrific business in its first two weeks before plummeting abruptly ..." Cook, *Lost Illusions*, 107.
[591] Amy Taubin in Janet Staiger, "Taboos and Totems: Cultural Meanings of The Silence of The Lambs," in J. Collins, H. Radner, A. P. Collins (eds) *Film Theory Goes to the Movies*, (1993):n35, 149.
[592] Staiger, "Taboos and Totems: Cultural Meanings of The Silence of The Lambs,"142-54.
[593] K. E. Sullivan, "Ed Gein and the Figure of the Trangendered Serial Killer," *Jump Cut* (43):39.
[594] Sullivan lists a series of B movies from the 1970s-1980s which deploy a similar narrative trajectory– *No Way To Treat a Lady* (1968) *Three on a Meathook* (1973) *Deadly Blessing* (1984) and *Relentless 3* (1993). Sullivan, "Ed Gein and the Figure of the Trangendered Serial Killer," *Jump Cut* (43):39.
[595] See Emer Rockett& Kevin Rockett, "In Dreams (1999)," *Neil Jordan Exploring Boundaries*, (2003): 205-222.

Psycho Robert Bloch was living in Wisconsin at the time when accounts of Ed Gein's crimes and details of his trial abounded in the media.[596]

As both Elizabeth Young and Douglas Crimp have noted Jonathan Demme's film deviates markedly from the novel in its representation of Buffalo Bill.[597] Whereas in the book Buffalo Bill is described as a "fag-basher" in the film his sexual identity is presented as "transsexual, transvestite and homosexual queen."[598] In the book there is a chapter given over to a discussion between Crawford and Dr Danielson of the Gender Identity Clinic at John Hopkins in which Dr Danielson in no uncertain terms explains to Crawford the dangers of linking Buffalo Bill to transsexuals arguing that the "incidence of violence among transsexuals is a lot lower than in the general population."[599] The film does make an attempt at distinguishing Buffalo Bill from transsexuals. However, this is conveyed through Hannibal Lecter, who explains to Starling that Buffalo Bill *thinks* he is a transsexual and has wanted to be a lot of things. This comment by Lecter is weaker in comparison to the force of effect that the visual imagery of Bill in his basement has, which re- enforces the collision of so many stereotypical representations of society's other/s.

Young discusses the way in which many feminists have wanted to interpret the film as offering itself as a potential site for readings grounded in deconstructive theories of destabilized identities and gender positions. The benefit of this destabilization is in how it articulates a feminist position that critiques a naïve feminist position on male violence, which takes as its starting point a fixed identity, entrenched in essentialism. Yet for Young the film nonetheless offers "incoherence rather than innovation" in terms of a discussion on gender and sexual politics.[600] Gender difference is displaced by male "homophobic anxiety over masculinity, rather than the utopian transcendence of sexual difference."[601]

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[596] Sullivan, "Ed Gein and the Figure of the Trangendered Serial Killer," 40.
[597] Elizabeth Young, "The Silence of The Lambs and the Flaying of Feminist Theory," *Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory* 27 (September 1991): 5-36. Douglas Crimp, "Right On, Girlfriend!" *Social Text* 33 (1992):2-18.
[598] Young, "The Silence of The Lambs and the Flaying of Feminist Theory," *18.*
[599] Thomas Harris, *The Silence of The Lambs*, 1991): 407.
[600] Young, "The Silence of The Lambs and the Flaying of Feminist Theory," *17.*
[601] Ibid.

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The displacement within *The Silence of the Lambs* of this type of violence onto a gay character, Buffalo Bill, goes against evidence, which overwhelmingly suggests that serial murder is usually committed by heterosexual males. In effect, the film emphatically uses male homosexuality as a scapegoat for violence, which is deep, rooted within heterosexual male culture.[602] Julie Tharp, referring to the way the police officers refer to Buffalo Bill's victims as "humps" also makes the valid point that "if homosexuality is coded as dangerous in this film, heterosexuality fairs little better."[603] This is not to undermine the importance of critical analysis of the homophobic discourses operating within the film but rather to suggest that it is equally important not to ring fence such issues. The problem with only discussing a film in terms of gender violence or gay politics is how this also operates to exclude equally valid areas of discussion. This needs to be understood very clearly in relation to the market and economic structures in place for academic criticism. While obviously for the sake of clarity and a limited word count one area of interest discussed and argued well makes perfect academic sense. However problems do arise. As we know particular issues and discourses take precedence over others and it would be politically naïve to deny that fashions exist in academia. Align this with an undergraduate desire to be at the 'cutting edge' of whatever appears to be the dominant wave of intellectual life and what emerges is very rigid enclosures of interest dealing with "the body," "queer theory," "gender," "digital technology" etc. The point is not to endorse some reactionary conservative position in what are all valid areas of research but to question their abstraction and isolation in relation to each other.

In effect this abstraction denies an engagement that deals with the complex way discursive bundles are articulated through their inter-relationships and the specific contexts of their

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[602] Discussing this K.E. Sullivan writes: "according to Richard Tithecott, author of *Men and Monsters: Jeffrey Dahmer and the Construction of the Serial Killer*, 'we fail to read the serial killer' accurately because he is an embodiment of "society's dominant values.' Specifically, Tithecott indicates that serial killers are enacting/performing the logic of straight masculinity: the violent expulsion of the feminine from the masculine. However, as a culture we are so unable to admit or recognize the connection between our dominant forms of masculinity and 'violent misogynistic crimes' that we must attribute some other kind of motive to them besides masculinity. Instead, motive is attributed to perceived gender deviance, in particular, to man coveting or assuming the mantle of femininity through gender identification or homosexual object choice. Thus murderous rage is queered, and queerness becomes the privileged signifier for psychotic violence." Richard Tithecott, Of Men and Monsters: Jeffrey Dahmer and the Construction of the Serial Killer, 1997 in Sullivan, "Ed Gein and the Figure of the Trangendered Serial Killer," 43.
[603] Julie Tharp, "The Transvestite as Monster: Gender Horror in The Silence of the Lambs and Psycho," *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 19.3 (Fall 1991): 109.

representation with regard to other discourses such as race or class. For example, Adrienne Donald points out that concentrating on gender and sexual violence can blind us to the other forms of violence in the film. Donald writes:

> What is truly frightening is that viewers may take for granted or overlook the silent humiliations endured by women workers and the brutalizing stigmas of class. *The Silence of the Lamb's* homophobia and misogyny are inextricable from economic violence. Economic violence shapes everyone in the film, the police as well as their prisoners, the gainfully employed as well as the wantonly destructive, the powerful as well as the powerless. Every character— not just the victimized women and the murderous gay transsexual— struggles with what might figuratively or literally cannibalize us all: work.[604]

Donald suggests that the film's "cynical manipulation" of homophobia is linked to its treatment of class. He lists Buffalo Bill's characteristics as "dirty, inarticulate, artisanal (as opposed to artistic), vulgar, faggy, misogynistic, violent, perverted, tattooed, and mutilated; he listens to heavy metal, he drives a van, he lives in the suburbs, he owns a toy poodle named Precious, he is a Vietnam veteran." As such Buffalo Bill represents suburban Gothic offering "an appalling stereotype of class and erotic loathsomeness."[605] Donald's description of Buffalo Bill as artisan rather than artistic is quite important. In fact the artisan is an important marker in the de-industrialized location, or more appropriately post-Fordist, in which Starling eventually finds Buffalo Bill, at old Mrs. Litmans ' place, the same location as Frederica Bimmel's father keeps his rabbits and Frederica Bimmel's friend Stacy works.[606] It is the artisan space of the American working class who has lost the focus of major production (similar to Michael Moore's suburban landscapes in *Roger and Me* 1989).[607] It also references the American working class topography of *The Deer Hunter*

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[604] Donald, "Working For Oneself: Labor and Love in The Silence of The Lambs," 348.

[605] Ibid, 354.

[606] See David Harvey, "From Fordism to Flexible Accumulation." In The *Condition of Postmodernity*, Cambridge:Blackwell,141-172. His discussion on the role of women in these new post-Fordist labour markets are important especially in relation to Fredrica Bimmel's employment status prior to her murder. See Harvey,153-155.

[607] Of course this post-Fordist employment lanscape exists in the city also. For example referring to the 'Eye Works' scene in the film Blade Runner, Peter Wollen writes, "See Peter Wollen's discussion of *Balde Runner* where, "production of important elements, such as eyes, is subcontracted out to small specialized workshops, run on a craft rather than an industrial basis. 'Riddleyville' is presumably full of such 'out-source' workshops, alongside the animoid suppliers, noodle bars and night-spots." See Wollen, "Blade Runner," in *Paris Hollywood:Writings on Film*, (2002):128.

(1978), going so far as to include a mobile home outside the house and making an oblique reference to the Vietnam War, especially in the final scene of Jamie Gum's basement.
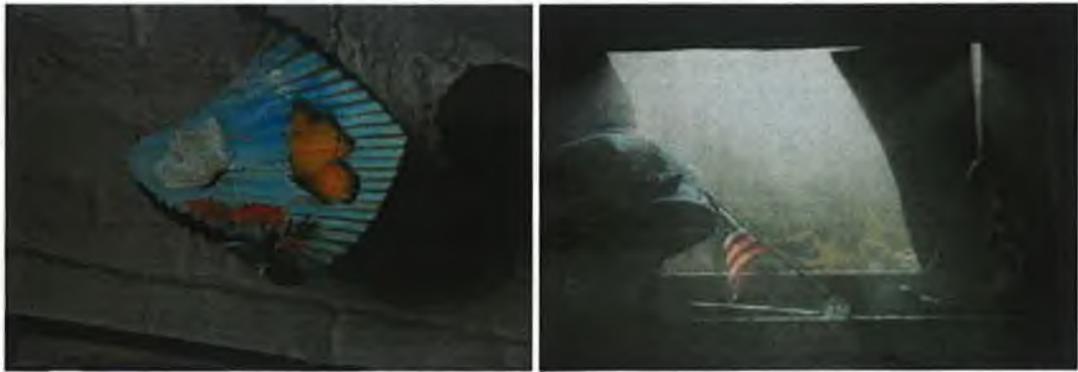
Fig.20 On the far right hand side a toy soldier is just visible, The Silence of the Lambs film stills
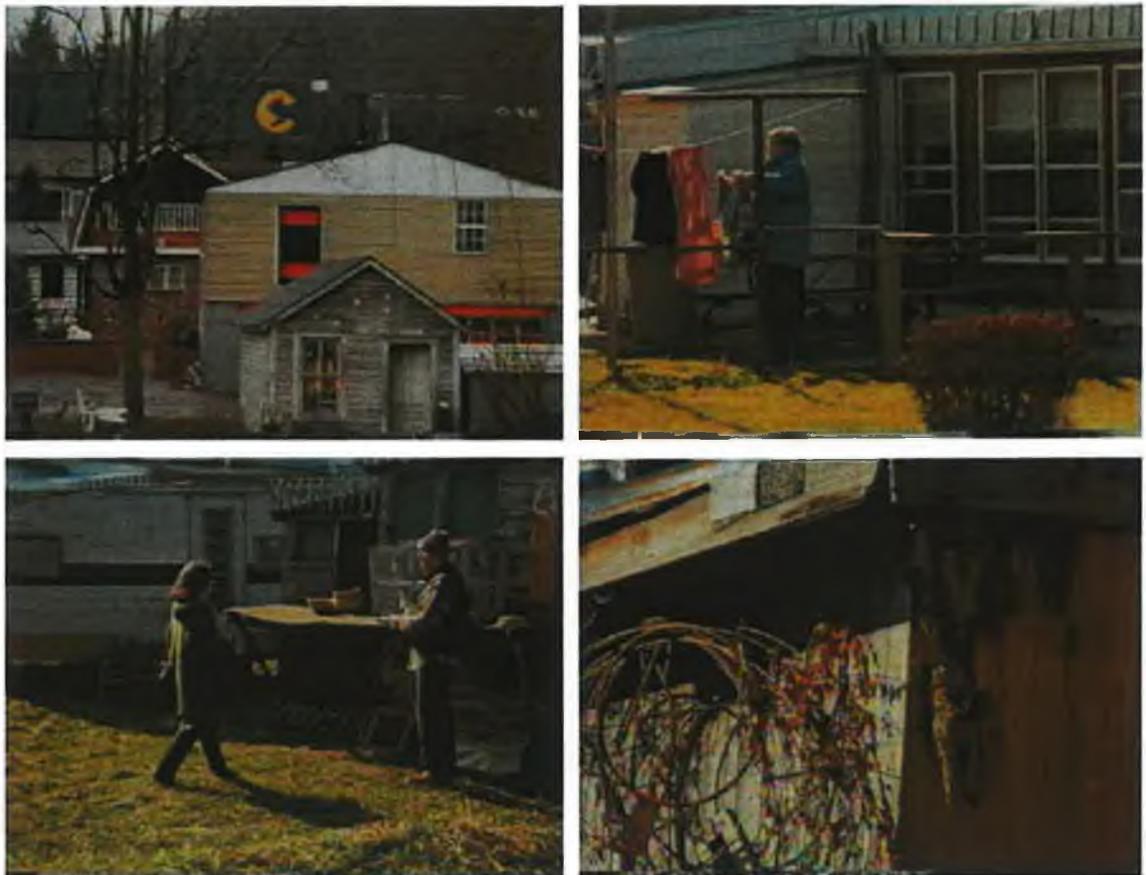
Fig.21 The landscape of Frederica Bimmel's home is the same landscape were Jamie Gum occupies himself in his basement and a similar landscape to the one Clarice leaves behind, The Silence of the Lambs film stills

Trailer home, The Deerhunter film stills

This connection made to class by Donald is significant as it relates to the way in which discussion of labour politics traverses the film. While many feminist commentators have analysed the importance of Clarice Starling's relationship with Hannibal Lecter and Agent Crawford in terms of her education into a paternalistic career world, the significance of her class position is often ignored or side-lined in favour of a more dominant theoretical pre-occupation with gender. Of significant importance, as Bruce Robbins remarks is the link between sex and gender and Clarice's personal advancement.[608] What emerges in this link are the parallels being made between the serial killer Buffalo Bill and Clarice that become apparent through a discussion of class position. As a version of Clarice:

> Buffalo Bill is a product of provincial poverty; like her, he wants to change his life by refusing or subduing his "natural" sexuality. A would-be transsexual, he can hardly avoid echoing the woman who is forced to desex or "resex" herself, to try to be a man in order to make a life for herself in a man's world. His poodle is to him, perhaps, what Clarice's lambs are to her.[609]

Robbins goes on to suggest that it may in fact be the suppression of her own sexuality and her suppression of Buffalo Bill's which allows Starling social mobility and advancement, referring to the way in which this suppression seems to align itself with Weber's view that society operates a protestant work ethic of delayed gratification. It also suggests that Starling's social mobility is dependent on the elimination of a threat to society, which is

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[608] Bruce Robbins, "Murder and Mentorship: Advancement in The Silence of the Lambs," *boundary* 2 23:1, (1996): 73.
[609] Ibid, 75.

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greater than her own as a single woman.[610] Starling's advancement of course is dependent on the concerted management and control not only of her sexuality but also, importantly, her emotions. The significance of a lack of emotion is the way it links bureaucracy and Starling with a monstrosity portrayed by Crawford, Lecter, and Buffalo Bill in different forms. Judith Halberstam referring to the link made between the monster and bureaucracy writes:

> The monster, as we know it, died in 1963 when Hannah Arendt published her "Report on the Banality of Evil" entitled *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Adolf Eichmann, as the representative of a system of unspeakable horror, stood trial for "Crimes Committed Against Humanity." Arendt refused, in her report, to grant the power of horror to the ordinary looking man who stood trial. While the press commented on the monster who hides behind the banal appearance, Arendt turned the equation around and recognised the banality of a monstrosity that functions as a bureaucracy. [...] Arendt's relegation of Eichmann from monster dripping with the blood of a people to the conformist clerk who does his job and does not ask questions suggests that crime and corrupt politics and murder all demand complicit and silent observers. Eichman's crime was that he was no monster, no aberration from the norm.[611]

In effect, what is being underlined is how professionalism in the late 20th Century is based on an absence of emotion. Rather than a Romantic passion or vocation one's professional career is charted by a distinct emotional distance. Fredric Jameson in an essay on Max Weber suggests that professionalisation creates "ennui [which is] not so much a form of suffering as an absence of feeling in general."[612] And yet as Robbins points out *The Silence of the Lambs* seems to offer a point of resistance to the Jameson's position above in the way it portrays this professional refusal of emotion. The way in which Starling mimics its monstrous portrayal through both Lecter and Buffalo Bill suggests, in fact, that this absence

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[610] Ibid, 77. As Young writes: " she deflects a series of advances from virtually every male character in the film [...] It is not that she is waiting for the right man to come along; rather she seems utterly indifferent to any suggestion of romance as the film poses it, in heterosexual terms." Leading on from this some reviewers have interpreted Clarice's relationship with Ardelia Mapp (Kasi Lemmons) as a potential lesbian relationship. In either case as Young points out, "it is clear, within the terms of the film, that she attempts to live outside a sexual economy of what Adrienne Rich has called 'compulsory heterosexuality,' and what Judith Butler, in a different theoretical frame has more recently termed 'the heterosexual matrix.'"Young, "The Silence of the Lambs and the Flaying of Feminist Theory", 11-12.
[611] Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 27.
[612] Fredric Jameson, "The Vanishing Mediator, or, Max Weber as Storyteller," in *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971-1986, vol.2.* , Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press (1988) in Robbins, "Murder and Mentorship," 81.

of emotion leads "all professionals to the brink of violence and insanity."[613] As an example of this, both Robbins and Donald remark on Starling's maintenance of emotional distance when she is shown a photograph of the nurse who is assaulted by Lecter (his own heart rate never getting above eighty-five). Donald asks the question, "Is the ability to experience horror without getting excited a sign of calm professionalism or of madness?"[614] Here Lecter's role as mentor to Starling's professional advancement can be seen as the creation of a bureaucratic monster. As Robbins writes, "Starling's coming-of-age is her entry into organized sadism; to become a professional is to resemble the serial murderer who is her mentor."[615]

Robbin's suggests that within this trajectory however we also need to consider the significance of Starling's early trauma story retold to Lecter in one of their mentoring encounters or, sessions. This is the story of Clarice trying to save the lambs from the slaughter. While Donald relates this story to bringing up to the surface a hidden private memory from a past she is desperate to distance herself from, Robbins on the contrary gives a convincing argument as to why this should be understood as the primal scene of her professional life.[616] Rather than wishing to repress this past identity as Donald maintains, Robbins emphasizes how Lecter demands the "production of emotion" as a performance, as a means of legitimating her professional identity. Her desire to save the lambs is not representative of a past she wants to escape but it is the source, which feeds her professional desire. The constant deferral of gratification is linked to her professional advancement. Robbins points out for example, that in the novel Lecter refers to this asking: "Well Clarice, have the lambs stopped screaming? [...] It's the plight that drives you, seeing the plight, and the plight will not end, ever."[617]

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[613] Robbins, "Murder and Mentorship," 81.
[614] Donald, "Working For Oneself: Labor and Love in The Silence of The Lambs," 351.
[615] Robbins, "Murder and Mentorship," 81.
[616] Lecter's desire to know the intimate details of Clarice's life, distances it from feminist critical possibilities for Carol Watts. She writes, "The Silence of the Lambs is so effective (and at once conservative) as narrative because of the way a potentially critical conjunction – between the slasher and its detective framework – is folded into a dominant psychological drama." Watts, "The 'American Girl' in The Silence of The Lambs," *Women: A Cultural Review* Vol.4, no.1 (1993):70. For Slavok Zizek, this shows the extent of Lecter's cannibalism, "[...]their relationship is a mocking imitation of the analytic situation, since in exchange for his helping her to capture 'Buffalo Bill', he wants her to confide – what? Precisely what the analysand confides to the analyst, the kernel of her being, her fundamental fantasy (the crying of the lambs)." Zizek, In His Bold Gaze My Ruin is Writ Large," in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Lacan But Were Afraid to ask Hitchcock*, (ed) Slavok Zizek(1992):263.
[617] Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs*,366.

The childhood trauma of sexuality which we are led to expect (and which Lecter himself advances) is refused and replaced by a professional primal scene. And rather than disappointment Lecter seems genuinely more interested in Starling because of this. For Robbins bizarre as it may seem, this is what marks Lecter as the "good mentor," this is because of the link Lecter's apparent interpretation allows. Here Starling's professional advancement and career mobility up the ranks of the FBI Academy are intimately linked with her working class origins. Rather than a denial of, or escape from her past or as Donald writes: "a vain flight from her white trash origins."[618] Starling attempts to maintain a connection with her past. Her professional advancement is deeply connected to her desire to rescue and protect those who she can identify with, who offer alternative versions of a self she could have been. As Halberstam points out the first victim Starling comes in contact with is found in her home state West Virginia. Halberstam writes: "The corpse laid out on the table, of course, is a double for Starling, the image of what she might have become had she not left home, as Lecter points out, and aspired to greater things." [619]

If Hannibal Lector is the 'good mentor' to Starling's working class mentee, then Crawford is the bad mentor. While he directs Clarice not to let Lecter inside her head, he also sends her to him without fully informing her of why she is being sent. Towards the end of the film he also is seen to direct her to Lecter once more albeit ambiguously when he reminds Clarice of her phone call (from Lecter). As Young writes:

> Dr. Crawford, who is Lecter's double in professional expertise, conceals important information from Clarice from the start, humiliates her in front of a group of men as she prepares to examine the body of a victim, and displays an ambiguous form of interest in her throughout the film – interest that, falling as it does   barely within the range of normal patterns of mentorship, bears a strong affinity to Lecter's more obvious transgressions."[620]

Robbins goes on to suggest that this affinity to Lecter includes killing. Referring to Starling's response in the novel when Crawford admits he was in the wrong and that Clarice

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[618] Donald, "Working For Oneself: Labor and Love in The Silence of The Lambs," 352.
[619] Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 42.
[620] Young, "The Silence of the Lambs and the Flaying of Feminist Theory," 9.

feels "she would have killed for him then,"[621] Robbins remarks on a suggestive link between recruitment and killing. For Robbins, mentors bear a resemblance to killers in so much as they have "life-or-death powers over the fate of the recruit."[622] He goes on to link recruitment and the erotic because of the way in which both tap into strongly held and often-irrational emotions. While he suggests the erotic is suppressed on a day to day level from professional institutions, with sexual harassment being an obvious exception, the erotic lies just below the surface because of the reproductive need of the institution or professional body to reproduce themselves. Robbins continues:

> This process of inorganic, nonbiological reproduction is at its most visible and most dramatically risky at moments such as recruitment, when an erstwhile member of the public is singled out and persuaded or seduced into adopting the institution's goals, practices, and identity. To this nonbiological reproduction there corresponds a sort of nonbiological or surrogate parenting – mentorship – and, again, as in the family, a sort of nonbiological sexuality, the source of its emotional power.[623]

In Jon Amiel's *Copycat* (1997) the risks of mentoring are played out in force. Helen Hudson (Sigourney Weaver), a professor of serial violence and serial killers goes on a lecture tour and during her account of the difficulties in identifying who could be a possible serial killer, the killer 'a student' mimics slitting her throat with his finger. Later she is attacked in the toilets by the killer but manages to escape. The experience leaves her with a drink problem and agoraphobia. However Hudson is persuaded to help detective Monaghan (Holly Hunter), who has never been on a serial murder case before track down a copycat killer. If Hudson and Monaghan offer one reading of 'mentoring' there is a more sinister form of mentoring represented through the relationship of the 'copycat' with the initial killer who has subsequently been arrested. It becomes apparent that the copycat is stalking Hudson, and he eventually attempts to mimic down to the minutest details the initial attack on her by the first killer.

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[621] Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs*, 96.
[622] Robbins, *Murder and Mentorship*, 87.
[623] Ibid.

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Melodrama and Professional advancement

As a comparison to the way in which professional advancement and the issue of mentor and metee are articulated in *The Silence of the Lambs,* I would like to explore Mike Nichols' *Working Girl* (1988) which, rather than horror, would most readily be identified as melodrama/romantic comedy. In this film we are introduced to the character Tess McGill (Melanie Griffith) and her desire to advance from her lowly background not through romantic love but through professional advancement.[624] To achieve this she attends night classes in subjects important to both her career path in corporate culture and social graces (speech training) Similar to Clarice Starling, Tess McGill also suffers sexual harassment in the course of pursuing her career, and early on in the film she looses her secretarial position by her angry response to this harassment. Having been turned down for the *entry programme* again, her senior male co-workers explain to her that she is up against "Harvard graduates" where her own flimsy access to education through night classes is not in a position to compete. On the pretence that they are setting her up with a possible professional advancement as assistant to a corporate high flier (Kevin Spacey) she soon realizes it is a set up and that they are acting in all but name as pimps. Following this exposure we find that Tess has been placed in four positions over the past couple of months and has left them for similar reasons. Tess's frustration is palpable as she tells the woman in the recruitment agency "I'm 30 yrs old, it took me 5yrs but I got my degree and with honours I know I can do a job."

Her next placement is as secretarial assistant to Catherine Parker (Sigourney Weaver) who takes on the role of monstrous mentor amalgamating qualities of both Lecter and Crawford.[625] Their introductory meeting as employer/employee mentor/mentee sets the terrain for the crisis which follows where Catherine Parker makes Tess aware of her need to reproduce herself in the image of social mobility.

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[624] Other examples of films in which the discourse of institutional reproduction and mentorship are evident include, *The Little Drummer Girl, The Remains of the Day, The Pelican Brief and Interview with a Vampire.* Robbins, "Murder and Mentorship, 87."

[625] Sigourney Weaver takes on the role of dysfunctional monstrous mentor to Holly Hunter in Jon Amiel's *Copy Cat* as discussed above(1997).

Catherine Parker: So Tess a few ground rules – the way I look at it, you are my link with the outside world, people's impressions of me starts with you. You're tough when its warranted, accommodating when you can be, you're accurate, you're punctual, you never make a promise you can't keep, I'm never on the other line, I'm in a meeting. I consider us a team Tess and as such we have a uniform, simple, elegant, impeccable, *dress shabbily they notice the dress, dress impeccably they notice the woman* – Coco Channel.

Tess: "hmmm how do I look?"

Catherine Parker: You look terrific. You might want to rethink the jewellery. I want your input Tess. I welcome your ideas and I like to see hard work rewarded. It's a two way street on my team. Am I making myself clear?

Tess: "Yes Catherine."

*Catherine Parke*r: "And call me Catherine."

While arguably not reaching quite the same scale of horror as the deconstruction of Clarice's *look by* Lecter where he tells her she is just two steps away from white trash with her "good bag and cheap shoes," both Tess and Starling are dressed down by those in a position of authority over them. (Lecter is in a position of authority as he holds the potential for advancement.) It is also interesting to note the mention of the "two way street" in terms of professional advancement put forward by Catherine Parker, similar to the quid pro quo arrangement that Lecter suggests. Although as *Working Girl* progresses it is evident that Catherine Parker goes out of her way to deny Tess the advancement Lecter offers Starling.

Arguably horror does reside in *Working Girl*, most obviously perhaps by the way in which the proverbial glass ceiling is articulated and then immediately dis-articulated by presenting a woman as the block to Tess's professional advancement. The film goes out of its way to

demonstrate the significance of this cultural discourse seen clearly in Tess's discussion with her boyfriend about her new boss where she says:

> Tess: Its so exciting. I mean she takes me seriously and I think its because and I know you hate when I say this, but I think its because she's a woman. There is none of that chasing around the desk stuff and its like she wants to be my mentor which is exactly what I needed.

While presenting the problems faced by working class women to advance beyond the secretarial pool, *Working Girl* offers many humorous and poignant moments in its depiction of this.[626] For example, on realizing the devious methods Catherine Parker has plotted to rob her intellectual property, Tess decides the only way forward is to employ subterfuge and promptly plans to put forward her idea by arranging a meeting with Jack Trainer (Harrison Ford) who doubles as Tess's love interest and good mentor as his name suggests. As the meeting begins, Trainer says "coffee" as a question to Tess, who immediately gets up as if to get it, turns, sees Trainer's secretary at the door realizes her mistake and sits down again. This form of Pavlov Ian training is evident even when she finally does get a promotion. On her first day in her new position she walks into her new workspace sees someone (her new secretary) in the office she has been directed to and promptly sits down in the secretaries' space outside.

Working Girl, while articulating the type of cultural debates to do with gender and employment of the 1980s, offers a reactionary response to them. The film suggests that women are against women and the possibility of an 'old girls network' is not possible while maintaining and elaborating a cultural fantasy concerning the structural problems of the glass ceiling. Here the glass ceiling is not denied. However, it is shown to exist within middle management and not a firmly entrenched structural directive from the very top down. When Tess finally meets the chairman of the company, Mr. Trask, the smiling face

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[626] Interestingly in Harris' book, Clarice is caught by the Senator in Catherine's apartment and in the ensuing discussion about possibly important evidence she is told by Mr. Krendler from the Department of Justice "You must be a bright kid, or Crawford would n't bother with you, so I'll tell you one time: do something about that mouth or it'll put you in the typing pool." Harris, The Silence of the Lambs, 433.

of paternalism, her professional advancement is assured by the benign and omnipotent will of her new father figure.

The problem of academic and culturally privileged positions dominating the feminist movement, excluding and dis-articulating more fragmented voices to do with class and race, is obviously evident in *Working Girl* even if it presented in a crassly condensed form. In effect, class and race indicate much stronger and more reliable affiliations than a movement concerned specifically with gender equality. From a feminist point of view *The Silence of the Lambs* possibly offers a more advanced gender role model in Clarice Starling than Tess McGill in *Working Girl* and yet it is important to remember that Clarice Starling is isolated amongst men in her attempt at advancement, her roommate playing a very marginal role in the film. This isolation is also not something the viewer is asked to analyse. In contrast, *Working Girl* does articulate eloquently the heroine's increasing isolation as she achieves social mobility. Towards the end of the film as we see Tess enter her office and close the door, (from the impossible space of outside her window in a skyscraper) she begins to make a phone call to her friend Sin to tell her about the promotion, cut to Sin in the secretarial pool surrounded by a community of other women who all start cheering as she tells them of Tess's good fortune, cut back to Tess alone in her office and as the camera pulls back we see other professionals alone in their offices. What seems implicit in this visual motif is the way in which professional advancement isolates individuals away from the communal space evident in the typing pool.

Clarice Starling's isolation does pose a problem in terms of positive feminist analysis of *The Silence of the Lambs*. Chris Lehmann for example refers to how the feminist embrace of this film is inattentive to detail, making the valid point that key female characters in Harris's novel are dropped in Demme's film. He writes:

> No feminist critic has noted how significant female characters from Harris's novel (such as the terminally ill wife of Clarice's FBI supervisor and the flashback figure of Clarice's mother) have dropped out of the film entirely. Such decisions were doubtless intended to strengthen Clarice's image as a singular, heroic woman

– but at considerable cost of isolating her from any sort of strong female role model.[627]

Not only is Clarice isolated from a strong female role model the one woman in a position of authority in the film, Senator Ruth Martin, makes sure that Clarice is dropped from the case. It is also worth spending some time on Catherine Martin, the victim still alive in the basement. As a character in the film she sends out very confused messages making it initially difficult to place her. The first encounter we have of Catherine is driving home singing to loud rock music on the radio and the chorus of "*She was an American Girl.*" Her hair and make-up and general demeanour place her firmly within the category we have already seen is at risk, that is '*naïve working class young woman*'. This incongruity of the Senator's daughter is never fully explained and has allowed interpretations of the antagonism between Clarice and Catherine in the final rescue scene, which are really misplaced.

When Clarice enters the basement room in which Catherine is imprisoned in a well Clarice shouts "FBI- you're safe!" a line as Young points out "so obviously incongruous – given the precariousness of her own situation at this moment as to provoke laughter."[628] Proceeding to explain to Catherine that she has to leave her for a while, Catherine shouts back "you get me out of here now - you fucking bitch!" Young makes two points in relation to this conversation both of which do not deal with an aspect of their relationship that arguably is, blatantly obvious. Young suggests that there is a paralleling of agency evident between them, Clarice has her FBI training behind her and Catherine has developed her own strategy of controlling Buffalo Bill through the kidnapping of his dog. For Young while this aligns the two characters, it is superseded by their separation. Young remarks:

> [...] Just when the two women might engage in significant conversation, the film distances them from one another, undercutting the intensity of the moment with comedy and turning their encounter into a stereotypical "catfight." This conceptual blockage connotes not simply a lack of "sisterly" behaviour between these two women, but more fundamentally the film's

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[627] Chris Lehmann, "Jonathan Demme and the Aesthetics of Contempt," *Tikkun* 6:4 (July-August 1991): 78-79.
[628] Young, "The Silence of the Lambs and the Flaying of Feminist Theory," 17.

inability to imagine what would customarily – in the context of the genre – conclude a scene of thrilling rescue involving a hero and a victim: that is, a romantic encounter between them. The film's avoidance of any such encounter between two women [...] appears to offer a kind of homophobia by absence.[629]

Senator Martin physically resembles Clarice rather than Catherine Martin The Silence of the Lambs, film stills

Fig.23 Catherine Martin the 'American girl', The Silence of the Lambs, film still

Rather than the stereotypical "catfight," what we arguably witness is Catherine Martin as privileged Senator's daughter staging her authority in relation to Clarice's own position of authority as FBI. (Both positions obviously seriously undermined by the dangerous threat they are in from the psychopath Buffalo Bill.) In the book for example, Catherine says "You fucking bitch! Don't you leave me down here, my mother will tear your goddamn shit

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[629] Ibid, 17-18.

