Lund University
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Cinema And Its Outside
Making A Deleuzean Sense of Moving Images

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Abstract

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Aim of the study: The overall aim of the study was to develop a theoretical understanding of how films in general and the photographic image in particular alter the way we conceive of and relate to our environment. Setting of where social constructivism, Cartesian dualism and textualism ends, the essay brings forward an alternative approach to cultural experience and identity construction.

Conclusion: With the advent of the moving photographic image, the way we relate to what is real and what is not changed dramatically. In a mediated society where the image is all around us, the distinction between what is fiction and what is not has become more or less dissolved turning real life into an object for scrutiny and disbelief. In this way the implications of the reproducible image is two-folded; it passes on as a force overcoming mental and physical space and distance, and as an alienating force creating fragmentation and increasing divisions between individuals thus altering the subject's relation to its environment. In essence, the techniques of photographic art, as represented in cinema, has deepened and widened our conception of the outside world and our place in it.

Keywords: Cinema, Affect, Cultural Theory, Sociological Theory, The Moving Image, Gilles Deleuze

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Table of Contents

Preface

Remember that it is *just a film*, it is not *for real*'. The words still echo in my mind from having seen a scary movie in my early childhood. A friend and me had somehow got hold of a film in which a satanic cult sacrificed infants in diabolic rituals, and I can still remember the images in which the helpless child screams helplessly when being cut by sharp knives. And even though we knew that the film would give us long lasting nightmares, my friend and me sat, like children in front of an open fire or a bonfire, as if glued to the screen, watching and examining every little detail of the ritual. I guess that I am not the first one who has heard these words ("it is not for real", "it is just fiction" etc.) from a parent, a friend or anyone who, together with you has seen a disturbing, shocking film. The sensation of finding oneself in front of the screen, watching and hearing, but above all; feeling, often makes one wonder what this Other real of which your peers speak really is, if not the disturbing presence of the here and now.

Everyday, in our western(ized) culture, people like you and me are participating in the biggest spectacle of them all. In the course of everyday life we pretend, we act, and we make believe.[1] Our sense of this spectacle, this reality, stems partly or as some (Baudrillard 1994, Sontag 1979) would argue, mainly from the vast amount of images produced by the culture industry. The 'stage' is not restricted to the theatre or the film studio in Hollywood rather, it is omnipresent. No wonder then that, in some sociological traditions, one speaks of performative or dramaturgical approaches and discourses[2]. In this sense, we live in a culture that is above all, and evidently, symbolic. However, what happens when this culture is taken for, or indeed *is*, what we tend to call our (social) reality? When we live our lives through it as though it were natural, i.e. given by nature?

This essay is written with the conception that there are things in culture and in the world that we cannot grasp with the tools given by so-called traditional[3] social theory and sociological inquiry. The question is really whether we can interpret and/or *understand* the object at all, in "its 'unreasonableness', that is in its plurality, its singularity, its movement, its materiality etc." (Johansson 2003: 31)? The so-called linguistic turn in social and cultural theory has, together with the constructivist approach in philosophy, brought about many interesting insights in the relation between mind and society, self and other.[4] However, as Michael Taussig proposes; isn't there anything *beyond* constructivism, and "in constructions place –what? No more invention, or more invention?" (Taussig 1993:xvi). What will happen if we (continue to) act as if we are not aware of the

arbitrary nature of the sign, or, perhaps even more intriguing, abolish it and take the relation for ontologically natural and given? Today, "we dissimulate. We act and have to act as if mischief were not afoot in the kingdom of the real and that all around the ground lay firm" (ibid. xvii). The problem being here that, as Brian Massumi reminds us, "the ground is full of movement…Any geologist will tell you that the ground is anything but stable." (Massumi 2002: 10) Nature construed as "the normative self-regulation" (ibid 11) of nature itself is not a cultural or social construction, as some theories would have it. The process, by which reality is mediated, through representation and simulation, is thus broken down. Deconstructionism and postmodernism has done nothing to rid our concepts and the categories by which we live. At most, it has taught us that sex, race, class etc are all contingent and arbitrary social constructions. [5] But why then do we still find ourselves reproducing and living a socially constructed li(f)e knowing that there is, as the Saussurian mantra goes, no natural relation between the signifier and the signified? (Bignell 2002: 8-9)

Introduction

> We write only at the frontiers of our knowledge, at the border which separates our knowledge from our ignorance and transforms the one into the other. Only in this manner are we resolved to write.
>
> Gilles Deleuze 1994: xxi

During the last couple of years, being a student in Media and communication studies and today in Cultural Studies I feel that I have embraced and come to turns with the idea that the social reality as we know it is, in some way or another, understood and constructed through discourse, signifying practices and representation[6]. And further that the categories by which we live our lives and our principles of organization are not natural or given but arbitrary and contingent. "All that is solid melts into air" as Marx and Engels put it in a famous phrase, pointing to the instability of social relations. (Marx & Engels 1848) Everything that we take for granted in our social life could have been, will be, and surely is –in some other's opinion or from someone else's point of view- in another way and understood differently.[7] This insight is, to put it modestly, dazzling and provoking. What it tells us is that our sense of the social reality is, and never could be, the only one or even the correct one. It also tells us that we are in some way or another a product of outer circumstances of which we are not always aware. But this is only one side of the coin. And it is an idea or a way of

thinking that in some sense could be understood as a reaction towards disciplines that focus upon fundamentally other aspects of reality and human agency such as biology, neuroscience, physics and religion.

For some time there has been in Cultural Studies a critical understanding of the human body as the (mental and material) surface upon which different practices and powers are forced and invoked.[8] Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977) is a good example of how the construction of a disciplinary society, practices of the body and a technique of the senses evolve simultaneously and interact in institutions such as the prison, the school, and the factory. More generally, Foucault shows how power is distributed and constructed through and upon the body. However, as Foucault shows, there is also the material and physical construction of the *Panopticon* –the omnipresent and invisible 'eye' of power- and its interplay with human action, which make way for this transformation, this redistribution of powers and the senses. The Panopticon mechanism is, to speak with Marshall McLuhan (1964), 'an extension of man' which "arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately." (Foucault 1977:200). What is interesting here is that an material and in some ways autonomous mechanism affects the mind and the way we think and feel; inside becomes outside and vice versa It alters the way we see the world and the way that we make sense of our place in it as it centers and focuses the attention of human subjects. With the words of McLuhan: 'the medium is the message' here in the sense that the form of a particular medium, i.e. the mechanism or the substance through which a 'message' is transmitted, in some ways determines its cultural and social implications. The content of the medium is, from McLuhan's point of view, nothing but another medium –in this case the eye. (1964: 19)

What then could sociology and Cultural Studies learn from an approach that focuses upon the relation between media (seen here neither as a 'text' nor as a representation but rather as a mechanism with which humans interact and intersect, and further as a technology which alter and de- and re-naturalize reality as we know it) and the human body? It is my opinion here that we cannot separate the historical developments of different media such as writing, photography and film from the genealogy of human subjectivity[9]. Walter Benjamin writes that "the manner in which human sense perception is organised, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well." (1968: 222). One could say that the way we experience reality is a product of both social and historical circumstances. This said, there is also immediacy in perception and experience, which in turn is 'inherent' in the mechanism of cognition. This primacy and the directness of the so-called lived experience is in this sense –for better or worse,

but nevertheless undeniably– "continuous, immediate and, at least to some extent, unavoidable" (Thompson 1995: 229). Alongside the development of reproducible media, such as photography, film and other recording devices, one could argue that lived experience finds its equivalent in the so-called mediated experience. Thompson argues here that the two are negotiated and incorporated in subjectivity and the construction of the self according to a "structure of relevance" (ibid: 229-231) Implicit in this assumption lies an idea of separation between the authenticity of the lived experience and the fabricated and simulated mediated experience. What I want to stress here and in the following pages, is that the "shock-effect", of which Benjamin (1968: 238, 240) writes and which, according to him, is what cinema is all about, shakes the authority and the authenticity in lived experience by its very foundations.

To summarize, this essay can be seen then as an attempt to deal with the relation between and the intersection of culture and technology, media and body. I will deal with these questions by evoking ideas and theories that stress the importance of perception and cognition, bringing up empirical examples from contemporary culture and from particular events and spectacles that I find significant for my inquiry. In some ways then this essay could be seen as theoretical, but it is also my opinion that the theories that I employ have to be seen in the light of some empirical material.

Structure of Thesis

My aim has been to let the structure of this thesis reflect the way that I have worked in this study. Perhaps some would call the procedure unorthodox, unacademic or unstructured; I would like to call it pragmatic. The theories and the methods employed are seen, not as separate entities, but as integrated wholes. In the same way, I have looked upon the ontological and the epistemological considerations as opposite sides of the same coin. In this sense, some of the ideas put forward will inevitably be repeated although in different guises and contexts. However, the overall structure is as follows:

The subsequent part of the study should be seen, first and foremost, as an introduction to the theoretical and methodological assumptions that have been made in relation to the topic of the study. They also work as a toolbox or guideline to the following parts. As such, it is both a statement of 'my own', subjective ideas about what counts as relevant as well as a reflective and elaborated account on these ideas. Further, they give to the reader an insight to the considerations that have been worked with along the way. As a general thought I have tried to work within a thematic

structure, discussing various, seemingly disparate, concepts and ideas such as affect and representation; non-identity; processuality, movement and change; thought as image, image as thought; and distance, proximity and experience. Encompassing these ideas and concepts are the influences of Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, Marshall McLuhan and Walter Benjamin to name a few.

The second part of the thesis consists of an analytical account on three films. Here, the ideas employed in the first part will meet with the empirical material found in these films. These films are: *Irreversible* (2002), *Time Code* (2000), and *Memento* (2000). As in part one of the thesis, these films are worked with in a thematic and synthesised structure. In other words I try to extricate some concepts and ideas from the films that, in turn, are discuss from different approaches. What I try to show here is that these concepts, which derive from the films, can be seen from a greater perspective having an impact on social and cultural theory in general.

The final part of the thesis consists of a general discussion upon the topic. This part could be seen both as a conclusion as well as theoretical and methodological proposition for future studies. A deeper theoretical understanding of the topic will be developed. Further, there will be suggestions of how the topic at hand relates to social and cultural theory at large.

Material

> The mere presence of a spectator . . . is a violation
>
> Jacques Derrida 1998: 113

This spectator of which Derrida writes –originally embodying a critique on the work of anthropologist Levi Strauss, and, perhaps more generally, on scientific ethics and politics– could easily be equated with me being a student at the university. Without making this essay seem too important or magnificent, I suggest that what I do and what all those who are involved in scientific work do, is to make violence upon the world. We force our habitual categories upon whatever deviates from the normal, thus squeezing the objects and its content to fit the form, like the child when it tries to fit pieces of a jigsaw puzzle in the wrong place[10]. More generally the spectator is someone who makes observations, draws conclusions and, as is the case with most scientific work, writes this down and presents it to his or her fellow workers. As I see it, what Derrida is pointing at here is that all knowledge involves the intersection of, and relation between, a subject and an object[11]. The one cannot exist without the other. So to study an *object*, to give an objective account on

something -that is; to write about it; to describe it; to analyse it; or just to look at it- always entails the inevitable and, with Derrida's words violating, presence of a *subject*.

Why then have I chosen the three films mentioned above? This question is of course crucial since the material used in the essay will alter and affect its results. Firstly, I want to make clear that I do not intend to represent an objective or neutral subject in this matter. What I want to do is, above all, to make the argument put forward *work*. All choices and considerations are, as Derrida reminds us in the quote above, to a greater or lesser degree, subjective. Further, these three films all made a great impact on me when I saw them for the first time. They all stood out as being different and creative, either due to their deviant story-lines or the cinematic technique employed in them. Thus they all push the limits of convention in cinema[12].

Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to elaborate a theoretical framework in which films and cultural experience can be studied and conceived in a different way than in traditional film theory and audience oriented research.[13] The main purpose here is (1) to put forward an alternative to textualism (which reduces culture to signifying processes through the construction of meaning, ignoring the material and affective elements of culture). And (2) to offer a critical reading of the ontological dualism prevalent in modern social theory, inserting in its stead a monist ontology found in, among others, Deleuze, Spinoza and Bergson. Finally, the aim of the study is (3) to show how films in general, and the cinematic technique in particular, alters the way we conceive of reality, our selves and others. These three points however are in no way separated structurally in the thesis.

Research questions and problems

The questions that have been dealt with in this thesis are neither singular nor easy to pin down. As I see it, there is more to culture than signification and interpretation. And there is more to the body and the mind than there is for us to know, instinctively and counsciously, about it. Most of the "things" that happen to and inside our bodies are processed on a subconscious level, including the process through which outer stimuli becomes conscious and reactive response.

