THE CHRONOTOPIC IMAGINATION: ABERRANT TIMES AND FIGURES IN CINEMA

By

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This dissertation explores two important aspects of filmic discourse, the representation of

time and the body as read through gesture. Drawing on the Russian literary theorist Mikhail

Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope, or the time-space continuum expressed in literature, it

imports Bakhtin's underappreciated idea to analyze and theorize filmic articulations of time.

While temporal presence underpins the cinematic image, many filmmakers experiment with

temporalities that challenge realist representational strategies. Inventive in their practices, these

filmmakers fashion a chronotopic imagination that invites viewers to re-think our own present

condition. They seek creative engagements with our past and present, while opening avenues for

thinking the future. Equally important, they ask viewers to consider the body as figure of an

aberrant time. By creating often unusual and unexpected gestures or bodily dispositions,

filmmakers drawn to the chronotopic imagination invest bodies with time. Rather than evincing

narrative health and agency, the body instead suffers from time itself. Through close readings of

images and sequences, analysis carefully studies how films achieve novel depictions of time and

the body.

Chapters focus on four important filmmakers—Sergei Eisenstein, Andrey Tarkovsky, Leos Carax, and Abbas Kiarostami—and how they fabricate their respective chronotopes. At first glance, these four filmmakers appear to share little in common stylistically and thematically; they also emerge in different historical contexts. Yet despite these differences, all four develop their distinctive chronotopes by placing emphasis upon unusual gestures including acrobatics, fainting spells, levitations, suicide, stammerings, and failed actions. Through gesture, the body tends to occupy a hiatus separating past, present, and future moments in time. Never present, gesture often entails a process of becoming, in which bodily states and temporal moments are about to be, but are not yet. In such instances, the chronotopic imagination offers creative responses to two important questions for the analysis and theorization of visual culture—what could be and what can a body do.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

We measure and order time with our fictions; but time seems, in reality, to be ever more diverse and less and less subject to any uniform sense of measurement. (Kermode 63)

From its inception, cinema among all the arts possessed a unique relationship with time. Capturing a slice of life and time, the camera rescued reality "from its proper corruption" (Bazin 1: 14) by giving eternal life to its phantom double, embodied in and as an image.[1] Due to its automatic nature, which recorded 16 frames per second, and later 24, the camera astonished its initial viewers with an uncanny spatial and temporal duplicate of the world. By tricking human perception, mechanically reproduced movements provided a gauge for measuring a homogeneous time oriented around a stable presence. The camera recorded time as it was, a former present now turned past in the viewing context. The unprecedented realism and temporal uniformity of the earliest films would galvanize classical cinema and its heirs.[2]

Despite possessing a tendency toward realism, historically cinema as an art of time has also constructed many varying, often paradoxical, temporalities that appear to complicate representations grounded in the ostensive presence of the image. Such films possess the ability to reveal a "temporal unconscious," to paraphrase Walter Benjamin.[3] Filmmakers who experiment with time establish a tension between the mimetic power of the camera and their own inventively constructed temporalities. In this sense, experimental films undo the grip the image necessarily has on the present by interrogating possibilities that non-linear temporalities may

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[1] Although Bazin discusses photography, which he also compares to mummification and fingerprinting, cinema as an art of time enhances this "rescue mission."

[2] Even though the apparatus itself grounds the image in presence, filmmakers such as Andy Warhol and Michael Snow employ extremely long takes that undermine temporal uniformity. Their films often attest to how subjectivity infuses temporal expression.

[3] Of a filmic unconscious, Benjamin's famous essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" avers, "The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses" (690).

hold. By orchestrating poetic interplays of past and future or of indeterminate, floating times, filmmakers creatively manipulate time to erode the presence recorded by the camera.