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brains out!"[630] Interpreting this scene as one of power positioning is reinforced by the earlier scene in which Catherine tries desperately to persuade Buffalo Bill that her mother is an important person and can give him anything he wants.

In the novel the account of Starling's visit to Catherine Martin's apartment is important in building up the differences between Catherine and Starling and indeed Catherine and the other victims, however, this is dispensed with in the film. In the novel Starling arrives at the apartment complex of Catherine Martin and the distinction between the occupants of this complex and Starling could not be made more obvious. From the parking of her Chevrolet Celebrity in amongst the "Trans-Ams and IROC-Z Camaros [...] Motor homes for the weekend and ski boats," to her critical surmising of what the apartments would contain.[631]

> Probably the apartments were full of white wicker and peach shag. Snapshots under the glass of the coffee table. The *Dinner for Two cookbook* and *Fondue on the Menu.* Starling, whose only residence was a dormitory room at the FBI Academy, was a severe critic of these things.[632]

The account that follows of Starling's attempt to build up a profile of Catherine Martin offer an informative guide to the level of distance between Catherine and Starling. Starling reads that Catherine is a "bright underachiever." We are made aware that Starling has had up close knowledge of this type of troubled rich kid during her time at boarding school"living on scholarships, her grades much better than her clothes."[633]

> The closet interested Starling most. Catherine Baker Martin, laundry mark C-B-M, had a lot of clothes and some of them were very good. Starling recognized many of the labels, including Garfinkel's and Britches in Washington. *Presents from Mommy,* Starling said to herself [...] In a hanging rack were twenty-three pairs of shoes. Seven pairs were Ferragamos in 10C, and there were some Reeboks and run-over loafers. A light backpack and a tennis

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[630] Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs*, 518.

[631] Ibid, 425.

[632] Ibid.

[633] Ibid.

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racket were on the top shelf. The belongings of a privileged kid, a
student and practice teacher who lived better than most.[634]

By contrast to this privilege is the echo of her own dressing down by Hannibal Lecter
"the good bag and cheap shoes" and her cultural knowledge that is made apparent later
when she looks through Fredrica Bimmel's wardrobe who has plenty of good clothes
which she makes herself. However, "Fredrica suffered from the Achilles' heel of the budget
wardrobe - she was short on shoes - and at her weight she was hard on the shoes she
had."[635] In the film it is Starling's discovery of Fredrica Bimmel as a dressmaker that leads
her to Buffalo Bill when she finally realizes why he mutilates his victims, as she explains to
Crawford, he is making himself his very own "woman-suit."

Understanding how class, gender and advancement are connected to each other within this
film could not be more clear than in looking at how both clothes and outside appearances
are used to define and position people in terms of their social mobility and also their
sexuality. Hannibal Lecter's parting shot to Senator Ruth Martin "love your suit" which as
we remember comes quick on the heels of his jeer about the way breast feeding "toughens
your nipples," both act to belittle her social position as Senator and as Young remarks:
"offer a menacing reminder that beneath Ruth Martin's senatorial clothing - yet another of
the film's costumes of gender - lies a vulnerable biologized maternal body." [636]

Clothing in fact is very important to the de-industrialized landscape where Starling makes
her discovery of Buffalo Bill's gender factory. As Young writes: "he will play Dr.
Frankenstein to himself, creating a literal bodysuit to transform his gender. The bodysuit,
that is, will be his "birthday suit" as a woman, giving birth to a new gender identity through
a change of costume."[637] The significance of the artisan to this de-industrialized landscape
mentioned earlier also collides with the way in which gender, class and labour issues
cannot easily be disentangled in this film.

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[634] Ibid.
[635] Ibid, 501.
[636] Young, "The Silence of the Lambs and the Flaying of Feminist Theory," n.22, 31.
[637] Ibid, 12.

In what Judith Halberstam refers to as a "basement sweatshop", Buffalo Bill's fabric is also his cheap labour.[638] As Halberstam says his "new material is stored in a well in the form of a woman who Buffalo Bill is starving out of her skin."[639] In other words in Buffalo Bill's production line size 14 young women become his 'raw material' and his labour force, their work to "starve" and to rub lotion on their skin as part of the production process. The body parts he does not need are discarded, as pollutants and waste into the river similar to former industries in the area.

The use of the Death Head Moth, which is also an allusion to the silkworm or caterpillar of the silk moth who its cocoon of silk, acts in this case as a metaphor for the victims as the raw material, and producers of his gruesome fabric. The relationship between Buffalo bill and his victims, as mapped by the chrysalis and Death Head Moth is one of transformation, "both are cocoon and moth".[640]

> Buffalo Bill is the cocoon holed up in a basement waiting for his skin to grow, for his beautiful metamorphosis to take place...[and his] victims are also cocoon and moth, they must shed their skins and fly on to death.[641]

As we have seen in *Working Girl* clothes are also used as an important marker both in terms of gender positioning and social mobility or status. Early on in the film Tess, who is trying on black lingerie that her partner has bought her for her birthday (transforming her into his erotic fantasy), remarks on how she wishes he would buy her something she could wear outside their apartment. Here Tess alludes to the way she feels imprisoned by this particular version of femininity. She is imprisoned by these garments just as the workers who make them are 'imprisoned'. This of course is given extra weight by the knowledge of the way in which the garment industry actively condones the worse form of labour practices in contemporary society and of course the use of prisoners from the Super Max prisons in the US by *Victoria's Secret*.

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[638] Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 72.
[639] Ibid.
[640] Ibid, 174.
[641] Ibid.

Murder Considered as One of The Fine Arts*

The relationship between serial murder and the representation of seriality and aesthetics these films negotiate is very often most strongly articulated through a paralleling of the killer as artist/genius. This is evident by numerous popular cultural codes signifying 'artist', and offering a mediation on representation itself beyond the immediate storyline. Though it may not be immediately apparent this linking of killer/artist/genius is also intimately immersed in discourses to do with labour and finance capitalism.

The serial killer as artist has become something of a standard in many of these films. Apparent in *The Silence of the Lambs, Manhunter, Hannibal, The Red Dragon, Seven, The Cell* and many more including earlier films such as Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*. In a recent publication on Jack the Ripper, Patricia Cornwall claims Walter Sickert, the famous British painter to be the Ripper using contemporary DNA techniques to back up her argument.[642] Maria Tatar in her book *Lustmord* (1995) looks at the vast amount of representations of sexual murder in Weimar Germany. Tatar comments on the numerous works of Georg Grosz and Otto Dix of mutilated corpses and the fact that Georg Grosz even went so far as to have himself photographed posing as Jack the Ripper.[643]

Tatar writes,

> That real-life murderers and their victims have a habit of turning up in plays and novels or making appearances in paintings and films even as artists' construct their own identities as murderous assailants suggest a strange bond between murder and art, one to which Thomas De Quincy referred in his mediations "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts" (1827).[644]

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[642] Patricia Cornwall, *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper – Case Closed*, London, Penguin (2002). For an entertaining discussion on Cornwalls assertions, see www.artguide.org (search Patricia Cornwall Walter Sickert).

* Taken from Thomas De Quincey's book title 127, in Tatar, *Lustmord*, 6.

[643] It is interesting to note that Michael Powell also situates himself in his film as the abusive father, Professor Lewis (in the old family film footage shot by the professor) and his own son played Mark Lewis as a young boy. As Wollen writes Powell "chose to represent himself within his own film not only as director, but also as psychologist, sadist and voyeur." Wollen ,"Michael Powell's Peeping Tom,"21.

[644] Tatar, *Lustmord*, 6.

*Fig.24 Georg Grosz as Jack the Ripper, Self-Portrait
with Eva Peter in the Artist's studio (1918)*

The discussion of the aestheticization of murder is not limited, as Mark Seltzer points out to cultural accounts. Seltzer refers to John Douglas, formerly of the FBI and profiler of serial killers, who writes, "I always tell my agents, 'if you want to understand the artist, you have to look at the painting.' We looked at many 'paintings' over the years and talked extensively to the most 'accomplished' artists." [645]

In many of these films, concentrating as they do on reproduction, there is a clear merging of the killer's murderous activity as *work* resembling an art practice. Dollarhyde in *Manhunter* is literally surrounded by various forms of technological reproduction, which he employs for his work both in his day job and his other non-economically viable 'murderous work.' At his house, in one scene he uses a slide projector with a variety of slides to explain his work to an unfortunate victim. Reminiscent of a business sales pitch (and an oblique articulation of technological obsolescence) and yet, contemporaneously, more often associated with the academic/artist talk or slide installation. Similarly the looped film footage that has his next victim constantly jumping into the swimming pool and re-emerging is reminiscent of so many music videos and film/video installations.

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[645] John Douglas, *Mindhunter*, 27, in Seltzer, *Serial Killers*, n.10 121.

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In *The Silence of the Lambs* high culture is constantly used to distinguish Hannibal Lecter from everyone else. There is nothing unusual here as high culture is always used as a form of distinction. What makes it uncomfortable, here though, is its alignment with Lecter's intellectual capabilities. This link opens up certain avenues of investigation, which nevertheless pull in different ways as social discourses always do. On the one hand, Lecter's embodiment of creativity, high culture and intellectual ability, (albeit a particularly stereotypical representation of same) aligns these discourses with contemporary society's (especially the U.S's) most terrifying, most monstrous sign, the serial killer, and thus operates to devalue cultural-intellectual labour, promoting a reactionary discourse of anti-intellectualism. On the other hand, Lecter is seen by many as a heroic figure in the film including a feminist audience as K.E. Sullivan writes:

> On the visual register, the film makes clear that virtually all male characters in the film menace, patronize, grope and sexualize Starling. Wherever she goes, criminals, law officers and fellow FBI trainees gaze and harass her. Only Hannibal Lecter, convicted serial killer, treats Clarice with a modicum of respect. In this regard, he is, perhaps, the most sympathetic male character present in the film despite the fact that he is also a killer.[646]

David J. Skal comments "Hannibal Lecter was, arguably, the most publicized and recognizable personality (real or not) in America during February 1991."[647] Lecter's star status is referenced in the sequel to *The Silence of the Lambs, Hannibal.* Here Barney has set up his own home business providing memorabilia/relics of Lecter to his fans.[648] This includes the leather mask and other items, which have become iconic in terms of Lecter's popularity as a movie character.[649] The cult of Lecter as a character is significant in that he

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[646] Sullivan, "Ed Gein and the Figure of the Transgendered Serial Killer,"39.

[647] Indeed Skal comments on how " actor Anthony Hopkins received a thundering standing ovation when he accepted his award for the cannibal role, and had been treated during the ceremony almost as a guest of honour, with an endless stream of flesh-eating jokes thrown in his direction throughout the evening. The non-stop, bloodthirsty humor[sic] was bizarrely juxtaposed with the red lapel ribbons worn by most of the presenters– symbols of compassion for people with AIDS." David J. Skal, *The Monster Show,A Cultural History of Horror,* (1993): 382.

[648] See Devon Jackson "Serial Killers and the People who Love Them" (Village Voice 22March 1994:26-32) in Seltzer, Serial Killers, n.10, 121.

[649] The leather mask was used by McDonald's for one of their fast food promotions. Lecter wears this mask when he meets Senator Martin. In this scene his omnipotent power is fore-grounded where although he is completely immobilized from his mouth to his limbs he sucks on a pen nib at the same time as we are made aware of Dr. Chiltern missing his. His audience with the Senator quickly degenerates to insults, belittling her cultural power position by concentrating on her

is a marginal character in both Harris's thrillers *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Red Dragon* and yet, as Nicholas M. Williams states that while this phenomenon could be attributed to the performance of Anthony Hopkins, it could also be understood as inherent in the character Harris created, to his "status as a high artist, a murderous aesthete."[650] His aestheticizing function is constituted by his apparent distance from the centre of the narrative. Williams writes:

> Like the aestheticized murders of classical drama, Lecter's crimes are not permitted on stage in their unmediated present, but only in retrospective tableaux, and so cast a formalist artistic aura over their recounting and over their creator equally. The paradox of Lecter, that of the prisoner who seems more powerful than his captors, is the paradox of the Romantic artist, who, in Wordsworth's words, discovers that '[I]n truth the prison into which we doom/ourselves, no prison is.' The important point [...] is that Lecter's formal rigor, his omniscient artistry and masterly control of the narrative, would hardy be imaginable outside of the spiritual rectitude of his prison cell.[651]

In other words, it is Lecter as Romantic ascetic, his greatest works recalled as memory which create an aura around him as high art, an idealized version of the artist removed from the present. It is this distance, which allows Lecter to incorporate heroic elements evident in the way the audience is asked to respond to his monstrosity. We need only think of the numerous gags Lecter performs to understand that we are asked to read him also as hero. Janet Staiger offers the suggestion that this obvious enjoyment of Lecter's role relates to his breaking of firmly entrenched societal taboos. Referring to Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and how taboos are broken as a means of strengthening the boundaries, which give the taboos meaning, Staiger writes:

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role as biological mother. Commenting on the way in which limb amputees often feel the limb that has been removed he asks her "where will it tickle you" when her daughter Catherine is murdered. Re-enforcing this reactionary essentialism he asks her whether she breast fed Catherine responding "toughens your nipples does n't it." McDonald's use of Lecter's attire from this scene lends itself to some interesting questions currently in focus in the public domain. With the increasing antagonism to fast food products which are directly blamed for the rise in obesity in the States (and most recently in Ireland) where the serial consumption of these products (similar all over the world) is seen as bearing a direct relation to addiction and increased bad health (especially in children) why in this cultural context would a multi-national corporation which, for the first time ever, is recording losses in sales, use the representation of a monster to promote its product?

[650] Nicholas M. Williams, "Eating Blake, Or An Essay on Taste, The Case of Thomas Harris's Red Dragon," *Cultural Critique* 42 (Spring 1999): 153

[651] Ibid.

Lecter's ingestion of his own kind, authorized as the incorporation of the bodies of authority figures and legitimized through socially originated hierarchies of binary oppositions, provide both textual and contextual determinations for spectators to accept, and even find pleasure in, his destruction of boundaries.[652]

However, as Williams's points out, it is the threat that Lecter will break free and commence his cannibalistic practice, endlessly deferring the possibility of this action in the present, which works best. For example in *Manhunter* and *Red Dragon* he never escapes. Arguably one of the reasons *Hannibal* fails at the box office is the fact that Lecter is free to use his omnipotent power to consume flesh throughout the film. As a representation of high art Lecter must maintain a distance from his activities in the present otherwise the aura of the artwork dissipates.

In *The Silence of the Lambs* our first visual introduction to Lecter is in his dungeon cell surrounded by charcoal drawings. As Adrienne Donald writes "he is an amateur artist who compensates for the aesthetic boredom of incarceration by drawing the Palazzo Vecchio, the Duomo of Florence, parodies of Renaissance masterpieces."[653] Drawn from memory the suggestion is inferred that Dr. Lecter, eminent and now incarcerated psychologist is also a talented artist, capable of using his highly tuned memory (an example of intellectual prowess) to represent the grandeur of Renaissance architecture.[654] In *Hannibal*, it comes as no surprise that Lecter is resident in Florence and just beginning to take up a post at the Camponi library, recognized as a scholar in Renaissance cultural artifacts.[655] Indeed, Lecter in his first slide lecture at the library selects an image of the hanging of Francesco de Pazzi, an ancestor of the Italian detective attempting to collect on the reward for Lecter's capture. This selection acts as a preamble to the re-enactment of the hanging in the same

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[652] Staiger, "Taboos and Totems," 143.

[653] Donald, "Working for Oneself," 355.

[654] Donald referring to Lecter's drawing style comments that later in the film " he draws Starling, swathed in drapery, holding a lamb. It would be generous to describe the picture as 'cheesy' and it represents a failure of taste which I would rather ascribe to the film's set designer than to Lecter himself. I will admit, however, that Lecter's aesthetic tends toward Walter Pater's more lurid excesses." Ibid, n4 360.

[655] It is interesting to note the way in which meaning is fluid and mobile in relation to Lecter. For example one commentator Kathleen Murphy associates him not only with medieval culture but also paganism. She writes, "Lecter is consulted by cops as an oracle, and acts as a high priest to those acolytes who strive, as he has, to transform themselves, triggering their evolution in rites of human sacrifice." Murphy, "Communion," Film Comment 27:1 (Jan-Feb 1991):31.

location of the unfortunate detective. As the copy on the cover of the video for Hannibal proclaims *"His Genius UNDENIABLE His Evil UNSPEAKABLE."*

Lecter's monstrous creativity in *The Silence of the Lambs* also extends towards more contemporary art influences. An example of the "retrospective tableaux" discussed above is the storage space he has rented indefinitely to store his things. Here in the plush interior of Lecter's vintage car are two mannequin's dressed in Gatsby style clothes in close proximity to a glass bell jar containing a human male head, that of Benjamin Raspail with false eye lashes and makeup. Lecter's installations evoke an American gothic and the influence of the artist Edward Kienholz is readily apparent. Raspail, the unfortunate victim is unable to enjoy the mobility suggested in these tableaux as Lechter later flippantly remarks "best thing for him really his therapy was going nowhere." Benjamin Raspail's connection to Lecter's cultural positioning is further elaborated on in *Hannibal*. Here Clarice explains to Paul Krendler (her boss) why Lecter kills.

> Clarice: …to show his contempt for those who exasperate him. Or sometimes to perform a public service. In the case of the flutist Benjamin Raspail he did it to improve the sound of the Baltimore orchestra, serving the not so talented flutist's sweetbreads to the board with a nice Montrachet at $700 a bottle.[656]

Another installation is evident in the State Justice Department where Lecter's cell reminiscent of old style Wild West is converted into a tableaux morte in which the police force represented by the flayed and trussed cops (representatives of the state) are converted and rationalized by him into 'use value' for his mobility. One of the policeman's face is literally used as a means of getting Lecter from the building. (Prior to their discovery we view Lecter regulating his pulse rate to the Goldberg variations).[657] The possible inference being an example of how the law of state can be hijacked as the face of trade and financial authority by transnational finance capital. This masking is mistakenly understood as ultimate power and authority rather than its representation. In a sense the references to Lecter's cultural affinity with classical culture, the Renaissance etc., acts as a mark of

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[656] There is an obvious connection here to the point made by Peter Wollen in relation to Mark Lewis the character in *Peeping Tom*. Wollen writes "he falls more closely into the category admired by Wilde and indeed Orwell, the middle-class aesthete gone terribly wrong." Wollen, *Michael Powell's Peeping Tom*, 19.

[657] The Goldberg variations are performed by Glen Gould, the child prodigy marketed successfully as a genius, the idiosyncratic nature of which are recorded with his playing in the form of hums and sighs by Gould in time to the music.

distinction from ordinary citizens and their interests in popular culture. Lecter's distinction is confirmation of unlimited access to history (and therefore power/knowledge) represented by links to earlier cultural forms, which also happen to be the products of an emerging capitalism. Pursuing this we find that Lecter in *Manhunter* is not hampered from his activity by being held in state custody but manages to use the state apparatus to manipulate his own agenda. For example, when he manages to de-face the phone and make a direct call to Dr. Blum's office, getting Will Graham's home address, which he in turn, sends through code to the Tooth Fairy, the killer on the outside. Again the "romantic artist" more powerful than his captors creates this omnipotent aura around him. If Count Dracula was a Landlord, tied to the land, Lecter emerges as a cipher for deterritorialized capital.

Fig.25 Lector's cell, The Silence of the Lambs, film still

Hannibal as a complex sign, also articulates feudal scopic regimes that come into play and how feudal re-articulations of power and control persist in 'modern' discourses. Our first introduction to him is as a monster that is confined in a medieval dungeon. His meeting with Senator Martin is also an opportunity to present Hannibal in feudal mode. As we know, his crimes are not crimes of passion but carefully planned, strategic (as the above quote concerning the orchestra demonstrated), in order words his behaviour is 'feudal' in that it fails to recognize the importance of the state, the law, etc. However what this suggests is that the state also incorporates elements of the feudal- as if his crimes are so heinous that they must be allowed free reign in how they control him.

Fig.26 Lecter meeting the Senator, The Silence of the Lambs, film stills

When Lecter finally escapes, a shift occurs. The measured distance and control is replaced by casualness evident in the campness of his clothes. Lecter in his linen "creamy tourist suit" also succumbs to a style decision, which is de rigour for white-Anglo-American tourists wishing to invest in aspirational fantasies of colonial power relations, and, of course, this is the exact measurement of a character that apparently embodies an epicurean sense of culture and privilege. Adrienne Donald makes an interesting connection between Lecter's "neoclassical aestheticism [...] his violent insanity" and what he refers to as Lecter's "brutal dandyism."[658] The reference to the dandy persona is an important one. Donald comments on how the dandy and homosexual were by the end of the 19th century seen as the Other of the autonomous bourgeois subject, who enters relations of exchange as a professional. By contrast "the gay dandy subverts his own commodification and classification with his dangerous uselessness, his exquisite sense perception, his social and erotic production of nothing more than style."[659] Donald asks the question of whether Lecter is monstrously compelling as an "unprofessional personality" who challenges and defies the authority of administered society or for the aesthetic "disinterested manner in which he clubs a man to death?" [660]

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[658] Donald, "Working for Oneself,"354-5.

[659] Ibid,355.

[660] Ibid, 356. In pursuing this idea of the unprofessional personality Donald quotes Theodor Adorno from the opening section of *Minima Moralia, Reflections From Damaged Life* (1974) where he writes: "the occupation with things of the mind has by now itself become 'practical', a business with strict division of labour, departments and restricted entry. The man of independent means who chooses it out of repugnance for the ignominy of earning money will not be disposed to acknowledge the fact. For this he is punished. He is not a 'professional', is ranked in the competitive hierarchy as a dilettante no matter how well he knows his subject, and must, if he wants to make a career, show himself even more resolutely blinkered than the most inveterate specialist. The urge to suspend the division of labour which, within certain limits, his economic situation enables him to satisfy, is thought particularly disreputable: it betrays a disinclination to

Colonialism and Labour

Fig.27 Lecter as lethal tourist, The Silence of the Lambs, film still

[...] The final image of Lecter after his murderous escape,
sauntering down a crowded main street in Haiti resplendent in his
creamy suit, is more disturbing than anything that has come before.
The serial killer, an American gift to the third world, a
fragmentation bomb, ready to explode.[661]

Amy Taubin in her discussion of *The Silence of the Lambs* makes a reference to the
American war machine as many commentators have, not only of this film but of serial killer

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sanction the operations imposed by society, and domineering competence permits no such idiosyncrasies. The departmentalization of mind is a means of abolishing mind where it is not exercised ex officio, under contract. It performs this task all the more reliably since anyone who repudiates the division of labour – if only by taking pleasure in his work – makes himself vulnerable by its standards in ways inseparable from elements of his superiority. Adorno, *Minima Moralia, Reflections From Damaged Life* (1974):21 in Donald, "Working For Oneself,"355-356.
[661] Amy Taubin, "Demme's Monde," *The Village Voice*, (19 February 1991).

films in general.[662] While I will discuss this dynamic later, I would like to pursue this final sequence of the film referred to above as a means of further concentrating on the multiple ways in which labour is articulated within *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Hannibal* and *Red Dragon*. The sight of Lecter languorously choreographing his body down a Haitian street may not appear immediately to connect to a discussion of labour in this film. However, this bright, sunny and humorous ending arguably offers an important vantage point to examine the global dimension of labour politics. It is also an obvious reference to the James Bond film *Live and Let Die*. The connection between 'serial killer films' and James Bond films is also important in terms of this discussion, for James Bond can also be read in counterpoint as a state sanctioned serial killer.

In her discussion of this sequence Elizabeth Young refers to how it betrays the film's anxious notion of race where the exotic distance it creates between Lecter's cannibalistic tendencies and the audience's fears for Clarice's safety "[...] collapse into that most tired of racist Hollywood conventions, the scenario of fully realized white characters set against an undifferentiated backdrop of 'local colour'."[663] For Young, an alternative reading which reads Lecter's pursuit of Chiltern to Haiti (filmed in Bimini) as suggesting "a sophisticated allegory, in which cannibalism, usually considered the province of the 'savage,' becomes instead the mode of the white man, who cannibalizes not only the Third World, but his own kind."[664] Though aware of Demme's interest in Afro Caribbean culture, Young nevertheless suggests that regardless of a possible anti-colonial intention by the director this racial iconography is "over determined by the history of Hollywood."[665]

While I agree with Young that this sequence does function as an obvious example of a racist and stereotypical Hollywood convention, her alternative reading misses the equally viable reading of white savagery cannibalizing the "Third World" as *documentary* text rather than as "sophisticated allegory." By which I mean that "sophisticated allegory" articulates a desire on the theorist's part to examine and negotiate the (often presumed)

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[662] Kevin Robbins, "Sights of War," *Into The Image: Culture and Politics in the Field of Vision*, 1996), Orla Ryan "Teratology and the Televisual in 'Manhunter'," in (eds) Maeve Connolly and Orla Ryan, *The Glass Eye*,(2000) 67-79.
[663] Young, "The Silence of the Lambs and the Flaying of Feminist Theory," 26.
[664] Ibid.
[665] Ibid, n42, 34.

creative desires of the film's makers. If we move away from this trajectory to look at the film as a complex arrangement of diverse discourses that are not all reined in or even comprehended by those making the film, we allow things to open up significantly. We are, for example, intellectually free to examine the way in which the film as cultural object, also functions as a document of an event, that is, the making of a commercial film. As a documentary of a film making practice this sequence employs "a racist and stereotypical Hollywood convention" with real effects in terms of labour relations, equity rights, issues related to the extras' payments etc can certainly be seen as having an indexical link (or following Benjamin a non-sensuous correspondence) to the socio-economic milieu of Hollywood film making.[666]

There are only two African Americans in *The Silence of the Lambs* with speaking parts. Ardelia Map (Kasi Lemmons) a student with Clarice at the FBI training camp and Barney (Frankie Faison). Both have small parts the main function of which is to reassure and assist Clarice. Barney is the reassuring "gentle giant" who works in the dungeon with Hannibal Lecter. Barney's place of work is worth concentrating on for a while. Here we find an example of labour alienation where one's working conditions (the absence of daylight, the smell of bodily discharges) are the same as those incarcerated by society as psychotic serial killers. While the absence of a window or view is something that becomes an important means of bargaining with Lecter for information on Buffalo Bill, this absence is not an issue for the people like Barney who work there.

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[666] Philip Rosen suggests for example "[…] there is a sense in which every 'normal' film image is supposed to be apprehended as a preservation from the past, and this is so even if what is preserved is an overt fiction. When I apprehend a certain body diegetically named as Walter in *His Girl Friday*, at a basic factual level I am seeing an indexical depiction of the actual body of the now –deceased individual born Archibald Leach, which, as the Hollywood institution requires, I know as Cary Grant." Rosen, 234.

Fig. 28 Barney imprisoned at work, The Silence of the Lambs, film still

It should also be noted, of course, that Crawford, the psychologist and head of the FBI's behavioral science unit, also works in a basement windowless office similar to Lecter indicating "that the places of institutional power and correction oddly resemble each other."[667] Michael Mann's *Heat* with Al Pacino and Robert De Niro is a mediation on alienated labour in contemporary American Society. Here the Detective played by Pacino and the professional criminal played by De Niro mirror each other in terms of how their commitment to a chosen career diminishes all aspects of their lives impinging on their personal lives to the point of erasing it.

Senses and Meaning

In her discussion of the films *Blue Steel* and *The Silence of the Lambs,* Laleen Jayamanne comments on how critics and academics in the field of film studies can become blind to the image through a desire to narrativize what is seen.[668] Concentrating on perception, the senses in modernity and mimesis (following the Frankfurt School) and also applying Gilles Deleuze's work on film, Jayamanne writes:

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[667] Donald, "Working for Oneself," 349.
[668] Jayamanne, " 'Eyes in the Back of Your Head': Erotics of Learning in Blue Steel and The Silence of the Lambs," *Towards Cinema and Its Double*, 206-231.

While reception, context, and so on are no doubt crucial in understanding what films do and what we do with films, the object's own mode of existence, its aesthetic qualities, are crucial to its power of invention, an invention that implicates the human senses through their recharging through technology.[669]

Rather than film as text, Jayamanne suggests the importance of concentrating on the filmic, rather than the narrative, to concentrate on the aural and visual qualities in terms of "movement, rhythm, color[sic], light sound, and duration." In this way the critic has access to a different type of knowledge of mimetic perception one, which accesses a temporality markedly different from the cognition of narrative time. Jayamanne pursues the idea of mentorship and knowledge acquisition in a different way from the discussion above to one which engages with "[...] how the senses are trained to perceive, know and act and how the female hero rewires herself mimetically, on the run, as she straddles the impossibility of being both agent and victim at once."[670]

The importance of the senses are articulated most obviously in the film by the way in which Lecter sniffs Clarice out, gaining knowledge of her as an animal might. He knows she wears *L'air du Temp*, "but not today" and later he knows she has cut herself without any visual proof. Lecter of course is not alone in this heightened sense of smell remembering his neighbouring psychopath Miggs' comment "I can smell your cunt." Jayamanne refers to Adorno and Horkheiner's comments on how the sense of smell "[...] is the most animal of our senses, and it does not respect boundaries, making them permeable."[671] If the heightened sense of smell marks the psychopath as animalistic it is worth noting that Clarice is also connected to Lecter and Buffalo Bill by this. In the book Clarice becomes aware that Jamie Gum is present in the final basement scene by smelling him, knowing the odour of "schizophrenic sweat."

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[669] Ibid, 206.
[670] Ibid, 224.
[671] Ibid.

Fig.29 Jamie Gum's stained fingers under Clarice's nose, The Silence of the Lambs, film still

In the film this heightened sense of smell is switched to being able to hear him cocking his gun. Interestingly earlier in the film we are offered a mimetic index of smell in the form of the visual stain of sweat on Clarice's top when she returns from her run. She is distinguished from those around by the visual appearance of her biological processes as we view her surrounded by her male peers in the lift and later in Crawford's office, two small spaces where surely Clarice's sweat would have generated a correspondingly strong odour. Crawford on the other hand, rather than having a heightened mimetic awareness is seen actively blocking his senses and encouraging others to follow suit when he places a cream under his nose to block the stench of death. In the basement scene we are offered another example where smell is indexed through the eyes. When Clarice enters the bathroom and finds a putrefied corpse her eyes widen as an indication of the horror which realistically resides in the overwhelming stench such a find would make, one which she would of course be alerted to well before she enters the room, let alone the residence of the late Mrs Litman.
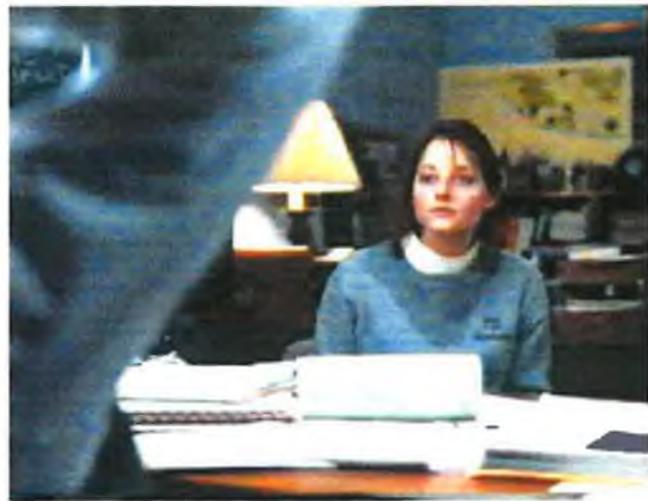
from top: Clarice in the lift, Clarice in Crawford's office

Fig. 30 Crawford's starched white arm pits, The Silence of the Lambs, film stills

Fig.31 Crawford blocking his senses, The Silence of the Lambs, film still

Jayamanne, discussing the sequence in which Jamie Gum's hand comes into frame almost touching Clarice's hair, writes:

> As a slow-motion image of Starling's head appears in close-up, with her hair moving sensuously from side to side, a white, disembodied, phantom hand floats in from frame left and tries to touch or caress her hair and face. At this moment music suddenly wells up, signalling an act of cinematic transubstantiation, both horror and fascination at the same time. Starling's heavy panting, the most prominent sound up to now, is drowned out by the music. The moment of the floating hand (of the killer) is very brief, but memory seems to stretch it out because of the horrible fascination of the image itself. Though we know that it is Buffalo Bill's hand that is in the frame, what we in fact see is a hand that is as weightless as light itself, floating, trying to caress her hair and face.[672]

In this passage Jayamanne stressing her fascination with this brief image feels compromised by her desire to prolong this visual image in the face of her feminist politics. And yet it is precisely through mimesis that this image side steps what is compromising about it by concentrating on a haptic visuality. Following in the very best tradition of horror this floating hand touches us mimetically, potentially making the hairs on the back of our necks stand up and arousing the hope that Clarice will also *feel* his presence.

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[672] Ibid, 231

Fig.32 Jamie Gum's hand almost touching Clarice's hair, The Silence of the Lambs, film still.