Traditional models of communication create a distinct conceptualization of objects and subjects, or audience and performance as separate and often opposing entities. I will argue that communication is what takes part *in-between* quantities such as the subject and the object. The process of

communication is thus that event which takes place between the text and the reader, or the film and the audience. This is the place (or the "non-place") where meaning and identity is constructed. Thus it is *in* the meeting *between* the text and the reader that any-thing called meaning is constructed.

> How can we approach cultural "texts", such as films, in a way that is different from text-oriented (hermeneutic) discourses, participant observation and reception-analysis?
>
> How can we *use* philosophy as a means of overlapping and reformulating concepts such as identity, representation, subject(ivity), space, time and culture in social and cultural theory today?
>
> How can we thus form an alternative to textualism, ontological dualism and hermeneutics. And what concepts will be necessary for such an approach?

Cinema or the art of reproducing reality through film and photography is throughout this thesis seen, first and foremost as a technology that alters the way that we look at and understand social reality. As such it has a great impact upon our understanding of our selves, others and our being-in-the-world. What is does is to change our relation to, and conceptualization of, reality in itself.

The questions above are incorporated within the text as it unfolds and consequently they should not be seen as following each other chronologically throughout the text. Thus, it is my hope that the totality of this essay should be greater than the parts of it.

For the reader it could be noted that the text in itself should be read as an alternative to a textualist/discursive or constructivist approach. I do not intend to give a full account on these perspectives, but when it is found necessary I will develop some of the thoughts belonging to them in the notes.

A Note on Method and Theory

> If you know where you will end up when you begin, nothing has happened in the meantime. You have to be willing to surprise yourself writing things you didn't think you thought… You have to get so caught up in the flow of your writing that is ceases at moments to be recognizable to you as your own.
>
> Brian Massumi 2002:18

To take Brian Massumi by the words is perhaps to hold the process of writing and research as a utopian, and even romanticized practice. To go outside oneself –is this really conceivable, and if so, what does this mean? I find Massumi's words to be inspiring in the sense that they do not restrict

writing or thinking to formalization or homogenization. Inventing and thinking, constructing problems and questions –this is what research and writing should be all about. But still: I, me, you, the author, the reader etc. –we're not blank sheets of paper, no *tabula rasa*. As I approach a field I have my own interests, experiences, points of view and cultural capital to take into account. In this way the distinction between the researcher (the subject) and the researched (the object) is neither clear nor given. I become part of what I set out to study as well as it is and becomes a part of me[14].

Two words: ontology and epistemology; the knowledge and assumptions of what there is to know in the world and the way in which we can get knowledge of it. Do we have to discuss these concepts?, why do I bring them up here in a thesis in sociology?, and what do these two words have to do with the topic being discussed in this thesis? "Instead of asking, 'what can we know?' –a properly philosophical question– cultural studies must ask, 'what can philosophy *do*?'" (Crofts Wiley 2005: 69) All theory and scientific work is based upon assumptions and philosophical concepts. One of the main tasks for cultural studies has always been to critically reformulate and contest the political and intellectual state of being. As such it has tried to develop a framework in which relations of power are dismantled and, consequently, the distance between the practices of the academy and 'ordinary people' is diminished.[15] The problem here is first and foremost one of ontological nature. As Crofts Wiley puts it "cultural studies has retained many modernist assumptions" while at the same time seeking to "extricate it [cultural studies] from the white, bourgeois, Anglocentric and patriarchal commitments of modernism and to construct an alternative liberating practice of knowledge production and politics" (ibid. 64) There is thus an inherent discrepancy between the goals and the means in this ongoing discussion. What we need to do here is to rework our assumptions and the concepts that they involve in order to get beyond this stagnation in both theory and practice. The other problem, that of epistemology, is subtler. How do we get knowledge of the world? The researcher is not outside the object of research, but rather becomes part of it, altering it and ultimately constructs it through discourse and practice. In this way, knowledge is always situated and "inside". As will become clear to the reader, the method used in this essay is not separable from theory; they form integrated parts of a greater totality. Perhaps one could name this method "dialectical", bridging the gap between *thesis* and *antithesis* thus constructing a *synthetisized* body of text and theory.[16]

My vantage point in this thesis stems from an interest in the relation between mediated and lived experience. With the ever-increasing dissemination of new media technology, the intersection of media in everyday life is today more present than ever in late-capitalism societies[17]. We are as

dependent upon our media as they are dependant upon us. One could argue, and in some ways be right in doing so, that the formerly solid distinction (were there ever one) between what counts as *real* and what does not, has become increasingly blurred. How then could this assertion be researched? Clearly one could spend a vast period of time conducting fieldwork or performing interviews with audiences asking them if and how they acknowledge this matter. Further one could look to other media such as newspapers, radio or Internet[18]. My reason for *not* doing this is first and foremost pragmatic but I also find the theoretical material within the field in which I am interested too underdeveloped or rather too inconsistent, problematic and blurry. For Richard Rorty, representing the American neo-pragmatists, the alleged difference between science and art is merely a difference in genre. Every account on this thing we call reality is, according to Rorty, equally valid and the supposedly difference between appearance (art, fiction) and reality (science, 'hard' knowledge) is a question of convention. (Rorty 2003: 33-60) The main point here is that every statement has its very own validity and reliability and its own "regime of truth" to speak with the words of Michel Foucault.

   By evoking examples, both from my own experiences and from the empirical world outside my own subjectivity, I will let the theories discussed in this paper be put in a context. To put it simple one could argue that what I do is to evoke 'pure' theoretical illustrations thus creating particular, extreme types or Weberian 'ideal types' (Swingewood 2000: 91-93) from which the general can be extracted. It is thus my opinion that the ideas put forward in this thesis rightly could be applied to more general relations and situations, even though they appear here as edgy, singular and abstract. This method, I believe, is the most fruitful if one wants abstract theories to become graspable and comprehendible. Further these examples, however subjective and specific they may be, I think can be seen as empirical in some sense of the word.[19] This is also the reason why I evoke both general and specific examples, so that I do not merely make general assumptions from specific and unique experiences. By moving continuously between the general and the detail, it is my aim here to show how generality and particularity are interconnected and that the distinction between the two is nothing but an illusion (Adorno & Horkheimer 1944: 32). With this method, usually referred to as dialectical, no difference is made between the processes of explaining and understanding: to explain something is to understand it and vice versa. It is only through an explanation of a problem that we can understand it. There is, according to Paul Riceour, a needless dualistic distinction between the two concepts of understanding and explanation. Riceour suggests instead that they are part of a dialectical process. (Johansson & Miegel 2002: 191)

In the second part of the thesis one might argue that the films that I have used as material are nothing but general in the sense that they are neither ordinary nor are they expressions of contemporary tendencies within culture. Quite to the contrary; I have used rather extreme, innovative or deviant films in which both cinematic technology and the plots deviate from the ordinary. This way of dealing with the topic encapsulates the assertion that films and cinematic techniques can and do alter the state of things, our subjectivity, and techniques of perception and observation. (Connolly 2002: xiii)

"In recent years", argues Gregory Flaxman, "film theory has more or less gone underground: the tenets of semiotics, psychoanalysis, and (Althusserian) Marxism are still called upon but not with the same conviction… In their stead, historicism, spectator studies, cultural studies, and cognitivism have come to dominate the field." (Flaxman 2000:7). Isn't it also true, as Flaxman continues to argue, that "the cinema is understood (tacitly but perhaps even more firmly than ever before) as a system of re-presentation"(ibid: 7)? What I set out to do here in this thesis is to put focus on Gilles Deleuze's notion of the cinema as non-representative. Not seeing it as mere mimesis, reflecting and reconstructing reality. But instead creating new realities and new possibilities. I take the argument laid forward by William E. Connolly as crucial. "Film analysis helps us to discern multimedia techniques at work in organizing perceptual experience, consolidating habits, composing ethical dispositions, and spurring new thoughts into being. Technique provides a medium through which cultures and brains infuse each other" (Connolly 2002: xiii) Rather than looking at how bodies are represented in media I want to look at how bodies interact and connect with them. How our perceptual and cognitive experiences are organized in relation to technology and media in general and film in particular. Of course, the converse is also true; that media such as film is produced in relation to our own sensory schemata.

What I set out to do in this thesis is thus to elaborate a theoretical framework in which I will discuss different theoretical approaches to the field and, in turn, evoking empirical examples letting the theories come alive. In doing so I hope to bring about a framework that opens up the field of Cultural Studies in general, and, if I succeed in doing so, pushes its limits forward or at least moves its center.

Part I

Representation And Affect

> By EMOTION (affectus) I understand the modifications of the body by which the power of action of the body is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time the idea of these modifications.

> Baruch de Spinoza in Thrift 2004: 62

Culture, it is often said, is the way we make sense of the world. It is the symbolic system through which the power of signification comes alive, and meaning becomes meaningful, in and through the construction of difference.[20] Further, one often speaks of culture as a noun giving it the quality of a reasonable, static and natural object belonging to certain groups of people and subjects. In this abstract scheme it is not the things in themselves that carry the meaning, rather it is the imposed and alleged difference between them that does. For example we could not tell the color white from black, and we could not tell woman from man, were there no alleged difference, no centered structure, around which such categories are organized. Thinking, so it seems, is restricted to such binary structure and without them we are lost in the world.[21]

. What this supposition seems to, and indeed has to, take for granted, is that all communication is restricted to the realm of language and thus expressed through discourse. In this sense, the world and reality as we know it is a text that is produced and reproduced by human agency. Thus, to understand and gather knowledge of the world it takes a human mind to decode this text.[22] My question here is whether there is anything outside discourse; if we can reach beyond "the suffocating hold of 'constructivism' [and] the passive view of nature it upholds"? (Taussig: xix) Since models of communication in general seems to imply the linear and static model 'sender-text-receiver' (Shannon & Weaver 1949) or 'encoding-meaningful discourse-decoding' (Hall 1980), there is also a notion of interpretation and secondaryness to the experience and mechanism of communication. The text *must* be read, and there has to be a text to read. There is no immediacy and action, only passiveness and re-action.

   In *Cinema 1: the movement-image*, Deleuze offers a non-representative ontology of the cinema. This 'elsewhere' which is neither seen directly nor present in any physical sense of the word. The out-of-field

refers to what is neither seen nor understood, but is nevertheless perfectly present
. . . In one case, the out-of-field designates that which exists elsewhere, to one side
or around; in the other case, the out-of-field testifies to a more disturbing
presence, one which cannot even be said to exist, but rather to 'insist' or 'subsist', a
more radical Elsewhere, outside homogenous space and time. Undoubtedly these
two aspects to the out-of-field intermingle constantly. (Deleuze 1986:16-17)

What Deleuze speaks of here is that which cannot be seen or perceived directly by the senses, the thing that eludes every interpretation, but nevertheless appears so present, and perhaps even evident. I would like to call into question this 'radical Elsewhere' of which Deleuze writes, by evoking some examples.

What we see in the image is a snapshot, a produced and conventionally manufactured image. There is movement and time inherent in the cinematic image. But the laws of the cinema also allows for abstract time and abstract movement in the sense that we imagine, we make believe, things that are not present in the image at a given moment and at a given time.

By evoking the concept of affect, cultural theory has recently undergone a radical change. In this emotive frame- or patchwork, what counts as thinking is no longer seen as merely a rational and conscious process, based upon reason and common sense. Rather, it focuses upon pre-cognitive and 'immediate' aspects of thought and behavior in itself. Through the cinema and the technological progress made in the field of photography, this moment of affect, of emotional response, has been made visible and object for scrutiny. What Nigel Thrift refers to, as the country of the 'half-second delay' is one of these. What this means is that it takes time for consciousness to construct, that action comes before awareness of this very same action. Nevertheless, the bodily response is practically immediate and "we can now understand emotions as a kind of corporeal thinking". (Thrift: 2004: 67) Or with the words of Walter Benjamin:

With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended…
Evidently a different nature opens itself to the camera than opens to the naked eye
– if only because an unconsciously penetrated space is substituted for a space
consciously explored by man… The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as
does the psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses. (1968: 236)

Psychoanalysis on the other hand is infused into American popular culture in and through film in the 1940s and 1950s (Connolly 2002: 17). Thus, we can now see and examine the detail, both the physical and the mental. First realized in the proto-cinematic devices such as the Zootrope, we are

now able to cut, rewind and slow down or speed up the succession of movement. What was until then unknown to human knowledge and left unseen to the human eye became evident and clear as technology progressed. But these devices were also, as Jonathan Crary (1999:271) puts it, sites or technologies of attentiveness and attention. Spectatorship and construction of subjectivity is organized around the spectacle as an "unchanging, unreflective, [and] even unseeing" practice (ibid: 273)

  To represent, to characterize, symbolize, portray and to stand for; is this really what cinema is and what it does? And if so, from where does this idea of the cinema as something secondary (to what?) come? The Platonian division of form and matter, the Saussurian separation of signifier and signified, and the Cartesian dualism of mind and body, subject and object, make way for this dualistic and re-presentative ontology. In this sense, the image is a linguistic sign, which stands for something that it is not. What makes Deleuze's philosophy of cinema, and art in general, intriguing is his notion of the image as expressive. Thus he bridges the gap between signifier and signified, seeing the image as neither signifier nor signified but rather as a composite of affects and percepts. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 164)

  Affect is what could be said to be the immediate and non-mediated response or expression of the human organism. It is pre-cognitive in the sense that it is neither re-active, nor mediated.[23] By evoking the concept of 'expression' Deleuze and Guattari turns away from models of communication that focus upon language as the sole mechanism of human interaction. Expression is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, an autonomous agency that traverses any attempt to fix it within the realm of language (1987:317). How then can we understand this expressionism of which Deleuze and Guattari speaks in relation to the concept of affect? If we understand affect as a kind of impersonal and 'instinctive' process that is not dependant on a conscious, thinking subject, then affect too is in some ways autonomous. Affect is *in* the work of art (or more generally in the object) as a percept, just as much as it is a result of the subject's confrontation with it. Because what is interesting with cinema isn't just a matter of the narrative and the moral judgments in the plot, but the way that tension is created, the way we focus our attention. Muscles contract, the pulse increases, perhaps you sweat, cry, scream or laugh; these are all affective states. We are moved and touched, we feel and think; this is not just a matter of communication and information but above all of desire and affect.

Non-identity and the (im)possibilities of interpretation

To identify is to see resemblance, to find actual relations and virtual conjunctions between two or several objects. It is to categorize, to divide and to establish order. The deconstructivist approach, as employed by French philosopher Jacques Derrida, has brought about many critical insights when speaking of the construction of order and identity in general. Questioning Western thinking, Derrida argues that the "concept of centred structure –although it represents coherence in itself... is contradictorily coherent." (1978:279) This centre of which Derrida speaks seems to be the very source of thinking in itself: without it, it seems impossible to construct a sense of order, a sense of stable identity. Even so, one cannot help to wonder whether we would not be better of without this binary and static thinking. Especially since we 'know' that the world is not composed of such regularities and static categories that identity-thinking seems to imply[24]. Rather, there are, as has been shown by social anthropologist Mary Douglas (1964), anomalies and "matter out of place" as a side-effect to our systems of order. Culture (as well as nature!) understood as a system of classifications by which we live, is the creator of such anomalies and abnormalities. For Deleuze however, the power through which identity is constructed is not merely a matter of cultural convention and social interaction as in Bourdieu's conceptualization of Habitus.[25] Equating the concept of identity to that of habit, Deleuze argues that the latter belongs, not only to cultural and social systems of convention, but to the productive, physiological 'memory' of the body *in itself* as well. (Deleuze 1994: 70-79). As Brian Massumi puts it in a comment of the bodily aspects of habit:

> Habit is the body's defence against shocks of expression. It 'recognizes' every arriving perception it can as being 'like' an impulse the body has already integrated as a functional life content. It contains potential with resemblance. (Massumi 2001: xxxi)

The 'objective' world however is in itself 'natural' even though consisting of equally deviant and abnormal objects. I find it relevant here to discuss the concept of non-identity as put forward by critical theorist Theodor Adorno (1973).

Non-identity does not refer to the deviant or the abnormal; the deviant is nothing but a by-product of the symbolic system in which social norms are established in order to create an artificial order, a "second nature" (Eagleton 2000:4). It is not "the Other" in the opposition of self and other. Neither does it represent the transgression of such binary construction. The concept of non-identity refers to a more profound lack in thought itself namely the inability of thought and perception to grasp the

wholeness of an object[26]. At the moment of recognition and of understanding, there are pieces of the whole that are lost, forgotten and flawed. For Adorno, the problem here is not solved just by criticising this lack of wholeness in perception and knowledge. From his point of view there can be no way around this problem since: "the appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself, in its pure form. To think is to identify" (Adorno 1973:5). Thus it seems as though our classifications and systems of organisation, however arbitrary they may be, are indeed inherent in thought. In this sense, the concepts of *being* and *knowing* are intermingled and confused.[27]

The question is then how we are to appreciate and make justice to this proposition. How can we make claims of knowing and understanding anything at all, especially if thought *in itself* is distorting and false? Consider for example how easy we are led to fall into our well-known concepts and how hard it can be to break or 'deconstruct' them in everyday life. When confronted with the truly unknown or the truly incomprehensible, the organism reacts with fear or disgust. The French psychoanalysist Julia Kristeva refers to this zone of indeterminacy as "the abject". (Kristeva 1982: 1-18) The abject is neither subject nor object but defies every category and schemata, making it a source of ambivalence and confusion. This is because we need to make sense of what we perceive and what we experience, we need to find our meanings even if there are none.

In *Cinema 2*, Gilles Deleuze sees a way out of this impossibility of grasping the object in its entirety. For Deleuze, the cinema opens up the possibility to "detererritorialize the cogito" (Flaxman 2000:3), that is; to think, to feel and to see differently. To see "the whole image without metaphor" which, in turn, "brings out the thing in itself, literally, in its excess of horror or beauty, in its radical or unjustifiable character, because it no longer has to be 'justified', for better or for worse" (Deleuze 1989: 20) However this quality of the cinema is not a given by itself, but it is a potential inherent in the techniques and the possibilities of cinema. One could perhaps argue that Deleuze folds back into a discussion upon what counts as 'good' and 'bad' art, but I like to think that this is not so much a question of the 'old' dichotomic relation of low/high and popular/classic, but rather a distinction between the cliché or the conventional and the creative or explorative.[28]

But what do we *do* with this recognition; how does one employ a 'method' that only points against another and flaws the powers and possibilities of recognition, interpretation and understanding? Discussing these problems with Deleuze's concept of Becoming and drawing on the example of how children can appreciate and get caught up in, almost as if hypnotized, their parents' lullabies, Anders Johansson (2004: 174-175) argues that communication is *not* what literature and the experience of reading (understood here in the broad sense of the word) is all about. And it seems plausible to agree

since that the fascination of children, when hearing a song, seeing images or watching cartoons is not merely a question of interpretation but of *something else* as well.

It seems that all knowledge is based upon the ability to comprehend and to decipher, so how can we do justice to this assertion that it is though in itself that distort and falsify reality? First and foremost we need to understand that the way we think is in itself not only natural but also historical and coloured by ideological assumptions. Identity-thinking (the very foundation of the cogito), the action and process by which we see resemblance and connection, has in itself a history (Deleuze 1968). It is not my point here to flaw and to neglect the possibilities of hermeneutics and other decoding traditions, nevertheless I want to stress the significance in seeing media not as something that reflects, mimics and re-present something. To see it as something that has the possibility of becoming one with life, which is inseparable from it and ultimately alters it by its very foundations. As Friedrich Kittler (2003) reminds us, the great achievement of Foucault, one of the most prominent discourse analysts and the 'founding father' of the discursive thinking, was to see discourses as events with manifest materiality and limited effects.[29] With the words of Kittler "all discourses are information, but not all information is discursive" (2003: 155). There are thus some things that elude every interpretation and attempt to fix the world into well-known categories. This is not to say that constructivism is wrong or that 'traditional' models of communication are flawed. Rather, it is to recognise that such theories have their own applicability and thus have their own limits (Massumi: 2002:7)

The Deleuzean concept of *becoming* discussed above opens up a world in which one avoid seeing the concepts as static and frozen. Seeing the world as floating and to look at it as invariable emergence, not as being but always as becoming.

> Becoming is not to adopt a form (identification, imitation, Mimesis) but to find the zone of the close at hand, that which cannot be discerned or separated, so that you cannot any longer separate *one* woman, *one* animal or *one* molecule: not inexact or general, but unpredictable and non-pre-existent…Becoming is always an "in-between" or "among". (Deluze quoted in Johansson 2004: 175)

In the same manner, Deleuze's method is affirmative and intuitive rather than critical and negative. One could even say that if Deleuze himself has a method, this 'method' is rather a non-method. Arguing that we should approach the world without any pre-given concepts, questions or schemas, Deleuze asserts that we should *become* in relation to the world (Colebrook 2002: 46). This may all seem very abstract and almost unrealizable in both theory and practice. However, this is, as I see it,

more of a turn against interpretation and representation (the 'usual methods' of cultural studies) than a return to naive realism. Instead of looking for hidden meanings and the way this or that is portrayed, we should look for possibilities. In short we should not look for what cinema *is* but what it might *become*.

This becoming is perhaps what 'happens', recapturing the example given by Johansson, when the child hears its parents sing. In effect something happens in-between the parent and the child, something we cannot see or perceive but nevertheless seems so clear and present. Something new is taking place and it is changing the world and transforming its matter. But this 'something' is not an intelligible 'thing' or object in itself. Rather, it is a fluent and momentary event, which alters the order of things on a molecular level.

Processuality, Movement and Change

Culture construed as a process, rather than as static and frozen object, these notions make the concepts of time, space and change important to re-theorize and re-conceptualize in the wake of contemporary cultural theory. How can we understand how reality is conceived of, taken into account that it is constru(ct)ed here and now, in each second? The constructivism approach (i.e. the assertion that sex, gender, class, race etc. are all constructed in discourse) tells us little, if anything, about the immediacy and the becoming in the process by which categories are transformed and re-invented, all it can tell us is this and that happened there and then. It is as if time has stopped and objects been arrested. The real problem here is that constructivism cannot explain movement and change since it halts before them. In their stead; signifying practice and static positioning, all according to a "definitional grid whose determinations preexisted the bodies they constructed or to which they were applied" (Massumi 2002: 4-5). The only thing that this 'grid' can do is to back-form into its own reality. It is no wonder then that one who looks for these categories will inevitably 'find' them in one way or another.[30] How then can one make justice to the processuality of culture? Where (and how) can we look in order to find a proper theoretical approach to its movement?

Let us take an example.

It is said, even though one cannot know for sure, that the wing-beats or rather –the movement, of a butterfly can, or has the *potential* to, cause a storm at distances stretching hundred of miles away. What happens 'there and then' in distant time and space is thus interconnected with the present, the 'here and now'. Nevertheless, there is always movement and qualitative change along the path. The

wing-beat of the butterfly does not merely resonate in void; its intensity amplifies and changes matter; it transforms reality qualitatively. It is important here not to see this as a stimuli-response, or action-reaction process, but rather as pure and non-divisible movement in space. Zeno's famous arrow did not hit the tree because positioning-thinking stopped it[31]. But the trajectory by which it traveled does not exist before the impact in the tree. Only then does it stop, only then can we trace its trajectory. (Massumi 2002: 6) The same applies to the wing-beat of the butterfly or the envelopment of culture; here it is construed as becoming rather than being, an unfolding process rather than signification or coding.

The example with the butterfly is frequently used in chaos theory indicating a shift from temporal conceptions of change to a spatialised understanding of agency and transformation. Space has traditionally been neglected in cultural theory in favor of time. Consequently change is conceived as linear and static. An alternative to this time-bias is offered by Henri Bergson (1913) who conceives the here and now (the "pure duration") as a spatialised contraction of all the pasts and a possible future in a single instant. In a comment on Bergson's conception of movement and time, Deleuze proposes that cinema offers us a "movement or a time which is impersonal, uniform, abstract, invisible, or imperceptible, which is 'in' the apparatus" (Deleuze 1986: 1). Human knowledge, itself being a "creative evolution", oversees and neglects the movement inherent in every object. For Bergson, the forms that we superimpose on life, through language and rational thought, helps us to make sense of the world.

> When…change has become considerable enough to overcome the fortunate inertia of our perception, we say that the body has changed its form. But in reality the body is changing form at every moment; or rather, there is no form, since form is immobile and the reality is movement. What is real is the continual *change of form: form is only a snapshot view of transition.* (Bergson 1911: 318-319)

Thus, what we miss is the pure becoming and the transition in every changing process, in short and in the words of Bergson: we can never perceive the creative and evolutional character of life.

Thought as Image, Image as Thought

> I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images
>
> George Duhamel in Benjamin 1968: 238

> Cinema not only puts movement in the image, it also puts movement in the mind…The brain is the screen.
>
> Gilles Deleuze in Flaxman 2000: 366

> Thought strikes like lightning, with sheering ontogenetic force. It is felt.
>
> Brian Massumi 2001: xxxi

When I was younger my mother always used to say to me that I must not sit in front of the TV before going to bed. This, she said, would affect my dreams in a negative way since I would still have the rapid, 'disturbing' and throbbing images from the TV in (not on!) my mind, and this would also keep me from falling asleep. I also remember how she warned me against watching too much TV in general because if I did, she said, my eyes would change their form; they would become rectangular and screen-like. If the latter was more of an ironic and caring way of encouraging me to do other things than watching the TV all day, the former was, I have learnt by experience later on in life, a genuine and very honest concern from my mother's part.