The shift to perceiving the film mimetically as advocated by Jayamanne as opposed to *reading* the film solely, does expand our knowledge dynamically. In what follows I want to explore how the sound track offers important knowledge of Clarice, which confuses the way in which address is usually comprehended. In the final moments of the film when Clarice follows Gum into the basement we are already well aware that Clarice is 'playing' at being a *real* FBI agent. As a student she should not be there and yet she pursues him to the basement and, as mentioned above, her performance of the FBI agent supposedly in control of the situation is rejected by Catherine Martin. From Clarice's entrance to the basement the visual track and the sound track address the viewer in extremely different ways. Though discussions of *The Silence of the Lambs* usually make reference to its origins in the slasher film and concentrate on the way in which Clarice Starling is a final girl as defined by Carol Clover, this is not entirely correct and needs qualification. Certainly if we prioritize how the camera functions in the final basement scene it is difficult to maintain the argument that Clarice functions as a final girl. If we return to some of the important qualities of the final girl in the slasher film we are reminded that although she is continuously traumatised by the killer up until the final showdown, from that point on rather than seeing her victimization through the eyes of the killer we witness events from her point of view. In the case of the basement scene the camera fluctuates

between "[...]mysteriously gliding ahead, almost luring Starling into the depths of the house"[673] and framing the action from Jamie Gum's point of view. If we are asked to share the misogynist pleasure of the killer's point of view the potentially redemptive (from a gender politics position) role of the final girl is short-circuited. The question, then, is whether the sound track offers a different address which rather than reinforcing our complicity with the killer offers us an empathetic response to Clarice which overrides the visual, and identification with the killer?
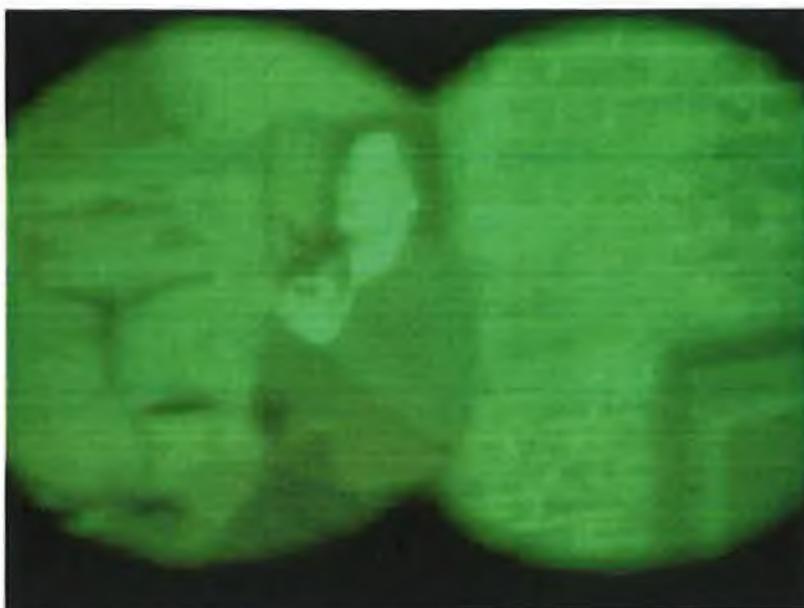
Fig.33 Jamie Gum's night vision, The Silence of the Lambs, *film still*

Clarice's descent to the basement is aurally framed by an intense concentration on her breathing making us uncomfortably aware of her rising fear and trepidation. This intensity and concentration increases when the lights go out and so this would suggest that this sound address is replicating and enforcing the visual image we see of Clarice as victim, flaying her arms about and stumbling unbearably in the dark. However, there is the possibility that in fact the aural track functions to stand in for the point of view, Clarice's, that we are denied.[674] This sonic moment gains clarity through a mimetic memory that leads us back to the beginning of the film in which we view Clarice alone, charting the obstacle course in the woods during the early morning, building up a sweat as she pants out

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[673] Ibid, 230.
[674] When Clarice enters the room in the basement where the moth flies freely around her in the dark the flapping of its wings are exaggerated to the point of sounding like a helicopter which taps into a mimetic memory of cinema history, creating a link with *The Deer Hunter* and Vietnam, like the mobile home outside and later the slow movement of the butterfly mobile in the final climactic scene between Gum and Clarice.

of breath from the physical exertion. Similar to the present moment in the basement, she really does not have to be there, it is not part of the course requirement otherwise she would have company from her peers. Both scenes function as indices of Clarice's professional ambition and the primal scene of her career path - running from the farm trying to save one lamb, alone, aware of the danger but unwilling or unable to pay heed to it. This mimetic memory which associates Clarice's shortness of breath with her professional desire offers us a mode of address in stark contrast to the visual one which fixes our view point through the killer' gaze. At the beginning of the film as Clarice emerges from the woods there are wooden signs nailed to the tree which state: Hurt, Agony, Pain, Love-it, this may be an instruction to the audience but it is also articulates what Clarice is attracted to professionally. There is another sign below these, barely visible - Pride, which perhaps was partially erased from our view because it states too emphatically the significance of hurt, agony and pain to Clarice's professional self image.[675]

Concentrating on the filmic, the image and its materiality, the basement scene provides a productive space in which to elaborate on the different forms of vision that compete with each other there. Jayamanne refers to the use of parallel editing between Clarice knocking on Jamie Gum's door and Jack Crawford's men who knock on a door they believe to be Gum's home. This parallel editing ends with Crawford's sudden awareness of the danger Clarice is in and the door being closed by Jamie Gum as Clarice looks around the room. For Jayamanne the fact that the camera next gives us an establishing shot of the location of Gum's house panning from three parallel railway tracks to Gum's house suggests that "[…]parallel editing(that resilient rhetorical figure of American action cinema) has led to a dead end in terms of action, and the three railway tracks outside Buffalo Bill's house, which the camera pans across in a sweeping curve to the accompaniment of the ominous theme music, suggest that the film is entering a register where action alone is powerless to effect change."[676]

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[675] The ability to read this sign is also a very clear indication of the way in critical analysis depends and relies on the material quality of video/dvd replay capacities as it is doubtful whether this last sign would be visible if viewed during the projected flow of the film.
[676] Ibid, 228.

Vision and Technology

Taking my cue from Jayamanne's reference to cinema history and the metacinematic I would like to analyse the image to extrapolate some thoughts concerning vision and technology. The railway tracks with their vanishing point on the horizon allude very clearly to perspectival space, early cinema and the 19th Century. *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show*, a travelling circus providing '*cowboys and Indians*' as mass entertainment and spectacle links in with the language used in the tabloid headline on the walls of both Crawford's office and Gum's basement, "Bill Skins Fifth." Buffalo Bill's performances were filmed by the Edison Manufacturing Company from 1894 onwards and Charles Musser suggests that one performance *The hold-up of the Deadwood Stage* inspired the Edison film *Stage Coach hold-up in the Days of '49* and may have even provided the actors and props.[677] The pan from the railway tracks to the house is a clearly defined means of the film moving into a different register, the temporal layers of the image linking Buffalo Bill, the serial killer to early cinema and the 19th Century. From here, the camera offers us a mediation on the metacinematic, on vision, the senses and technology, providing an opportunity to examine cinema history through the use of the camera rather than narrative content.

While Jayamanne refers to the change of camera from the outside pan, to an "ominous high angle shot" when Clarice enters the house to a camera which "lures" Clarice to the basement as gothic, the shift occurring from the outside pan to steadicam is one which indicates a particular moment in the history of technical innovation in Hollywood. Steadicam, beginning commercially in the mid '70's was an important technical device within the domain of slasher films. David Cook refers to the landmark use of steadicam in the film Halloween (1978) "[...] where cinematographer Dean Cundey's subjective hand-held tracking shots replicated the point of view of a psychotic killer as he stalked his victims – an innovative conceit imitated in hundreds of slasher and horror films to follow."[678] The use of steadicam not only brings us back to a representation of vision technology in the 19th Century but also draws attention to itself as a form of

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[677] Charles Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon, Edwin S. Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company*, (1991):174.
[678] Cook, *Lost Illusions*, 377.

representation. Returning to our view of Jamie Gum's point of view through his infrared night vision headset, his hand coming out to touch Clarice's hair enforces a link between touch and vision as mentioned above. The tangibility of the image, the reality effect it imposes on the senses is charged by a link with the history and discourses of vision. Rather than the certainty of perspectival space offered above ground outside the house here in the basement we are offered a disjunctive, and voyeuristic space, which shares many characteristics with stereoscopic space. The stereoscope was a device, which attempted to construct a representation of reality by replicating the body's binocular vision rather than the monocular vision of the camera obscura and perspective.[679] Instead of a verifiable truth outside the body, as was the discursive domain of the camera obscura, the stereoscope created a simulation of reality dependent on the viewer's own corporeal vision. Jonathan Crary's description of stereoscopic space offers many similarities to the way the basement scenes are represented.

Fig.34 Stereoscope

Discussing the stereoscopic image as planar he refers to how objects are viewed with a distinct sense of 'in front of' or 'in back of' which has the effect of creating a disjunctive space that is anything but unified. Crary writes:

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[679] See Crary's *Techniques of the Observer* For a full account of the history of stereoscopes and their uses see Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 116-136.

Our eyes follow a choppy and erratic path into its depth: it is an assemblage of local zones of three dimensionality, zones imbued with hallucinatory clarity, but which when taken together never coalesce into a homogenous field.[680]

As we view Clarice trying to find her bearings in the basement we view a vertiginous labyrinth where the corridor's doors seem to lead to more confusion. The camera dances from one space to the next and from one harrowing image to the next increasing the claustrophobic closeness of the objects as Clarice goes further into this space. Crary refers to the way in which stereoscopic space was literally *obscene* depending "[...] on the visual priority of the object closest to the viewer and on the absence of any mediation between eye and image."[681]

He also comments on the way in which the stereoscope became synonymous with pornography and some accounts of its eventual demise at the turn of the century connect this to its links with such subject matter. Jamie Gum's basement functions as an end point or terminus where optical technologies and their links with discourses of verisimilitude collide with the fragmentation of human bodies. Here 'the real' is linked to production, as it is constructed in different ways through a subjective camera or through the obsessive psychotic character of Jamie Gum whose transformation depends on having real body parts to construct a real woman suit. Buffalo Bill's transformation is an optical illusion dependent on fragmentation where the real is constructed as spectacle.

Fig.35 Jamie Gum's newspaper cuttings, polaroids and in far right corner his vhs camera, The Silence of the Lambs, film still.

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[680] Ibid, 126.
[681] Ibid, 127.

Fig.36 Clarice's point of view in the overheated basement is a vertiginous labyrinth of confusion. Here Clarice's vision is fragmentary, the close- ups creating a claustrophobic atmosphere. Jamie Gum's vision is also partial, his night vision equipment replicating a sense of the stereoscopes "in front of" discussed by Crary, evident in the film stills on pages 184 and 185.

Jamie Gum's night vision goggles, The Silence of the Lambs, film still

Fig,37 2nd World War night vision helmet

Manhunter

The link between optical technology and serial killing is also evident in Michael Mann's *Manhunter* (1988) where we find that the killer, Mr. Dollarhyde, in his home environment, is literally surrounded by an excess of technological reproduction. Here he has appropriated home movies projected on a constant loop; numerous photographic prints of lunar landscapes; a wall size photographic print of an indeterminate landscape—desert/lunar; a flickering television set registering nothing but interference; a slide projector; an 8-track cassette player and a dictaphone. Dollarhyde's access to an omnipotent visibility continues in his work place, Gateway, a photographic lab, where he can acquire any material necessary for his 'work.' We learn for instance that he needs infrared film for recording the activities of "nocturnal animals." Visibility and the ability to see beyond the visible is of course just as important to the FBI agents Graham and Crawford working on the case. Their attempt to decipher the secret language of communication between Hannibal Lecter and Dollarhyde requires multiple technologies of visibility to decipher its code. Graham and Crawford finally translate this code by interpreting what remains *invisible*, the missing section of the intercepted missal. Although this is implausible, it points to an important dynamic in *Manhunter*, reading what has been, or is under erasure.

Fig.38 Deciphering Lector's note, Manhunter, film stills

Though *Manhunter's taxonomy* of these technologies more or less fits in with the narrative progression required by Hollywood cinema, this excess of technology spins out beyond the literal narrative requirements. An example is the photographic prints, the lunar landscapes, which are obviously meant to relate to Dollarhyde's murderous 'lunar cycle.[682] Yet examining these prints poses a question relevant to this discussion. What is Dollarhyde, as serial killer/monster meant to signify?

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[682] Also an obvious means of posing a question concerning his sexuality, his lunar cycle a means of feminising him by being linked to the menstrual cycle.

Fig.39 Dollarhyde's home, Manhunter, film stills

Employing these lunar prints as a means of situating a particular socio-historical milieu, helps position this film in a quotidian space already under erasure on the film's release in 1988. On one level the lunar print is pop culture's representation of the US space program, the utopian/dystopian desire to colonise outer space with all the attendant anticipation of technological progress. The images also speak of Dollarhyde's childhood when the space program was at the zenith of popular fascination, long before the televised coverage of the Challenger explosion in 1987. While the lunar prints most obviously map out a particular route to the sixties, once this temporal shift is located many other examples make themselves apparent. The music, which Dollarhyde plays towards the end of the film, Iron Butterfly's "In-a-Gadda-Da-Vida" (*In the Garden of Eden*) a type of Manson-esque psychedelic rock, also harks back to the sixties. The use of this sound track points less to a sixties revival but rather functions as a means of placing the film's diegetic temporality as a metaphor for a particular 'world view.'

What the lunar prints make apparent, similar to the film projector and the other technical equipment in Dollarhyde's home, is that the America being mapped through Dollarhyde's world is not necessarily contemporaneous with the films release. As discussed before within every cultural text there will be multiple and conflicting articulations pertinent to not only the present socio-historical moment but also the past and the future. These articulations are in themselves flooded with discursive paths that are diffuse and immersed in historical, fictional, and mythical trajectories.

The two families Dollarhyde has already murdered are chosen because they send their home movies to be processed at his lab. Besides signifying the randomness of their deaths it also poses further questions. Both families are situated in an above average income bracket, both occupying 'beautiful' American dream homes, it is not unreasonable to imagine then, that in 1988 they would have the latest *video* cameras to record the family. The fact that both families use film rather than video can be read as a conceit within the narrative structure offering Dollarhyde a means of choosing his victims. This is obvious when we look at this 'footage' where it becomes apparent that the low lighting levels inside the kitchen would severely restrict filming on super-8mm. Besides this narrative conceit it

also offers a reason why this particular cultural articulation is negotiated through Dollarhyde as a serial killer. We might assume that a film concerned to a large extent with technology would use science fiction as a means of exploring it. What requires the particularities of a serial killer within this technological trajectory? One possible answer is that this particular negotiation of technology specifically concerns the family and the everyday.

Dollarhyde's home is like a museum to technological obsolescence. Here in Dollarhyde's museum the accumulation of film, photography and television are representative of "new technological relations, social configurations, and economic imperatives [...] transient elements within an accelerating sequence of displacements and obsolescences," what Jonathan Crary refers to as "the delirious operations of modernisation."[683] The transition between the imminent obsolescent of one technology to its replacement is fore-grounded in Dollarhyde's museum, all the equipment functioning as a cultural marker to these transitions. The emphasis on the transition from film to video also occurs for example when Will Graham is driven to the home of one of the dead families by a police officer who tells Graham that the home movies have been transferred to "half inch video tape." This emphasis on the precision of naming will not be necessary when video has become standard.[684]

Mark Seltzer discusses the meaning of the term 'serial killer' as incorporating within the killer an "internal competition between repetition and representation."[685]The obsessive fantasy of the serial killer remains "unfulfilled in its enactment" and is repeated over and over again determined to get it right. However this repetition is similar to the cliffhanger, which as Seltzer remarks is " a suspense plot that fails to convert series into narrative."[686] This cliffhanger effect is illustrated clearly in *Manhunter* where Dollarhyde views repeatedly a looped film projection, a home movie of one of the families he plans to murder.

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[683] Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, And Modern Culture*, (1999):13.
[684] "The Helical-scan videotape systems [...] were perfected by electronics companies during the 1960s [...] By 1981, three million VCRs had been sold. Cook, *Lost Illusions*, 5.
[685] Seltzer, *Serial Killers*, 64.
[686] Ibid.

Seltzer makes the point that "the question of serial killing cannot be separated from the general forms of seriality, collection, and counting conspicuous in consumer society, and the forms of fetishism- the collecting of things and representations, person and person-thing like bodies- that traverse it."[687] Seriality is continuously referenced in the mise en scéne of these films. For example, in *Peeping Tom*, there is a scene in a newsagent, in which Mark, the camera man/killer, looks at an image of one of his victims on the cover of the Daily Mirror. He is compelled to move the vertically stacked newspapers horizontally across so that there is a series of the victim's image repeated over and over again.

Fig. 40 Newspapers, Peeping Tom, film stills

This emphasis on a horizontal axis denoting a series rather than a vertical axis required by narrative, though operating for less than a minute in this scene is an important marker toward reading *Peeping Tom* as a pre-cursor to later film mediations on death, serialization and the compulsion to repeat. In one scene in *Manhunter,* surrounded by consumer products in a supermarket aisle, the brand names too repetitively stacked to be 'realistic,' Will Graham explains to his son how Hannibal Lecter damaged him both physically and mentally. After this intimacy the son turns and takes up a packet of coffee saying, " Is this the one you like, *Folgers*?" The connection being made to serial consumption is again obvious in Cindy Sherman's *Office Killer* where the office in question is the office of the magazine "Constant Consumer." This concentration on series rather than narrative is also an important marker in defining the present cultural moment as *ahistorical.* For Fredric Jameson "the disappearance of a sense of history" is directly linked to media penetration of society, which creates a perpetual present. In this case "the informational function of the

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[687] Ibid.

media would thus be to help us forget, to serve as the very agents and mechanisms for our historical amnesia."[688]

Fig. 41 product placement as a backdrop for explaining serial killing, Manhunter, film stills

Television, Time and Domestic Space

In *Manhunter* there is a link to theoretical discussions on television's temporality in terms of "presentness." Mary Ann Doane for example, writes of how "television has been conceptualized as the annihilation of memory, and consequently of history, in its continual stress on the 'nowness of its own discourse."[689] And yet despite this constant presence, television, for Doane, is also haunted with death. Referring to Roland Barthes' formulation that photographs always signify a past, something that has been and because of this are

[688] Jameson,"Postmodernism and Consumer Society," *The Anti-Aesthetic, Essays on Postmodern Culture* (ed) Hal Foster, Seattle, Bay Press, (1983).
[689] Doane, "Information, Crisis, Catastrophe," *Logis of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (ed) Patricia Mellencamp, Bloomington, Indiana University Press (1990): 227.

saturated by death,[690] Doane suggests that the difference with television is that "television deals not with the weight of the dead past but with the potential trauma and explosiveness of the present. And the ultimate drama of the instantaneous—catastrophe— constitutes the very limit of its discourse."[691]

In *Manhunter* there is a preoccupation with the "potential trauma of the present" which offers the viewer the 'catastrophic event' before it happens. Here the film operates as an insider guide to what happens before the news flash. Although this can be read literally in terms of whether the next potential victims will survive and the attendant race against time by the FBI, the film also presents a "potential trauma of the present" through its negotiation of technology's link to the restructuring of the family unit in American society. With its concern with the everyday, (through technological obsolescence) and its concern for 'normal' families (wiped out by the serial killer), *Manhunter* is very obviously within the domain of melodrama as a drama of modernisation.

Manhunter articulates a worry around the 'normal' family and its extinction. While the penultimate 'normal' family i.e. one mother, one father and at least two children is literally *dead* in this film, family values and an acceptable restructuring of the family is mapped on to the FBI agent Will Graham, his wife and child. Though the film obliquely references the fact that Will Graham may not be the biological father of the child (when Kevin does not want to leave his mother alone with Will) it negotiates a restructuring of the family unit by articulating that though the ties that bind are not necessarily biological, they can be reconstituted in a way that is 'beneficial to society,' remaining bound to traditional family values and gender positions in the everyday. This reconfiguration of the family still requires marriage though, which is articulated through the excess of shiny wedding bands worn by Graham, Crawford and many of the policemen throughout the film.

The family however is also seen as the cause of the deviant subjectivity of the serial killer.[692] The possibility that Dollarhyde was more than likely abused in childhood, is given

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[690] See Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, (1981), pp76-77.
[691] "Information, Crisis, Catastrophe," 222.
[692] Laura Mulvey "Melodrama inside and outside the home', in *Visual and Other Pleasures*, (1989):74.

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given voice by Graham when he tells Crawford that he has sympathy for Dollarhyde as an abused child even though as an adult he is unredeemable. Rather than looking outward to construct monsters out of foreign 'others' as in, for example the Gulf war, the 'war on terror' or Osama Bin Laden etc what these 'serial killer films' present is 'rottenness' within American society. This inward gaze is usually fixed on the family as the centre of moral disintegration and in this fixed gaze attention is deflected from the financial power blocks, which constitute the family in particular forms.

Dollarhyde lives alone devoid of any family connections and yet when he drags Rebo (his 'girlfriend') into his kitchen, at the end of the film, we see the kitchen table with four table settings. These four tablemats at once show that the 'normal' family while gone is still psychically important for Dollarhyde. Each room in Dollarhyde's home represents the different psycho/psychic melodramas played out by him. If the kitchen articulates a deep psychic drama concerning the family, in the living room and bedroom we view the teenage awkwardness of Dollarhyde, as techno geek.

Fig. 42 Dollarhyde's kitchen, Manhunter, film still

In discussing *Manhunter* as a mediation on the quotidian, the family and technology, television becomes central in understanding the dynamics at play. For Margaret Morse television is not 'outside' of everyday life but representative of an "enclosed" system, connected to the "freeway and the shopping mall" as "part of a socio-historical nexus of institutions which grew together into their present day structure and national scope after World War II."[693] In other words television does not just represent the world 'outside' but rather is also constitutive of everyday life.

Mary Ann Doane breaks television's structuring of time down into three main categories, which are, information, crisis and catastrophe. Television's time is made up of events that happen, events, which are at once covered by the media and constituted by the media becoming part of an endless 'flow' of information. As Doane writes this constant process of updating the events, this flow is "steady and continuous."[694] A crisis, however is different, it is a flare-up of limited duration. Doane situates the crisis in terms of political action requiring a decision and, because of the decision making process it has a subject whereas "information and catastrophe are both subject-less."[695] Catastrophe time is instantaneous, of the moment. Doane gives a good analogy to catastrophe time in the digital watch where each moment's 'time' arrives isolated from past moments and future moments. Although the flow of information would seem to be an incompatible temporality with the punctuation of catastrophe, television in blurring this difference allows "urgency, enslavement to the instant and hence forgetability " to become a feature of both information and catastrophe.[696]

Doane presents a persuasive argument suggesting that television modelled on an idea of catastrophe, operates as a "system of discontinuities" structurally dependent on the catastrophic as a punctuation or rupturing device.[697] In developing her argument Doane refers to the consistent features of "events which television designate as catastrophic," one of which is the body count of the dead. More important for Doane however is the

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[693] Margaret Morse, "An Ontology of Everyday Distraction, *The Freeway, The Mall and Television,*" *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (ed) Patricia Mellencamp (1990): 208.
[694] Doane,"Information, Crisis, Catastrophe," 223.
[695] Ibid
[696] Ibid.
[697] Ibid, 229.

relationship between the catastrophe and technology leading her to define catastrophe "as the conjuncture of the failure of technology and the resulting confrontation with death."[698] Technological failure resulting in multiple deaths such as airline crashes etc articulates these catastrophes as specific to modernity rather than the pre-modern where the catastrophic event would be understood as a teleologically natural disaster, fate, act of God etc. Contemporary reporting of "natural disasters" such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods etc are immersed in discourses concerning technology's failure to contain the catastrophe, for example, through discussions on techniques in engineering or technologies to assist predicting the extent of the disaster *about* to happen. Catastrophe then, is linked to advances in technology and progress. As Doane writes, the temporality of technological progress is linear constantly moving forward and catastrophe is its interruption.

Doane's discussion of catastrophe and television assists in a negotiation of how catastrophe is employed in *Manhunter*. To return to the question of what Dollarhyde, as serial killer/monster is meant to signify? I would suggest that Dollarhyde represents an embodiment of catastrophe and that this embodiment cannot be separated from television and televisual culture. This embodiment of catastrophe read through the televisual operates as an extension to the link *Manhunter* and other serial killer films have with disaster movies. The fact that disaster movies such as *The Towering Inferno* (1974) and gothic-paranoia films such as *The Exorcist* (1973) first emerge after the American defeat in Vietnam is also of significance in terms of a link with *Manhunter* and the way in which the '60s function as a specific point of reference within the film.[699] Contained within all these films is the sense that ordinary citizens cannot be protected by the state. If the police do finally come to the rescue they can achieve this only by thoroughly mimicking the serial killer. (This discursive thread is also evident in *Seven*.)

Similar to how Clarice Starling is linked to both Lecter and Buffalo Bill in *Manhunter* Dollarhyde and Graham are continuously linked throughout the film. This occurs from seemingly irrelevant details such as the fact they both live near water, that their homes are

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[698] Ibid.

[699] Although the Towering Inferno is remodelled on 19th Century sensational melodramas by Dion Boucicault. See Brian Hand, "Looking for Attention," *Circa* 93 (Autumn 2000):26-31.

both examples of high modernist architecture to the emphasis placed on Graham's ability to think like a 'psychopath', the reason he is called back from retirement to track the serial killer. Lecter taunts Graham about his own murderous desires alluding to the fine line distinguishing Graham's murderous actions from Dollarhyde. This duality is important between Graham and Dollarhyde. Dollarhyde, as 'normal' citizen mirrors the omniscient powers of visibility and control the state maintains, through agencies like the FBI and the CIA and in his monstrousness legitimates the need for Graham as a legally sanctioned killer, a monster, the Agency (individualized by Graham) required by the state to maintain social order.

If Dollarhyde's monstrousness is linked to the omniscient power of the state it is also linked to the omniscient power of the media. Dollarhyde's link with nature must go beyond his questionable 'human' status if he is to represent catastrophe within the context of television sufficiently. Television's representation of plane crashes, earthquakes etc, as catastrophes are conceptualised in terms of an uncontainable power of a capricious nature, in other words, god like. Dollarhyde's link with televisual catastrophe occurs through his lunar cycle, offering at once a higher temporal order based on the planet's movements and a link with technology through outer space, satellites, aerials etc.

As Doane's discussion indicates, catastrophe time is required by television to punctuate the flow of information time. Here the ordinary flow is representative of what the social order prescribes as normal. For Doane then, catastrophe's function is a "return of the repressed" and what is repressed in this temporal logic is what remains outside the "daily social rhythms of everyday life [which] is death."[700]

Dollarhyde distinguishes himself from the distance imposed on death in the quotidian realm of modernity by being death's messenger, his random killing specifically aimed at punctuating the flow of 'normal' everyday life similar to the way in which television needs catastrophe to punctuate its flow of information. As Doane states, death in this

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[700] Ibid, 233.

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configuration, appears as "pure discontinuity, disruption- pure chance or accident, the result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time."[701]

> Catastrophe is at some level always about the body, about the encounter with death. For all of its ideology of "liveness" it may be death, which forms the point of televisual intrigue. Contemporary society works to conceal death to such an extent that its experience is generally a vicarious one through representation. [702]

This reference to death as a "televisual intrigue," as a process of distancing, reducing any "direct confrontation with death," is one, which Doane and others discuss through the relationship of image technologies and weapons. In *Manhunter* there is also an oblique reference to this when Rebo refers to why she, as a blind person, is employed by Gateway, "they had to hire the handicapped to shape up their employment practices to get this Defence contract." In his book *War And Cinema: The Logics of Perception*, (1999) Paul Virilio traces the interdependence of warfare and image production back to early cinema and beyond to the mid-19th century and the beginnings of photography. In Kevin Robbins' discussion of serial killer films he makes a direct link between the physical distancing allowed by contemporary warfare and the neutralising effects produced by the screen.[703]Robbins' refers to Apache helicopter pilots who, using video cameras equipped with nighttime vision recorded Iraqi soldiers as they slaughtered them. On returning to base the pilots watched the Iraqi soldiers stumbling in the dark unable to see their killers. Robbins refers to the way in which this distance separating the pilots from the harsh effects of their actions allows for a specularisation of their killing spree reducing it to image without compassion. Robbins' remarks upon the similarity of this 'episode' to a scene in *Henry portrait of a Serial Killer* in which Henry and Otis record their killing of a family so that they can watch it over and over again. As Robbins' writes:" in both examples, the killers are, at the same time, the video-makers. Acts of sadism are instantaneously

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[701] Ibid.

[702] Doane, "Information, Crisis, Catastrophe," 233. See also Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations* (ed)Hannah Arendt (1969):83-110. Here Benjamin traces the "removal of death" from the everyday back to the 19th century.

[703] Robbins, "Sights of War," 79.

transformed into acts of voyeurism."[704] This process, which moves from sadism to viewing, reduces perception to pure vision, the screen abstracting destruction to pure image.

The linking of the Apache pilots to Henry and Otis, who also view their killing spree by Robbins, while important, nevertheless requires making a distinction between these two viewing situations similar though they may appear. This distinction becomes apparent by returning to the discussion of phantasmagorias in chapter 1, to recap briefly, Susan Buck Morss discusses the multiplying of phantasmogoric effects in the 19th century as offering a "protective shield for the senses."[705] She writes, "Phantasmagorias are technoaesthetics. The perception they provide are 'real' enough — their impact upon the senses and nerves is still 'natural' from a neurophysical point of view. But their social function in each case is compensatory."[706] From this description, then, it is still possible to maintain a link between the pilots' aesthetic pleasure in the surface pattern of destruction represented on their screens with that of Henry and Otis. What distinguishes the pilots from Henry and Otis is that the pilots' labour, in producing these 'images' is concealed by the images. Here the pilots' images of slaughter functions with the same phantasmagoric effects as Marx described in relation to commodities. Whereas Otis and Henry watch themselves represented on screen as they kill the family, the pilots are distanced from the physical reality (contact) of killing.

Within television the fact that its main aim is to bring audiences to commodities by way of advertising points to the reason why catastrophe is so important to television. As Doane writes catastrophe hides this 'real' function of television by constantly alluding to television's ability to access the real.[707] In terms of television's own discourse Doane writes that perhaps: "the most catastrophic of technological catastrophes is the loss of the signal."[708]

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[704] Ibid.
[705] Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics,"22.
[706] Ibid.
[707] Doane, "information, Crisis, Catastrophe," 238.
[708] Ibid.

In *Manhunter*, there is an anomaly in the way media coverage is referenced within the narrative structure. The only reporting on the serial killer is through a printed publication rather than any news coverage on television, which functions in a similar way to the use of 'film' discussed earlier. Both highlight a certain out of *synch-ness* with the contemporary time of the film's production and yet remain plausible. While television as a material object is referenced, viewing is obstructed. In the underground car park at the *National Tatler* building, where the guard sits outside his booth reading a tabloid newspaper we hear a quiz show, which emanates from a small portable television in the booth. Seconds later the journalist, Freddie Lounds is returned to base in a wheel chair engulfed by flames never to report again.

Dollarhyde has at least three television sets, which are always on, yet here again, though the signal is registered, the television *is* on, the image, however is illegible. Each scene in which the TV screens appear in Dollarhyde's home we are offered a different form of interference. The screens flicker continuously, registering the transitions occurring within the visual information being transmitted and yet they are always beyond reach, always indecipherable. It is this emphasis on television, which in rigorously blocking standard uses of television in film, such as, for example, the news flash, or, at the very least, a readable screen, articulates clearly that *Manhunter* is a mediation on television.

If the television screens in Dollarhyde's home refer to a catastrophic illegibility, his monstrosity explained through "unknowability" occurs precisely because the film articulates worries concerning technological reproduction and representation. As Doane writes, "death emerges as the absolute limit of technology's power, that which marks its vulnerability. Catastrophe, conjoining death with the failure of technology, presents us with a scenario of limits - the limits of technology, the limits of signification."[709]

It is interesting to note that in *Manhunter* although technological transitions are mapped, there is only one reference made to computer technology. This is the scene at police headquarters in which the names of employees at Gateway are fed into the drivers' license

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[709] Ibid, 233.

index. On one level we might think that Dollarhyde, with his interest in technology would also have a personal computer and yet the fact that he does not is probably more telling. Gateway, the company Dollarhyde works for, is of course the name of one of the largest computer manufacturers.

Discussing this film, from today's perspective is to be aware that the technology mapped in the film distinguishes itself as analogue, still retaining an indexical link with the 'real' world. Although the personal computer was available in 1988, it had not established itself as an integral part of the everyday. Given the cultural debates concerning the loss of the indexical in relation to digitalization, where the sign can only refer to itself, Manhunter's mapping of analogue image technologies operates as an ur-history to digitalization and the processes of convergence this involves. *Manhunter* maps this technological transition, articulating it as 'past' at the moment of its disappearance while also anticipating future worries around digitalization.