What happens with, to and in the brain when the body is subjected to moving cinematic images? The question may at first sight seem a bit awkward and perhaps even irrelevant to a sociology of the media, the body, and emotions. But if we really want to know in what ways the human body and the media interact and intersect, we must not fear to raise questions that may seem as not belonging to 'our' field of knowledge.

It is important here to bring to mind the way that images in general and moving images in particular opens up and dissect the scope of objective reality as we know it. Through cinema we can slow down or accelerate speeds, rewind and cut, enhance and enlarge. In addition the techniques of montage makes possible for disparate and inconsistent 'here-and-nows' to be put together creating deterritorializing affects which alter our conception of space, time and movement. In this sense the moving image construct relations and linkages between unrelated objects, putting the idea of unity and identity into question. To put it simply; we subject the notion of reality –as experienced by the

most privileged of the human senses, namely the eye (Taussig 1993: 26)– to scrutiny and disbelief. When we realize that looks in fact can be deceiving, when the camera makes us aware of layers of reality that are unreachable by the mechanism of human vision, we also realize that the camera and the art of reproducing reality in the form of images, alters the way we *think* of the world and our own place in it. As Michael Taussig comments: "seeing is *felt* in a nonvisual way. You move into the inferior of images, just as images move into you" (1993: 57-58, emphasis added)

Seeing is felt; this assertion truly encapsulates much of what has been said until now. The potential of the cinema to shock its audience, allowing for a heightened level of consciousness of their senses is truly a revolutionary quality. Unlike other arts such as painting or photography (where the spectator has to subject his or her mind to the work of art, thus making movement), with the cinema the converse is what takes place. Cinema moves the mind,

> producing a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous and cerebral system directly. Because the cinematographic image itself 'makes' movement, because it makes what other arts are restricted to demanding (or to saying), it brings together what is essential in other arts; it inherits it, it is as it were the directions for use of the other images, it converts into potential what was only possibility (Deleuze 1989: 156)

But, the skeptics object, is cinema really that powerful and, above all, is it really that creative and different from other the other art-forms? If we return to Deleuze, the answer is yes; cinema is qualitatively and essentially different, and it holds the potential of altering the human subject and its relation to the world fundamentally. However, this quality of the moving image is not to be taken for granted. There are surely other forces at work here; forces that work the other way around and make the cinema stagnate. This set aside, what the cinematic image does is to let its audience contemplate and examine in a state of distraction. It does not demand interpretation, as does the painting or the book. It connects directly to thought and alters it. Consider, for example, how the "inner'- or 'mental-perception' is affected by seeing moving images. And consequently how the body responds with increased heart rate, sweat, muscles strained. In this sense the moving image becomes part of the body-thought-circuit making a temporary conjunction between man and machine.

Distance, Proximity and Experience

> [I]n the face of the huge images across the walls of houses, where toothpaste and cosmetics lie handy for giants, sentimentality is restored to health and liberated in American style, *just as people whom nothing moves or touches* any longer *are taught to cry again by films*.
>
> Walter Benjamin cited in Taussig 1993: 30

I sometimes wonder what people that I 'know' from TV or from film do at a given time. I see these people everyday in my living room, eating my dinner or just lying down on my sofa. I know their voices; I re-cognize them any time I hear or see them and sometimes I can even feel or make believe that they know me –that there is a mutual relation between them and me.

Through the invention of photography, the 'here and now' of a particular instant and a given space could be reproduced and distributed to places that are distant in time and space. This brought about new notions of what makes up our sense of immediacy as well as the concepts of the title of this paragraph –distance, proximity and experience. Unlike the written word or a painting, the photography is a replica or a copy (however arbitrary this may be) of reality. The camera then mimics human visuality in the sense that it gives us a non-representative image of the very objects that is in the photography. To illustrate this relation between photography, and its natural successor –the cinema, and other art such as painting, Benjamin uses a metaphor that he finds in the magician and the surgeon:

> The magician maintains the natural distance between the patient and himself; though he reduces it very slightly by the laying on of hands, he greatly increases it by virtue of his authority. The surgeon does exactly the reverse; he greatly diminishes the distance between himself and the patient by penetrating into the patient's body, and increases it but little by the caution with which his hand moves among the organs… Magician and surgeon compare to painter and cameraman. The painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web. There is a tremendous difference between the pictures they obtain. (1968: 233-234)

Whereas the image produced by the painter is in some way a truly subjective re-presentation (i.e. an interpretation) of a given time and space, the image produced by the camera *is*, in a very different way, a presentation of this time and space. One could of course argue that there is always a crucial

moment in which the cameraman chooses his motif, the angle from which he takes his pictures and so on. And there is here, as with the painter, a moment in which the cameraman makes an interpretation of the situation and alters his procedures accordingly. This said, the overall effect of the photographic and the cinematic image is that it brings about the illusion of pure immediacy, of being here and now. It alters and diminishes the distance between subject and object, of viewer and viewed.

There is of course, as Barthes (1977) reminds us, two levels or two 'messages' in the photographic or mechanically reproducible image: one that is 'analogous' to the object depicted in the image and one that is codified, cultural and imbedded in signifying practices. But whereas this second meaning is always dependant on a viewer –a positioned subject, the first meaning is in some way autonomous to its subject. It relates to a more disturbing process, a pure meaning, without any distinction or distance between signifier and signified. No wonder perhaps that the social implications of photography implies a somewhat magical practice. And no wonder then that reality, its sensational events and its global spectacles such as the moon landing, the gulf war (Baudrillard 1991), the assassin of American president John f. Kennedy, the holocaust, and even the world cup in football in 1958, are objects for scrutiny and disbelief by skeptical media critics and cynical masses alike[32].

Part II

Now we have reached the point where the theoretical approaches laid forward hitherto are to be put to test, developed, negotiated and elaborated through analysis and further discussions. Until now one could argue that I have tried to elaborate a synthesis of the theories, perhaps at the expense of a critical understanding of their limits and shortcomings. In this part of the thesis I therefore see it as my task to put the ideas that I employ up to the test.

Irreversible: Movement and Speed

Irreversible (2002) by director Gaspar Noé was received as a provoking and "meaningless" attempt to do nothing but shock its audience. At its first screening in Cannes, parts of the audience (most likely consisting of critics and enthusiastic cineastes) threw up, left the screening room in protest or, in other ways, explicitly marked their disgust in front of the screen. Two scenes, one in which a man is brutally killed in front of our eyes and another in which a woman is raped, stood out as particularly provoking and disturbing. Irreversible is narrated from the end to the beginning. The film consists of several segments each of them containing plots that take you further to the beginning of the narrative. In this sense, what we know in the end of the film alters our interpretation of the beginning. Here we find our meaning and 'identity' is established between the different parts of the film.

In the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* (DN 031010) the cultural journalist Johan Croneman writes, in a comment on Irreversible, that he "cannot see the filter, the very film". He goes on arguing that the scene in which the woman in the film, Alex, is raped "is a filmed rape, [he] sees nothing else". Throughout the whole review Croneman continuously argues that he cannot see the point in the film, that there is no 'meaning' attached to it. Implicit in this argument lies the proposition that there has to be a message, other than just the feelings and thoughts that arise when looking at the film; that there is a decodable, sense-making and underlying text that can be read in relation to 'real' life and 'real' social relations. The argument seems to imply that films in general should be invested with the quality of being as far away from any kind of realism as possible without losing its connections with reality, its social and cultural implications. This line of thought folds into the supposition that a film or any other cultural artifact has to make a statement, that art is always a

matter of commenting and analyzing. But is it really? And if so, does not the film evoke thoughts and feelings, and thus carry some kind of meaning after all, however subtle (or intense) it may be?

Even though one can go on arguing about whether there is or is not a meaning in this very film, the film *does* something; it is not simply a question of the film *standing for* something else that it is not. It is no longer a matter of mimicry, representation, imitation or metaphor, but rather, it is conjunction, sensation and affect. It is the intersection of media and body, of spectator and screen, of subject and object. Something happens, something disturbing is taking place in the space between the screen and the spectator; it is an event on a molecular level.

In this film there are two scenes that are significant and important for the analysis. Firstly we have the scene, in the beginning, in which Le Tenia (the alleged rapist) is brutally killed by Pierre (an ex-lover to the rape-victim Alex). The word 'killed' is perhaps somewhat of an understatement here though. Le Tenia is smashed with a fire extinguisher over and over again until his face is nothing but a bloody and unrecognizable pulp-like mass of flesh and blood. It is a brutal action that we are witnessing; intensive emotions and fury unleashed. It is not a planned and conscious action taken by a rational mind; rather, it is the animal-like and the primitive.

The second scene is the one in which Alex is raped, after having left a party, in a tunnel by Le Tenia. What is interesting here is that the camera never leaves the action, the pictures of the rape are shown to the audience in its excessive grotesque and horrifying totality. Had this been a 'traditional' film we would have been left with a hint, a scene in which what took place in the tunnel was left unseen but, nevertheless, implied and unspoken of. Here, on the other hand, we witness something shocking, spectacular and disturbing; the camera, which by the beginning of the film never rested, going from one irregular and seemingly irrelevant point to the other, is still, –fixed on the happenings. It leaves nothing unseen and nothing for the imagination. Maybe this is also the reason why Irreversible has become subject to a great deal of controversy and dispute? The eye of the camera rests and stays fixed on the scene, mimicking an indifferent, passive spectator. "Neo-realism…is a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent" (Deleuze 1989: 2)

Another way of looking at it is suggested by Henri Bergson (1913) and his theory of aesthetic movement. According to Bergson, what we experience as beautiful as well as comprehensible is not merely a matter of cultural convention and habit. The pleasure of knowing in advance what will happen –the condition of knowing, or rather of *feeling*, the perception in advance, to anticipate it- is what makes us experience beauty and grace. Bergson speaks here of a bending movement as opposed to an irregular and fragmented one:

> We are led to find a superior ease in the movements which can be foreseen, in the
> present attitudes in which future attitudes are pointed out and, as it were,
> prefigured…Thus the perception of ease in motion passes over into the pleasure
> of mastering the flow of time and of holding the future in the present. (Bergson
> 1913:12)

The bending and regular movement is soft and slow and thus arouses feelings of joy and pleasure. An irregular and fragmented movement on the other hand awakens feeling of unease and even disgust. Not being able to calculate or even suspect what is going to happen stimulates feelings of anguish and panic. Does then the fragmented and schizophrenic presentation of time (and space) in Irreversible contribute to the evaporation of meaning in it? At least we can conclude, with Bergson's notion of movement, that the irregular speeds and movements in the film contribute to the schizophrenic and often sickening feelings attributed to the experience of watching this particular film.

"Time destroys everything". This we are told by the end of the film. But what does this assertion convey, what does it *mean*? Normally the converse ought to pass for truth: that it is through the succession of time that we construct and develop a sense of understanding and a coherent, rational sense of meaning. Common sense implies that we should look at history to find the reason behind this or that –that there is a 'natural' explanation to find in the past. However, in Irreversible this 'natural' succession of time is ruptured and broken down and what we find is a chaotic and schizophrenic conception of movements and speeds. The camera gives to us "a 'seeing' that is not attached to the human eye" opening up a space in which "the play of camera angles moving across a visual field gives us the direct expression of movement" (Colebrook 2002:29-30). But we are also presented with time in itself due to the reversed sequential order in the film. Time, not as what connects one movement to another, but as invariable emergence and pure becoming. This is what is presented to us. It is the actualization of the virtual, of, with the words of Bergson, "holding the future in the present".

By the end of the film, this relation -the one between the virtual (the not yet actualized, but nevertheless real) and the actual (the unfolding of being, the movement from virtual potential to actual existence i.e. the becoming)- materializes in Alex's precognition of the rape, which takes place later the same night. Had the sequential order of the film been presented in 'traditional' order, that is, in line with a natural conception of time, this relation had been apparent from the outset since this

had followed the cause-effect thinking that we are used to in linear time-thinking. A character has a dream, a precognition, which is, subsequently, realised.

Due to the construction of modern society as we know it, some aspects of life are extracted from the course of everyday life. Children are put in school, the elderly in homes for the aged, whereas criminals and sick people are confined to prisons and hospitals respectively. Consider for example that you can live your whole life never encountering a dead person. Thompson argues that we through the media are exposed to deterritorialized experiences that are unlikely to exist in our own environment. (Thompson 1995:258-259) In this sense the 'ordinary man' is rarely, if ever, subjected to aspects of life such as sickness, death etc. What happens is that these aspects of life are institutionalised and the experience is brought to us through the media. Irreversible surely puts this proposition to test. We are positioned as the passive spectator, examining the detailed and grotesque actions of man. We feel disgust and shame, affective states, not being able to intervene. "We have schemata for turning away when it is too unpleasant, for prompting resignation when it is terrible and for assimilating when it is too beautiful" (Deleuze 1989: 20). This is the object or the image *in itself* without metaphor. It is too real, too unpleasant and too disturbing to pass for an image. The image has moved into our mind and puts it in motion.