Conclusion

In exploring *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Manhunter* in depth I have tried to examine the ways in which these films on the one hand operate within a cluster of films employing the sign of serial killer and what that may signify. At the same time I have tried to open up the way these films are discussed by examining the way in which larger cultural dynamics are encoded in them. These films as 'dramas of modernization' are dramas of historical inscription, which constantly return to ideas and societal worries to do with the individual's choice. In many of these films, for example, history is seen as a determining factor on future events, the early childhood trauma and abuse of the killer leading to all manner of horrors in the future. Individual choice is relegated to a historical determinism, which is aligned to the historical discourse of automation, in effect people function like machines; killing becomes an activity removed from emotions such as anger, frustration, loss of control and the individual's responsibility.

There is a constant reminder in these films that all is not as it seems. In other words, these films provide mainstream examples of the theoretical space explored in Benjamin's

discussion of non-sensuous correspondences as discussed in **Part 1**. Here, we find a profound nervousness around the inability to comprehend social cues. Modernity erases social hierarchies and structures, which fix individual positions, and in a world of competing sign streams there is a breakdown in the ability to understand everyday social interactions. The serial killer as monstrous neighbour appears normal and yet does despicable things. The dynamic of not being able to read what is close to you in your everyday world is narrativized as being extremely dangerous in 'serial killer films' however it is important to realize that this is an important dynamic in romantic comedies although here the same dynamic is narrativized through humour rather than fear. For example in the film You've *Got Mail* (1988), the protagonists misrecognize each other as 'the enemy' in their real everyday social interactions but fall in love with each other over the Internet.

If one looks at the way in which authority has shifted in western modernity over a long period, we can see not only how this dynamic is articulated through films but also a certain nostalgia for a feudal hierarchical authority. Moving from the way in which the feudal lord has power and authority over all, to the shift in power to parental authority in the early bourgeois period to a more recent shift in which the nuclear family becomes irrelevant and the individual is left to her/his own council, we witness these shifts in cultural representations. *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) is a recent example of how the shift in parental authority to individual control is negotiated. While in *Sleepless in Seattle* the normal social world of the individual including the nuclear family provide a space in which to find a mate, this does not necessarily mean that it is the correct choice, in this romantic comedy chance and randomness combined with a thorough knowledge of media representations offer a more empowering means of   meeting Mr/Mrs right. Here the social contract is replaced by a make believe world of understanding the codes of chance. In *Sleepless in Seattle*, interestingly, we are also presented with the 'romantic' side of stalking. Of course the dissipation of parental authority is also evident in films, which use the serial killer, here parental authority is seen to be morally bankrupt (through child abuse) and requires being replaced by a higher authority, the state, which both mimics and outdoes the carnage created by the serial killer.

In **Part 3**, our discussion moves away from a direct exploration of mainstream films to an investigation of artists/filmmakers whose work, as a self-consciously critical practice rather than entertainment, inhabits museum spaces. The significance of the distinction I am making between a self-consciously critical practice in the context of the museum requires qualification however. Although it may appear initially as an extreme jump from mainstream cinema to the museum, Benjamin's theory of non-sensuous similarities is once again important. While corporate involvement can be blatantly obvious in the content of mainstream film blockbusters (through product placement or, an excess of special effects as obvious examples), the importance of the corporate world to the art gallery/ museum is no less profound. Though not always as immediately apparent as the sponsorship programmes put in place between the art institution and the corporate world (a local example being The RHA and *Eurojet Futures* or *Nissan Art Project*) the corporate world is deeply embedded in museum culture.[710] Chin-tao Wu, writing on the increasing privatization of culture, refers to how the chief executives or senior partners play a major role in terms of "corporate art intervention." Wu writes,

> These top executives, 'an elite within an elite', in particular those overseeing large corporations, are often reported in the media as having great or even 'mad' passions for art. Their close involvement in corporate arts ventures cannot be conceptualized as purely incidental, but rather has to be understood as a locus of social distinction to which their elite status and class aspirations are anchored.[711]

Arguably this corporate involvement makes itself immediately apparent in *art as entertainment* blockbuster exhibitions, and, in *art as entertainment* models of moving-image installations, which replicate the "attractions" model of early cinema as Gunning points out.[712] Moving-image installations which primarily activate an entertainment model

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[710] See Chin-tao Wu, "Corporate Art Awards," *Privatising Culture, Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s,* (2002):159-187. Referring to corporate sponsored art awards, Wu writes, "When awarded by academies, such prizes serve to reflect current establishment tastes and appear to be dis-interested – or at least not to have direct vested interests[...] Being the sponsor or organiser of such awards is, accordingly, to situate oneself by association at the very centre of excellence as well as centre-stage in widely publicised and sometimes televised spectacles." Ibid, 161-162. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (1984)
[711] Ibid, 7. This quote also evokes a lecteresque passion for the arts.
[712] Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Cinema, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," In *Early Cinema: Space-Frame- Narrative*, (ed) Thomas Elsaesser (1990):56-62. A prime example of moving installations as "attractions'

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are often dependent on an "immersive experience for the viewer,"[713] again, similar to the cinema exhibition model.[714] What I hope this clarifies is the futility of working with some naïve assumption that the museum or 'high culture' is an alternative, to industrialized culture, and, therefore, work exhibited in this context is automatically critical and self-reflexive.

In **Part 2**, our discussion centered on the significance of melodrama to mainstream film production. Here, emphasis was placed on melodrama as a 'mode' (to re-iterate Linda Williams' point earlier) rather than simply understood as a specific genre. In this expanded sense melodrama can be seen to subsume other more narrowly defined genres, including my sub category of 'serial killer films'. In the following discussion of films, moving-image installations and CD-Roms in museum contexts which pursue a critical model, I will argue that melodrama as a mode is displaced (however not dispensed with) by an anthropological model, documentary. Here Matthew Buckingham's film *Situation Leading to a Story (1999)*, the moving-image installations of Pierre Huyghe, *The Third Memory* (2000) and, my own *discordant...hum* (1996) and Chris Marker's CD-Rom *Immemory* (1997) use an anthropological model to examine cinema. In the case of Buckingham, Huyghe and myself this is very clearly an exploration of mainstream cinema and its codes.

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can be seen in Doug Aitken's *Electric Earth*, (1999). Referring to the video work of Bill Viola, Claire Bishop discusses recent critiques of his work, such as Ann Wagners. Bishop writes, "His imagery has become increasingly religious, often deriving from or suggesting paintings, and the work is ever more slick and populist, employing the latest plasma screens and special effects." Bishop, *Installation Art*, (2005): 97. In a similar vein Hal Foster refers to a piece by Bill Viola exhibited in the Gugenheim in 2003 as an example of Benjamin's "blue flower in the land of technology, an experience of spiritual immediacy effected through intense media immersion. And people love it, this bewitching mysticism." Hal Foster in Round Table, "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art, *October* 104 (Spring 2003):80.
[713] Bishop, *Installation Art*, 97.
[714] Also relevant to our discussion on mimesis and fragmentation is Bishop's discussion of installtions as spaces of mimetic engulfment, where "self-obliteration is a persistent motif" especially in the work of Yayoi Kusama. Ibid, 82-100.

Part 3

Montage and the 'body of the film': documentary fiction in moving-image installations

Introduction

Following on from the discussion in **Part 2**, it becomes clear how finance capital's restructuring of Hollywood and mainstream film has taken place – through, what was referred to as a mainstreaming of exploitation, however, how does this restructuring articulate itself in the art world? In the concluding comments of the last chapter, I suggested possible examples of finance capital's control in the art world. An immediate one is of course, the high profile blockbuster exhibitions, which also strategically market merchandising to accompany the exhibition, like glossy 'coffee table catalogues', with smaller versions for those with limited funds, posters, t-shirts, mugs, postcards down to pencil cases.

It is also significant that since the break with high modernism in the '60s and '70s, most obvious through the breakdown of medium specificity, recognition of the curator's importance has risen appreciably. This is worth considering here briefly. My thesis has mainly been concerned with advancing a methodology which promotes the fragmenting of rigid definitions, arguing that too much of importance can get left out in maintaining these boundaries. However the following brief discussion on the rise of the curator and a concurrent shift in exhibition models presents clearly the problems with the breakdown of 'specificity' and indicates the problems of an interdisciplinary practice with no disciplines as such.

The curator of contemporary art can now expect the same sort of recognition, which is on a par with recognition of the artist. While historically curators were educated through academic art history courses solely, there has been an increase in curatorial practice master degrees. Curators, can be seen now, not only as institutional academics 'tracking' the changes and shifts in the art world and dutifully presenting them to the museum audience

(if this was ever the case) but more as equal participants directing the field.[715] Arguably equality with the artist has been supplanted to such a degree that, now, curators can be understood more as the manipulators of raw materials (the art works and/or the artists). Here the contemporary rhetoric is one of discursivity and dialogue, in which an art project is democratically discussed between curator and artist, or the exhibition/installation is 'designed' by the curator, where a number of art objects/or services provided by the artist as art are available and through 'discussion' the choices are made by the curator.[716]

In this context, rather than the 'white cube' of modernism we have the contemporary art space as "laboratory." In a recent article, Claire Bishop suggests that this is not necessarily directed by the curator but a response by curators, to the type of work that emerges in the '90s. Describing this work, Bishop writes,

> Work that is open-ended, interactive, and resistant to closure, often appearing to be "work-in-progress" rather than a completed object. Such work seems to derive from a creative misreading of poststructuralist theory: rather than the *interpretations* of a work of art being open to continual reassessment, the work of art *itself* is argued to be in perpetual flux.[717]

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[715] It is also important to stress the links between the museum curator and corporate curators and art consultants and to understand the links between these career paths. Chin-tao Wu comments on the growth of art consultants and corporate curators since the '70s and the significance placed on corporate collecting in academia can be seen by how this subject often forms part of particular courses.[715] Sharing academic credentials in art history with museum curators, indeed, they may also have worked in public museums, these corporate curators transfer to corporate collections "the authenticating prestige that they had enjoyed in their positions in public institutions, thereby legitimising corporate collections[...]" Chin-tao Wu, *Privatising Culture*, 256. In this context It would be naïve to presume that academia necessarily takes an objective or critical stance to the role of corporate curators and how this effects interpretations of the artists and their work. For example, discussing one of Hans Haacke's works (described by Wu as "the quintessential critical voice against the power of business not only in the art world, but in contemporary society also," Ibid, 267.) Sam Hunter, professor emeritus of art history at Princeton University suggests the following, "[...] the very presence of the work in a well-known corporate collection can be viewed as a promising sign of the concern of at least one member of the corporate community to examine its own motives. Such enlightened gestures do much to ventilate an important social issue, and to deflect criticism of the corporate tendency to aggrandize and flaunt charitable acts[...]" Sam Hunter, "Corporate Patronage and the Commodities Corporation Art Collection," *National Art Guide*, 2.6 (1980):24-5 in Chin-tao Wu, *Privatising Culture*, 267.

[716] Another issue concerning the art-in- progress, laboratory model, is how the work becomes 'services' based. Recent example given by Bishop are, the re-designing of amenities such as the bar by Liam Gillick at the Whitechapel Art Gallery and, the reading lounge by Apolonia Sustersic at the Kunstverein, Munich. Earlier examples of artist as provider of services to the museum in the '90s are evident in the work of U.S artists, such as Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum* (1992). Wilson, worked on a project which involved re-curating exhibits and pieces in the collection of The Maryland Historical Society. Here he re-inserted repressed histories of slavery by exhibiting under the title "metalwork 1793-1880" a pair of slave manacles, surrounded in the vitrine by the more acceptable 'civilized' examples of silver table ware. While Wilson's *Mining the Museum*, is a significant art project, there are problems with this type of practice.

[717] Claire Bishop,"Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," in *October 110* (Fall 2004):52.

One of the most obvious problems evident here is the way this "laboratory" model, seen by young artists as a significant 'radical' strategy against the bureaucratic collection-based museum, operates to further advance the art institutions' desire to market itself "as a space of leisure and entertainment."[718] As Bishop continues,

> One could argue that in this context, project-based works-in-progress and artists in residence begin to dovetail with an "experience economy," the marketing strategy that seeks to replace goods and services with scripted and staged personal experiences.[719]

As Bishop points out it is not clear what the viewer is asked to take from this "experience." The address of this type of laboratory format can in many instances be so forcefully open-ended that it can have the effect of making the position of viewer irrelevant. In this atmosphere the boundary breakdown is so extreme that the position of artist, or the position of viewer is impossible to distinguish, or at least that may be the utopian desire. However what is ignored here is the way this desired 'casualness' by the curator/artist operates to exclude those not directly involved in the art world from equal participation in the event.

In the late '80s, early '90s, the perception of this type of service-based practice was seen as a form of Institutional Critique, which in turn followed on from earlier conceptual models in the '70s. However, as became readily apparent, very often, rather than a process of deconstruction or unmasking of ideology, this practice merely assists the institution in the presentation of itself as 'self-critical.'[720] As Hal Foster wrote in 1996, here the

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[718] Ibid.

[719] Ibid.

[720] It is also important to qualify how not withstanding the problems identified with the "cultural capital" acquired by the institution in producing such work, some of this work offers an important contribution to a critical practice. Apparently addressing the possibility of co-option her service based practiced allows, Andrea Fraser in a recent work had herself secretly filmed entering The Guggenheim Bilbao and asking for an audio-guide to the museum. Fraser's *Little Frank and His Carp* (2001) provides a useful example, of the way in which the corporate aligned institution wants to present itself to its public but also how Fraser attempt to unravel this in her performance. George Baker describes the performance, "Following the audio-guide's instructions, Fraser smiles resplendently when told by the guide that the museum is "uplifting. Its like a gothic cathedral." [...] She looks puzzled when told that in the "great museums of previous ages," rooms were laid out in linear arrangements so that one had to visit them all, and it felt as if there were "no escape." She frowns upon being told that "modern art is demanding, complicated, bewildering." And then she smiles once more[...] upon being assured that "the museum tries to make you feel at home, so you can relax and absorb what you see more easily." Her smile grows [...] as she is pointed to the museum's "powerfully sensual" curves. Invited by the guide to touch them – "you'll see people going up to the walls and stroking them [the only people Fraser sees [stroking the walls] are carrying audio-guides] ...You might feel the desire to do so yourself" – Fraser begins to do so. [...] As the guide continues to speak about the building [...] Fraser begins to touch the Museum wall, eventually rubbing her entire body against it. She pulls up her dress. She shows off her white thong. She rubs her ass. A small crowd gathers. She dry humps

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institution/museum, "may shadow the work that it otherwise highlights: it becomes the spectacle, it collects the cultural capital, and the director-curator becomes the star."[721]

Thinking of how the curator, and the institution have appropriated the "position and desire attached to the artist" in the contemporary art world, how do we relate this to our earlier discussion on finance capital's restructuring of Hollywood cinema and an "attractions" model of culture? One obvious way is to think of the exhibition formats, which again returns us to some of the points raised earlier by Claire Bishop. If we consider early cinema and the way programmes of short films were combined by local exhibitors who also arranged particular musical accompaniment, lectures etc, and these activities were "dispersed and localized rather than centralized."[722] This links to how the curator/ museum can use artists' work as "raw material" for the spectacle exhibition in which the curator or museum is really the star.

There is also a relationship to the increasing use of film, video, dvd. This needs to be read through its economic accessibility, it is relatively cheap to make, produce and send work from the artist's perspective and for the institutions, who in large measure do not take the cost of producing the work, it is relatively cheap to exhibit. The increasing trend of using moving-image projection also needs to be read through the awareness that many of the artists who use it art not particularly concerned with its history as a medium, either within the museum or even necessarily in mainstream cinema.[723] Hal Foster for example makes a distinction between moving-image work, which treats film reflexively, and the current excesses of "rampant pictorialism." In a reflexive practice there is an expectation that the

the sensually curving wall." George Baker, "Little Frank and His Carp," in *Image Stream*, ed. Helen Molesworth (2003):50-51.Fraser's performance confronts us with the museum's form of "seduction," articulating how the Guggenheim seems to want to appropriate "the position and desire attached to the artist." Ibid,55.

[721] Hal Foster, "The Artist an Ethnographer," in *The Return of The Real*, (1996): 198. In a footnote in the same essay Foster writes, "Put glibly, if the 1970s was the decade of the theorist and the 1980s the decade of the dealer, the 1990s may be the decade of the itinerant curator who gathers nomadic artists at different sites. With the art market crash in 1987 an the political controversies thereafter (Robert Mapplethorpe, "obscene" performance art, Andres Serrano...), support for contemporary art declined in the United States. Funding was also redirected to regional institutions, which often imported metropolitan artists nonetheless, as did European institutions where funding remained relatively high. Thus the rise of the migrant ethnographic artist." Ibid, n44, 282.

[722] Rosen, *Changed Mummified*, 245. See also Charles Musser, "producer and Exhibitor as Co-Creators: 1897-1900," in *Before the Nickelodeon: Edwin S. porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company*, (1991):103-156

[723] Although as Matthew Buckingham, commenting on the interest of cinema in the art world refers to, "the rich familiarity with its history which can be mined for its resonance with viewers." See George Baker, "Round Table: the Projected Image in Contemporary Art," *October 104*, (Spring 2003):73.

artist/filmmaker concerns herself with the physical space of the gallery/museum; will also think about how the work addresses the viewer as an embodied subject and will think about the material structures of the apparatus. The above is a brief outline of what this model of "installation" involved as a practice, before its use as a glib label for any projection.[724] By contrast Foster describes the dominant type of projections as follows,

> The pictorialism of projected images today often does n't seem to care much about the actual space. Sometimes it does n't matter when you walk in, or even whether you do. It's as if the work doesn't care whether you're there or not. This is beyond disembodiment: Its habituating us to a kind of condition of post-subjectivity."[725]

The above brief discussion articulates some of the problems which attach themselves to practices which turn boundary dispersal into aesthetic, however in what follows, I want to shift our attention to negotiating work which critically concentrates on the fragmentation of the body of the film. This process of fragmentation is usually related to, and, operates within the terrain of, an anthropology of mainstream cinema. As will become apparent especially in the 2nd section on Pierre Huyghe's *The Third Memory* (2000), this exploration of artist /filmmakers who use mainstream cinema as a 'medium' for their own work also points clearly to the fragmenting of boundaries within academic fields of research. For example, the problems the art critic/historian George Baker has in situating Huyghe's work within his own visual art lexicon.

Returning to the questions raised in **Part 1**, we can examine a selection of moving-image work that stands, not parallel to mass culture exactly, but perhaps, a practice which foregrounds an interest with, at the same time as it wants to explore the potential legacies disavowed by mainstream cinema. This is certainly not to reinsert an idea of art in the

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[724] Chrissie Iles offers the following useful typology of projection in the museum space,"[…] if a projected image reaches the floor, its usually called an "installation." That space between the image and the floor is a critical part of the piece. If you bring the image down to the floor, you're negating cinema on a certain level. You're saying: "This is not meant for you to watch all the way through like a narrative film. This is part of the 'going for a walk' of museum and gallery viewing." With a film or video projector, if you move it in, it looks like a Super-8 film you'd see at home. If you move it this way, it looks like 16mm. Is the space painted white? If so, it refers more to the gallery. Is it black? Well, then it's more of an immersive space, like cinema." Ibid, 80.
[725] Ibid, 75.

museum as high art but to explore the ways in which some of this work seems intent on *documenting* aspects of mainstream cinema.[726]

Of central significance here is the interpretation of Walter Benjamin's *artwork* essay by Susan Buck-Morss and particularly the insistence "that art as we know it is coming to an end."[727] Buck-Morss in an interview with Grant Kester,   *Aesthetics after Art* , refers to Benjamin's suggestion that   art "in the bourgeois sense is no longer tenable."[728] As Buck-Morss elaborates, this is nothing to do with the well-worn argument of the commodification of art, for as she points out, bourgeois art has always been bought and sold. What is at stake in the liquidation of bourgeois art is really an issue concerning boundaries. For Benjamin, technological production has blurred established boundaries to such an extent that making a distinction between "art" and other cultural objects   becomes irrelevant. In this context, maintaining its separate status under the auspices of preserving a form of cultural practice against commercialization, as museums and art institutions do is redundant, for as Buck-Morss argues,

> [...] Is the logic of the value of art any different? Given what a Van Gogh is selling for on the world market, given the fact that this market is motivated as much by the relative value between the dollar and the yen, say, than any intrinsic worth of the canvas, is this a meaningful distinction?[729]

This re-definition of aesthetics is crucial to an engagement with cultural practices based on Benjamin's theory of experience. To re-iterate our earlier discussion, here, the concept of aesthetics based on beauty and taste as defined by modern aesthetic philosophy is replaced by a concept of aesthetics based on cognitive experience, a way of experiencing material

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[726] It is really beyond the scope of this discussion to address the need for public spaces which offer alternative views to dominant cultural paradigms. As various recent publications make clear it is difficult at the present moment to accept most museum practices as providing that space, even though there is a critical need to keep the requirement for some such space in play. And as Gregory Sholette makes clear, there are also critical problems attached to practices which attempt to stand outside the institution. For related discussions See Chin-tao Wu, *Privatising Culture, Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s*, (2002); Mark W. Rectanus, *Culture Incorporated: Museums, Artists, and Corporate Sponsorship*, (2002) and Gregory Shollette, "Interventionism and the Historical Uncanny Or: can there be revolutionary art without the revolution," in *The Interventionists, User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life*, eds, Nato Thompson and Gregory Shollette, (2004).
[727] Grant Kester, "Aesthetics after the end of Art: An interview with Susan Buck-Morss," *Art Journal* (1997):38.
[728] Ibid.
[729] Ibid, 38-39.

reality, which aims to resist instrumentalization. Relating this to the discussion above on moving-image installations we can see that a critical practice would very definitely consider the viewer as an embodied subject and would need to take on the material reality of the viewing space rather than an indifference to the way the work is shown.

Commenting on the way her own emphasis on the import of cognitive experience appears to go against theories of experience understood as culturally mediated, Buck-Morss continues,

> [...] Cultural meanings are sensed bodily as being wrong. How else are people capable of social protest? If we were in fact always produced by our respective cultures, how could it ever come into our mind to resist them? This is Adorno's point when he speaks of the somatic solidarity we feel with victims of socially organized violence, even when that violence is justified in our own culture's terms.[730]

From this perspective, aesthetics becomes a form of critical cognition centred in the body. For Buck-Morss this sensory awareness should be trusted politically. This allows for an emphasis on the social conditions in which cognition takes place. An aesthetic experience in an expanded sense moves away from discrete culturally defined art objects, which can participate in veiling material reality toward   an aesthetics of amnesia.

Grant Kester, referring to the charge of didacticism of some conceptual art of the '80s, suggests that some contemporary art works are equally didactic, the characteristics of which are not only found formally in the work but also as Kester writes,

> They are also produced in our reading of the work through the discursive positioning of it by critics, galleries, artists' statements, etc. I find some works that ostensibly embrace complexity and visual pleasure to be reductive and didactic precisely because they ask me to forcefully suppress particular cultural or political associations that I might have with a given image or material in

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[730] Ibid, 40.

order to achieve the properly "ambiguous" (i.e., non-referential) response.[731]

The refusal to acknowledge the social conditions in which cultural objects are produced sustains the higher status of art over other social objects. Kester gives an example of a review in *I.D.* (International Design Magazine) of the National Institute of Health's Visible Human Project [VHP], a graphic record of the human body on their website and available as a CD-ROM. The human body in question was that of an executed murderer, Joseph Paul Jernigan, whose body was frozen and then cut into 1,871 slices which where then scanned to provide this virtual tour. The review in I.D. totally ignored the facts of Jernigan's life and death effusively concentrating instead on the "[...] mesmerizing beauty and realism [...] Death never looked this good." As Kester comments on how this aesthetic operates to abstract the images of Jernigan's executed body from "the conditions of his life." Though we are not asked to contemplate his death, "to ask questions about [...] what it means for the State to take a man's life," it is his death, which turns his fragmented body into an aesthetic event.[732]
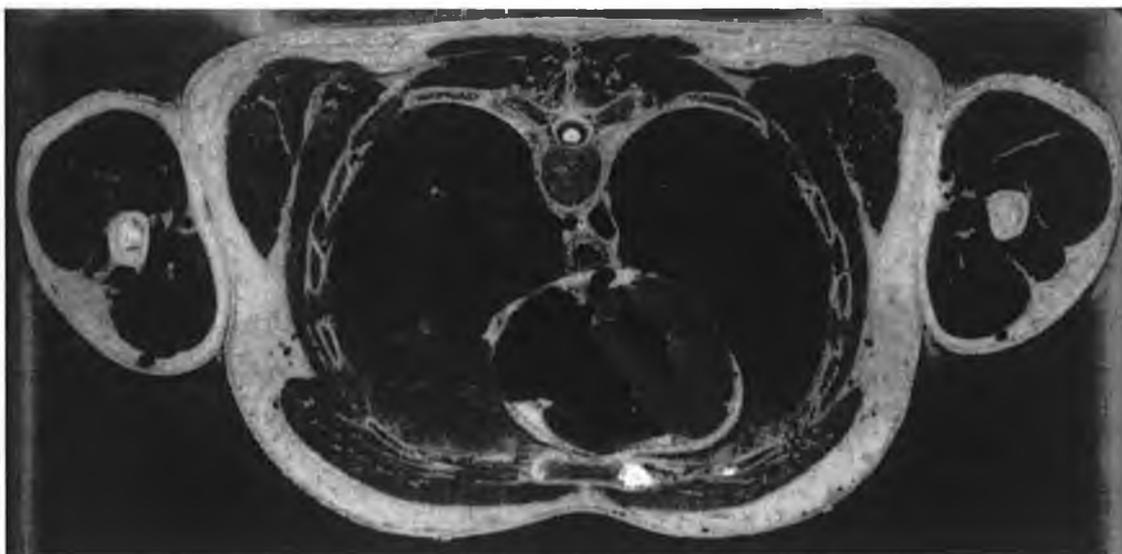

Fig. 43 The sliced and scanned remains of Joseph Paul Jernigan as part of the United States National Institute of Health's Visible Human Project- (from thorax subset)[733]

[731] Ibid, 40-41.
[732] Ibid.
[733] http://www.nlm.nib.gov/research/visible html. Accessed 12 November 2005.

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As an example of an alternative to this positioning of Jernigan's body through a discourse of "beauty as art" which disavows his corpse as a social object, Buck-Morss refers to Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs as an example of the way boundaries between categories such as "art, pornography, advertising image, fashion photography, celebrity portraits" are all called into question making it difficult for the viewer to "feel secure that what s/he is looking at *is* art."[734] In fact Buck-Morss asks why is "art" seen as the privileged object of aesthetic experience. Responding to a question posed by Kester concerning what an 'aesthetics after art' might consist of Buck-Morss puts forward the view that,

> [...] If aesthetics were freed from "art" as its object, it would come into its own as a form of cognition — not a discipline, not just another way of doing "cultural studies," but as a self-reflective, cognitive practice. Aesthetics would become anthropology in the philosophical sense, and a rather brutally materialist one at that.[735]

One of the important points raised in this interview between Buck-Morss and Kester is in reference to a universal sense of "beauty." While both reject this position they both agree that "the capacity for aesthetic experience is open to all," in the sense that "all cognition has, necessarily a sensory or 'aesthetic' component."[736] Buck-Morss while distancing herself from a universalist position in which sexual, ethnic and class differences are not acknowledged equally argues that, in certain contexts, for example where the environment suggests physical danger (a burning building) " You yell 'everybody out' and you mean it. You don't go over a checklist of 'difference' before you scream your head off. The body as a cognitive organ can, at least given the same physical environment, be described with a fair amount of universalism."[737]

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[734] Buck-Morss also remarks on the fact that you can't take in all of Mapplethorpe's practice through art history conventions alone, except from a purely formal position and in referring to one specific photograph entitled Helmut and Brooks, N.Y.C., 1978 comments, "[...] given the fact that one is looking at a fist thrust up an anus, [a formalist interpretation] is just not all there is to the experience of the image. You keep wondering what it *feels* like (for the fistor and the fistee). And then you come upon a remarkable revelation. You realize that through the very core of the human body, from one end to the other there is a hole. The center[sic] of the human being is a conduit for the outside world. That's remarkable. It is also a statement of universal anthropology — gay and straight, male and female, black and white. How the hole *feels* to people, of course, varies." (Kester:45)
[735] Ibid, 43.
[736] Ibid.
[737] Ibid. She continues, "We need a little vulgar empiricism — Plumpes Denken, as Brecht used to call it! And 'aesthetics' becomes crucial in this context. It would mean ending the privileging of written language over, say, the mimetic languages of facial expression and bodily gestures, the languages of images."

By shifting a theory of aesthetics toward a form of cognition, how does the role of artist change in response to this shift? And, what sort of practice allows for a critical reflection on the organization of the senses, both by the artist and the viewer which concentrates on the effects of capitalism and digital technology and the way this may situate us as active or passive in the face of mass communications networks. What sort of work looks at the way seemingly separate and distinct objects are connected, making a concerted effort to contradict accepted givens, disentangle the past from nostalgia and foreground alternative futures. In her essay *Why Media Aesthetics?* Miriam Hansen reflects on these issues, like Buck-Morss above, from "the perspective of Benjamin's anthropological-materialist philosophy of technology" where film and other media assume such a central position in his theory of media aesthetics.[738] For Benjamin, film as we recall, had the potential to educate human beings with the responses required in the face of the ever-increasing importance of technology in their daily lives.[739] From a contemporary perspective Hansen suggests that we need to understand,

> The practices, both productive and receptive, of technology in increasingly overlapping yet fractured, unequal yet unpredictable public spheres. It urges us to resume Benjamin's concern for the conditions of apperception, sensorial affect, and cognition, experience and memory – in short, for a political ecology of the senses.[740]

While it may be possible to present numerous examples of different alternative art practices which attempt an "anthropological materialism" my main concern here is to deal with work which specifically engages with a form of "media archaeology" or whose functional process is a form of anthropology related to the material conditions of film and media as mass culture within the context of the present shift from analogue to digital. Here I am positing that history and a politics of memory must be seen as key to a critical practice.

The reason why history and memory take on such significance has to do with the "rhetoric of amnesia" that surrounds digital culture not only within the market place but also,

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[738] Miriam Hansen "Why Media Aesthetics?" *Critical Inquiry*, 30.2 (Winter 2004):391-395
[739] Ibid,393.
[740] Ibid, 394.

unfortunately within academia as well. Lauren Rabinovitz and Abraham Geil comment on how this amnesia is apparent in both utopian and dystopic visions of digital culture. On the one hand it offers a future with limitless possibilities, on the other, it removes all agency in the face of this technological revolution. They write,

> In either case, the rhetoric of amnesia erases the complex interplay among the institutions– economic, juridical, and political – that selected, authorized, and deployed specific technologies over other possibilities and secured their development in highly specific ways for explicit purpose over time. The rhetoric of amnesia erases all that – the multiple relationships between culture and *techne* that have always been grounded in purpose and specific social interests. By obscuring the relationship of computer technologies to older modes of capitalist production and distribution, the status quo becomes naturalized and the material base of technology in history assumes transparency.[741]

In what follows I will explore the way in which different films/moving-image installations/CD-ROMs offer possible models of a critical practice, which offers a self-reflexive materialist anthropology. All the works discussed are a mediation on film and the film industry presenting themselves less as 'works of art' to be interpreted by the critic and more as a model of critical and theoretical inquiry in which "memory is not cast as a simple antidote to forgetting but is a form of historical perspective in the truest sense of memory as in its Latin root *memor* or 'mindful'."[742] In a related discussion Philip Rosen points out the significance of documentary to a discussion on historical meaning. He writes,

> The concept of documentary, as a mode of understanding the nature, potential, and functions of cinema and indexical representations, is in intimate ways intricated with the concept of historical meaning.[743]

In the following discussions on specific films/moving-image installations/ Cd/Rom etc I want to concentrate on found footage as a practice within art contexts some of which

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[741] Lauren Rabinovitz & Abraham Geil (eds) *Memory Bytes, History, Technology and Digital Culture*, (2004):4.
[742] Ibid
[743] Rosen, "Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts," in *Changed Mummified*, 234.

operates as a form of critical and experimental documentary practice.[744] Though often called collage, montage or archival film, the term found-footage, especially in this context has the advantage in how it specifically relates to the art historical term *found object or readymade*.[745] Its principle dynamic of "retrieval and recycling," already consumed moving-images to re-interpret their original narrative context, offers a potentially cheaper model of production and a philosophically rich terrain in which to explore contemporary society and its relationship to media images.[746] In the context of artists and filmmakers exhibiting in the museum, I want to pursue a point made by Catherine Russell. She writes,

> The complex relation to the real that unfolds in found-footage filmmaking lies somewhere between documentary and fictional modes of representation, opening up a very different means of representing culture.[747]

Of course, Russell's enthusiasm for found footage filmmaking fails to register how fiction has always been important to documentary practice as is evident by the rejection of unprocessed 'actuality' by John Grierson and his followers. Though the term documentary film may not have been in existence, Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North,* 1922, is seen by many, including Grierson, as one of its first examples. In 1943, Grierson emphasizes the importance of narrative to documentary practice, writing,

> [...] Even so complex a world as ours could be patterned for all to appreciate if only we got away from the servile accumulation of fact and struck for the story, which held the facts in living organic relationship together.[748]

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[744] The use of Found Footage within documentary practice goes back to the early work of Esfir Shub for example her documentary classic *The Fall of The Romanov Dynasty* 1927.