Time Code: The Smooth And The Striated And Immediacy

> Four cameras. One take. No edits. *Real* time

From time to time, the urge to portray reality "as it is", on place and without delay or editing, becomes the main goal within media. We can find this aspiration in many contemporary expressions such as the documentary, reality shows, performances that are televised 'live' and sports events. But one could easily argue that the paradigm of the real, of authenticity, is present and inherent in all media, ranging from the press, television, and film to radio, photography, Internet and music. This said, there are of course expressions such as surrealist painting or science fiction that do their outmost not to resemble an already existing reality. Although most journalists, screen writers, authors, artists and film producers are aware of the fact that their particular story or work is but a subjective and positioned statement, one often hear them, especially journalists, making claims of representing a very authentic and objectively existing reality. And of course they are in one way or

another right in doing so, the question here is whether there can be a way out of this dilemma, is there one?

   Mike Figgins's film *Time Code* is an attempt to get hold of some of this immediate, this close-to-reality. It could be seen as an experimenting with direct narrative expression and digital technology. The screen in Time Code is divided into four, each of them following one or several characters. At a given date and at a given time four cameras were put on record and the 97 minutes that follow are direct and unedited. The plot, we are told in the end of the film, was improvised around some given situations and events. As a screen writer within the film comments:

> My film has the necessity, the urge, to go beyond commerce…Montage has created a fake reality. Technology has arrived. Digital video has arrived and it's demanding new expressions, new sensations.

This line can be seen as a meta-commentary on the whole film. What is interesting with Figgin's film is that it makes us aware of how attention is structured around sensations, both visual and audial. Your eyes go traveling from one frame to the other especially during those segments of the film in which there is no particular frame to focus upon. Although not literally coherent with the structure of the film, Mcluhan's notion of acoustic space envisages the lack of centre within the film. Acoustic space:

> has no centre and no margin, unlike strictly visual space, which is an extension and intensification of the eye. Acoustic space is organic and integral, perceived through the simultaneous interplay of all the senses; whereas "rational" or pictorial space is uniform, sequential and continuous and creates a closed world with none of the rich resonance of the tribal echoland. (McLuhan and Zingrone 1997: 240)

The similarities between acoustic and visual space and Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the smooth and the striated are apparent here: "nomad space is smooth, marked only by 'traits' that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 381) Whereas visual space is restricted to the human vision and its limited field of visual perception, acoustic space opens up the linear and sequential and makes way for a simultaneous and non-chronological conception of reality. In Time Code, the primary technique that focuses the attention of the viewer is the lowering and the heightening of sound attributed and attached to each of the four frames. At some times all the sound coming from the four frames is silenced, other times the four audio tracks are at full volume all

together. This leaves the audience to itself. You desperately seek for a space to focus your attention to but none is given. The audience is the director.

> Imagine four cameras displayed in the scene… Imagine a siuationistic type of play, a Guy Debord's type of play. Each of the four cameras will follow a character and the characters are going to meet with each other creating the plot of the story, creating the plot of the film.

This is really what Time Code is all about: assembling four cameras, following some characters that in turn create the plot. All that is shown to the viewer is recorded in one take, during a period of 97 minutes. No editing, no montage –all is presented in *real* time. The film was improvised around some loosely given themes. There are several interesting techniques employed in this film, set aside the fact that it can be seen as a return to realistic aesthetics. First and foremost, the split-screen, with four simultaneously told plots or narratives, gives, to the eye of the beholder, the audience, the final saying in how to experience the film. If one decides to focus upon one of the frames there is no one stopping you. In other words, each experience of the film is literarily speaking unique. But nonetheless the technique employed in the film; the lowering and heightening of the volume attributed to each of the frames, the shifting from movement to motionlessness, the twisting and turning of the camera, makes your eye aware of where the action is. It is as if though the film makes us aware of our own attentiveness and how it is organized around the event as such.

   One other aspect of this film is the interconnectedness of the four frames. The narratives in each of the four frames are mainly situated at distant spaces, but nonetheless during the very same time. This makes them hard to follow since what goes on in one frame is very different from what goes on in the other. The characters on the other hand interact with each other through cellular phones and bugging devices**.** This relation renders the distance shrink and the tension between the frames is intensified. Everything connects in, one way or another, constituting an organic whole. The director of the 'film within the film' has an affair with a woman who is being tapped and monitored and monitored by another woman. The director's wife on the other hand is seen speaking to her therapist in the frame above. And in the fourth frame the cast and production-team is waiting impatiently for the director to arrive. Further, the returning earthquake-shots (the setting is Los Angeles, USA) in which the characters are thrown around and the camera shakes, binds the four frames together even more indicating the simultaneousness of the four shots.

So in conclusion one could argue that what this film does is first of all to reveal how objects and subjects in the world are in organic relation to each other. They are connected in ways that are not calculable, measurable or knowable to local human perception. It is only when we stop and freeze the world that it becomes measurable and visible to perception and knowledge. What is shown here is the fluid and chaotic character of movement and human, social relations. And this is accomplished only through the technique employed in the film.

Secondly, it makes us aware of our own subjectivity –our "own" way of looking- as the film forces the viewer to make choices, to focus and to mobilise attentiveness in relation to the film. "The audience's identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera" writes Benjamin (1968: 228). Here we have four cameras, four moving images, which are not only separated from any human eye but which are also presented to us simultaneously.

Memento: Time and Memory

The film Memento was as its release in 2001 appreciated by spectators and critics alike as truly innovative and different from any other film. Due to its reversed form of narrative, the experience of watching Memento is truly like acting as the private detective, seeking for clues and explanations in the past. In short, the film is about a man, Leonard, who has lost the ability to construct short time memory. As the plot develops it gets clear that Leonard's wife has been brutally killed and now he is out for revenge. In fact this is what his whole life is all about from the point where she died; to find the killer and avenge the loss of his wife. But since he has lost his ability to construct memory, Leonard has developed a system to materialize his memories outside his mind. "I am disciplined and organized; I use habit and routine to make my life possible" he says. In a way, this line encapsulates how we all build a sense of identity; through the cultivation of habits and routines we get a sense of stability and order.

The plot in Memento is told in reversed order beginning with the end and moving towards the beginning of the story. But the plot is also divided into to planes or dimensions one of which is told in traditional order and one which is reversed. The difference between these two planes is stressed by the fact that the one told linearly is in black-and-white whereas the reversed is in color. This difference, the one between the black-and-white and the colored images, normally suggests a difference in time. Whereas we associate black-and-white with the past, colored images imply

recentness and closeness in time.[33] It seems as if the story told in black-and-white is presented *as* image *as* viewed and thus *as* an interpretation. Memory and past time has taken on a form in itself, it has materialized before our eyes, and it is presented in its "pure optical form" (Deleuze 1989: 2)

The protagonist in Memento is truly a lost soul. He is confined to just a couple of clues and artifacts –notes of paper, a Polaroid camera and photographs, distorted memories– in his search for the killer. The Polaroid pictures, which he uses to remember, are the only things that he can truly trust. Technology and the art of reproducing reality has become one with his memory, or rather; they *are* his memory, his ability to remember. Leonard re-lives his past through photos and the marginal notes sketched on these. Some of his more crucial and urgent memories are tattooed on the surface of his skin. The past is in this sense always present. All Leonard has to do is to glance at his arm or his chest to re-experience the tragic slaughter of his wife and his fractured, blurred fragment of memories of her death.

Leonard lives thus in and through the past, the future and the present at the same time, relying mostly upon his photos, his reproducible works of art with the words of Benjamin. In Deleuze's reading of Henri Bergson's conception of time, Deleuze states that the past is always virtually present, at diverse degrees and levels, in every moment. (Deleuze 1994: 70-71, 286-287) The pure and immediate present, construed as the moment in which we are right here and right now, is thus an illusion. There is no unmediated and 'pure' cognition as our 'common sense' would have it, for "thinking draws upon nonchronological sheets of past, and it might be nudged in a new or novel direction from the encounter between a sheet of nonchronological past and an uncertain future." (Connolly 2002:98)

So in Memento one can say that the form of the film makes visible how memory and time operates, not by recollections and experience, but through the intervening of sheets of past and a future that is yet to come. Spatially and chronologically distant regions of time and space are connected in unexpected and discontinuous ways, thus creating and constituting the present and a virtually present future. This is what, for Deleuze, makes up the membrane of memory.

> This membrane which makes the inside and the outside present to each other is called memory…For memory is clearly no longer the faculty of having recollections: it is the membrane which, in the most varied ways (continuity, but also discontinuity, envelopment, etc.) makes the sheets of past and layers of reality freely correspond, the first emanating from an inside which is always already there, the second arriving from an outside always to come, the two gnawing at the present which is now only their encounter. (Deleuze 1986:207)

Leonard, who cannot recollect the scene in which his wife is killed, still has the ability to 'see' fractured and ruptured images of the killing. In one scene he awakens in the middle of the night stretching out on his bed for the person who a moment ago laid there next to him. When he finds out that there is no one there he suddenly hears some noise from the bathroom and goes up to see what is going on in there. While approaching the noises he recalls the disturbing images of his wife being killed. Images in which the killer holds a plastic bag in front of her mouth flashes before us and 'inside' Leonard. These images from the past "exist, they are strata from where we draw our recollection-images" and there are "two different states of time, time as perceptual crisis and, at a deeper level, time as primary matter, immense and terrifying, like universal becoming." (Deleuze 1989: 115) And this whole scene, we get to know, is identical to the one in which his wife died. The only difference being that this time the woman in the toilet is, it turns out, both to Leonard and the audience, an anonymous call girl and not his wife. In the following scene we are presented with Leonard's experiment. He has arranged for a call girl to spread out his wife's belongings and to lie next to him on the bed until he is sound asleep. Then she is told to get up and slam the bathroom door so that he awakens. This ritual has as its obvious objective to reproduce the setting in which the killer has entered Leonard's and his wife's home. It awakens and actualizes the virtual sheets of past of this very same situation, bringing them into a present here and now.

This use of irrational cuts and montage in cinema, indicating recollection-images as Deleuze calls them, shows how memory works in relation to time. Memories are real in the sense that they make up the whole of a person's life. Through memory we can move back and forward in the flow of time, thus rendering the linear conception of time, which is dominant in Western thinking, inadequate and in some ways misleading. When the image becomes what Deleuze speaks of as a time-image, time *in itself* is presented before us, showing the very becoming and dynamism of life.

> The screen itself is the cerebral membrane where immediate and direct confrontations take place between the past and the future, the inside and the outside, at a distance impossible to determine, independent of any fixed point…The image no longer has space and movement as its primary characteristics but topology and time. (Deleuze 1989: 125)

Here we can return to Benjamin's assertion that what happens in the cinema is that a different reality is presented to us. A reality no longer in need of a human subject to perceive it, in some ways an objective, and immediate reality. However, Deleuze takes this assertion even further suggesting that

"the brain is a screen in the sense that it is a filter that extracts itself from chaos" (Flaxman 2000: 16). The task for modern cinema is, for Deleuze, to deterritorialize thinking in itself thus opening up a space in which we can perceive the thing for itself; "to think the whole" through which the "brain experiences the image as a shock wave that cripples its capacity to reconstitute any habitus" (Ibid. 40-41)

Leonard, in a way, embodies and encapsulates the tendency in contemporary society by which we rely on and become dependant upon the art of reproducing reality in order for us to recollect the past and as guideline to an uncertain, yet virtually present future. The past, caught and frozen in a moment, an evaporating split-second, becomes part of the present, not necessarily as lived memory, but nevertheless as witness of an event taking place in this or that very time and space.

Part III

Conclusion: Theory Reconsidered

> The whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry. The old experience of the movie-goer, who sees the world outside as an extension of the film he has just left (because the latter is intent upon reproducing the world of everyday perceptions), is now the producer's guideline. The more intensely and flawlessly his techniques duplicate empirical objects, the easier it is today for the illusion to prevail that the outside world is the straightforward continuation of that presented on the screen. This purpose has been furthered by mechanical reproduction since the lightning takeover by the sound film. Real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies. The sound film, far surpassing the theatre of illusion, leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience, who are unable to respond within the structure of the film, yet deviate from its precise detail without losing the thread of the story; hence the film forces its victims to equate it directly with reality.
>
> Adorno & Horkheimer 1944: 35

Every history has its own distinct beginning and end. This paper began with a discussion upon how I, the 'author' of the text that you have just read, as a child, remember a disturbing and shocking experience when watching a film. But did it all really begin there and then? And does it really end now when we have reached the final pages? –No, the story goes on unfolding, searching new plots, characters and story lines –new lines of flight, to speak with Deleuze & Guattari. I can still feel and see the images from the film mentioned above in my mind, they are a part of my experience, my childhood –a part of my subjectivity. However, they have changed and been altered during the course of my life. Nevertheless they are always (t)here as virtual sheets of past.

In this final paragraph I will examine more closely the role that cinema and cinematic images play in constructing audiences as well as spectatorships and, in doing so, becoming a part of subjectivity and mind, culture and society. This discussion will focus upon some theoretical standpoints, most of them already mentioned implicitly or explicitly in the text. It is my aim here to outline a set of ideas and to bring them further together, showing their strengths and their weaknesses, thus advocating an integrated conceptual scheme.

The quote above, taken from Adorno's and Horkheimer's *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, sums up much of the argument put forward hitherto. The technology employed in modern cinema and the corresponding blurring of reality and fiction actually maintains the illusion that the "outside world is

the straightforward continuation of that presented on the screen" (and, in consequence, vice versa). The question is however whether Adorno and Horkheimer are right to assert that this blurring of actuality and virtuality, as represented in 'real' life and 'fictive' media, really sets aside the active participation of the audience. "No room for reflection or imagination" is left they claim, but isn't the converse also true, or perhaps even more accurate? In other words, does not the audience take part in this spectacle, isn't the imaginative and the reflective quality what makes the cinema work at all? As Arjun Appadurai suggests: "[T]he imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labour and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between different sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility. (Appadurai 1996: 31)

The lines of Adorno and Horkhemier evoke the notion of cinema or, more generally, popular culture as an escapist social practice. The idea here is that all form of entertainment distracts the people from the hardships and cruelties of everyday life, making them focus on more banal and insignificant matters, thus maintaining and reproducing oppressive social norms and class differences. We can see here that media operate both as a distracting force as well as a site, which constructs and focuses attention. "With regard to the screen, the critical and the receptive attitudes of the public coincide. The decisive reason for this is that the individual reactions are predetermined by the mass audience response they are about to produce, and this is nowhere more pronounced than in the film." (Benjamin 1968: 234) It has been perhaps one of the most significant tasks of Cultural Studies to complicate and to some extent question the passive conception of the audience as put forward by parts of the so-called Frankfurt School, especially Adorno's, by stressing the pleasurable, active and liberating qualities of popular culture. One should also keep in mind that much of Adorno's own writings on the impact of popular culture were a reaction to Walter Benjamin's very (perhaps too?) optimistic account on the very same matters.[34]

What does it mean then, to call into question the experience of going to the movies? First and foremost one has to, in my opinion, get rid of the passive view of the spectator as advocated for example by Adorno. Not because Adorno is completely wrong in stressing the trend towards homogenization and consistency in popular culture, but because his perspective maintains a too determinate and passive view of human agency and social practice. At the other extreme we find a position found in some of the more audience-oriented approaches within Cultural Studies. Dorothy Hobson's account on the audience's creativity when watching television is noteworthy here as she states that "there can be as many interpretations of a programme as the individual viewers bring to

it" (Storey 1999:110). The question of determinacy and autonomy here shifts from the text and the discursively imbedded text to the audience and its cultural and social practices, leaving no room for what happens in-between the two. It is as though the process of communication takes place in void. However, the main problem with the accounts outlined above consists of its inherent theoretical dualism. Thus, secondly, one has to question and contest the notion of the audience as completely autonomous as well. In her analysis of women going to the cinema, Jackie Stacey (1994:24) makes the following distinction between Film studies and Cultural studies:

Film studies	Cultural studies
spectatorship positioning	audience readings
textual analysis	ethnographic readings
meaning as production-led	meaning as consumption-led
passive viewer	active viewer
unconscious	conscious
pessimistic	optimistic

This binary scheme, as outlined by Stacey, roughly encapsulates the positions represented by Adorno's and Hobson's account respectively. Whereas one focuses upon the form, the production and the text, the other stresses the importance of the context, the consumption and the audience. Perhaps it is no wonder then that the outcome of these two perspectives is "pessimistic" and "passive viewer" or "optimistic" and "active viewer"?

  If the differences described above, between film studies and cultural studies, are of a methodological or epistemological character, one could outline two theoretical or ontological/philosophical differences or approaches as well. The impact of electronical and reproducible media in society has been widely discussed during the 20th century since media technology became available to increasingly more people. Hal Foster (1996:218-220) outlines two traditions or rather two perspectives presented in this debate. One of them is found in Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, and the other in Marshall McLuhan's *Media –Extension of Man.* The positions taken by these two authors are seemingly very different although their works are both written in the sixties and implicitly or explicitly indebted to Walter Benjamin (1968). Where Debord sees the mechanically reproduced image as something that alienates and disintegrates the self and especially the people living in a society, McLuhan's approach is more hopeful. McLuhan speaks of a global village and sees the medium as a direct extension of the human senses: media and body integrated. "We have put our central nervous systems outside us in electric technology". (McLuhan 2001:57)

McLuhan's main argument here is that the speed by which mediated massages travel, and subsequently, the distant it thus reach, brings together disparate segments of time and space. Spatial as well as cultural and social distances shrink and communicative obstacles are overcome. This is thus the encouraging account. Debord on the other hand, writing in a more Marxist/cultural criticism tradition, sees image-production and the dissemination of mediated communication in society as distancing and alienating. The perceived closeness between disparate and distant objects and subjects is, according to Debord, nothing but an illusion. The spectacle of which Debord writes "is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images". (Debord 1994) Consequently, what we have here are two very disparate and contradicting accounts on the impact of media in society. However, the positions taken by these two writers are not that different from Benjamin's analogue found in the magician-painter and the surgeon-cameraman. Whereas the distance shrinks in McLuhan it grows in Debord. Here, it could be worth recapitulating the affirmative approach as advocated by Walter Benjamin.

By comparing the experience of watching and contemplating in front of a painting and the experience of finding oneself in front of a screen, Benjamin addresses the relation between distraction and attention, not singling one or the other out.

> Distraction and concentration form polar opposites which may be stated as follows: A man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it. He enters into this work of art the way legend tells of the Chinese painter when he viewed his finished painting. In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art… Reception in a state of distraction, which is increasing noticeably in all fields of art and is symptomatic of profound changes in apperception, finds in the film its true means of exercise. The film with its shock effect meets this mode of reception halfway…The public is an examiner, but an absent-minded one. (Benjamin 1968: 239-241)

Thus, for Benjamin the cinema with its shock effect has the potential to assemble and mobilize the masses. This is, as mentioned above, quite the opposite of what Adorno describes in his ideas of the mass-society. Although Benjamin wrote his essay in a time when technological change was spurring beyond its own capacity and people put their faith in a better future, it is not hard to see that his account is in some ways right. For even if there are forces of homogenization and conformity within contemporary culture in general and in cinema in particular, the idea of "the masses", as a passive and uncontrollable force, is today outdated.

How can one reach beyond the theoretical dualism found in accounts such as Stacey, McLuhan and Debord, Benjamin and Adorno? And how can we reach beyond the ontological dualism, which

is dominating much of social and cultural theory today? Is there any other way of approaching this topic, of theorizing film and culture as well as the experience of going to the cinema, than the one outlined above? And perhaps more importantly; why shouldn't we settle with the theoretical practices and methods already available to us?

Instead of thinking in oppositions, binary categories and dualistic conceptions of reality, we should recognize the processuality of the states of beings. Instead of thinking nouns we should be thinking verbs. Taking the example from the audience in the cinema, you *are* not "the audience" –a static and defined, outlined and frozen object– but you *become* audience with the film. In the auditorium you are addressed as spectator and viewer and react accordingly. Seen from a greater perspective this kind of thinking turns all we take for granted upside-down. Arguing against the "interpretosis" that they see in Western thinking, Deleuze and Guattari argues for seeing the flux of becoming-life.[35] There is no original and primitive 'being' behind this becoming. Rather it is a ceaseless actualization of virtual potential. What the 'being'-thinking does is thus to negate and exclude all the virtual becomings. As I see it, this ontology of becoming is applicable to all social sciences and its philosophical underpinnings, especially as an alternative to constructivism and hermeneutics. Only if we set free and *think* the movement inherent in every object and subject will we be able to recognize its diverse changes and its immanent potentials. Brian Fay proposes, as a solution to the dualistic conception of reality, a dialectical approach in which "differences are not conceived as absolute, and consequently the relation between them is not one of utter antagonism" (Fay 1996: 224).

From the outset of this thesis it has been my main aim to advocate an integrated and multi-layered theoretical and methodological approach, not halting before what some perhaps would call "unorthodox" ways of dealing with the matter at hand. As Nigel Thrift (2004:59) suggests the supposedly solid distinction between 'traditional' (i.e. natural) science and social science is becoming increasingly distorted and vague, making way for new intersections between the two. For if we are to grasp and understand the multi-layered character of culture, action and human agency we must not halt before what counts as 'good' or 'bad' theory.

Perhaps one could accuse the argument put forward in this thesis of neglecting the audience or, as it follows, putting too great a focus on the material aspects of cinema and consequently on the work of art in itself.[36] Clearly the experience of going to the cinema or standing in front of an image, painting or any work of art, implies the inevitable process of interpretation and construction of more or less subjective sensations. However, the work of art in itself sets more or less distinct limits to these processes. Thus, what it all seems to comes down to is this rather cryptic and misdirected

question: is the work of art autonomous? The answer, if there really is one, is most certainly *no* (the work of art carry no fixed meaning in itself and needs to be interpreted) and *yes* (because there are indeed affects and percepts, i.e. fixed and preserved content, embedded within the work of art, and these are in some ways independent of an outside audience). But, as stated above, the question is from my point of view misdirected, at least here and now. What I have tried to show in this thesis is that there are other, perhaps more fruitful, ways of approaching film and art in general from a cultural studies perspective than the one prevalent today.

The project of cultural studies –always a critical and politicized, progressive project– has retained many modernist assumptions (such as the linear conceptions of agency and change, an ontological separation between appearance and reality, a binary logic of difference, and a focus upon the humanist, centered subject as the centre of all knowledge) and, at the same time, tried to overcome them. We now "know" that the audience is active, and that cultural consumption entails the localized, contextual and subjective construction of meaningful interpretation on the audience's behalf. The question we should ask ourselves is where we to go from this assertion. What really matters here is that the moving image affects us in ways that are often neglected or at least taken for granted within contemporary cultural theory.

I have tried to show how the moving image alters the way that we look at reality and our place in it. It changes the way that our bodies relate to the world, how they become part of it. But it also changes the way that we experience our selves and others. As Susan Sontag puts it in a significant statement:

> Reality has come to seem more and more like what we are shown by cameras. It is common now for people to insist about their experience of a violent event in which they were caught up –a plane crash, a shoot-out, a terrorist bombing- that 'it seemed like a movie.' This is said, other descriptions seeming insufficient, in order to explain how real it was. (Sontag: 1979: 161)

'The Authenticity', were there ever one, of the real has been subtracted from the here and now turning reality in itself into a shadow. But is it really relevant to make this distinction between image and reality? In a Deluzian sense the answer to this question is clearly no. The image holds the quality of and is real in itself. Everyday life is inseparable from our media technology, and the coupling between the two makes the distinction between appearance and reality, simulation and representation superflous and obsolete. From this point of view, the (legitimate?) question "what is this an image

of?” is a misdirected and irrelevant question. Rather, Deleuze insists that we should ask ourselves “what does the image *do* to us, what can we do *with it*, what is its social, mental and material implication?”. In this sense there is no “outside” of discourse and thought. Language and thought both work on a single plane of reality. Hence the materialistic view advocated in Deleuze's philosophy. Perhaps this non-representative ontology of Deleuze is hard to employ in an empirical sense, one always runs the “risk” of ending up in a dualistic and hermeneutic ontological standpoint. The heritage from the Cartesian and the Kantian wiev of the world is hard to neglect and to overcome, both in theory and in practice. Nevertheless we have to remember that this modernist, dualistic conception of reality is a history in itself, constructed and formed under certain historical and ideological conditions. In other words there is nothing universal or natural in categories such as the Kantian “phenomena” and “noumena” (perception and reality) or the Cartesian division of mind and body. (Rorty 2003)

If we accept this monist, materialistic worldview we could also find new ways of approaching the relation between the media and the subject, seeing them not as separate, indivisible entities but as processes, mutually feeding of from each other. This is where Deleuze's concept of *becoming* (rather than the Cartesian *being*) comes into the picture. Seeing the ontological basis of life as constantly modulating and changing processes, *panta rei* as Heracleitus said, or; everything flows. Contesting Western thinking and science, many contemporary social scientists advocate this proposal as liberating and intelectually challenging. In the same manner we could also find new inspiring ways of theorizing the relation between traditional, binary categories such as individual and society, nature and culture, primitive and civilized, mind and body, self and other, man and woman. For what good is a science that does not wish to change and alter the state of beings? That settles with the concepts and the categories that are already there for everyone to see? To set free the movement and flow of life creates, in itself, new challenges, new obstacles and provocing questions. It does most definitely not stop here and now.