[745] The found object was fore-grounded by Marcel Duchamp when he exhibited an industrial product, a bottle rack in 1914. Duchamp's move affectively distanced his 'artistic practice' away from the bourgeois cultural assumptions surrounding art such as creative genius, beauty etc and emphasized instead the discursive as a central component of art. By concentrating on the importance of language, Duchamp also lay the ground for art practices such as minimalism, conceptual art, institutional critique 'postmodern' appropriation strategies which wanted to get beyond the prescriptive theories of high modernism as advanced by Clement Greenberg.

[746] Although the more successful the artist/filmmaker the more institutionally recognised and therefore the potential for an acceptable level of 'piracy' fades and require clip licences.

[747] Ibid, 238.

[748] John Grierson, *Grierson on Documentary*, ed Forsyth Hardy, (1966):290. Referring to writing on documentary at this time by Grierson and his followers, Philip Rosen comments, on its importance as we can see quite clearly the documentary tradition, "self consciously inventing itself." Rosen, "Document and Documentary," 233.

So while found footage filmmaking is not the first to combine "fictional and documentary modes of representation," it does however self-consciously confront the randomness and "incompleteness of the documentary record." Found footage filmmaking, aligned with a form of anthropological materialism, can also be seen as complicating historiography's "disciplinary requirements that an internally unified sequence should be inferred from the source documents."[749] This may imply a movement away from representation in the direction of simulation (following Jean Baudrillard) however, this work continues to concern itself with the 'real,' and the found footage clips are presented as referents documenting that real.[750]

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[749] Rosen refers to Arthur Danto's discussion of two ambitions evident in modern historiography– "coherent sequenciation" and "complete documentation." In developing his discussion about complete documentation he puts forward the idea of the "ideal Chronicler," who both knows and writes everything down as it happens. However this full running commentary does not become history, until there is an apparent end point in the sequence. Rosen, "Document and Documentary," 238.

[750] See Rosen's discussion on Grierson and Baudrillard in "Document and Documentary,"253-263.

In looking at Matthew Buckingham's *Situation Leading to a Story* (1999, 20 mins) we can explore this work's engagement with found footage as historical artifact or document and also as a recurrent questioning of the archive itself as representation. Investigating archives and conceptions of the archive is a predominant discourse in nearly all Buckingham's films. While *Situation Leading to a Story* is the only film using actual found footage, both *Amos Fortune Road* (1996, 21 min) and *The Truth About Abraham Lincoln* (1992,19 min) engage with historical material employing a combination of specific texts (*Amos Fortune Road*) or combining photographs, illustrations and different historical accounts with new footage (*The Truth About Abraham Lincoln*). All three films are immersed in a negotiation of history and memory recycling the past as a means of engaging with discussions on representation in the present.

Buckingham's emphasis on history and memory is central to his engagement with debates on documentary as representative of objectivity, authenticity, truth, fiction and the factual in relation to the moving-image. For example, discussing a collaborative project he worked on with Joachim Koester about *Christania*, a large squat in a former military base in the centre of Copenhagen, Buckingham refers to some of the reasoning behind the project. Buckingham comments,

> We decided to return to the initial parameters of 16mm hand-held documentary filmmaking that existed at the time Christiania was founded. We were also really interested in the distinctions made in the '60s between cinema verité in Europe and direct cinema in the U.S. and Canada — the two documentary models that filmmakers tended to gravitate toward in making truth-claims through documentary methods.[752]

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[751] Material for this section appeared originally as a feature article entitled "Between Lost and Found: the films of Matthew Buckingham," *Afterimage*, 28.5 (2001): 16-17 and also "Retelling History from Lost Sources, *CIRCA* 106 (Autumn, 2003):51-55.

[752] "Round Table: The Projected Image in Contemporary Art," *October* 104, (Spring 2003):79.

As well as the significance of visual anthropology and enthnography to Buckingham's work there is an equal emphasis placed on the role of the archive. The assumed authority of institutional archives and historical representation is targeted by the de-stabilization, which occurs through the use of found footage. Here the use of found footage is related to an emphasis on history and memory allowing the artist/filmmaker/viewer the opportunity to explore debates on documentary as representative of objectivity, authenticity, truth, fiction and the factual in relation to the moving-image. Catherine Russell remarks, "found footage is a technique that produces 'the ethnographic' as a discourse of representation,"[753] by which I understand her to mean that the ethnographic model loses its given assumption of offering a mimetic transparency of culture.[754] In *Situation*, ethnography is deployed as a means of exposing the vulnerability of ethnographic discourses reliant on objectivity and authenticity etc. denying the underlying documentary assumption of transparency in representation.[755] In this sense, Buckingham pursues an ethnographic discourse informed by the innovative work of Jean Rouch, who, in an interview said,

> For me, as an ethnographer and filmmaker, there is almost no boundary between documentary film and films of fiction. The cinema, the art of the double, is already a transition from the real world to the imaginary world, and ethnography, the science of thought systems, is a permanent crossing point from one conceptual universe to another; acrobatic gymnastics where losing one's footing is the least of the risks.[756]

In *Situation Leading to a Story four* found films are projected one after the other with minimal intervention by the filmmaker.[757] These found films are 1920's home movies, presenting a wealthy family strolling on a lawn, a bullfight, a cable tramway construction in Peru and the building of a four-car garage. The four found films used in *Situation* are not part of any archive, recognized and named, but, rather, they are fragments, detritus found

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[753] Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*,238.

[754] Ibid.

[755] A questioning of transparency is also evident in *Amos*, here, the central character's search for information on Amos Fortune, an African slave, is ultimately based on two fictional biographies. In *The Truth*, competing discourses become a loud cacophony in debunking myths around Abraham Lincoln. Each film, in different ways denies the possibility of transparency in representation.

[756] Jean Rouch, "Interview," (1978) in Paul Stoller, "Artaud, Rouch and the Cinema of Cruelty," in *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays From V.A.R. 1990-1994* , ed., Lucien Taylor, (1994):96-97.

[757] Re-filming them to arrest further disintegration he also slowed the films down to 24 frames a second rather than their original speed of 16 frames (silent speed).

on the street. In his attempt to make a connection between the films, looking for the same people in each film for example, Buckingham eventually concedes *"that the four films had been thrown out— they were connected to each other in this way—someone did not want them."*[758] In the final throes of deterioration, these discarded films *" delicate and brittle"* and giving off a *"pungent odour"* (possibly vinegar syndrome) are disassociated from their original context as home movies. In this process of detachment these four found films have neither fixed meaning in and of themselves nor in their relationship to each other; their connection is immersed in contingency, brought together through an emptying out of use-value, any   connection they may once have had to one another remains elusive.

Situation is related to chance; after finding old films accidentally in the street Buckingham presents them in such a way as to allow the viewer to have their own chance encounter.[759] Unlike standard found footage documentary practice where there is often an expectation of prior knowledge of the original narrative, which is then disrupted through a process of re-editing, in *Situation* Buckingham does not re-edit the films but instead shows them without hierarchy one after the other. The gap produced by this process suspends the idea of finding and retrieving while the viewer makes correspondences where none ostensibly exist. For example referring to his own response to the films as a viewer, Buckingham comments,

> [...] The kinds of connections that I made —— imperialism, increased wealth and leisure, time, etc. — I recognized as my own projections onto the films. Whether or not they were valid was sort of irrelevant for me. It was much more about using the opportunity to reflect on myself taking up the role of anthropologist investigating these dislocated images.[760]

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[758] Matthew Buckingham, *Situation leading to a Story*, (dialogue from Film) 1999. While myinterpretation concentrates on the way *Situation Leading to a Story*, actively interrogates the fiction/documentary divide and is a significant exploration of non-sensuous correspondences, followimg our discussion of Benjamin's theory of experience, the art critic George Baker wants to insert Buckingham's work in a project which elaborates on the significance of Bertolt Brecht to current cultural debates. Writing briefly on *Situation Leading to a Story* he comments on its "indebtedness to Brecht." Baker comments on a recent publication by Fredric Jameson, *Brecht and Method*, 1998, and writes,Ultimately, Jameson depicts Brecht's "method" as a dialectical form of "realism," one with little in common however with the way that we normally use the latter term; Brecht's method is not a realism of realistic depiction, but a practice of actuality, a way of allowing history and its transformations to break into the work of art, and the artwork into history." George Baker, *Gerard Byrne, Books, Magazines, and Newspapers*, (2003):15-17.

[759] Although concentrating here on the films as screened events, all three films have also been presented as installations that create different temporal and spatial dynamics depending on the location etc.

[760] Matthew Buckingham, Round Table, "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art," *October* 104, (Spring 2003):83.

While this minimal serial procedure of showing the film with a semblance of non-hierarchical repetition invests *Situation* with a surface calm, the gap maintained between the projected images and the dialogue (narrated by Buckingham) actively constructs a site to analyse meaning as constantly in transition rather than fixed.

In her discussion of documentary practices, and, the necessity of not suppressing the complexities of life, Trinh T. Minh-Ha suggests that nuance is crucial and writes "[...] meaning can therefore be political only when it does not let itself be easily stabilized, and, when it does not rely on any single source of authority, but rather empties it, or decentralizes it."[761] In *Situation* the voice over constantly digresses away from what appears directly relevant to the images on screen to more personal issues related to finding and researching the films. The dialogue accompanying the projected films explains how Buckingham found the films, along with his research in trying to resolve where the films originated. Though the voice over could, perhaps, be momentarily associated with the narrative voice of authority and knowledge of standard documentary and ethnographic film practice, (what Trinh T. Minh-Ha refers to as the "almighty voice giver"[762]) the narrator displaces the authorative voice by constantly acknowledging his lack of knowledge in relation to these found films. While we may understand Buckingham's desire to distance himself from the "almighty voice giver," of colonial discourse critiqued in Minh-Ha's discussion, this strategy could be construed as a compromise, avoiding any clearly defined strategy of political engagement with these found films. However Buckingham's political commitment is most evident in the politics of representation and the necessity of the viewer's own intellectual negotiation as a central concern to any political practice. Discussing the construction of this work as an installation, Buckingham comments,

> [...] I conceived of a site for re-presenting the material — a constructed space — where the viewer initially encounters the projector and the sound without the image, a sort of talking projector. I thought of it as a two-channel piece really — image and sound — consisting of the films, basically as I found them, and a self-reflective journalistic account of what happened after [...] So,

[761] Trinh T. Minh-Ha, "The Totalizing Quest of Meaning," in *When The Moon Waxes Red, Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics*, (1991):41.
[762] Ibid, 36.

the viewer's first impression is of a small space with the projector and a bit of the monologue. There's a small opening in the wall, in front of the projector, so you realize, immediately, that you have to find the image. You have a choice between going one way or the other, and making your way around this very simple, S-shaped maze or labyrinth. In the second room, image and sound are put together, but this construction always points back to the material conditions that allow the viewer to see what they see and hear what they hear.[763]

As Buckingham makes clear, his unwillingness to direct meaning becomes dependent on using and maintaining the gaps between voice and image, at once allowing the viewer the space to insert her own ideas while indirectly providing a structure conducive to the development and emergence of not only different historical narratives but also an engagement with their link to the present. This process of destabilization by Buckingham places his film work within an allegorical practice. Here the films point towards negotiating a certain way of occupying history. In *Situation* not only do the images shown in the found films function allegorically but, also, the actual materiality of the films contains traces of historical occupancy, what Russell refers to as an "aesthetic of ruins."[764] In her study of Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project, Susan Buck Morss explains that "in allegory, history appears as nature in decay or ruins and the temporal mode is one of retrospective contemplation."[765] Considering this in relation to   *Situation*, the negotiation of the past, memory and history occurs not only through what is represented but also through the actual decaying film stock. For example the voice over in *Situation* tells us, "in 1916 Eastman Kodak began putting date-codes on the motion picture film stock it manufactured" which allows him to situate the age of three of the films by looking at the symbols on the black emulsion by the sprocket holes.

How *Situation* displaces what is represented on these films as undisputed access to the past is linked to contemporary debates on representation. It is the materiality of the found film stock, which situates an indexical link with the past; yet a hidden indexical link with the

[763]Buckingham, "The Projected Image in Contemporary Art," *83-84*.

[764] Russell, "Archival Apocalyse," 238.

[765] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project*, (Cambridge, Mass, MIT Press), 1997, p.168.

present occurs when Buckingham re-films the material in order to prevent further decay and the material acquires a new date code. The "lost" indexical relationship between what is represented on film with a particular moment in time and a presence in front of the camera is conventionally attributed to the transition to digitalization. Here the replacement of standard film and photography with digital processes is seen to challenge the perceived authenticity of the photographic/film image and re-open questions of the images veridical nature. However, throughout the history of photography/film, techniques such as double exposure, superimposition, collage, ghosting, subliminal effects, etc., have all been processes of destabilization in relation to fixing the real.[766] Yet, it is this indexical link, in all its instability, that has been exploited to excess by documentary practices relying on a rhetoric of undisputed access to the real. This position is usually dependent on a naïve prioritization of the visual in which truth is reduced to what is visible. As Trinh T. Minh-Ha writes, "truth lies in between all regimes of truth," and while Buckingham does not engage with an irrelevant retreat from the "fact" of the document, neither does he use the found films to present a questionable authenticity of the image.[767] As Russell explains "the found image doubles the historical real as both truth and fiction, at once document of history and unreliable evidence of history."[768] In *Situation* the dialogue travels from the known to the uncertain and then to a reinsertion of these 'home movies' through a social history of home movies in the United States and later to the impact of U.S. mining interests in Peru.

The situation leading to a story in the title becomes Buckingham's account of U.S. capitalist interests in Peru. Tracking the history of the Cerro de Pasco Copper Corporation (CPC), from 1901 to its nationalization by the Peruvian government in 1974, Buckingham tells of the exploitation of the miners, the residents in the region of the mine, as well as the environmental pollution produced by U.S. industrialists. Due to the serial presentation of the films, this information is given while the viewer watches the foundations of the four-car

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[766] Philip Rosen referring to "the discourse of digital utopia" understood as an emphatic displacement of indexicality denies the "sometimes explicit, sometimes implict levels of hybridity in the register of the digital image.In Important ways, such hybridities confuse the initiating opposition between digital and indexical. They therefore make claims for a ruptural historical break in representation more difficult, or at least more complicated, than they may at first seem." Rosen, "Old and New,"*Change Mummified,*303.

[767] Minh-Ha, "The Totalizing Quest of Meaning,"30.

[768] Russell, "Archival Apocalypse" 252.

garage being dug. While hearing the narrator's historical description of U.S capitalism in South America the growing prosperity and upward mobility signified by the four-car garage is linked to events in the Andes mountains, where we're told "With the encouragement of CPC, The Peruvian government passed a law in 1926 exempting all copper and zinc production, i.e., CPC, from paying taxes for the next ten years." Though the film on the making of the four-car garage remains silent, Buckingham strategically reminds us of how, "The imperial powers of the older system do not want to know about their colonies or about the violence and exploitation on which their own prosperity is founded."[769]

Buckingham's emphasis on discursivity initiates a questioning of the formal narrative codes of documentary film, while also challenging narratives of history. Rather than abandoning a historical dimension or maintaining historical amnesia the film's formal elements develop and allow for an ethnographic exploration of the found visual material through many discourses. This formal instability unravels the material while resituating it in larger, more complex narrative structures. This engagement with a contemporary emphasis on discursivity however allows for critiques such as Grant Kester's, who refers to a form of "discursive determinism [as the] reductive belief that 'discourse' or dialogue in and of itself has the power to radically transform social relations,"[770] Yet Buckingham does not conform to a naïve relativism, rather his discursive strategies constantly target the problems of representation as a practice. For example the ways in which certain representational processes actively attempt a closing down of intellectual enquiry. The discursive in *Situation* becomes a way of mobilizing historical 'fragments', such as the history of CPC's involvement in Peru, to strategically relate to contemporary global economic power relations. Repressed histories are allowed surface to question the standard progress narratives of history. As Russell writes,

> In traditional ethnography, the anthropological Other was conventionally linked to the past, and otherness was constructed within a teleological, progressivist historiography. Johannes Fabian has argued that a truly revised, postcolonial ethnography needs to

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[769] Fredric Jameson, "The end of temporality." *Critical Inquiry* 29.4 (Summer 2003): 700.
[770] See Grant Kester, "Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art" in *Variant*, (supplement), No. 9, Winter 2000.

imagine an invasion by "the time of the Other," a historiography that does not hierarchize the present over a less-developed past, and, I would add, one that can conceptualize otherness within a history of the future. The collage nature of found-footage filmmaking creates a discontinuity that is not only spatial but also temporal and produces a historical effect that might be described as, precisely this time of the Other.[771]

*Fig. 44 Situation Leading to a Story stills*

[771] Russell, "Archival Apocalypse" 252.

Fig.45 Situation Leading to a Story stills

Built for the Cerro de Pasco
Copper Corp., to haul ore
from mine to mill.

THE END

Fig. 46 Situation Leading to a Story stills

Fig.47 Situation Leading to a Story still

In Linking *Garage*, the last film in *Situation* to CPC's mining interests in Peru, Buckingham highlights an excess in mobility (the four-car garage) and the privilege of attaining and maintaining distance. The privilege of anonymity is linked to socio-economic power relations. In presenting these films, he offers a mediation of the impact of home movie making in the early years of its inception and references the link between movie-making and car ownership. Referring to Kodak's Model A camera, introduced in 1922, and the fact that it was comparable in price to Ford's Model A car. Buckingham in referring to a book published by Kodak entitled *How to Make Good Movies remarks*, "the book says that exposing motion picture film will become as automatic to the enthusiast as driving a car."[772] The moving-image is linked to the mobility of the car: both are used to conquer distance. We see this explicitly in the tourist film called *Guadalajara*, where the distance traveled to attain the moving-images, specifically, the bullfight, is paradoxically announced and denied through the recorded film event; *Guadalajara* and the recorded bullfight is made repeatedly available, overcoming spatial distance and time passed.

In discussing the relationship between found-footage and Walter Benjamin's concept of dialectical images, Russell writes, "Dialectical images create a 'now' that is always transitory and momentary. The reference to the past in the form of an image produces the present as a moment in a historical continuum that is in perpetual change. The imagination of the future is thus grounded in the imagery of a past that cannot be salvaged but only

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[772] Matthew Buckingham, *Situation leading to a Story.*

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allegorically recalled." [773] At one point viewing the Andes Mountains the voice over narrates a journey to find the house in the first film and to see if it is the same as the address on the box in which the films are found. Remembered as 55 Underhill Rd., (although it was really no.52) Buckingham returning to the city from Ossining decides to make a "half-hearted" attempt to locate the house. He continues,

> The sun went down. I got lost. I wound up at the home of Washington Irving. I walked into the gift shop to ask for directions just as it was closing. A woman wearing an enormous early 19th Century style hoop dress and bonnet was sitting in a chair crying. It was her first day on the job and she had not been able to eat her lunch because of the time it took to put on the elaborate costume she was required to wear while giving tours of the house [...][774]

This excerpt certainly does offer us a dialectical image, linking to discourses surrounding the deskilling of workers and their re-employment in service industries such as tourism in a de-industrial metropolitan landscape. It also alludes to a melodramatic mode stripped of its spectacle tendencies and re-inserted in the quotidian. Buckingham's "retrieval and recycling" of historical narratives are dependent on a reflexive account of his own narrative production, (his "journalistic account") and in doing this he concerns himself with histories of his own practice, experimental film. Buckingham translates the self-reflexive practice of acknowledging the camera to the space of presentation. The presentation space is fore grounded by Buckingham's voice over as narrator/lecturer, and the viewer's initial acknowledgement of his "talking Projector," in the installation space.

Peter Gidal's account of structuralist/materialist film and its anti-illusionist strategies suggests that "when one states that each film is a record of its own making, this refers to shooting, editing, printing stages, or separations of these," placing great emphasis on the process of the specifically cinematic.[775] However this emphasis becomes an ontological blind spot because of the way in which the "specifically cinematic is taken to be primarily

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[773] Russell, "Archival Apocalyse," 253.

[774] Buckingham, *Situation Leading to a Story*, voice over.

[775] Peter Gidal "Theory and Definition of Structuralist/Materialist Film ", in *British Avant-garde Film: An Anthology of Writings*, ed.,Michael O'Pray (1996):145-170.

the picture track."[776] *Situation* can only exist as a 'film' or film installation of Matthew Buckingham by positioning itself in the destabilized space between audio and visual.

Buckingham's persistence in developing and maintaining a gap between sound and image is arguably related to the importance placed on the viewer's intellectual activity, allowing the viewer "to see what they see and hear what they hear," as mentioned above. In Roland Barthes's essay *The Third Meaning: Research notes on some Eisenstein stills,* the author refers to the third meaning or obtuse meaning, as the one that exceeds his interpretation, at once "persistent and elusive."[777] For Barthes it is what allows the "filmic" to emerge. While he suggests that the filmic resides in the still he also remarks that within the "classical paradigm of the five senses, the third sense is hearing (first in importance in the middles ages)."[778] Later in the essay Barthes discusses Sergei Eisenstein's comments on the possibilities of audio-visual montage, suggesting that "...the basic centre of gravity is no longer the element 'between shots' - the shock- but the element 'inside the shot' - the accentuation within the fragment..." Within *Situation* the basic centre of gravity not only foregrounds film as fragmentary but accentuates through the dialogue's relationship to the image track, a process of fragmentation. In negotiating the process of its own production, *Situation* displaces the centrality of the image-track. Rather than a formal record of the home movies own making, *Situation* oscillates between a historical record of these early home movies "own making" and an account of the making of Buckingham's film. All of these accounts are arbitrary, possibly fictional, and fragmentary.

Buckingham uses contingency, the unfixing of meaning and the ephemeral as elements in his own labour process. Here what becomes central is an aesthetic responsibility toward the creation of and maintenance of an intellectual space for the viewer allowing the time to ponder, reflect and think not only about the material presented but the ways in which we narrate it and construct it into cohesive units. By examining how representational processes close down intellectual enquiry Buckingham uses the ephemeral and accidental to re-

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[776] See Peter Wollen "The Two Avant-Gardes" in *British Avant-garde Film,*137.

[777] Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning, Research notes on some Eisenstein stills," trans Stephen Heath, *Image Music Text,* (1977): 52-68.

[778] Ibid, 53, n.1.

establish a commitment to a historical project aware that a political or critical space cannot exist without one, or a Rosen points out, "[...] it id crucial because any politically engaged approach to culture and theorized critique must be able to consider the possibility of change."[779]

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[779] Rosen, *Changed Mummified*, 351.

The Third Memory

The work of the French artist Pierre Huyghe operates at the intersection of a number of fields of enquiry, mainly cinema, television, architecture, design and music. Consistently Huyghe performs an exploration of our relationship with mass entertainment corporations, very often concentrating on seemingly irrelevant fragments.[780] Thinking about Huyghe's practice it is important to place it within an historical topography, which encompasses the shift from analogue to digital and is related to what Jonathan Crary refers to as the ever-increasing abstraction of the visual. This of course as we discussed earlier is part of a larger abstraction to do with finance capital's ability to hide the social realities it creates. As we discussed in **Part one** this abstraction of the visual is an important component in the separation of memory from experience, indicating the need to think about the politics of memory in relation to the moving-image. The phantasmagoric effects of media technology and the expanding manipulation of that technology to serve the interests of "spectacle and commodity production" poses many difficult intellectual problems for cultural producers. Work such as Huyghe's arguably creates a temporal and spatial interruption to mass cultural scopic regimes offering the opportunity to analyse "reception in a state of distraction" rather than promoting it or being overwhelmed by it.[781] As an "analysis of illusions" to refer back to Walter Benjamin, there is an important interconnection to be made between work such as Huyghe's which functions in the gallery/ Museum system and the theoretical critiques of mass mediated spectacle culture that circulate in the academy.

Similar to contemporary artists such as Douglas Gordon, Stan Douglas, Eija-Liisa Ahtila and others, much of Huyghe's work engages with meta-cinematic discourses. Christine Van Assche commenting on this interest in cinema by visual artists writes of how "[...] each in their own ways, [...] examine, inventory, deconstruct, shift, reinterpret, isolate, or stretch

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[780] A couple of years ago Huyghe and the artist Philip Parreno bought the rights to a cheap Japanese Manga cartoon character, Ann Lee, which offers a good example of how Huyghe concentrates on the seemingly insignificant fragments within the nexus of mass media entertainment corporations. One of the ideas behind buying this cartoon character was to extend its use collaboratively with other artists wishing to use it for their own work. The overall project which began in 1999 and ended in 2002 was called *No Ghost Just a Shell*. Ann Lee, an inexpensive character for the artists involved (precisely because she is not a hero) was specifically created for a limited life span. While this project took many different routes one particular use of Ann Lee by Huyghe was a video installation entitled *One Million Kingdoms*, (2001). Here Ann Lee walks with a "machinic monotony" in what is possibly a landscape of ruins or a lunar landscape. The landscape's perpetual transformation is dependent on the voice over which sounds like the voice of Neil Armstrong but which is a synthesised voice of Armstrong "reciting a literary montage written by Huyghe." Referencing Neil Armstrong, through a cheap limited life expectancy Manga cartoon character, operates in Benjamin Buchloh's opinion as an allegorical gesture pointing to the naïve and "obsolescent triumph" of the first moon landing. See Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "Control by Design" in *Artforum*, XL no. 1 (September 2001). For an alternative and severely critical reading of *No Ghost just a Shell* see Tom McDonough, "No Ghost," *October* 110, (Fall 2004)111-116.
[781] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture*, (1999):1.

out fragments or groups of films, scenarios or dialogues, places or characters, etc."[782] As artists working with moving-image installation they are undoubtedly influenced by the earlier work of artists such as James Coleman, especially his *La Tache Aveugle, 1978-90*.[783] While there are many contemporary works, which appropriate mass media images, the more advanced of this type of contemporary practice offers a reflexive mediation on the dominant codes of representation. In this practice of 'media archaeology' commercial cinema becomes the medium a "[…] raw material, just like paint, text, photography."[784]

Huyghe's work *Ellipse*, 1998, offers a useful example of the way commercial cinema is used as "raw material" in the construction of his own work. *Ellipse* analyses a jump cut in Wim Wender's film *The American Friend* made in 1977. The character Jonathan Zimmerman played by Bruno Ganz is seen talking on the phone in a Parisian apartment. This scene cuts to Ganz receiving a phone call in another Parisian apartment across the Seine. Nothing very unusual in cinematic language. Huyghe however inserts his work within this jump cut. In a three-screen projection we view the two different apartments and Huyghe's *Ellipse*. Now we watch the actor Bruno Ganz, twenty-one years older, walk a ten-minute journey from one apartment to the next. This real time insertion is a documentation of an event, which originates in a cinematic fiction. In Wender's film while the character Zimmerman, talks on the phone in the second apartment accompanied by the loud noise of the construction of a high rise building, in Huyghe's insertion the high rise tower looks old. Huyghe's project forms a juncture where art, life, fiction, reality, past and present intersect, allowing a process of reflection on that convergence.

In a recent interview with Huyghe, George Baker referring to his method of effecting reality by using a representation comments on the dangers of this type of strategy and the way it implies a type of aestheticism, l'art pour l'art. Further on, placing Huyghe's work in relation to an engagement with spectacle Baker suggests that Huyghes' strategy allows "spectacle to run wild." He asks "is it a form of mimicry of the conditions of spectacle and

[782] Christine Van Assche "The State of Things" in *Pierre Huyghe: The Third Memory*, Paris, Centre Pompidou and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, (2000):86.

[783] For an important collection of essays on Coleman's work See George Baker (ed), *James Coleman, October Files 5*, (2003).

[784] Christine Van Assche "The State of Things" in *Pierre Huyghe: The Third Memory*, (2000):84.

how they shape reality and life today?"[785] Huyghe responds by suggesting that while spectacle has always been considered through a discussion on ideology, the culture industry, illusion, manipulation etc for him what seems to be important is to comprehend "spectacle as a format." Rather than positioning oneself as artists/entertainer the point is to use it "for other purposes." He continues,

> I do use conventions of representation to frame, catch, and affect reality. I know quite well the traditions of documentary film and photography. Documentary form has always been important to me. The problem is that the form of capturing reality has become itself a convention. So the problem then becomes, again, one not about the arrangement itself, but about the rules of arrangement. One has to transform the conventions. I am still interested in capturing reality […] Sometimes a pure fiction film, even a science-fiction film, tells us more about reality than a documentary. I am interested in this. [786]

One clear example of Huyghe's engagement with an experimental approach to documentary is evident in a short film entitled Blanche- *Neige Lucie/Snow White Lucie,* (1997) we view Lucie Doléne who was the voice of Snow White in the French version of the Disney film. Here an aged Lucie hums the famous cartoon song "Some Day My Prince Will Come" while subtitles below recount her working relationship with the Disney Corporation. As we listen to this sugar sweet melodic hum we read of her legal battle to win back the rights of her own voice. Within the short space of three minutes the work offers a brief but concise exploration of the connections between the internationally recognized cartoon character, Doléne as a French actress, and labour relations within the economic context of a multinational corporation.

The relationship between real lives and mass media entertainment corporations is also to the fore in *The Third Memory* (2000), an installation comprising a clip from a 1970s American chat show shown on a monitor and two large projections side by side. *The Third Memory* analyses the media story of John Wojtowitcz, whose failed bank robbery in 1972 to finance his lover's sex change operation, ended up being broadcast live on television and

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[785] George Baker, "An Interview with Pierre Huyghe," in *October* 110, (Fall 2004)104.
[786] Ibid 104-105.

was the basis for Sydney Lumet's *Dog Day Afternoon* starring Al Pacino made in 1975.[787] The Warner Brother's advertisement for the film remarked that though the robbery should have taken 10 minutes "Four hours later, the bank was like a circus sideshow. Eight hours later, it was the hottest thing on live tv. Twelve hours later it was history. And it's all true."[788]Reacting to the rapid police response Wojtowicz and his accomplice Salvatore Natuarale took seven hostages. The media spectacle that ensued exposed the sympathy the hostages had for Wojtowitz, (what we would now refer to as the Stockholm Syndrome). Wojtowitz who came across as an articulate personality also attempted to work the crowd and the TV coverage also included interviews and pleas from all the people close to Wojtowitz – his lover, mother, psychiatrist, and priest. As a developing media spectacle it interrupted coverage of the Republican National Convention in Miami.

John Wojtowitcz who was paroled in 1979 was invited by Pierre Huyghe to tell his story allowing him to reflect on his participation in an event, which had become a media spectacle. Wojtowitz would not meet with the screenwriters of *Dog Day Afternoon* and rejected a deal with Warners, although he did receive 31,000 dollars from them. In this installation both archival news footage and film excerpts from *Dog day Afternoon* are combined with new footage of Wojtowitz, now in his fifties. The first part of the installation presents a monitor showing a video clip from the 1970s television chat show, *The Jeanne Part Show*. Here Jeanne Part interviews both John and his lover Ernie (now Liz Eden), who managed to have a series of operations to turn her into a woman, which were paid for by John. At one point in the show, Jeanne Part is interviewing John in prison as a circular image of his lover is inserted "as a woman now" listening to his comments of how he does not approve of transsexual operations. As part of a contemporary art exhibition this television clip becomes an exhibit, a media artefact offering a type of media prehistory to the plethora of current chat shows where the live audience and viewers are asked to take a prurient interest in participants' private lives. The availability of media archive material offers interesting interpretative avenues which as mentioned above allow for a media critique/ analysis, a point which is alluded to by Huyghe who in discussing *The*

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[787] See Fredric Jameson's "Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture: Dog Day Afternoon as a Political Film," (1977) in *Signatures of the Visible*, (1992):35-54.
[788] *The Third Memory* (2000):71.

Third Memory comments on its didacticism, "The first time I saw it myself I was sure it should be shown in the education department of museums."[789]

Fig. 48 Installation view, The Third Memory

[789] Huyghe in Adrian Dannatt, "Where fact and Fiction Meet, " The Art Newspaper (2002), http:// www. The artnewspaper.com/news/article.asp?idart=4510
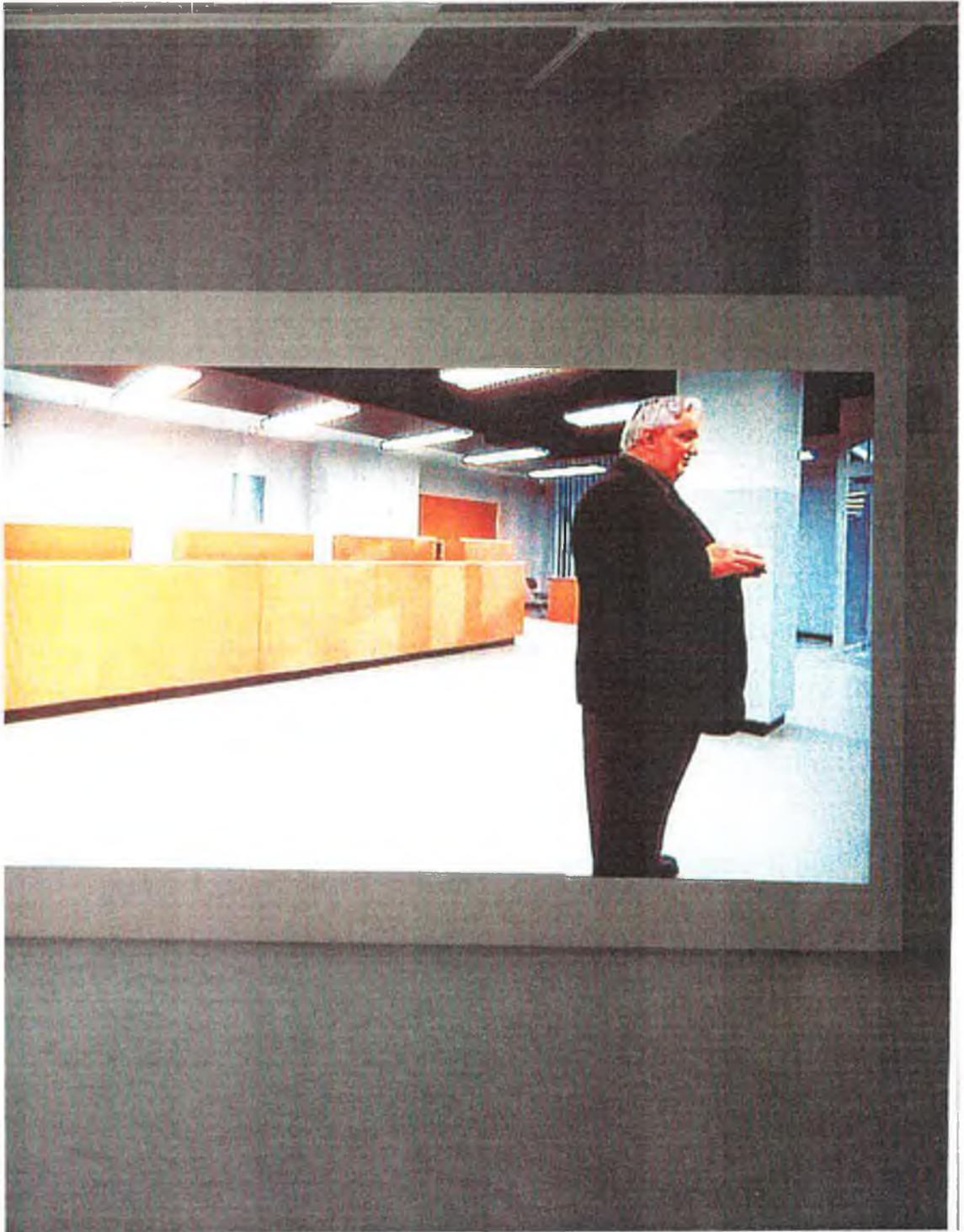
Fig.49 Installation view, The Third Memory
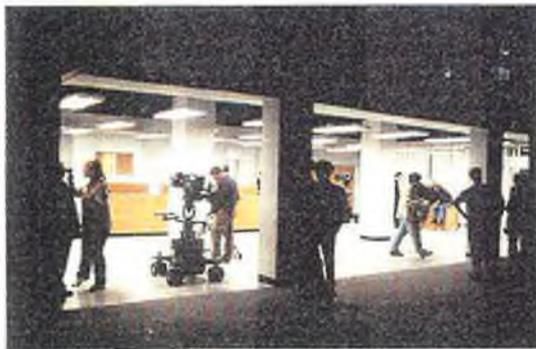
Fig. 50 Installation view, The Third Memory

Fig. 51 Installation view, the Third Memory
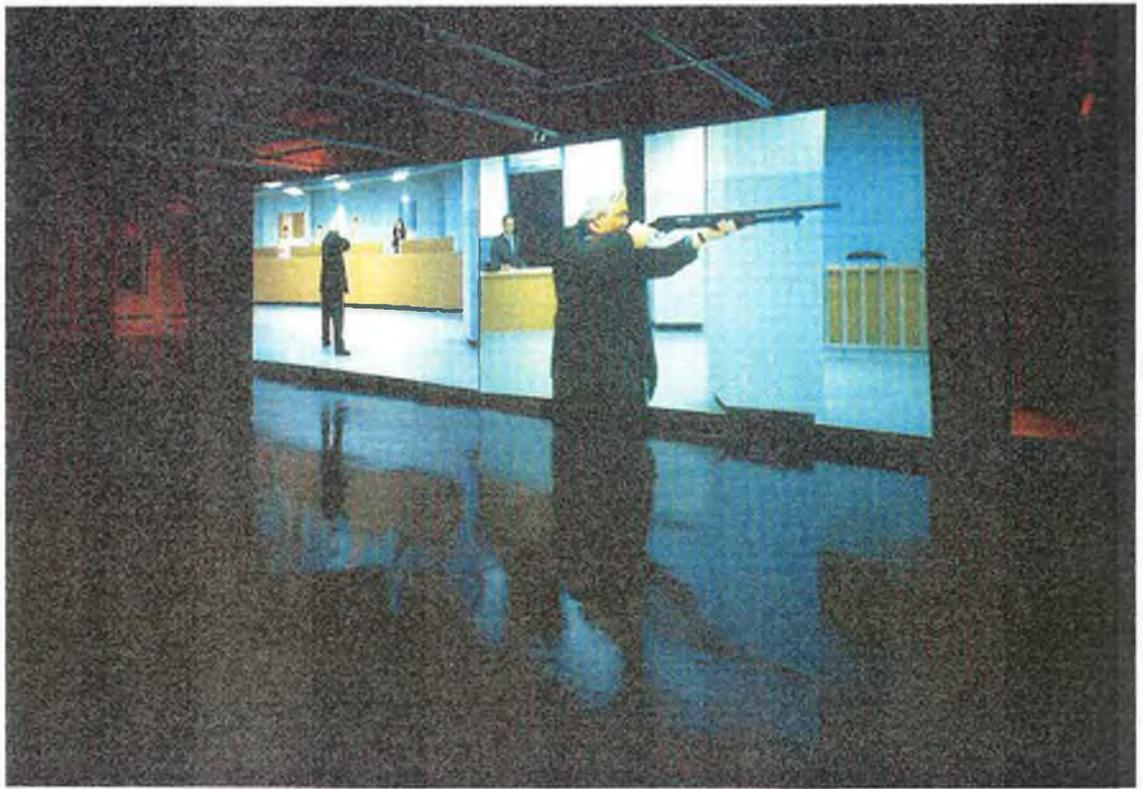
Fig.52 Installation view, The Third Memory
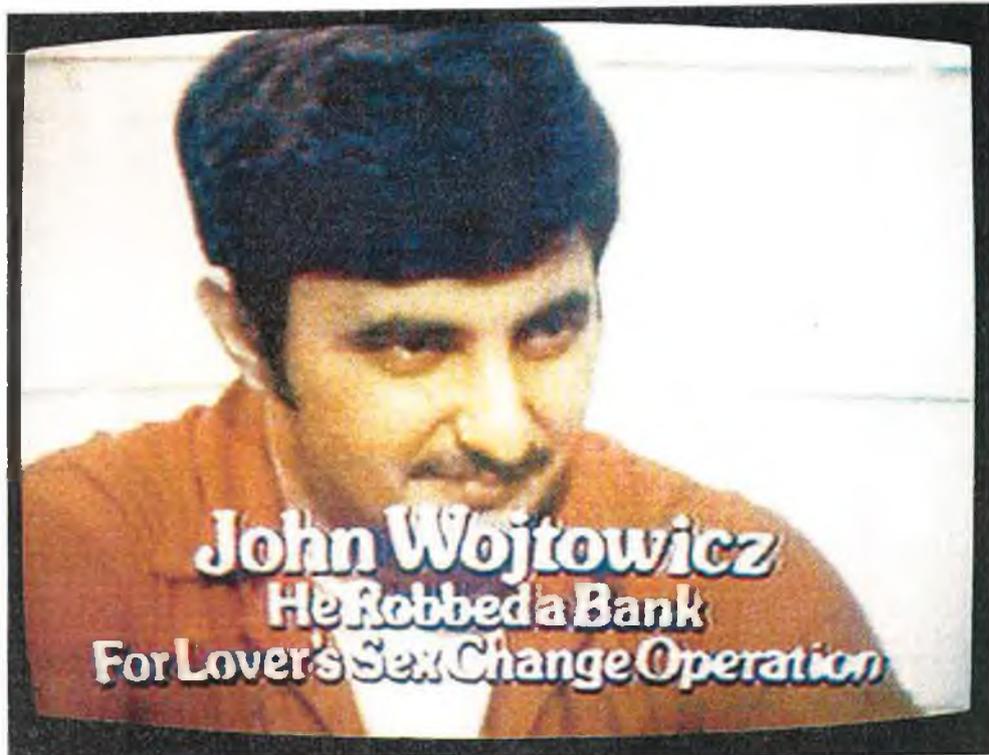
Fig. 53 Undated. Public declaration by John Wojtowitz during his prison term, the Third Memory

Fig. 54 August 22, 1972, ABC News: John Wojtowitz outside the bank The Third Memory

Fig. 55 August 23,1972, New York Times, The Third Memory

Fig. 56 1975. Original Poster for Dog Day Afternoon, The Third Memory

Tom McDonough in a critical essay on Pierre Huyghe's work also comments on *The Third Memory's* didactic air, and asks what this work "aims to teach its audience."[790] He suggests that critical consensus seems to be that it is one of emancipation, that Wojtowitz gains "narrative agency" and is given " the means to reassert control over his own image and life history."[791] The consensus of which McDonough speaks is however based on only two writers' interpretation of the work.[792] One is the catalogue essay by Jean-Charles Maseru, "The Lesson of Stains," which accompanied the production of the work published by The Pompidou Centre and The Renaissance Center, the other by Palais de Tokyo curator Nicholas Bourriaud and author of two recent publications on contemporary practice, *Relational Aesthetics* and *Postproduction*.[793] McDonough rejects the "optimistic vision" of Masséra and Bourriaud and suggests instead that we should "understand him – more modestly" as an artist who explores, "the topography of the spectacle from within."[794]

In delineating their optimistic and affirmative interpretation of *The Third Memory* McDonough refers to Masséra's conclusion, it is however very clearly written as the concluding lines of the preface to his essay in the catalogue. McDonough quotes the following,

> [...] An enterprise (an attempt) of reappropriating the representations that speak in our place and name, an enterprise where the subject represented —or figured — is invited to take back his place at the very heart of the spectacular machinery that has dispossessed him of his own identity...An invitation to comment on his own gestures and deeds, to reappropriate them, to speak up once again, to regain his own image.[795]

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[790] Tom McDonough "No Ghost," *October* 110, (2004):107-30.

[791] McDonough "No Ghost,"108.

[792] McDonough writes "An exception to this critical consensus on Huyghe's work is found in the writings of Hamza Walker." See his 'Thanks for the Memories', in *Image Stream*, ed. Helen Molesworth (2003):59-67. In McDonough, "No Ghost," n5,109.

[793] Jean-Charles Masséra, "The Lesson of Stains," trans. Brian Holmes, in *Pierre Huyghe : The Third Memory* (2000). Nicholas Bourriaud *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance & Fronza Woods, (2002) and Nicholas Bourriaud *Postproduction*, trans Jeanine Herman, (2002).

[794] Tom McDonough "No Ghost,"110.

[795] Masséra Preface to "The Lesson of Stains," 95.

While this certainly can be read as optimistic, Masséra's preface suggests that his essay "The Lesson of Stains" (The essay title as McDonough points out comes from the name of the Parisian suburb where Huyghe produced the work) be read as palimpsest of Guy Debord's *The Society of The Spectacle* (1967). Masséra writes,

> The Lesson of Stains probably comes down to this: by imagining a
> reconstitution of the facts that inspired Sydney Lumet in the filming
> of *Dog Day Afternoon*, a reconstitution in which the main character
> (Al Pacino) is replaced by the person he played (John Wojtowitz),
> Pierre Huyghe seems to have set out on a path where the aesthetic
> of appropriating an alienating form (the cinema) gives way to an
> enterprise (an attempt)...[796]

It is significant I think that this section referenced above which immediately precedes the section referenced by McDonough is peppered with the words "probably" and "seems to have" and creates a very different textual atmosphere in which the writer is fully aware of his "birth" as a reader and subsequently author/interpreter of Huyghe's *The Third Memory*.[797]

McDonough continues by suggesting that "For Nicholas Bourriaud the program adumbrated in Huyghes's work may be summarized in an aesthetic paraphrase of Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: 'We must stop interpreting the world, stop playing walk-on parts in a script written by power. We must become [...] its actors or co-writers." [798] Both these readings McDonough suggest, reduce *The Third Memory* to a "[...] all too familiar form of ideological critique."[799]In this understanding the artists' practice operates as a form of "unmasking reality" allowing the repressed and marginalized voice of Wojtowicz to be heard. While we may agree with McDonough that these two writers do indeed offer far too

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[796] Masséra, "Preface,"95.
[797] See Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author", trans. Stephen Heath, *Image Music Text*, London, Fontana Press (1977):142-148.
[798] Borriaud *Postproduction*,45-46 in McDonough, *No Ghost*,109.
[799] McDonough, No Ghost, 109.

many claims for the emancipatory possibilities of the work and his critical assessment offers a welcome corrective, it is, however important   to point to the context in which McDonough's essay initially appeared. McDonough's critical evaluation of Huyghe's work appeared in *October* as part of a larger critique of the curatorial practice and writing of Nicholas Bourriaud, whose aspirations for the "utopian spirit in art" in the face of an ever increasing service economy appears to be blind to the socio-political realities evident in France.[800] Given this context of a critique on Bourriaud it seems somehow inappropriate to use the work of Pierre Huyghe who Baker refers to as "arguably the most important of contemporary French artists" for illustrative purposes, which show the flaws in Bourriaud's critical musings. This method also poses certain problems. Firstly, as I have suggested McDonough's "critical consensus" lacks critical mass and using Jean-Charles Masséra's essay from the catalogue as representative of a critical consensus strategically weakens his argument. I do not want to make a qualitative judgement on Masséra's art criticism here, however I do want to suggest that the dominant function of this type of writing as Andrea Fraser pointed out in a different context is "as a marketing tool."[801] The second problem is that by concentrating on the emancipatory claims of these two writers, the readily available and multi-layered readings contained within the text that undermine and complicate this optimism and   which are definitely discussed by other commentators are displaced to an

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[800] George Baker gives an introduction to three texts which appeared in *October*, (Fall 2004), which present a critique of Bourriaud's aesthetic model in different ways. Claire Bishop's essay "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics" (51-79). This looks at the "theoretical program of the Palais de Tokyo." An interview with Pierre Huyghe by George Baker (80-106) which *"confronts* [my emphasis] the first full decade of his practice […] not without an ambivalence..." which from Baker's perspective is missing in the majority of commentaries on Huyghe's work including of course Bourriaud's. Finally Tom McDonough's "No Ghost" (107-30)which examines Huyghe's practice while comprehending "both the social and theoretical context in France from which the current concern with "relational aesthetics" has emerged." Baker's introduction states clearly some of the criticisms of Bourriaud's model which presents itself as a radical new avant-garde. Baker writes, "A more complete reaction to Bourriaud's program would need to occur, first, on the level of its rather startling blind-spots and omissions – its misprision of the importance of social relationality to almost all of the major practices of artistic postmodernism, its misunderstanding of 'interactivity' in art as the same thing as an exploration of social relationality or even 'conviviality'(a favourite phrase of the critic's, along with the infelicitous proclamation of a new artistic 'criterion of co-existence'), as well as Bourriaud's seeming ignorance of the direct historical precedents to his proclamation of aesthetic innovation," 50.

[801] Andrea Fraser was responding to a comment made by Rosalind Krauss which suggested that whereas once dealers understood that a work of art did not exist in a "discursive vacuum" but depended on "catalogs with serious essays by critics" that this situation had changed in the last ten years and that now it is enough that "the artist is having shows regularly at an established gallery and that is enough." Fraser's full response was as follows, "[…] I think it's important to make a distinction here between different kinds of critical discourses and different kinds of writing about art. I think we have to be careful about how we're defining criticism. For example, if we're defining criticism according to a criterion of critique, I would have to ask whether essays in gallery catalogs, which are fundamentally marketing tools, ever really played that role. On the other hand, if we're defining criticism as writing about art, while 'serious' essays in catalogs and journals may play less of a role in establishing artistic reputations, the popular press and popular media seem to be playing a much greater role. See "Round Table: The PresentConditions of Art Criticism" *October 100, (Spring 2002)200–228.*

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insignificant position. This displacement   allows for a rather blatant rhetorical positioning of McDonough's essay as, according to George Baker "the single most important critical reaction to Huyghe's work to date." [802]

The third problem concerns the theoretical underpinnings of some of the assertions made against Huyghe's artwork. For example Tom McDonough refers to the fact that Huyghe rejects any "overt critical intent" quoting Huyghe as saying "it is never about referencing or deconstructing a film or the nature of Hollywood. I am speaking about the story of a man and about representation."[803] Even accepting McDonough's example of Huyghe's seeming denial of overt criticality in the work, such a comment could be seen as a pragmatic response to the vagaries of attempting to maintain an international art career at the present time and Huyghe is surely not alone among contemporary artists employing this strategy. Alternatively his affirmative response to George Baker's question that he seems to resist thinking about his work in political terms because of " [...] a realization that false political claims for artistic practices were made in the 1980s, and one must not falsely claim immediate political functions for cultural or aesthetic purposes?" offers surely   a significant understanding of his position in this regard.[804]

The example above poses questions concerning the significance placed on what the artist suggests the work is about and how this is used to critique or comprehend the significance of the work. While obviously this is an integral component of research methods by many critics and historians, an over reliance on the artist as key to interpretation suggests a rejection of the most basic poststructuralist strategies, such as Roland Barthes' death of the author/ birth of the reader. As Barthes writes,

> We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-god) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.[805]

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[802] Baker, "Introduction,"50.
[803] Pierre Huyghe and Dannatt interview quoted in McDonough "No Ghost,"110.
[804] See George Baker "An interview with Pierre Huyghe," *October* 110, (2004):99.
[805] Barthes "Death of the Author," 146

Placing the artist/ author as ultimate controller of the work/text ignores completely for example the role that context plays in how the work is received and how this reception is always dependent on the geographical, historical and temporal discursive convergences operating at any one time or place.[806] One extreme example of this would be Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, which had immense and completely unforeseen consequences upon its publication because of the adverse reaction by radically orthodox Muslim constituencies in Europe and beyond.

Writing about the overall art practice of artists is such common practice (this is in large measure to do with art historians/ art critics involvement in the career building of artists through catalogue essays, etc.) that the problems associated with it are rarely analysed. While auteurism as a form of analysis has been widely critiqued within film studies (as discussed earlier in part two) it still retains an unexamined stronghold within the field of art criticism. Another reason for this may be a rejection of a cultural studies methodology by art critics who would rather maintain a vertical field of enquiry on the subject of visual art rather than incorporating a horizontal analysis of the visual in the wider fields of culture, sociology, audience analysis, etc.

This position is particularly evident in the interview between George Baker and Pierre Huyghe. For example referring to some of the exhibition strategies and the collaborative processes Huyghe has engaged in Baker writes,

> You de-emphasize the idea of a singular artist producing work for an exhibition space, and you de-emphasize the production as well of an object for that space. It is extremely difficult as an art critic to even react to such a practice. We have neither a singular author nor a complete object in any one given scenario or situation or exhibition.[807]

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[806] I should clarify that I am not suggesting here that biographical information is not relevant. For a discussion on the importance of re-instating biography into a discussion on minimalist artists see Ann C. Chave "Minimalism and Biography," *The Art Bulletin*, (March 2000).
[807] Baker, "interview with Pierre Huyghe," 89.

At another point in the interview Baker questions Huyghe about the way in which the work seems to be,

> [...] Related to fields that touch upon the visual arts but are not proper to them [...] I ask this question because one of the reasons I am interested in your work is precisely the difficulty I feel in attempting to "place" it — within avant-garde traditions, within a history specific to visual art.[808]

And further on Baker comments,

> I am intrigued by the divergence of connections and references raised by your project. While on the one hand we could be discussing your reflection on Cage or on Buren, we are now finding a model for your practice in Pasolini's thoughts on cinema. Other filmmakers whom I have talked to about your work see an indebtedness in your project to Jean-Luc Godard. This is a new position, I think, in which to be: within recent histories of contemporary art, I'm not sure that the range of practices to which one responded have ever been so divergent.[809]

This circulation by Baker, around the multi-dimensional way in which Huyghe, though possibly aiming to articulate flaws in Huyghe's practice, seem however, to illustrate the point made by Miriam Hansen referenced in the introduction to **Part 3** and worth repeating here, "we discover in technological media practice forms of modernist aesthetics-configurations of "vernacular modernism"--that elude the lens of traditional criticism and theory."

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[808] Ibid,90.

[809] Ibid,97. Besides his desire to firmly read this work singularly through the field of visual art there seems to be a desire to be part of critical group which firmly fix and present the definitive reading on Huyghe's work. A project highly questionable from a poststructuralist point of view and potentially totalizing. As Barthes writes in "To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing. Such a conception suits criticism very well, the latter then allotting itself the important task of discovering the Author [...] beneath the work: when the Author has been found, the text is 'explained' – victory to the critic." (See Barthes "Death of the Author," 147. Evidence of this desire for a controlling voice is also evident in Baker's desires to increase an audience for *October* when he writes, "*October* has been part of an extremely productive 'crisis' in the cultural realm—both provoking and tracking that crisis—and it is my hope that this can occur again. So that any artist, any critic, any art or film historian who doesn't subscribe, well, they will be the ones who are obsolete." See "Round Table: The Present Conditions of Art Criticism" *October100*, (Spring 2002): 221.

In *The Third Memory* the large two screen projection presents a contemporary account of the events by Wojtowitz intercut with a compilation of material both fictional and archival. Huyghe's minimal, inexpressive bank set looks like it is made in MDF has grey, white and brown tones, and physically mimics minimalism, functioning as both props and three dimensional objects. A neo-minimalist aesthetic is very popular amongst a contemporary generation of artists and designers, (unfortunately not always or necessarily based on a clear or specific theoretical exploration) and this could be explanation enough for Huyghe's use of it as a fashionable 'look'. However the set functions as a distinct marker between the media work Huyghe is engaged in and the type of media spectacle he is analysing. By referencing American minimalist strategies from the '60s, the set immediately states that a realist type of documentary interview is not relevant to this particular media exploration. In fact it is possible to use the set's minimalist aesthetic to help elaborate further interpretative possibilities articulated in Huyghe's installation such as reception and the role of the audience, and subject formation within the cultural dominance of global media networks.

In *The Crux of Minimalism*, Hal Foster situates Minimalism as not only fulfilling the late modernist agenda of the autonomous art object but also ultimately exceeding it.[810] Foster refers to the way Donald Judd seems to take Greenberg's call for objective painting to a literal end point with his specific objects and suggesting that the minimalist "suppression of anthropomorphic images and gestures is more than a reaction against the abstract-expressionist model of art; it is a 'death of the author' (as Roland Barthes would call it in 1968) that is at the same time a birth of the viewer."[811] While Huyghe's set for *The Third Memory* is devoid of 'realist' codes it is "incurably theatrical" (a pejorative term used by Michael Fried in his attack on minimalism). "[812]

In this set Wojtowitz, talks to the camera as he moves around directing the hired actors who stand in as the people who were there on the actual day of the robbery. We view Wojtowitz giving the extras instructions for example Wojtowitz says "now you tell me to put the gun

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[810] Hal Foster, "The Crux of Minimalism" in *The Return of The Real* (1996):35-70.
[811] Ibid, 50.
[812] See Michael Fried "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* (June 1967).

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down" then the actor says "put the gun down." The artificiality of the bank set makes the very real shot gun carried by Wojtowitz an ex con, who is dressed as if he is meeting the parole board more eerily pronounced.

While I have concentrated above on possible links to minimalism available within *The Third Memory* a more obvious link can be made to Brechtian ideas of distanciation. There is no attempt made to hide the production process or to delineate between a realistic mise en scene and the working environment of the sound stage. Contained within the installation as a whole, there is also other documentary material alerting the viewer to how this subject has been represented in the newspapers and TV footage of the time. The process of production is fore grounded. However for McDonough while *The Third Memory*,

> Makes use of these Brechtian practices to demonstrate precisely the difficulty of dislodging the Imaginary ego installed by ideology, of disrupting those identifications fostered by contemporary culture. In the congealed world of the spectacle, intervention in the form of critical seeing proves increasingly attenuated, devoted to documenting the seeming impregnability of the social order.[813]

For McDonough, then, Pierre Huyghe's project leads away from Brecht's politics of representation and towards Guy Debord's pronouncements on spectacle culture where the hierarchy of "direct" experience has disappeared. As McDonough writes "alienation is now mediated by and within representation". In this scenario, and from McDonough's perspective, "Pierre Huyghe is the phenomenologist of this upside-down world."[814]

Hamza Walker writing on *The Third Memory* for its exhibition at the Renaissance Center in Chicago (2000) comments on how it exposes the points of intersection between "film, filmic reality, reality as memory, and reality as constructed by the media." [815] Combining the different media sources with Huyghe's representation of Wojtowitz as he is now activates an analysis of the different modes of address being employed and how they effect

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[813] McDonough, "No Ghost," 110.
[814] Ibid, 111.
[815] Hamza Walker, *The Third Memory Pierre Huyghe: The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago* (2000).

our perception. In the essay that accompanied the presentation of the installation at The Renaissance Center in Chicago, Hamza Walker refers to Guy Debord's comments on the history of cinema and the possible ways that it could have gone such as "historical examination, theory, essay, and memories." *The Third Memory* incorporates all these dimensions.

The art critic Daniel Birnbaum discussing the ways in which *Dog Day Afternoon* may have affected Wojtowitz's memory of his own real life event writes:

> Of course he thinks he is reconstructing hard facts, but when he refers to what really happened as "the real movie" as he does in *The Third Memory*, one has reason to get suspicious. The situation is complicated: Not only were Wojtowitz's looks compared to Pacino's in the press at the time of the Robbery, but it was Pacino, along with Marlon Brando, who provided a fictional model for how to be a crook; the robbers watched *The Godfather* for inspiration the very afternoon of their crime." [816]

The subject formation mediated through media networks also suggests an interesting question as to why Pierre Huyghe makes visual connections to a minimalist aesthetic with its theoretical emphasis on the erasure of the subject. Returning to McDonough's discussion, it is this mediation of fact and fiction apparent in Wojtowitz's account of the event that offers the most striking example of why Bourriaud's optimistic appraisal of *The Third Memory* as in someway offering a means of "reality [taking] revenge on fiction" should be discounted.[817] McDonough writes,

> It is rather the ever-increasing conscription of the subject by the mechanisms of that culture, the culmination of more than a half-century of attempts to colonize everyday life down to its most minute aspects."[818]

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[816] Daniel Birnbaum, "StickUp Artist, *Artforum*, 39. 3 (Nov 2000):131-133. Huyghe discussing this wavering between fact and fiction by Wojtowitz comments, "I decided to ask him to explain how it happened, but what is interesting today is that, of course, his memory is affected by the fiction itself. He had to integrate the fiction of *Dog Day Afternoon* into the fact of his life. He is always shifting between these two things, the memory of the fact and the memory of the fiction. Huyghe quoted in Dannatt, "Where Fact and Fiction meet" in McDonough, "No Ghost," 109..

[817] See Nicolas Bourriaud *Postproduction*, 45-46.

[818] McDonough, "No Ghost," 109..

Referring to Guy Debord's analysis of spectacle, McDonough suggests that what we see is a clear example through Wojtowitz of what was "once directly lived" now degenerated into a representation.[819]   Wojtowitz's unwitting exposure of the way in which spectacle has infiltrated our memories in Huyghe's *The Third Memory* suggests that Huyghe, rather than a "phenomenologist of this upside-down world" participates in a practice which historicises media spectacle, away from entertainment. One commentator has remarked that, on reflection, perhaps Wojtowitz's failed bank robbery as media spectacle was one of the first of such real time, real life dramas to unfold as entertainment for millions. Jerry Saltz writing for *The Village Voice* refers to more recent examples such as O.J Simpson being chased by the police on the freeway, or Elián Gonzales return to Cuba.[820] Looking at this overweight and middle-aged man, (no Pacino now), directly confronts some of our more pronounced theoretical doxa and offers an opportunity to view the vulnerable imperfect subject against a backdrop of cynical investment in the theft of people's stories by Hollywood. As with Lucie Doléne's battle with Disney, Huyghe's interest in documentary reveals itself as linked to a similar anxiety presented in Jean Luc Godard's *Eloge du L'Amour* (2001). Here we witness the vitriolic attack on the Hollywood producer (cheque book in hand) by the granddaughter of the resistance fighters who are selling their story to him. In an age where global corporations copyright DNA and people's personal narratives are traded Huyghe's simply stated aim of "speaking about the story of a man and about representation" operates surely as a critical activity.

However, thinking about how Huyghe's practice functions as a form of what Miriam Hansen refers to, following Benjamin, as a "political ecology of the senses" we also need to be wary of suppressing specific cultural debates which question the spaces of reception in which Huyghe's work operates. The limits of Huyghe's practice are not necessarily to be found in the formal content of the work, as suggested by Baker and McDonough, but rather in the institutional boundaries and frames it aspires to at the level of reception.

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[819] The direct quote reads, "The Whole Life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation."See Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholas-Smith,
[820] http://www.artnet.com/magazine/features/saltz/saltz2-14-01.aspNew

Fig. 57 Immemory 1997

Immemory

Chris Marker's CD-ROM *Immemory* 1997 is divided into eight zones, cinema; travel; museum; memory; photography; war; poetry and xplugs. *Immemory* uses for the most part Marker's own personal archive, all the material he has accumulated over the years as a photographer and film maker (including his Uncle Anton's family album), with exceptions being his discussion of different films in the cinema zone such as Wings (1927)(billed as possibly the first film he ever saw), *La Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* (1929), *Aelita* (1924) and *Vertigo* (1928).

Immemory's formal genesis can be seen in the installation *Zapping Zone* (1989-1990)[821] This installation, as Raymond Bellour comments, " [...] in its voluntary disorder, its

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[821] *Zapping Zone* (1989-1990) exhibited in the Pompidou Center as part of the exhibition *Passage de L'Image*.

fractured zones, its ways of relating the different registers of historical and personal experience, and its sketch of interactivity [...] is something like a first outline of *Immemory*."[822] *Immemory* is an immense project and one, which requires a commitment by the viewer, which vastly exceeds the viewing time of even one of Marker's longer films. Researching the cinema, memory photography and travel zones in some depth required easily over forty hours and I would still certainly hesitate from presuming an authoritative voice in relation to Marker or this CD-ROM.

Initially the work struck me, as an awkward attempt by Marker to work in the unfamiliar medium of new media. However, subsequently, having spent considerable time exploring this CD-ROM, I find it significant critical work not only because of Marker's approach to new media but also in relation to the study of film. What is immediately apparent is the how *Immemory* appears to disavow a lot of the new media rhetoric that concentrates on the inherently liberating qualities of hypertext. Here creating one's own narrative path through the text can lead to confusion. Indeed pursuing this 'liberatory' decontextualisation of one's own making illustrates perfectly the sombre reflections on cybernetic systems by theorists such as Bill Nicholls who suggests, "The chip is pure surface, pure simulation of thought. Its material surface is its meaning, without history, without depth, without aura or affect, or feeling."[823] However as Marker himself advises in the Commands section of the CD-ROM, " Don't zap, take your time." Often taking your time with a page is rewarded with the eventual indication of a bifurcation, developing layers of meaning, which are unavailable otherwise, and refuting some of the charges suggested by Nicholl's above.

On the final page of the *Wings* section in the Cinema Zone of *Immemory* Marker writes,

> From Wings to Star Wars, I will have seen many things fly over the world's screens. Perhaps cinema has given all it can give; perhaps it must leave room for something else. Jean Prévost writes somewhere that death is not so grave, that it consists only in rejoining all that one has loved and lost. The death of cinema would be only that an immense memory, it is an honest destiny.