Postscript

Where do we go on from here, what is the essential suggestion put forward here in this thesis? In conclusion I would like to take the opportunity to once again address Bergson and his "cinematographical method" (Bergson 1911). In relation to how our perceptions and thoughts work and act, Bergson draws an analogy between the apparatus of cinema and the human being, seeing human perception as a quasi-cinematic process. The human body connects with and perceives the outside and its bodies as does the immobile photographs, when shown in the sequential order of cinema, put motion and becoming into the cinema.

> Whether we would think becoming, or express it, or even perceive it, we hardly do anything else than set going a kind of cinematographic inside us. We may therefore sum up what we have been saying in the conclusion that the *mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographic kind.* (Bergson 1911: 323)

To think of the mind (and the universe)[32] as cinema, this had hardly been possible when Rene Descartes construed the "I think therefore I am" –a postulation that has influenced Western science and thinking ever since. Reformulating this suggestion, the neuroscientist and anti-Cartesian crusader Antonio Domasio (2000) proposes, in line with Spinoza, that the foundation of human consciousness is that of feeling and affect: I *feel* therefore I am… As Marshall McLuhan suggests "[e]very new medium changes the images we have of our own bodies" (Ingvarsson 2003: 28) But who is this "I" doing all the thinking and acting? From where does this subject derive? Perhaps today, with the advent of "new" media technology such as the Internet and mobile, disembodied communication, we will begin to reformulate the being of this "I", seeing the subject as an interaction between body *and* mind, and the mind as a composite of inner states of affect *and* the outside i.e. the environment. The activity of the organism alters the environment, and the activity of the environment alters the organism. There is no way of separating the two in reality, no way of telling which is primary and which is secondary. In this sense the human being is defined through its exceeding of itself, through its interaction with, and (dis)placement in, the world.

In conclusion, I will end this text with the inspiring and thoughtful words of Spinoza that are, even though they were written some three hundred years ago, still valid:

Nobody has as yet determined the limits of the body's capabilities… For nobody as yet knows the structure of the body so accurately as to explain all its functions. (Connolly 2002: 212n28)

Notes

[1] The fact that I am, already at the outset of this essay, complicating matters by speaking in terms of "we" (and implicitly of "them" whoever they be) is for me a highly problematic concern. In doing so, I could easily end up reproducing notions of ethnocentrism and universalism. However, I believe that this "we" of which I am speaking is not to be considered a univocal and universal term. Of course, the "we" of which I am speaking, inevitably reproduces and excludes a "them". But the divide here does not necessarily refer to well-known binary categories such as west/east, north/south, rich/poor etc. Contesting such dualistic notions, Arjun Appadurai (1996) introduces the suffix –scape (media, techno, ethno and finance), as in landscape. What this term signifies is that there are indeed differences, that the way I experience reality is not necessarily, or even probably, the only one; that this essay is not an objective statement of the state of being, the order of things. As Stuart Hall reminds us: "Of course, the 'I' who writes here must also be thought of as, itself, 'enunciated'. We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always 'in context', *positioned*." (1990:222) What I want to make clear here is that I am aware of the limits of the ideas and propositions laid forward in this essay. This matter, however, will be more thoroughly discussed and problematised further down.

[2] I am referring here first of all to Erving Goffman's (1959) analysis of human interaction in everyday life. Social life and the *scene* on which this is *acted* out is, argues Goffman, not that different from what goes on at the theatre or in the film studio. I would argue that the so-called performativity of sex and gender, as put forward by gender studies and perhaps most provokingly and radically by Judith Butler (1993), falls in the same category. To put it simply, the main idea is here that we, depending of the social environment we find ourselves in and the given situation, take on a given and prescribed role and act accordingly. This behaviour is what makes social life and interaction between different people possible and meaningful at all.

[3] By inserting this term 'traditional' it may seem that I position myself above or beside these theories of which I am speaking. This is perhaps even the case. It should be noted though that it is against contemporary bodies of theory such as discourse analysis and social constructivism taken to the extreme that I am speaking here. What I want to lay forward in this essay is a critical understanding of such theories. By testing and stretching them out to test their limits, and by this also their benefits, it is my idea that there *is* a *real* world outside discourse (cf. Burr 1995: 79-94), a material and physical one that deludes any attempt to fix it within the realm of language. There is also, as I see it, a point in questioning the position of discursive approaches in contemporary cultural theory and in Cultural Studies in general. This framework of practice has, as Taussig calls into question, become something of a means in itself. The question that began with: how, if not scientifically is reality understood and constructed? has been converted 'into a conclusion –eg. "sex is a social construction", "race is a social construction", "the nation is a social construction".' (Taussig: xvi) And, as Sernhede, Johansson and Trondman (1999: 9) point out, Cultural Studies must be seen as an 'open and pluralistic project'. Seen against the backdrop of the development in Cultural Studies the field has, in my opinion, reached a stoppage. The insertion of discourse analysis as *The* methodological and theoretical framework has, as Taussig reminds us, evoked the 'simple' answer that reality as we know it *is* socially constructed, neither more nor less, through discourse.

[4] It is not a coincidence that I allude to George Herbert Mead's title *Mind, Self and Society* (1934) here. Mead was one of the first to articulate the symbiotic and inseparable quality of human agency and social structure. By asserting that the way in which society is constructed works along the lines of a *social evolution* (Miegel & Johansson 2002:90) Mead stressed that the mind is social. The notion of the 'I' and the 'me' (that is the spontaneous reaction of an individual to social situations and the internalised view that others hold of one self), as developed in social psychology, tells us that the mind is not merely 'natural' but above all social. (1934: 175) With the words of Mead: "social reconstruction and self or personality reconstruction are the two sides of a single process –the process of human social evolution." (ibid: 309).

[5] Of course one could argue, as does for example sociologist Anthony Giddens (1997:101-109), that 'late-modernity' has increased our possibilities and the freedom of the individual, thus rendering the power of tradition and habit virtually ineffective. And consequently, that the late-modern subject picks and chooses freely its preferred lifestyle and identity from a virtually endless cultural repertoire. Of course, there are some plausible points in this argument depending on what position you occupy; the freedom of some is the unfreedom of others. What such a reading of modernity fails to recognise, however, is the bodily, the material and the mental aspects of the social. And further; that this freedom still is a freedom that works within the very same conceptual scheme that promotes the idea of identity and the construction of oppositions such as Self and Other, of inclusion and exclusion.

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[6] Within the school of social constructivism the proposal that reality is a social construction is a fashionable one. In her introduction to the topic, Vivien Burr (1995) poses the somehat bissare question "Is there a real world outside discourse?". It is against such questions and proposals that this thesis sets out to give an alternative reading of the constructedness/material aspects of social reality.

[7] Bo Isenberg discusses the concept of contingency as what characterizes modernity as a fundamentally new and different epoch. "The principle of the insufficient ground" as he calls it implies that the human being is alone in the world, left to her own decisions without any justifying and metaphysical authority to guide her, "God is dead" as Nietzsche put it. Man alone has to justify his/her own existens and being-in-the-world. As Isenberg shows, this "self-assertion" has been one of the main topics of sociologists and thinkers. In Weber: Disenchantment; Marx and Engels: Capitalism; Foucault: Disciplines; Horkheimer and Adorno: Enlightenment (Cf Isenberg 2001: 59-82)

[8] Queer theory and postmodern feminism has since long put focus upon both the material, bodily aspects of the body as well as the symbolic, gendered matters of sex. Questioning the gendered imperative in western culture, writers such as Judith Butler (1993) and Donna Haraway (1991) explore the limits and social implications of the gendered/queer body in contemporary society. In postcolonial theory writers such as Frantz Fanon (2000) and Stuart Hall (1997) see to how bodies are constructed in racialized discourses focusing on differences and representations of 'race'. In Sweden, two dissertations in comparative literature *Avhandling i litteraturvetenskap: Adorno, Deleuze och litteraturens möjligheter* and *En besynnerlig gemenskap teknologins gestaltningar i svensk prosa 1965-70* deal with a topic that touch upon the one in this thesis. They both argue that literature, or media (texts) in general, should not be interpreted or decoded but rather that they be used. The same argument, but with a more materialistic and techno-deterministic approach, is advocated by the German media theorist Friedrich Kittler in *Maskinskrifter* and *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. The study of affect is not new in itself, but has since recently seen a renaissance in Lawrence Grossberg's *We Gotta Get Out Of This Place* and Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* to name a few. In short, affect is the sociology of emotions. But The intersection of body and technology, or the clumsier concepts of "nature" and "culture", is a matter for the so-called posthumanists. Katherine Hayles' *How We Became Posthuman*, Neil Badmington's *Posthumanism* and Sarah Whatmore's *Hybrid Geographies* give a wide and open introduction to the topic. Encompassing these three is the belief in the hybridization of nature and culture.

[9] Theorists such as Walter J Ong (1982) and Friedrich A. Kittler (1986) have been discussing this transformative quality of media and its impact on the human mind. Whereas the former proposes that the shift from an oral to a literal culture brought about a shifting focus of the senses (from audial dominance to visual dominance), the latter suggests that our 'new media' such as the gramophone, the film and the typewriter, and subsequently, the computer, changes and alters the human being in itself, physically and especially mentally. "Once storage media can accommodate optical and acoustic data, human memory capacity is bound to dwindle. Its 'liberation' is its end" writes Kittler (1986: 10). Following McLuhan, Kittler argues that "people will be hooked to an information channel that can be used for any medium –for the first time in history, or for its end" (ibid: 1) and couldn't we argue that this is what has happened with the advent of Internet?

[10] See the discussion upon the concept of non-identity below. See also footnote 30.

[11] What is interesting in this context is that the individual, broadly speaking, can turn him/herself into either subject or object. Socialpsychologist such as George Herbert Mead tells us that the self is composed of the "I" (the subject) and "me" (the object). These two aspects of the individual interrelate and feed of each other forming the self, the "doer behind the doing".

[12] This is of course my own reason for being interested in these very films. However, I am not alone in my reaction; the films that I discuss in this thesis have all been widely discussed due to their deviant qualities. Here I have consulted articles and reviews in Swedish newspapers, and some of the comments that have been made in these articles about the films are also used in the analysis since they intersect with the discussion that I put forward in the thesis. See Dagens Nyheter 010821 *"Memento" ska du också glömma* Mattias Berg, Dagens Nyheter 991122 *Fyra rullar på samma duk* (Kurt Mälarstedt), Dagens Nyheter 020525 *Våldtäktsscener chockar publiken* (Nicholas Wennö), and Dagens Nyheter 031010 *Irréversible* (Johan Croneman)

[13] The conceptualisation of the audience has since long been a highly contested project in social and cultural theory. The audience as such became an object of research with the advent of proto-cinematic devices during the first decade of the

20th century. Since then, the main object of analysis has been the question of *effect* in a stimuli-response circuit. One can see that the research on media audiences changes in relation to social, political and economic aspects. If the first half of the 20th century was characterised by the idea that the media injected beliefs, morals and cultural values into its audience, the latter part of the century has been more nuanced and diverse in approaching the audience. During the last couple of years there has been a vast amount of studies advocating the active and creative audience. These studies are often carried out as some kind of participant observations with ethnographical data to support its findings.

[14] Even though dealing with subatomic particles, quantum mechanics and quantum physics has shown, through Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, that objects change when they are obseved. In short, we could say that Heisenberg's principle tells us that our methods and questions alter our understanding of any object. What I point to here though is that my experience and understanding of the objects that I study change during the course of work.

[15] The concept of the 'organic intellectual' as advocated by Antonio Gramsci and later on adapted and refined by Stuart Hall encapsulates this, indeed very politicised, project. First of all, the organic intellectual is one who, if put simply, defies any attempt to freeze or stop the intellectual and theoretical development of cultural studies as an 'organic' and interdisciplinary academic project. Secondly, it denotes the ambition that cultural studies should be in close contact, not only with the academy and its intellectual climate, but first and foremost, with the world outside the academy. In this sense the project of cultural studies is, or rather ought to be, according to Gramsci and subsequently Hall, first of all a political project. (cf. Hall 1996: 102-104)

[16] Some further explaining might be in place here, especially since the word "dialectic" is used quite differently in different contexts. The word originates from the German idealist philosopher Hegel (although the thought-form of the dialectic i.e. the negation of the negation is present even in Plato) who developed an account on history in which an initial proposition (thesis) is negated through a counter-argument (antithesis). From these two, rational thought and truth is extracted forming the progress of society and historical development at large. Marx and Engels later transformed Hegel's dialectic into their theory on capitalism and the economic, political project of historical materialism. The method referred to here however owes more to Theodor Adorno's conception of a "negative dialectic" (1973). Adorno sees the dialectic method, not as a truth-generating method, but as a constantly and ceaselessly self-reflection of thought. The word "negative" relates to the proposition that there is no end to this process and that the synthesis always entails raising new questions and new problems to be dealt with. Further, Adorno suggests that the outcome of dialectics is always negative, and not positive as in Hegel or Marx. This assertion relates to the concept of "non-identity" which is not to be mistaken for the opposite of identity or the "other". The concept of "non-identity" will be dealt with further down.