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[822] Raymond Bellour "The Book, back and Forth" in *A Propos du CD-ROM Immemory de Chris Marker*,(1997):116.
[823] Bill Nicholls "The Work of Culture in the Age of Cybernetic Systems," in *Electronic Media and Technoculture*, ed. Thorton Caldwell (New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers University Press) (2000):101.
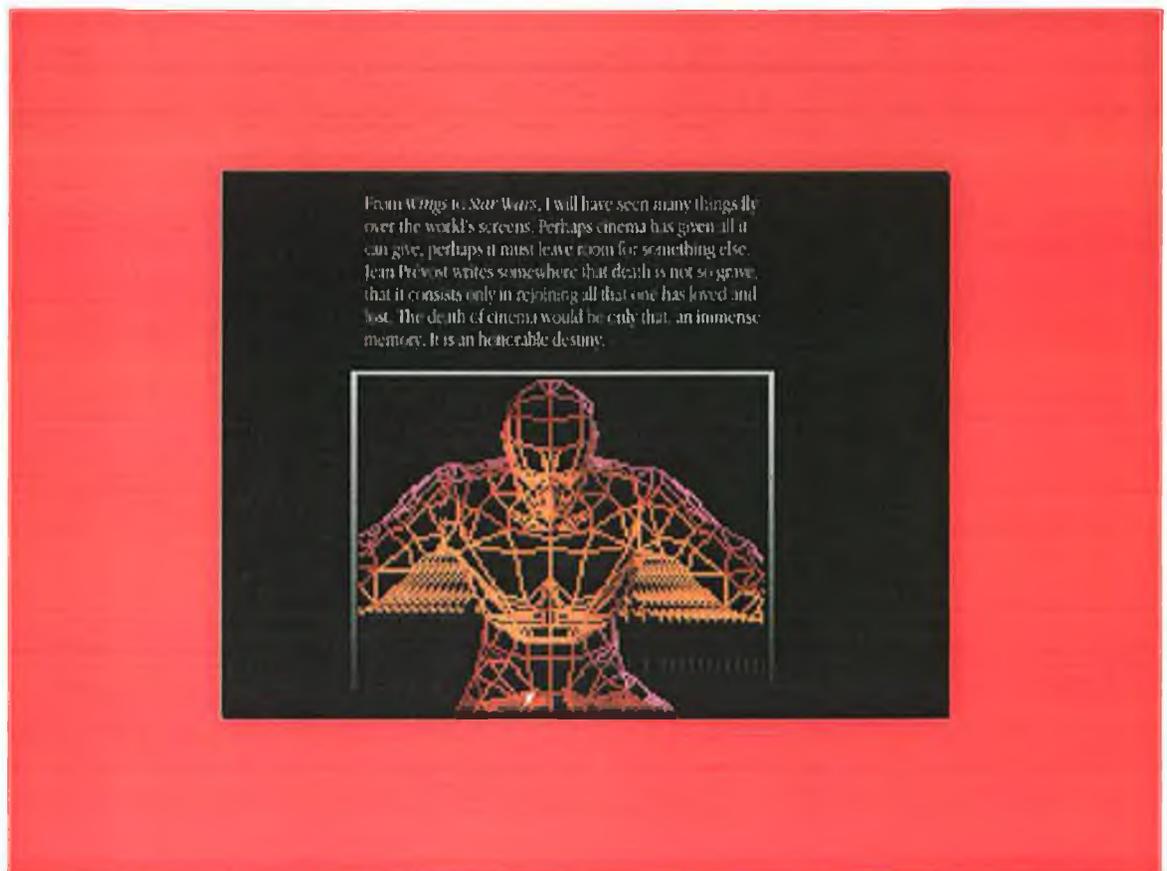
Fig. 58 Immemory 1997

Commenting on the fact that there is as yet little understanding of what a CD-ROM may turn out to be, Raymond Bellour writes that it is "somewhere between the withdrawing film and the book of images."[824] While on the face of it Marker's *Immemory* is an archive of his own art practice, the fact that as a filmmaker Marker chooses to employ the CD-ROM to do this is in itself an elegy of sorts to the "withdrawing film." It also offers an interesting perspective on how to explore some of his authorative ideas on film and cinema. This recalls another enormous film history project, Jean Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinema* (1998). While Godard's project has been written about in great detail by many scholars (I am thinking specifically about the recent publication of papers given at the *Forever Godard* conference at the Tate in 2002) *Immemory* seems to have been overlooked. There is also a potentially interesting site of analysis to explore the way in which these two projects may

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[824] Ibid, 114.

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intersect. While outside the scope of this study I will, however, make some tentative links as a possible starting point for a more in depth future study.

There are some references to Godard in *Immemory*. One in particular serves as a useful way of demonstrating Marker's method of working in this project. Following a path through "stories of cities and other places" found in the Russian section of the Photography zone one arrives at an image used by Godard for his credits sequence in the film *Alphaville*. The photograph used by Godard was actually taken by Marker in 1956 at the Youth Festival in Moscow. The image shows a large building cloaked in a theatrical backdrop which has two images painted on it. The image on the top is of a hand releasing a dove; the image below is a group of people pushing a tank over a precipice. The large scale of this image makes the solitary human figure walking past this building seem both poignant and bizarre. Scrolling over the image a text appears and a few seconds later the clip from Alphaville using this image appears superimposed over Marker's image and text. The text reads,

> The people of the world join hands to throw the tanks into the drink (not all of them as the Czechs and the Hungarians will find out later) – there the symbol is clear enough, but whose hands are releasing the dove of peace? A woman's hands, perhaps an angel's. 'Who if I cried out...' Was Godard thinking of Rilke when he slipped this image into the credits screen of Alphaville?[825]

When the clip finishes 'Rilke' is now in red allowing the cursor to click on it, Guillaume the cat appears, (Marker's alternative navigator through the text) and directs us to Rilke and "The opening of the first Duino Elegy, the Elegy of the Angels, where he says 'For beauty is nothing but the onset of terror'." These are verses cited often by Godard as Raymond Bellour points out. Bellour continues, "No doubt that suffices to justify Marker's interpellation, all the more striking because it is not alone in *Immemory*, and because Marker [...] practices here with Godard what Godard himself has practiced massively with the history of cinema as a whole."[826]

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[825] Marker, "Photography Zone," *Immemory*.
[826] Bellour, "The Book, back and Forth" 146.

Fig. 59 Immemory 1997

One of the most striking connections to be made between these two cinephiles, is that while both Marker and Godard have distinguished cinema as superior to television, they both opt to make works concerning history and film, through small screen technologies. In the Wings section of the cinema zone, Marker writes movingly of Simone Genevois, the actress who starred in *La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* and who unwittingly gave him "[…] one of his life's rare discoveries, the discovery of things that quicken the heart." [827] Commenting on the "shock" of seeing a face (Simone's) projected to the size of a house he writes,

> "[…] No doubt that's why I always feel something like aggression in the use of the word 'cinema' for films seen on television. Godard said it quite well, as he does sometimes; 'cinema is higher than us, it is that to which we must lift our eyes. When it passes into a smaller object on which we lower our eyes, cinema loses its essence. One can be moved by the trace it leaves, this keepsake – portrait that we look at like the photo of a loved one carried with us, one can see the shadow of a film on the television, the longing for a film, the nostalgia, the echo of a film, never a film'.[828]

Youssef Ishaghpour in conversation with Godard has suggested to him that for *Histoire(s)* to use cinema to reflect on its history that "the existence of video was necessary,"[829] not just as technology, but it was also in fact video's historical condition which made *Histoire(s)* possible "[…] since video in a sense also means the end of cinema?" Godard responds by making a distinction to the way video is used for broadcasting, and commenting on the way in which video will be overtaken by "information technology or some hybrid mixture" but

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[827] *Immemory* is full of anecdotes, fragments and coincidences such as Marker's comments on Simone Genevois who he sees at a screening for a film in 1986. He writes: " A loop of Time was looped that evening at the Palais de Chaillot when I found myself seated not far from the charming old lady who would rise to the public's applause: Simone Genevois. And I suddenly felt the wave of emotion that old lovers feel when chance brings them together after years of separation. She smiled, she greeted people, she did n't know that not ten yards away there was a stranger who owed her one of his life's most rare discoveries, the discovery of things that quicken the heart." This phrase "things that quicken the heart" was used originally by Marker in his film *Sans Soleil* (1983).

[828] Marker, "Cinema Zone," *Immemory*.

[829] Jean-Luc Godard and Youssef Ishaghpour, *Cinema: the archaeology of film and the memory of a century*, (2005): 31.

beyond that he suggests there is no big difference between video and cinema, some things being easier to achieve with video.[830] Further on in their conversation he comments,

> [...] There's another way of working if you like, with CD-ROM, which gives the added possibility of leafing quickly back and forth, finding things, sticking titles in...its like a corridor lined with open doors, a lot of games work like that.... Somewhere between the video game and the CD-ROM there could be another way of making films, which would be a lot closer to Borges and people like him. But it'll never be done, we needn't worry...Perhaps one day there will be someone, a Chris or a Van der Keuken, who will make that sort of film [...][831]

Ishaghpour's suggestion that video means the end of cinema has in a sense been superseded by an awareness referred to by Godard of the convergence of film and video. We are also aware that the sense of mourning in relation to the end of cinema is articulated most often through discussions on digitality, which is seen now as "the marker of the death of cinema."[832] However some commentators, such as Timothy Murray in his discussion of artists and film maker's CD-ROMs in *Wide Angle,* asks the question that rather than mourn the passing of film,

> Might the arrival of inordinate miniaturization, the advent of the new media with its thumbnails and windows, signal the paradox of digitality? That to shape a digital code means to bear the loss of code itself, to carry on the legacy of cinema as the crypt of the twentieth century?[833]

The "loss of code itself" mentioned by Murray above relates to the "code as it stands in relation to cinema." Murray's suggestion that the cinematic code may perhaps linger in digitality as a residual discourse "of loss, mourning, and melancholia," is to a certain extent

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[830] Further on in their conversation Godard comments, "[...] Video is, in real-estate parlance, an adjacent wing of cinema. It's paracinema that can be used, in a way, to do what cinema couldn't do without loss of quality – that's it really – and more cheaply too." Ibid, 36.

[831] Ibid, 38-39.

[832] Timithy Murray "By Way of Introduction: Digitality and the Memory of Cinema, or, Bearing the Losses of the Digital Code", *Wide Angle* Vol.21 No.1 (January 1999):4.

[833] Murray (1999):9. Murray's essay offers a useful survey of some interesting video /CD-Roms whose concerns relate to a certain extent with Marker's *Immemory.* Murray discusses Gary Hill's *Sites/Recite (a prologue) 1994,* Grace Quintanilla's *Vice-Versa; presenting the Past, the Present, and the depths of Roberto and Chelo Cobo, 1999,* and Keith Piper's *Relocating the Remains* 1997.

evident in Marker's *Immemory*.[834] Returning to Marker's statement above that "cinema has given all that it can give [...] and must leave room for something else," its death an "honest destiny" and concentrating on the context in which we find this statement, (within the CD-ROM *Immemory*) and the parallel place it has with his re-iteration of Godard's statement on cinema's destruction through miniaturization suggests both a poignancy and pragmatism in the face of a shift to digital from analogue shared by them both. Both Godard and Marker seem to take a dialectical position in relation to the shift to digital technology, which simultaneously rejects and accepts the rhetoric of rupture attached to digital "new media." As an example let me quote at length Godard's opinion on the end of cinema.

> We can say broadly that a certain idea of cinema which wasn't Lumiere's but was perhaps Feuillade's up to a point – which continued with Delluc and Vigo, and which I myself feel quite close to – that idea of cinema has passed, as the Fontainbleau School passed, as Italian painting passed, as very suddenly – Braudel gives a good account of this – Venice gave place to Amsterdam and then Amsterdam to Genoa and then Genoa to London and then New York. You could say a certain cinema is now concluded. As Hegel said, an epoch has ended. Afterwards things are different. One feels sad because childhood has been lost. But it's normal too. Now there's a new cinema, and a different art, whose history will be made in fifty or a hundred years. Now humanity's in a new chapter, and perhaps even the idea of History will change.[835]

Lev Manovich writing on the evolution of CD-Rom games in an essay entitled *What is Digital Cinema?* discusses how initial hardware limitations during playback, such as degraded visuals due to compression of the image size meant designers employed a range of strategies "[...] previously used in nineteenth-century moving-image presentations, in twentieth-century animation, and in the avant-garde tradition of graphic cinema."[836] He

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[834] Margaret Morse suggests something similar when she writes of how " The cinematic apparatus has now been largely subsumed into an electronic culture of video and computer-assisted imagery based on principles of envelopment and temporal simultaneity rather than distance and sequential unfolding. Television, video, and the computer have 'live' screens that expose multiple 'heres' and 'nows' that overlap confusingly with our own physical reality. Yet all these apparatuses co-exist in contemporary life and themes that developed in one technology find counterparts in others. See Margaret Morse "Body and Screen" in *Wide Angle* Vo. 21 No.1 (January 99): 64.

[835] Godard and Ishaghpour, *Cinema: the archaeology of film and the memory of a century*,112.

[836] Lev Manovich, "What is Digital Cinema?" in *The Digital Dialectic*, ed., Peter Lunenfeld,(2000):185.

continues by stating "the photographic and the graphic, divorced when cinema and animation went their separate ways, met again on the computer screen." [837] While Lev Manovich is recognized as having made an important contribution to discussions on digital technology, recently the theorist Mark B.N. Hansen has criticized Manovich for his reductive reading of the creative possibilities of new media. Hansen maintains that Manovich's reading is reductive primarily because of the significance he places on cinema, which Hansen suggests is used as a catchall phrase for visual culture. Manovich's use of the term cinema also allows him to "ratify cinematic immobility as the default condition of the human-computer interface." [838]Referring to Manovich's circular argument, which states "born from animation, cinema pushed animation to its periphery, only in the end to become one particular case of animation," Hansen points out how Manovich's move pushes the " term 'cinema' so as to encompass the prehistory of cinema in nineteenth-century techniques of animation as well as its redemptive return in the digital." [839] Hansen continues his critique,

> By restricting the function of digital media to the manual constructions of images, Manovich effectively ignores another equally important element in the precinematic regime of visuality: *the manual production of movement.* As art historian Jonathan Crary has demonstrated, *all* of the precinematic devices some central element of manual action on the part of the viewer. One had to yank outward on the two strings supporting the circular face of the thaumatrope; to spin the phenakistiscope, the stroboscope, and the zootrope with one's hands; to flip manually through the flip book; to crank the handle of the zoopraxiscope and the mutoscope; to move one's neck and head in relation to the diorama; to walk around within the space of the panorama; and even manually to replace the slides in the stereoscope.[840]

Following Linda Williams, Hansen comments on the physical tactileness of these pre-cinematic devices and how significant touch was to the experience of the visual spectacle.

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[837] Ibid. In discussing the development of CD-ROMS from "slide-show format to the superimposition of small moving elements over static backgrounds and finally to full-frame moving images," Manovich is aware of the parallels between the development of digital media as a replay of the "emergence of cinema a century earlier." However instead of a linear progress narrative towards "accurate verisimilitude" he suggests we should be aware of how each new development closes of "some of the possibilities of the previous one." Ibid, 187.
[838] Mark, B.N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (2004):34.
[839] Ibid, 36.
[840] Ibid, 36-37.

Here the reality or believability of the image is achieved in a literal way through the spectator-observer feeling his or her own body.

As is apparent from our discussion of *Immemory* so far, Marker's decision to use a CD-ROM format for a work on memory makes sense from a technological perspective. As a storage unit or archive, the CD-Rom is seen as a contemporary example of a memory bank. It is significant also concerning the differing views of Manovich and Hansen that the CD-ROMs mobility is often related to the book. Remarking on the way the book has always been an extension of an individual's memory, Florian Brody comments on how we seem to be returning to a medieval model: rather than large scale personal libraries, we are unifying our collections in one place: the computer.[841] By this I understand him to be making a connection to the art of memory used by medieval orators and poets. At the present moment rather than an art of memory (a form of mnemonics used to store and retrieve information inside the brain) technology mediates memory retrieval externally in one location – the personal commuter.[842]

Brody, commenting that "books have been on the way out for most of the twentieth century," suggests that our dreams have up this point been more satisfied by the fantasies created by film and television yet he contends that "digital media — unlike film and video—have the potential to emerge as a new type of book." [843] While Brody acknowledges

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[841] See Florian Brody "The Medium is the Memory" in *The Digital Dialectic*, op.cit, 134-149.Marker makes a similar connection when he comments in *Immemory* that Filippo Gesualdo proposes in 1592 "an image of memory in terms of branching which is positively softwarian."

[842] Mary Carruthers discusses how the ability to recite a text backwards as well as forwards, "or to skip around it in a systematic way, without becoming lost or confused" was seen as a major accomplishment in feudal culture. Having a good memory was not something in itself but what was commendable was the ability to know the text so well that one could move around it instantly, directly etc. Carruthers makes the important distinction between memory, as recall by rote a perfect imitation of the text as it were, and recollection and reminiscence. Recollection was understood as tracking down what had been set aside. Recollection occurs through association: one finds or hunts out the stored-memory impressions by using other things associated with it. The art of memory is the art of recollection, a process which functions as a retrieval system. See Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, (1990).

[843] Brody, "The Medium is the Memory," 135.Acknowledging that there are "certain factors that militate" against his thesis. He writes, "at first glance, the realm of digital media is clearly the Tomorrowland of the information society. As much as the world still needs Disneyland and its colonies. the culture of the information age demands its own colourful and interactive environments to offer up a cornucopia of possibilities and prospects. All the hopes and desires that theme parks can fulfil for only a short period are now available, in the words of an old Microsoft slogan "at your fingertip." While television continues to fulfil its McLuhanist expectation to be a "window on the world," digital media— especially as they are linked via the internet — actually connect the user to the world. Yet for all the hype, the internet as we find it remains a remarkable concoction of sentimental snippets. Ibid, 136-138.

that machines have not developed interfaces with hand held reading in mind but rather have been "conceptualized as highly sophisticated typewriters rather than as reading machines."[844] The desire by Brody to make a clear distinction between digital media (as a new type of book) and film is, I would suggest based on a particular conception of film and film culture based on "Disneyland and its colonies." However, perhaps we need to hold on to the potential of digital media as a hybrid of both books and films to allow the discursive space for a creative digital practice that prioritises thought and memory. This returns us to thinking about alternative possibilities for film that existed but were never fully utilised. One immediately thinks of Marker's development of the film essay – such as Sans *Soleil* and what Andre Bazin referred to as a form of "horizontal editing." Equally Guy Debord's comments on other possible trajectories for cinema rather than the dominant one we ended up with where "cinema could have been, historical examination, theory, essay, memories."[845] Whatever conception of film Brody is using, it unfortunately does not allow for the possible futures cinema contained on its emergence. Jean Luc Godard also writes suggestively of the potential cinema had without ever living up to it, when he says,

> [...] Montage is what made cinema unique and different as compared to painting and the novel. Cinema as it was originally conceived is going to disappear quite quickly, within a lifetime, and something else will take its place. But what made it original, and what will never really have existed, like a plant that has never really left the ground, is montage. The silent movie world felt it very strongly and talked about it a lot. No one found it. Griffith was looking for something like montage, he discovered the close-up. Eisenstein naturally thought that he had found montage...But by montage I mean something much more vast.[846]

To understand what Godard means by this vastness in relation to montage, Monica Dall'Asta points to Godard's acceptance of the impossibility of making a history of cinema, which is why he presents a "plural concept of history." [847]This of course leads us to Walter Benjamin's critique of a universal history and of the significance he places on

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[844] Ibid, 148.

[845] Hamza Walker, The Third Memory Pierre Huyghe: The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago (April 7-30, 2000)

[846] Jean-Luc Godard, "Le Montage, la solitude et la liberté," *Confrontations: Les Mardis de La Femis*, Paris: Femis, (1990). Trans and in Trond Lundemo, "The Index and Erasure: Godard's Approach to Film History," *For Ever Godard*, (2004):380.

[847] Monica Dall Asta, "The (IM)Possible History", *Forever Godard*,.352.

montage in his own conception of history, as evident in his Theses *on the Philosophy of History* and *The Arcades Project*. Dall'Asta comments on the profound significance of Benjamin to Godard's creative practice over the last fifteen years evident not only in *Histoire(s)* but also in *Hélas pour moi*, (1993), and *The Old Place*, (1999).[848]

Trond Lundemo suggests that the use of montage in *Histoire(s)* presents a model of practicing film history. Here the "virtual archive or database" is the ground on which new relations and meaning are constructed. For this reason *Histoire(s)* is "one of the most important works for thinking about the logic of databases in computer environments."[849] For Lundemo *Histoire(s)* is "groundbreaking" because,

> It employs multiple "search criteria," like iconic matches, movement relations, sound juxtapositions, together with more conventional archival searches based on linguistic criteria and naming. These multiple search criteria allow for unconventional and surprising montages, where the poetic principles of 'the association of ideas [as] distant and right' are fulfilled.[850]

Lundemo's concentration on the multiple search criteria which exist as part of the patchwork of Godard's *Histoire(s)* suggest not only Benjamin's discussion of sensuous and non-sensuous similarities, but also the significant implications of histories which employ images in a much more radical way than as mere illustrations of the text. In a related discussion Monica Dall'Asta elaborates on Georges Didi-Huberman interpretation of Benjamin's view that "art history does not exist," and interprets this contention in the following way,

> When Benjamin writes that 'there's no history of art', it isn't to express a judgement of inexistence. It's to express a need, a desire: that art history should at last begin to exist in the form of a history

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[848] Referring to the fundamental role Benjamin's concept of history has played in Godard's Histoire(s) Dall'Asta writes, "Though the historiographical model for this research is provided by a multiplicity of authors such as André Malraux, Élie Faure, Fernand Braudel, Michel Foucault, Charles Péguy and Jules Michelet, the position that Benjamin occupies within the group is a particularly strategic one, for it provides the chance to link [...] all these very different names in an intertextual net of quotations." Ibid, 353.

[849] Trond Lundemo, "The Index and Erasure: Godard's Approach to Film History," 381.

[850] Ibid.

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of the works themselves [this history will break with] the familiar and fallacious connection of 'causes' and 'effects'. Art history ends up denying the temporality of its objects by relating art 'only by means of causality', in the usual historicist way. But art works, says Benjamin, have their 'specific historicity, which is not expressed in the 'extensive mode' of a causal or familial narrative like you find in Vasari. It expresses itself in multiple ways, in the 'intensive modes', which between works 'brings out connections that are atemporal without being ahistorical'.[851]

This way of thinking about history, following Benjamin, and the relationship Lundemo sees readily in Godard's *Histoire(s)* with computer databases and "the poetic principles of 'the association of ideas [as] distant and right'" is also evident throughout Marker's *Immemory*.

For example, travelling the standard route through the Memory zone in *Immemory* each of the images reveals an anecdote around a play *Le Corsaire* by Marcel Achard, directed by Louis Jouvet. Here we are told a story of how one of Marker's young friends managed to get a walk on part in the play and generously took advantage of his insignificance which allowed his friends to enter the theatre using his name "…so that each night a different boy came on rubbing his head at stage left [….] Clicking on another image we find out about the music by Vittorio Rieti. Marker reflects on being possibly the last person to remember his music and the opportunity this CD-ROM project presents to let others hear what may not have been heard for sixty years and then when you press the cursor you hear a fragment of the music. Marker proceeds to link this information on *Le Corsaire* to Proust's *Swan's Way* and Hitchcock's *Vertigo* through the name Madeleine. The first name of the actress Miss Ozeray who performs in the film version of *Le Corsaire* is Madeleine and in *Vertigo* the heroine is called Madeleine, which is, Marker writes, "the kind of fluke that connoisseurs can smile over, without exaggerating its importance. But how many decisive turning points in our lives rest on even slimmer coincidences?" When one returns back to initial image in this zone and click on Hitchcock an image of Madeleine appears and Marker informs us that

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[851] Benjamin in a letter to Florens Christian Rang, 9 December, 1923. In Georges Didi-Huberman, *Devant Les Temps: Histoire de l'art at anachronisme de l'image*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, (2000):87. in Monica Dall'Asta, "The (Im)Possible History," n10,431.

> [...] Vertigo deals with the extravagant quest to rediscover things
> past.... The story of a man who can no longer tolerate the tyranny
> of memory; || He simply wants to triumph over time [...] No film
> has ever shown so well that memory, if deranged, can be used for
> something quite different than remembering: it can be used to
> reinvent life and finally to vanquish death [...] Friendly warning –
> If you don't know *Vertigo* by heart there's no use reading on.[852]

Here, I want to return to the role contingency plays in Benjamin's theory of experience and to concentrate on the way contingency operates as a reading strategy. As has already been discussed earlier, rather than the act of catching the image 'in flight' so to speak, contingency in Benjamin's thought is also concerned with the possibilities of a mimetic reading of correspondences of the non-similar by an audience. The audience in the case of Marker's *Immemory* is as well as us, Marker himself who looks back on his own work and reads it mimetically. I want to concentrate on his *coda* (1997) to his decision to reproduce the text that accompanied a series of photographs entitled "Korea" which was published originally in 1959. Marker reflecting on the book writes, "Nearly forty years later, its legitimate to ask a few questions: does it refer to a world irredeemably rejected by history, in the name of the famous 'crisis of ideologies'?" Referring to the book's reception in Korea he comments on how it was rejected by both North and South Korea. South Korea rejected it as communist propaganda and exhibited it in a counter revolutionary museum labeled "Marxist dog." This contingent recall, offers Marker an expanded interpretation of non-sensuous correspondences with which to think about the social formation and his own position with regard to it at the end of the last century.

> I can see Snoopy leaving Herman Hesse aside for a while to read
> Capital...) You can let yourself be flattered by that kind of
> symmetry, you can make comparisons with Chaplin at the end of
> the Pilgrim, sniped at by both sides, walking tip-toe along the
> border line — you can tell yourself that getting flack from both
> ends is a pretty good indication you're on the right track. It's a
> shortsighted glory, an easy way of setting yourself above the fray.
> The end of our century demands something else. What is more the

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[852] Marker, "Memory Zone," *Immemory*.

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notion of historical progress, of a powerful "current of history" never mattered to me except in a deliberate play on the word "current": not a directional flow over some chart plotted out by infallible commanders [...] but instead the possibility to grasp the current meanings of the historical present, full of sound and fury, told and so on.

What did we go looking for in the fifties-sixties in Korea, in China, and later in Cuba? Above all — and this is so easily forgotten today, with the hocus-pocus over the uncertain concept of "ideologies" — a break with the Soviet model. [...] Those children of Confuscius, Lao-Tzu, Bolivar and Marti had no reason to kneel before dogma elaborated by bureaucrats born from a Leninist host-mother inseminated by Kafka. The answer is: they did. Another thing: in the mid- fifties, a quiver of expectation ran through the USSR itself [...] It would have taken enormous historical pessimism to foresee Brezhnev and the period of what the people back there call stagnation [...]

So the balance sheet to which most of the texts and images on the disc bear witness is totally disastrous and I feel neither the right nor the inclination to ignore that. But I'd like to note two things, which for me have their importance.

Much has been made of the resemblances between the two totalitarianisms, communism and Nazism. They are undeniable, with this one difference, that the communists committed their crimes in betrayal of the values on which they founded themselves and the Nazis in fulfillment of theirs. Maybe that difference is the wrong question. Or maybe it's the whole question.

And to close: all the despair accumulated at this century's end, all the shattered hopes, so many victims, so many resignations, all that still doesn't give me an ounce of inclination for even a sketch of indulgence toward society "as it is." During the Cold War I used to say to my comrades on both sides, "What you call the error of socialism is socialism, what you call unbridled capitalism is capitalism." For now only one of these two behemoths remains on its feet, but the others' defect has not humanized the survivor, on the contrary. Interviewed on television shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Claude Le Louch, who is not a Marxist dog, made a comment full of good sense: "Communism had at least this going for it, it scared the money-men — and left to their own devices, the money-men are capable of anything, believe me I know what they are like. I find it fitting to give a film maker the last word on the Twentieth century, which despite all its shams has so little real

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existence which may after all have been nothing but an immense interminable fade over.

Port Kosinki 1997.[853]

[853] Marker, "Photography Zone," *Immemory*.

Discordant...hum

Discordant..Hum (1997) was an installation, which comprised two monitors, a series of seven slides constantly rotating and one still slide. One video is of four and a half minutes duration looped and the other is under one minute looped. The work was an exploration of a number of interlinked research concerns, which are namely to do with urban space, dystopian narratives and seriality in contemporary culture. As I said in the introduction this research project originated from a year spent on the Independent Study program at The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. The Whitney ISP is an intensive program which was one of the first programmes in the USA to bring together art historians, art critics, curators, artists and film makers, (mostly recent post-graduates) to work in an interdisciplinary environment.

The program originates out of intellectual discussions in the 1970s, influenced by post-structuralism and cultural studies. As well as working on one's own research project, each participant attends two group sessions a week. These sessions take the form of an artist/curator/film maker's visit and a discussion of their work. Theorists, art critics and art historians were also invited to lead a number of sessions in succession. Here participants were expected to read a text provided and contribute to the discussion. The programme benefits from its location in New York and has an impressive range of respected artists and theorists visiting each year. The year I attended the artist Mary Kelly lead a number of sessions as well as contributing to a Lacanian reading group. The filmmaker Yvonne Rainer has a close association with the ISP, as does Peter Wollen and Laura Mulvey. Art Historian's associated with the journal *October*, Hal Foster and Benjamin Buchloh were also a significant presence at the ISP.[854] Combined with these weekly lectures and reading groups, participants can have a number of studio visits with visiting artists/curators and film makers, which makes for a really intensive working atmosphere as well as being intellectually expansive for most participants.

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[854] The year I attended the ISP I also attended lectures given by Benjamin Buchloh at Barnard College, Columbia University on *Post War European Art*, some of which were extremely pertinent to the development of my art project, *discordant...hum*.

Through its association with the Whitney Museum it might reasonably be inferred that the Independent Study Program is an entirely privileged space and there is no question that attendance at The Whitney ISP is indeed seen as prestigious, there is however need for qualification. The ISP is located downtown in a loft space below Canal Street, close to the sweatshops of China town. Though there are small studio spaces for the artists, the art critics and curators have no studio space. There are no facilities making it financially difficult to make work while attending the program. The final exhibition takes place as an invitation to "open studios" which in some ways is incongruous given the amount of space the Museum could provide. The Museum has tried over the years to distance itself both physically and conceptually from the ISP as much as possible because of the ISP's 'embarrassingly' persistent attachment to a cultural Marxist position. The ISP has managed to survive on a shoestring only because the Museum would be too embarrassed to expose itself outright to the ISP's powerful and diverse allies within the larger art community in New York. [855]

Fig. 60 untitled photograph, Oral Ryan 1996-7

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[855] For example Katheryn Bigelow, Jenny Holzer, Julian Schnabel and Pat Murphy are all ISP alumni.

Prior to commencing research on *Discordant...Hum* I had completed another large-scale installation *Punctuations of Dehiscence* (1995). This had been an exploration of fear and violence in the domestic space through an engagement with feminist readings of Michel Foucault's analysis of power. Equally significant to this installation had been the historical context of minimalism and the formal and philosophical strategies it employed. As will become apparent some of these concerns were carried through into the next project *discordant...hum*.

An initial entrance to the concerns mentioned above was an interest in the way film posters functioned in the subway stations throughout the city. Running the length of the platforms and corridors in these underground spaces for the ambulatory viewer, they merged together and mimicked the films they advertised. Sitting on the subway trains, as they pulled in an out of the stations, I began to think of the trains taking on the function of the film projector. Here however these contingent and constantly 'reworked' poster/films stay still as the viewers move through the expansive labyrinthian machine of the subway network occupying a viewing space that mimics the panoramas of the 19th Century. Rental contracts as 'editing' decisions made between the agency and the subway company create a visual concrete poem. Juxtaposing the different types of posters creates a disjointed narrative from comedy to horror, fragments of the copy mingling in with each other as the viewer speeds by on the train.
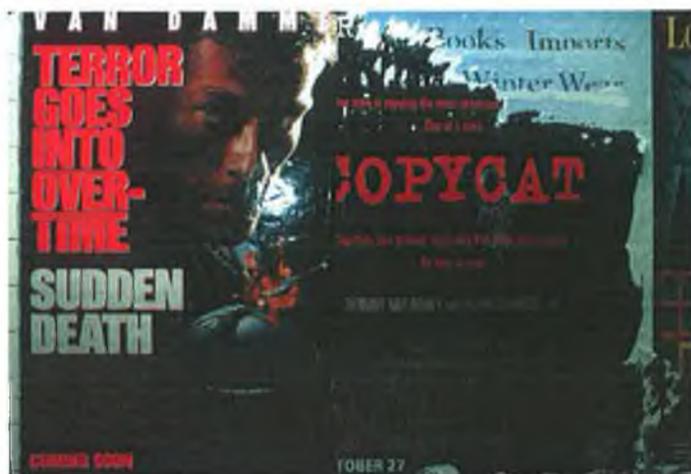

Fig. 61 untitled photograph, Orla Ryan 1996-7

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Fig. 62 untitled photograph, Orla Ryan 1996-7

I began to use the advertising copy as found text for a potential script, which was finally realized as a short video entitled *we sell professional lighting* (1997):

> VO: A powerfully carnal love story. Wonderfully strange. Graceful. Elegant and enchanting. Sparkling. A wonderous blend of primness and spunk. Stunning intensity. Sensual. A gem. Revealing.. Deeply felt. Wonderfully complex ... Extravagantly romantic you realize with a gasp of joy. A feast for the eyes, ears and heart with a commendable lack of sentimentality. A case of imagination run gorgeously riot. Unstoppable as a furious river at flood tide. Absorbing. A troubling but undeniably breathless joyride. Outstanding. Fresh and thrilling. Gripping...Passionate... Electrifying. Stirringly compelling. Inspiring without seeming manipulative...A sulphur hot cultural event. A sexy kinethic thriller. So much suspense it almost stops your heart. A heartpounding trip into the trill zone. More heat .. more crash...more burn...A rock solid adrenalin rush.; A nail biter for the sophisticated. So much suspense it almost stops your heart. Strikingly original and utterly fascinating. I'll do you a favour and not even hint at the genuinely shocking twist...