[17] This assertion, taken to its extreme position by some theorists such as Jean Baudrillard (1994) seems to imply that the images we are confronted with today are nothing but simulations and/or simulacras. To put it short, the simulacra is a copy without an original whereas the process of simulation suggests that, in late-capitalist culture, reality is ultimately an effect of the media (and not the other way around). For example, Baudrillard (1991) in a nowadays-notorious article commented upon the Gulf War implying that it was not an actual event but a 'virtual' and symbolic war of images and symbols. This rather perverse idea stems from Baudrillard's inability to link the symbolic and the material. However one could ask whether, for western viewers, the war really did take place anywhere else but in front of their TV? This question is, ironically, addressed in the film *Wag the dog* from 1997 in which the American president stages a war which takes place only in a Hollywood studio through the techniques of digital montage and image-manipulation. Wag the dog could also be seen as a perfect example of how films and 'real events' get mixed up in news media. At the time for its release, president Bill Clinton had, just as the president in the film, just been caught having an affair with one of his employees. The following military strike on Iraq, ordered by the Clinton government, further indicate this resemblance between fiction and real life. (C.f. Black, Joel 2002: 190-193)

[18] It could be worth noting here that I do not make any suggestions about the uniqueness and autonomy of any medium. On the contrary TV, radio, newspapers, novels, films and the Internet all intersect and work intertextually on each other. Consider for example the origins of the well-known secret agent 007, who started off as a character in Ian Fleming's novels and later on as a movie star. Lately James Bond has been the character in several video games and there are surely thousands of web pages devoted to the British agent. What this shows is that the content of a particular medium is easily transported and re-used in another. However, there of course differences considering the form of different media.

[19] The use of biographical and autobiographical 'data' has become a more or less accepted method within social sciences today. I believe that the achievements within disciplines such as gender studies and postcolonial literature/theory has

brought about new notions of the interconnectedness of research*er* and research*ed*: the relation between the two is inevitable, and why shouldn't it? The idea of a neutral and objective scientist is, since the arrival of postmodernism and poststructuralist thought, gone since long –for better or for worse. For a good example of how the autobiographical genre can be used as a source of knowledge see Appadurai 1996 or Fanon 2000.

[20] I am aware of the very strict and limited definition of the word culture used here. It is not my aim to narrow it down further or negate other definitions of the word. On the contrary the way I use the word here points to what I experience as being the common sense, reductionist understanding of the word "culture". Neglecting the material implications of culture, much of contemporary cultural theory reduces it to signification and interpretation.

[21] In *The Savage Mind*, Claude Levi Strauss argues that man, seen as a universal category, is destined to a certain kind of (structural) thinking. Our minds seem to have in them the pre-conscious and inevitable capacity to organize and categorize the objective world. This he shows by studying the alleged 'primitive' mind and societies claiming that 'their' principles of organization are as abstract and complex as 'our'. This question, however, will be dealt with further below.

[22] In what has been called "the anti-humanist" approach, the image of the subject as such has undergone radical changes. Questioning humanism's image of the unified and stable subject, the relation between the individual and society, between discourse and reality, poststructuralism and postmodernism advocates the image of a fractured and schizophrenic subjectivity.

[23] Experiments with what Sigmund Freud referred to as subliminal perception, i.e. the unconscious perception of external inputs, were made early on in the history of cinema. During screenings, images of different merchandise and products –coca cola being the most famous example- were flashed before the audience. Allegedly, none of these images were processed as conscious memory but as the story goes the audience were affected and during the intermission bought the screened product. However, the experiments have never been validated and the actual outcome of subliminal effects is a highly contested area of research. Later on, the results were revealed as fabricated. Nevertheless there is within contemporary psychoanalysis and neuroscience an interest in how consciousness and noncounsciosness are constructed. What was referred to above as 'the half second delay' is an example of how scientists today dig deeper into the vast land of unconscious perception. The de-centering of Man (as the conscious, rational and enlightened human subject) has since the advent of psychoanalysis and the anti-humanism found in, among others, Freud, Lacan, Marx, Foucault and Althusser, formed a body of theory in what goes under the name of post-humanism. Although not explicitly referred to within the structure of this thesis, much of the propositions laid forward within this body of thought is present implicitly. For an account on anti-humanism and its relation to posthumanism see Badmington 2000.

[24] It is for example common in social theory today to speak of different subjectivities belonging to different periods in the history of ideas. Stuart Hall (1992) outlines three conceptions of the subject namely: the *enlightenment* subject, the *modern* subject, and the *postmodern* subject. These three conceptualizations represent different approaches towards the subject and its relation to the world. In a comment on the Cartesian conceptualization of the subject (as in *Cogito Ergo Sum*, or: I think, therefore I am) Anthony Giddens writes the following, nowadays 'well-known' and in poststructuralist thinking accepted definition, on the subject: "'I think, therefore I am' is disqualified on a number of grounds. The 'I' is not immediately available to itself, deriving its identity as it does from its involvement in a system of signification. The 'I' is not the expression of some core of conscious selfhood that is its basis. The 'being' suggested by the 'I am' is not the expression of some core of continuous selfhood that is its basis." (Giddens 1987: 206)

[25] The concept of habitus derives from Scholastic philosophy but is also used by thinkers such as Hegel and Husserl. It represents a reaction towards the passive view of agency and action as offered by structuralism as well as a pragmatic alternative to the deterministic conceptions of the subject as offered by subjectivism and objectivism. Bourdieu defines the concept of habitus as a system of "durable, transportable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them." (Bourdieu 1993: 5)

[26] Consider for example how our gender identities work in practice. Gendered and embodied markers indicate certain identities while excluding others such as man/woman, boy/girl. But when we encounter abnormalities and confusing objects we often react by disgust and horror or ignorance. This is, with the words of Julia Kristeva, what is reffered to as the abject, that is -neither object nor subject. That which is unclassifiable and uncomprehendable is often forced into

well-known categories through processes of analogy ("The person acted like a woman, thus she is a woman"). Non-identity, Anders Johansson argues, can be explained as follows: when I see a person crying I can identify this act since I myself has once dcried. But I cannot *understand* and *wholly* identify the singular event of that person's own experience and reason for crying. Thus we reduce the particularity and specifity of this event into something more general and universal. An identity is constructed between me as an observer (who has once cried) and the crying individual i.e. the subject.

[27] Brian Fay suggests that there is a difference between *knowing* and *being* and that this difference is mostly a matter of active and/or reactive responses in the organism. Active response is when an action is taken because of inner beliefs and needs whereas reactive responses are dependant upon circumstances that lie outside the agent's body and its subjectivity. The most obvious example of the difference between knowing and being is illustrated in the relation between the patient and the doctor. The patient may very well be aware of the pains he or she experiences and in this sense he or she knows that he or she is (or rather has the experience of *being)* ill. The doctor on the other hand may very well *know* what is wrong with this particular patient but this does not suffice for knowing how this state of illness feels. Cf.Fay 1996: 17-24

[28] Although there is a lack of fruitful comments on Deleuze´s cinema books there are a few important remarks that have been made. One of the critiques aimed at Deleuze's theory of art in general and that of cinema in particular is that it is elitist in the sense that he distinguishes high from low art. In short he suggests that there is a qualitative difference between good art and bad art. Further, it is sometimes argued that he places too much focus upon the writer/artist/director. This critique is, according to me, justifiable. Especially Cinema 1 and Cinema 2 are cramped up with ovations and praises to the 'geniuses' of cinema. In this sense Deleuze differs from contemporary poststructuralist writers such as Roland Barthes (who declared the "death of the author") and postmodern art theory, which makes no explicit or qualitative difference between 'good' and 'bad' art. Perhaps one could argue that Deleuze lacks in an understanding of the audience and the reception of art. His account focuses mostly on the work of art in itself and the power of the cinematic image to astonish, shock and provoke feelings. One could say that for Deleuze the audience is always implicit, never articulated but still present. As such he enscribes himself into the anti-humanist project and the de-centering of the human subject represented in most works by post-structuralist thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida.

[29] Poststructuralism and deconstructivism has been criticised for not taking into account the materiality of discourse, seeing social and cultural reality as discursive and textual formations, neither more or less. Assertions such as '*everything is a text'* seem to neglect the impact of and limits in matter itself. Addressing these issues, Judith Butler poses the following questions: "If everything is discourse, what happens to the body? If everything is a text, what about violence and bodily injury? Does anything *matter* in or for poststructuralism?" (Butler 1993: 28) These questions are, in my opinion, what has to be addressed even here, in this thesis. Even though Butler offers no answer to them she goes on arguing that: "what is at stake is less a theory of cultural construction than a consideration of the scenography and topography of construction. This scenography is orchestrated by and as a matrix of power that remains disarticulated if we presume constructedness and materiality as necessarily oppositional notions." (ibid: 28) Materiality and construction goes hand in hand, the one does not exist without the other. This thesis however, will not explicitly address these questions and even less give any answer to them. It should be noted though that it is against the backdrop of these questions that this text has been produced. As I see it, the problematic and reductive proposition that 'everything is discourse' lacks an understanding of the materiality of discursive and social practice.

[30] In her study of the Yoruba society in Nigeria the author Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997) shows how categories such as 'man' and 'woman' were superimposed and constructed in and through western anthropological discourse. Oyeronke asserts that the bio-logic of western science translated social relations in Yoruba society as being gendered, rendering the category 'gender' a matter of analysis; inventing man, inventing woman (1997:30)

[31] The example with Zeno's arrow is one of the most well known paradoxes in modern philosophy. It might need some further comment though. According to this particular paradox, an arrow that is shot towards a tree will never reach its goal. How can this be possible you most probably wonder? Suppose that the path the arrow traverses while moving towards the tree is composed of a line with a specific number of points that the arrow has to cross. Between these points there are an infinite number of points and in order to reach the next point it has to cross all of these. But can you reach the end of infinity? No, you cannot. The problem here is that the trajectory of the arrow really is indivisible. Bergson (1911: 326) says in a comment on this that "we cannot divide its [the trajectory of the arrow] creation, which is an act in progress and not a thing." (cf. Bergson 1911: 325-330)

32 All of these events, and the scepticism aimed at them and/or their questioned truthfulness and authenticity, should, to most readers, be relatively familiar. The assertion that the World Cup in football '58 did not take place comes from a so-called mocumentary made in Sweden called "Konspiration 58" (Conspiracy 58). However, most viewers were not told in advance that this particular documentary was staged and fictive. Thus, many of the viewers took it as a 'real' documentary. This blurring between 'false' and 'true', of 'real' and 'fiction' has taken on a life on its own at a website dedicated to the idea that WC'58 never took place. In this website the discussion is still very much alive and 'authentic', and perhaps this is the ultimate proof of the (dis)belief put in images produced and distributed by the media? (For an account on the conspiracy theories concerning the assassination of John F Kennedy and similar questions on the Holocaust see Black 2002)

33 It has for example been suggested that pictures from the second world war (since they are most often in black-and-white) make us distance and disconnect ourselves from them, seeing them as something belonging to an ancient, or at least very distant, past. However, there are colored images and moving pictures from this period of time. Recently it has been suggested that these colored pictures of the war could make us aware of the fact that it took place not that long ago.

34 As Simon During (1999) suggests, in a comment to Adorno's and Horkheimer's text, one should also keep in mind the political and cultural environment in which it was written. "The Second World War had not quite ended, and Adorno and Horkheimer were refugees from Nazi Germany living in the US. Hitler's totalitarianism (with its state control of cultural production) and the American market system are fused in their thought – all the more easily because, for them as members of the German (or rather the secularized German-Jewish) bourgeoisie, high culture, particularly drama and music, is a powerful vehicle of civil values." (During 1999:31) This more critical view of the reproductive aspects of culture is addressed in letters written as a response to Benjamin by Adorno (cf Adorno 1987)

31 The search for implicit meaning and reason in for example psychoanalysis is what Deleuze and Guattari attacks here. As I see it Deleuze's and Guattari's approach can be seen as an attack against the deterministic view of human agency and its relation to social structure found in both psychoanalysis and Marxism. Instead of trying to reveal "the Truth" or some underlying structure in life, they construct an affirmative and, if you like, "positive" approach to the world.

32 With the words of Deleuze, Bergson sees "the universe as cinema in itself, a metacinema" (Deleuze 1986: 59) For Deleuze, this is what happens, in short, when cinema stops mimicking human, "natural" perception and detaches itself from the human being, constructing its own universe which is not dependant on any human observer and its senses.

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