Fig. 63 We sell professional lighting, film still

At the same time I had started taking photographs of the posters at different stations, I became knowledgeable about what poster/films were on offer at which station and which stations were regularly replenished with new material (all of the Manhattan stations). I found that stations in Queens and Brooklyn, which did not have huge traffic, would have the biggest collection of out of date posters. Alternatively if the station was located in an economically disadvantaged area there were no posters at all or the rental spaces were painted over in black, completely hiding the unintentional archive of posters underneath.

On one regular journey from Queens to Brooklyn I realized that most of the films consistently advertised there were horror, thrillers or 'serial killer' films. The line in question, the G Line, is an interesting case in point. It is the only subway line, which does not go into Manhattan at some point, instead its route traverses Queens and Brooklyn. Because of this route the G line is intermittently busy at early morning and evening rush hour, the rest of the time the trains are empty as they pass through empty stations. In this context travelers, especially women, tend to accumulate in carriages where there are enough people to provide some sense of safety. However depending on the time of day the reassurance of fellow travelers is not always available.

Fig. 64 untitled photograph, Orla Ryan 1997

Fig. 65 Discordant...Hum, video still (caged seating area) 1997

Fig. 66 Discordant...Hum, video stills (film posters seen through moving train)

The G line is renowned as one of the most dangerous lines in New York's subway network and the film posters reflected this sense of danger on the line. The film titles such as *Maximum Risk* (1996); *Copycat, Sudden Death* (1995); *The Net* (1995) and the advertising copy "Resistance is futile," "The other side of safe," "Terror goes into overdrive," "Her driver's license. Her credit cards. Her bank accounts. Her identity. Deleted," "Together, two women must stop him from killing again. Or they're next." This advertising copy, as an excess of manipulated anxiety re-enforced the starkness of the blacked out posters creating in the process a psychotopography of private and public fear fuelled by commercial interests.

Fig.67 Discordant... Hum, video still, 1997

Georg Simmel's essay "The Stranger" was important in developing ideas concerning people's spatial relations in public spaces.[856] As Simmel pointed out people occupy space in close proximity to each other in public locations, and yet, although physically close they are remote. In Simmel's reading, strangeness is,

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[856] See Georg Simmel, "The Stranger," *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. And ed. Kurt H. Wolff, Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950.

Caused by the fact that similarity, harmony and nearness are accompanied by the feeling that they are not really the unique property of this particular relationship; they something more general, something which potentially prevails between the partners and an indeterminate number of others, and therefore gives the relation [...] no inner and exclusive necessity." [857]

I started taking photographs in locations, which registered this "stranger intimacy" as being particularly fraught, and fearful– a taxonomy of spaces often used in these 'serial killer' films. A selection of these photographs was edited into a sequence for the slide component in the installation. These were a combination of images from a corridor in a skyscraper, an ATM lobby, an underground car park, a drugstore in an old cinema and for the still slide image, a baseball pitch in a public park.

Fig. 68 Discordant... Hum, video still (The Classic Cinema)

The main moving-image component of the installation concentrated on the subway stations and the trains, an old suburban cinema (The Classic, Harold's Cross, Dublin) and a baseball pitch in a public park. In the subway section the camera on the platform showed a fast

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[857] Simmel "The Stranger," *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. And ed. Kurt H. Wolff, Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950, p. 407 cited in Mark Seltzer, *Serial Killers, Death and Life in America's Wound Culture,* New York, London, Routledge, 1998, p42.

visual montage of the flickering images of the posters seen through the windows of an incoming train. It also concentrated on the blacked out rental spaces mentioned above. When the camera switches to inside the train the image concentrates on the lights, which occasionally light up the tunnel. A concern was to show how the camera cannot 'hold' the image, to try and present the limits of its capabilities, for example the visual jump that happens when autofocus refocuses. Or towards the end of the video by zooming closely to the outdoor lights used to flood a baseball field and then panning to each light, there is an afterimage of the light retained on screen. In this visual abstraction, where the surrounding context is outside the frame, the image functions as a 'realist' image of spectacle itself. In one of the tunnels the slow motion camera also captures what was not visible by the naked eye, an internal stairwell.

Fig. 69 Discordant... Hum, video stills (The Classic Cinema)

Visually there are no people in the video although the ambient sound contains a multitude of murmuring conversations, fragments of arguments "don't come back here no more." This human 'hum' was used to create a tension between the quotidian atmosphere of people moving through the subway system and 'the killers' potential point of view. This is played out in the second section, which is in The Classic Cinema. Here viewing the empty stalls and the specifically steep drop towards the screen of this cinema, the sound of an accordion player and the sound of people on the subway chatting etc is intercut with a more ominous sound. Here the sound is taken from Jon Amiel's *Copycat* specifically where the copycat killer is creating a macabre photomontage email using an image of his next victim, which is

eventually sent to Helen Hudson (Sigourney Weaver). This sound was of a muffled whistle and the sound of the mouse clicks on his computer.

Fig. 70 Discordant... Hum, video still (flood lights)

The last section is a very slow pan of the floodlights used in a baseball pitch. Moving from left to right, the camera zooms in on the balls of coloured lights abstracting them form their surroundings. As I said above as the camera moves from one light to the other a spectral afterimage follows the movement halfway to the next light before disappearing. The sound for this section is   part of the fearful music build up used to create tension in *Copycat*. One of the central concerns in developing this video was a means of cataloging devices used to create fear in the viewer, without offering the spectacle of the violence. The floodlights of the baseball pitch in Brooklyn   functioned for me a means of presenting an idea of spectacle culture targeting a mass audience. All three locations, the empty cinema space, architecture for entertaining a mass audience, the lights in the park and the subway used to transport the urban masses all concentrated on social spaces designed   specifically for mass configurations.

Fig. 71 Discordant... Hum, video still (flood lights)

The second video was of a journey in an empty 'dystopian' looking lift. In contrast to the spaces used in the first video, which for the most part accommodate large crowds, this small space articulates public spaces and the potentially fraught relations of stranger intimacy without the illusionary sense of individual safety, offered by the crowd.

Fig. 72 Elevator, video still
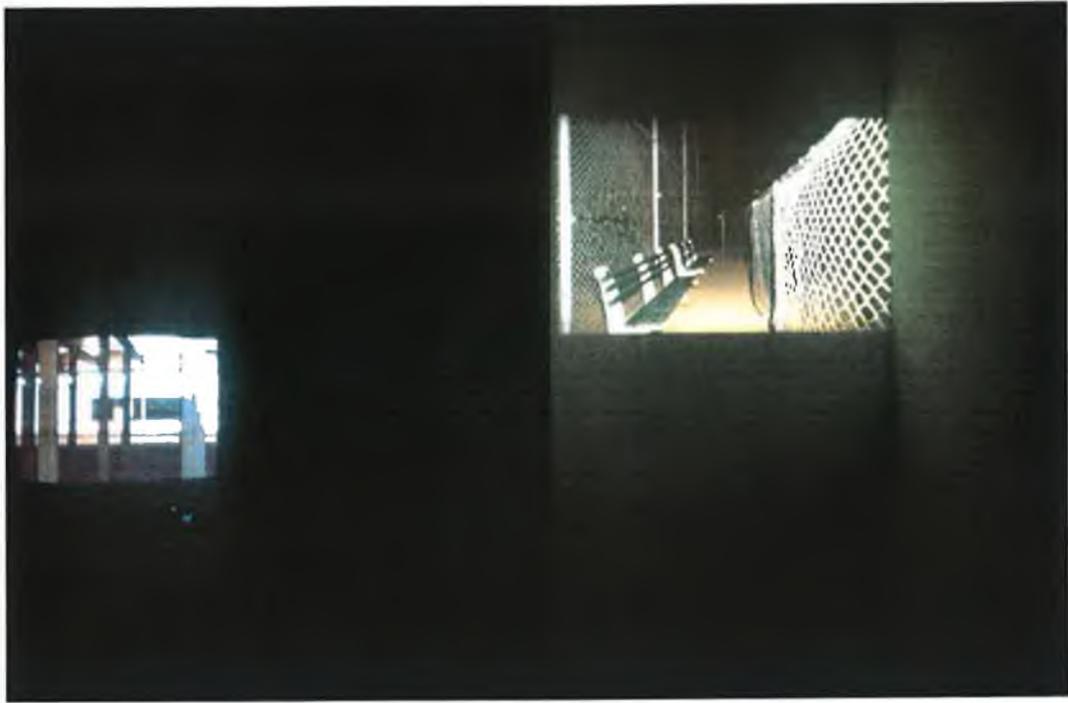
Fig. 73 Discordant... Hum, installation view

Thesis Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to study and answer a number of research questions. One of the primary motivations has been to establish the ground from which a critical cultural engagement (both theoretical and practical) with mass mediated images can operate at the present socio-historical juncture. In order to think through the context of analogue technologies envelopment into digital technologies I have maintained that this requires a longer look at the history of vision technologies and have argued for a more expanded field of research into the area of audio-visual culture. Implicit in this has been a critique of the rigidity of disciplinary boundaries within the academy. As was discussed in the introduction this is not to argue against being grounded in one discipline but rather to have a more complex understanding of what that grounding involves. What I have suggested is that, in the pragmatic haste of professional life, academics need to reflect on the gaps and omissions that will invariably haunt the field which disciplines construct.

As a basis for an exploration of the history of vision technologies I have adopted Giovanni Arrighi's periodisation of history and the four cycles of capitalist accumulation. Arrighi discusses how capitalism consolidated itself on a global scale, between the '50s and late '60s. In his discussion of the struggles for world domination within capitalism, he discusses how finance capital finally triumphed in the 1980s. Paul Willemen also suggests that this power struggle within the bourgeoisie has implications for theories related to the enlightenment. As he suggests, one of the primary aims of the enlightenment, as a complex ideological movement was to assist and advance the bourgeoisie's power struggle against the dominant control of the feudal aristocracy, and it's principle of hierarchal and divine power. The enlightenment produced discourses based on rationality (rather than myths and divine order) and powerful aspirations for human emancipation. In this configuration the industrial bourgeoisie were aided by discourses concerned with democracy and freedom. Through an aspirational progress narrative, the suggestion was, that the industrial development of society would benefit all, the bourgeoisie and the masses. The enlightenment then, as Willemen suggests, needs to be understood as a powerful discourse in displacing feudal absolutism and its rigid hierarchal structures. However, we also need to

understand how an enlightenment imaginary of universal rights was used as an immediate attack against feudalism and as an "anticipatory discourse." When capitalism finally triumphed over feudal aristocracy in the '50s, it no longer needed the anticipatory discourse of universal emancipation. This is witnessed in the widespread abandonment of large scale social policies, such as state ownership, free health and education for all etc. Thinking this through suggests a radical need to question how intellectual theories, which dismiss without question, all enlightenment narratives actually align themselves with finance capitalism.

The significance of understanding enlightenment discourses as both pragmatic and anticipatory, as compromise formations, also articulates a way of reading through modes of looking as also being complex configurations, which pull in different directions and need to be understood through ideas of montage, overlap and layering. In **Chapter 1, The Historical Force Lines of Mimesis** we examined a number of scopic regimes of modernity. Looking at linear perspectivalism and its articulation in digital discourses, the baroque, the camera obscura, and the Dutch art of describing, allowed us to examine how these scopic regimes articulate a viewing subject and are not separate, but are thoroughly immersed in ideologies which attempt to normalize vision. The importance of examining these scopic regimes and their corresponding "regime of subjectivity," following Willemen, was to address how these regimes continue to assert themselves in the present. By understanding their historical emergence we can also begin to track their alignment within particular discourses in the present and to understand how within the one film, for example, their will be a montage of multiple scopic regimes in play, all pulling in different directions, some functioning as modernizing forces others as archaiczing. In attempting to address the complexity of these cultural texts, both historically and contemporaneously requires a methodology which incorporates a reconceptualization of montage through diachronic and synchronic axes.

In **Chapter 2– The Crisis of Mimesis in Modernity**, the historical emergence of aesthetics was discussed within the wider context of the bourgeoisie's struggle with absolutism. Here, aesthetics as a discourse of the body shows clearly how mimesis is involved in the formation and disciplining of the bourgeois subject. This articulates the importance of

understanding mimesis anthropologically, beyond the confines of art and conventional discussions on aesthetics. In the context of the industrial bourgeoisie's increased success in consolidating its power, the control of the means of production aided and assisted its desire to control mental production through mass culture. Walter Benjamin's theory of experience, inflected through Raymond William's deployment of Gramsci's theory of hegemony indicates how the social complexities of cultural practices, which may appear disparate, operate efficiently through a non-sensuous resemblance in order to maintain power and control.

This social complexity was examined by looking at the rapid transformations in operation through industrialization and the effects of this on subjectivity. Especially useful here were Benjamin's theory of experience and mimesis. The discussion concentrated on Benjamin's account of the factory worker's need to protect her from sensory overload through a deadening of the senses. Benjamin suggests that the "historical nightmare of capitalism," is evident in how the factory worker's perception is separated from experience; history and memory are subsumed into a machine mimicry, which is constantly in the present. In Benjamin's theory of mimesis, iconic resemblance is not the issue; here rather, he concentrates on non-sensuous similarities and resemblances. Rather than an emphasis on the iconic, his discussion centres on contingency, the temporal and therefore indexical dimension of the image. Benjamin's discussion on contingency is important because it references how his theories are concerned with reading, montage and interpretation. For Benjamin, the industrialization of culture has compromised obvious and literal resemblances, making it politically important to explore how non-sensuous correspondences mobilize the viewer's political awareness. For example Mickey Mouse as the representation of "repressed pathologies of technological modernity."

Following on from our discussion in **Part 1– Mimesis and Modernity**, in **Part 2–Overlapping Montage Mainstream Cinema,** literal resemblances, (compromised through industrialization) are actively interrogated by exploring genre theory in film studies. As was argued in **Part 1**, multiple discourses, scopic regimes and regimes of subjectivity are encrusted on and through all cultural texts. In **Chapter 3– Genre Theory**

and Hollywood Film: 'Serial Killer Films' – a case study, we explored how the contingency of reading, following Benjamin will play a dynamic role in the way films are categorized. However, as suggested it is important to consider how the viewer is asked to interpret these films as participating in particular genres by marketing strategists. This presents a problem within academia, for the question arises, as to why, as independent intellectuals, we persist in following the directions of marketing managers to negotiate these films. Using 'serial killer films' as a case study, I suggest that while it is apparent that there is a type of sub-category in which these films can be identified, we need to realise however, narratives of serial killing exist in the western, comedy, horror, crime/thriller, supernatural/gothic, science fiction, action film and melodrama. Using 'serial killer films', I present a discussion on the significance of melodrama that should be understood as encompassing other genres within it. Given the centrality of melodrama to mainstream cultural production, 'serial killer films' while easily recognizable as horror films or thrillers are, overridingly, "dramas of modernization." Linda Williams' discussion on body genres and the relationship between melodramas, horror and pornography in their address to involuntary bodily responses is also important to attempts to understand these contemporary films. In our discussion we examined how the financial restructuring of Hollywood in the '70s was characterized by the 'mainstreaming of exploitation'. Many of the strategies employed in the production and marketing of films replicated formats from early cinema, in this context these body genres can be read through their alignment with earlier models of 'attractions'.

Chapter 4– Fantasies of Psychic and Physical Fragmentation in Mainstream Cinema closely examined two films, The *Silence of the Lambs* and *Manhunter*. In The *Silence of the Lambs* a number of discourses are attached to the film, for example, its articulation of homosexuality through the character Buffalo Bill and the divided perception of the film as both homophobic and feminist. The politics of labour was explored by an analysis of Clarice Starling's desires for professional advancement and how she is situated by both Crawford and Lector. As a means of displacing rigid genre boundaries discussed in **Chapter 3**, the discussion concentrated on how the discourse of professional advancement in *The Silence of the Lambs* has similarities to those evident in *Working Girl*. This chapter

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also explored how the serial killer is often articulated through aesthetics and art, and considered Lecter as a cipher for transnational capital. The main discussion on *The Silence of the Lambs* concerned itself with the narrative of the film and an engagement with other commentators who have written about it. However in the final part of the discussion on *The Silence of the Lambs*, rather than "narrativizing what is seen," we follow some of the points made by Laleen Jayamanne, towards re-emplacing the importance of concentrating on the image as image, and its filmic quality. Here we return to our earlier discussion on mimesis, different modes of looking and the senses as means of interpreting the film.

In the discussion of *Manhunter* the main emphasis is on the significantly specific presentation of technology. Here there is an excessive mapping of vision technology, through Dollarhyde's work with film, through to his domestic space, full of lunar landscapes, de-narrativized looped films of his victim which he projects on constant repeat and television screens which broadcast a constant stream of interference and white noise. In *Manhunter* discourses around technology are intimately linked to the everyday and, by extension, the televisual. In this context, television is understood as part of an "enclosed" system which includes a cluster of institutions which are connected to everyday life, like the "freeway and the shopping mall," as Margaret Morss pointed out. Following Mary Ann Doane's discussion of television's temporality as information, crisis, and catastrophe. In this discussion, catastrophe functions as structural system of discontinuities, and with this in mind discussed Dollarhyde as sign for televisual catastrophe.

These films operate as discursive bundles, which predominantly articulate worries around social cues and perception – can we believe what we see? As I suggest in the conclusion to **Chapter 4**, they can be read as "archaizing" in as much as there is nostalgia for a centralized authority, and even divine retribution. This is usually narrarativized in the context of the everyday, the family and its dissolution. The privileging of the nuclear family, parental authority and its alignment with religious authority is articulated through a poignantly nostalgic narrative of its destruction, by omnipotent outside forces, at once random and highly ordered. These films also function as significant conduits for

displaying the need for more power and control by the state. This usually occurs through a mimetic doubling between the serial killer and the state institutions and its representatives.

In Part 3, Montage and The 'Body of The Film': Documentary Fiction in Moving-Image Installations the discussion looked at films, moving-image installation and CD-Rom in the museum. In the introduction to this thesis I outlined why there was a need to combine research on mainstream cinema and moving-image. Here, it is suggested, that we need to develop methodologies, which incorporate a comparative approach, which is uncommon at present in film studies. And to that extent my thesis has attempted to articulate how a 'comparative film studies' model may be approached. Following Willemen's discussion on the significance of employing a comparative model, the 'universal' ground on which to make any comparisons are an "encounter with capitalism" and the industrialization of culture. Following this, it becomes clear why Benjamin's theory of experience and his discussion on non-sensuous correspondences provides a useful strategy in dismantling the rigidity of disciplines. This was also significant in discussing the work of Buckingham, Huyghe and Marker who all incorporate an alignment, (some more pronounced than others) with Benjamin's theories.

As Arrighi clarified, the '50s was the point at which the bourgeoisie finally consolidated its power from the hands of a feudal aristocracy. This is readily apparent in how the "encounter with capitalism" has accelerated since then. The shift in power within the ranks of capitalism, from industrial to finance has been discussed in terms of both its ramifications in mainstream cinema from the '70s on and in the art world. In the introduction to **Part 3**, I suggested a number of practices, which articulate this shift, such as corporate sponsorship and the importance placed on the role of the curator. While corporate sponsorship has been researched by Chin-tao Wu and others, how the shift in power to finance capital is articulated through, and also effects, certain types of practices, needs more research.

The particular works I looked at, *Situation Leading to a Story*, *The Third Memory*, Immemory and *discordant...hum*, are all either intent on *documenting* aspects of mainstream cinema, or in exploring forgotten histories, that were evident in cinema's

emergence but which were never fully realized, as Jean-Luc Godard suggested. An important non-sensuous correspondence linking these distinct works has been a development towards what Susan Buck-Morss refers to as a form of critical cognition. In her interpretation of Benjamin's *Artwork essay* examined in **Chapter 2**, the dominant effects of industrialization in general and the industrialization of culture in particular is a form of anaesthetics. In this context a critical cognition is one, which is aware of the political importance of history and memory

Returning to Benjamin's *Artwork essay* and his suggestion that 'art' is no longer tenable, is also another way of articulating why a distinction made between "high art" and mainstream culture is irrelevant, (and all the more reason for developing ways to discuss them in tandem). If this was evident to Benjamin in 1936, it is even more apparent now in the era of the blockbuster exhibitions etc. And yet, it is important to point out, that while these four examples are presented as models for a critical, materialist, anthropological practice, the work does not address directly its institutional positioning as "high art." While I think this is an important criticism that needs to be acknowledged, it was beyond the possibilities of this research project to examine this issue in any significant way.

In developing a discussion around a comparative model for film studies which includes a balanced discussion on both mainstream cinema and the moving-image in what, we should now, arguably define, as mainstream museums many areas of further research have become evident. As mentioned above, the models of practice and their alignment with the desires of finance capital in mainstream museums is a significant area that needs more discussion. Equally important, is the development of comparative research projects, which analyse how capitalism "thrives on its ability to advance and advocate very different sets of values as appropriate for different regions, people and sectors of the economy [...]" [858] With this in mind, developing from my own particular interests, an important research area would be what are the different and distinct values advocated for viewers within the areas of film and moving-image installations in mainstream cinema and museums. Also of significant value would be a comparative analysis of film that documents how capitalism has very disparate

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[858] Paul Willemen, "Detouring through Korean cinema," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 3.2 (2002):168.

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strategies put in play for people of different regions. Thinking of this brings to mind, the opening lines of a film, *Reassemblage* (1982) by Trinh T. Minh-Ha,

> Scarcely twenty years were enough to make two billion people
> define themselves as underdeveloped.
>
> I do not intend to speak about
> Just near by
>
> The Casamance
> Sun and Palms
> The Part of Senegal where tourist settlements flourish
>
> A film about what? my friends ask
> A film about Senegal; but what in Senegal

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Hitcher The, Robert Harmon (1986)

Historie(s) du cinema , Jean Luc Godard (1998)

Immemory , Chris Marker (1998)

In Dreams, Neil Jordan (1999)

In Praise of Love, Jean Luc Goddard (2001)

Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles, Neil Jordan (1994)

La Tache Aveugle ,James Coleman, *(1978-90)*

La Vie de Jeanne d'Arc, Carl Theodor Dreyer (1927)

Little Drummer Girl The, George Roy Hill (1984)

Little Frank and His Carp Andrea Fraser (2001)

Live and Let Die, Guy Hamilton (1973)

M, Fritz Lang *(1931)*

Man Bites Dog , Rémy Belvaux André Bonzel (1992)

Man with a Movie Camera, Dziga Vertov (1929)

Manhunter, Michael Mann (1988)

Maximum Risk, Ringo Lam (1996)

Meet the Parents, Jay Roach (2000)

Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc, La, Marco de Gastyne (1929)

Mining the Museum, Fred Wilson, (1992).

Minus Man The, Hampton Fancher (1999)

Modern Times, Charles Chaplin (1936)

Monsieur Verdoux, Charles Chaplin (1947)

Nanook of the North, Robert Flaherty (1922)

Natural Born Killers, Oliver Stone (1994)

Net, The, Irwin Winkler (1995)

Night of the Hunter The, Charles Laughton (1955)

Night Watch, Ole Bornedal (1997)

No Way to Treat a Lady, Jack Smight (1968)

Office Killer, Cindy Sherman (1997)

Old Place, The, Jean-Luc Godard (1999)

Pandora's Box, Georg Wilhelm Pabst (1929)

Peeping Tom, Michael Powell *(1959)*

Pelican Brief The, Alan J. Pakula (1993)

Perils of Our Girl Reporters The (series1917)

Perils of Pauline The (series1914)

Profiler, Cynthia Saunders (NBC 1996-1997, DVD 2003)

Psycho , Alfred Hitchcock (1960)

Punctuations of Dehiscence, Orla Ryan (1995)

Reassemblage, Trinh T. Minh-Ha (1982)

Rebecca , Alfred Hitchcock (1940)

Red Dragon, Brett Ratner (2002)

Relentless 3, James Lemmo (1993)

Remains of the Day The, James Ivory (1993)

Repulsion, Roman Polanski (1965)

Robo-Cop, Paul Verboeven (1987)

Roger and Me, Michael Moore (1989)

San Soleil, Chris Marker (1983)

Seven, David Fincher (1995)

Shadow of a Doubt, Alfred Hitchcock (1943)

Silence of the Lambs, Jonathan Demme (1990)

Situation Leading to a Story ,Matthew Buckingham(1998)

Sleepless in Seattle, Nora Ephron (1993)

Snow White Lucie, Pierre Huyghe (1997)

Stage Coach hold-up in the Days of '49, Edwin S. Porter(1901)

Stepfather The, Joseph Ruben (1987)

Strange Days, Kathryn Bigelow (1995)

Sudden Death, Peter Hyams (1995)

Terminator, James Cameron(1984)

Texas Chainsaw Massacre The, Tobe Hooper (1974).

Third Memory The, Pierre Huyghe (2000)

Three on a Meathook, William Girdler (1972)

Tin Star The, Anthony Mann (1957)

Towering Inferno The, John Guillermin Irwin Allen (1974)

Truth About Abraham Lincoln The, Matthew Buckingham (1992)

Triumph of the Will, Leni Riefenstahl (1935)

Two Mrs. Carrolls The , Peter Godfrey (1947)

24 Hour Psycho, Douglas Gordon (1993)

 Unforgiven, Clint Eastwood (1992)

Vampyr, Carl Theodor Dreyer (1931)

Virtuosity, Brett Leonard (1995)

Vertigo, Alfred Hitchcock (1958)

Working Girl, Mike Nichols (1988)

We Sell professional Lighting, Orla Ryan (1997)

Wings, William A. Wellman (1927)

You've Got Mail, Nora Ephron (1998)

Zapping Zone, Chris Marker (1989-1990)

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Appendix

Peter Bürger's Discussion on the aesthetics of genius in *The Decline of Modernism*
(1992):57-69.

In his discussion of the aesthetics of genius in the eighteenth century, Peter Bürger remarks
on its importance to art discourses ever since.[1] Commenting on the fact that a socio-
historical explanation, though at first seeming a simple matter, by employing for example,
already available discourses on the transition from feudalism to bourgeois society, is in fact
more complex, and should be understood as a compromise formation. Bürger argues, that
there are many interpretative explanations available which have equal validity. Referring to
Saint-Lambert's article on "Genie" the first characteristic of the genius is his unlimited
interest in all kinds of phenomena. The second characteristic of the genius is his capacity to
remember "a variety of sensuous experience " and to reproduce them.[2] Bürger remarks that
up to this point Saint-Lambert's text merely presents a "particular way of relating to
reality," one which has an expanded and more elaborate way of experiencing reality than
that experienced by the majority. Bürger also makes the point that this emphasised the
exceptional quality of the genius as opposed to asking why the majority experience is so
limited.

Bürger also emphasises the opposition between "taste" and "genius" in Saint Lambert's text.
Although there had been criticism of classical rules before this, the assumption was still
very much that rules were necessary: the main terms of reference of using new principles
would be whether the audience took pleasure in what had been produced. However, with
texts such as Saint-Lambert's, a shift occurs where the conformity to rules is seen as too
conventional. In contrast, the genius combines "irregularity and subliminity."[3] In this shift,
the emergence of the aesthetics of genius displaces the importance put on the audiences'
reception of the work.

Looking at the distinction being made between "taste" and "genius," how for Saint-
Lambert, taste follows schematically in place with convention, requires looking at how
taste functioned between rules on the one hand and spontaneous judgement on the other.
In the 17th century, aesthetic theories discussed taste as both subjective and universal, or

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[1]Peter Bürger, *The Decline of Modernism*, Cambridge, (1992):57-69.
[2]Ibid, 60.
[3]Ibid, 61.

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as a compromise formation between status (universal judgement) and subjective (individualism). Immanuel Kant, writing in his *Critique of Judgement*, published in 1793 writes,

> Everyone must allow that a judgement on the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest is very partial and not a pure judgement of taste. One must not be in the least prepossessed in favour of the real existence of the thing, but must preserve complete indifference in this respect, in order to play the matter of judge in matters of taste.[4]

While Kant maintains that point of view and the positioning of the subject are central to knowledge, in his earlier *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1787, he suggests aesthetic judgements require a "universal subjectivity."[5] Terry Eagleton discussing this writes,

> What aesthetic judgement signifies for Kant is essentially a form of altruism. In responding to an artefact, or to natural beauty, I place my own contingent aversions and appetencies in brackets, putting myself instead in everyone else's place and thus judging from the standpoint of a universal subjectivity.[6]

Given this we can see why taste, with its application to the universal position would be separated from the concept of genius. Saint-Lambert's contrasting of "taste" and "genius" is developed further by his opposition between imagination and philosophy. Here the logic required for philosophical coherence is contrasted with the passionate characteristics of the imagination. Discussing the debates occurring in the eighteenth century Bürger writes,

> We only really encounter something new when enthusiasm and passion are no longer understood as capacities that are merely tolerated in the name of poetic licence but finally come to represent the essential definition of the genius itself, and when the latter thereby enters into opposition to the rationality which prevails in science and in everyday life.[7]

In his discussion of Diderot's concept of great poetry as dependent on "archaic social conditions" rather than "contemporary civilisation," Bürger remarks how Diderot must

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[4]Immanuel Kant, "Critique of Judgement," *The Philosophy of Kant*, ed. Carl J. Friedrich, (1993):315.
[5]Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, (1990):97.
[6]Ibid, 97.
[7]Bürger, *The Decline of Modernism*, 63.

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"dehistoricize" this as "periods of catastrophe." In doing this he separates great poetry from the Enlightenment project. As Bürger writes, "poetry [or genius] in this sense, would then represent an archaic form of activity at odds with the developmental tendencies of a society which is based upon the advances of science and technology."[8] In developing his discussion Bürger comments that while the "concept of poetic madness was familiar to the proponents of the aesthetics of genius," articulating this tradition from Renaissance poetics does not explain its revival at that socio-historical juncture, or its centrality to aesthetics and its continued "validity for art as a bourgeois institution subsequently."[9] Bürger writes,

> One should therefore seriously consider whether or not in fact a nostalgic return on the part of bourgeois intellectuals to an ancient feudal (pre-absolutist) independence might play a role in the concept of freedom which underlies the aesthetics of genius.[10]

Interpretations of the aesthetics of genius which correlate the genius' need for freedom with the entrepreneur's demand for economic freedom fail to discuss the late emergence of the concept of genius while the correlated "economic process of development [...] took place over a period of 200 years."[11]Equally if the concept of genius is associated to the Renaissance concept of poetic madness, developed in opposition to feudalism, why would it remain as a central and "exemplary function" if the society it was opposed to no longer existed.

Bürger refers to Klaus Scherpe and his interpretation of the Sturm und Drang movement as a possible means of resolving the problem of interpretation mentioned above. This oppositional literary movement comprising a younger generation of bourgeois intellectuals "did not correspond at all to the initiatives of a bourgeois class bent on radical change." Based on Scherpe's account, Bürger suggests that the concept of genius is a reaction against the "self-sufficiency of the bourgeois class within a still feudal context" rather than a revolt against feudalism.[12] Bürger continues that there are still questions regarding Scherpe's interpretation, and writes,

> The protest of Sturm und Drang against the German bourgeoisie is not intended to further the realization of the bourgeois-capitalist

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[8]Ibid,65.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Ibid, 66.
[11]Ibid.
[12]Ibid,67.

mode of production. On the contrary, it already registers those forms of alienation which this system produces: the elimination of regional peculiarities through central administration, the destruction of established traditions through rational criticism and the subjection of interpersonal relationships to the principle of the maximization of profit.[13]

What this suggests to Bürger is that this critique of alienation incurred by new forms of production is pronounced because of a "persistence of pre-capitalist conditions of life in the German territories," making intellectuals acutely aware of the transition occurring. A solution to the interpretative problem of whether the concept of genius is a protest directed against feudalism or bourgeois society can be found by examining the "phenomena under attack from the radical cultural critique" of the aesthetics of genius.[14] The opposition to aesthetic rules is primarily against aristocratic-courtly conventions. However Bürger points out that the "status of rules" concerning feudal-absolutist literature is constituted through the rationalism of the bourgeois. This presents a paradox in which the opposition is to bourgeois elements existing within literature as a feudal-absolutist institution. For Bürger, evident here is a "contradictory historical phenomena." He refers to Rousseau's social critique to further elaborate on this, referring to the way in which luxury is, on the one hand, feudal display presenting "conspicuous consumption as a status symbol" and therefore ripe for criticism. However on the other hand, it also presupposes "a certain level of development in the bourgeois mode of production and "thus in attacking feudal prestige consumption the critique also strikes at one of the motivating forces of the capitalist economic system."[15]

The social critique by Rousseau and similarly the concept of genius, are directed against a "contradictory object, part feudal part bourgeois."[16] Taking the two main critiques evident in the concept of genius, Bürger articulates clearly how the critique is against both feudal and bourgeois. As we have seen concerning the rules of feudal absolutist poetics means also attacking bourgeois rationalism. Equally with the nature-culture opposition, the critique targets not only feudal culture but also the division of labour and the restrictions this imposes on experience. Bürger maintains it is because the concept of genius critiques social conditions "in which bourgeois 'content' has been developed beneath a feudal 'husk'"

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[13]Ibid, 67-68.
[14]Ibid, 68.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

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that allows it to function as a concept once the bourgeois model has become dominant.[17] In this context, Bürger 's discussion demonstrates clearly how cultural practices such as the concept of genius should be understood as "condensation points, intricate crossroads where a multiplicity of socially and historically orientated discourses intersect."[18]

[17]Ibid, p.69.

[18] Paul Willemen, *Regimes of Subjectivity*, 106.