When individual films orient representation around such heterogeneous temporalities, they test the manner in which we perceive and experience time, or are thought to by philosophy and psychology. Cinema thus directly engages our time(s) by fabricating unusual and discontinuous temporalities that invite creative intervention by film readers. To explain these "unruly" times as they appear in a given film, viewers must not only compare filmic representation to their own experiences; they must also discern and evaluate correspondences that representation and time hold with other films, especially mainstream films. When confronted by non-linear temporalities, viewers shuttle back and forth between noting deviations from conventional representations of time and resourcefully producing theories to interpret those deviations. This shuttling movement asks readers to account for and develop new yardsticks for measuring time. By artfully engaging with our past and present through the study of films, the act of reading opens avenues for thinking the future.

If, as Frank Kermode proposes, we invent fictions to give shape to our experience of time, then what happens when calculated measurement and order run up against an unruly, diverse, and heterogeneous time? What tropes do filmmakers invoke to express this unusual time that challenges conventional representation? Equally important, what sort of fictions do we as viewers and theorists of film deploy to explain aberrant times and movements? What types of figures or tropes best express this adventure with an insubordinate time? In other words, within the context elaborated here, what perspectives can cinema open onto time and how does cinema express those perspectives?

Let me suggest that Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the "chronotope," or the "time-space" continuum articulated in literature, promises a highly compelling avenue to approach the questions cited above. Although his analyses concentrate on language and literature, and their respective sociohistorical dimensions, Bakhtin proves equally relevant to thinking about cinema. As Robert Stam's <u>Subversive Pleasures</u> shows, the importation of key Bakhtinian ideas including dialogism, intertextuality, heteroglossia, and the carnivalesque into cultural studies can revitalize not only our understanding of Bakhtin, but can also successfully "migrate" into discourse about film. Inspired by Bakhtin's own literary "border crossings," the interdisciplinary tack of Stam's book suggests that "the encounter of Bakhtin with film might be viewed as virtually inevitable" (17). The openness of film theory to draw upon concepts from other disciplines, such as Lacanian psychoanalysis, Marxist critique, and Sausurrean linguistics, invites similar productive encounters with Bakhtin. This study does not seek to repeat Stam's gesture, the thorough evaluation of Bakhtin's generative concepts in light of cinema and visual culture, but rather plucks one of Bakhtin's central ideas and pursues it as an exegetical tool to analyze temporal articulation in film.[4]

In <u>The Dialogic Imagination</u>, Bakhtin employs the literary chronotope to discern shifts in representations of space and time that occur within the novel. Arguing that the artistic chronotope is a "formally constitutive category of literature" (84), Bakhtin asserts:

> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (84)

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[4] Stam's introduction takes brief notice of the chronotope. He returns to it but once to focus on space in films noir.

Fusing space and time, a given literary chronotope characterizes the distinctive "world" occupied

by its characters. By deploying the chronotope as concept, the reader recognizes the discursive

patterns framed by artistic use of consistent spatial and temporal "indicators." For Bakhtin, the

value of this notion results from the imbrication of historical circumstance and generic

convention that infuse literary production. Together, world history and literary history mutually

determine mutations present in the novel, and Bakhtin takes great care to analyze the chronotopic

imagination and its indicators as they appear in individual works.

Bakhtin focuses on roughly two millennia of literary production, yet the chronotope figures

as a concept equally productive for film analysis and theory. In fact, as Stam argues, the

chronotope

> Seems in some ways even more appropriate to film than literature, for whereas literature
> plays itself out within a virtual, lexical space, the cinematic chronotope is literal, splayed
> out concretely across a screen with specific dimensions and unfolding in literal time
> (usually 24 frames a second), quite apart from the fictive time/space specific films might
> construct. (11)

The "literal time" mentioned by Stam pertains to the realist articulations discussed above, in

which movement, space and time closely resemble their counterparts in reality. Yet against this

backdrop one can detect the experimentation with fictive time/spaces that test the ostensive

literality of time manufactured by the filmic apparatus. By challenging the realist chronotope,

filmmakers bid viewers to apply Bakhtin's idea to account for unusual or heterogeneous

expressions of space and time.

Although the filmic representation of space, or the "tope" in chronotope, constitutes a

fascinating approach to cinema, the focus here primarily rests on the "chrono" or time element

present in films.[5] Without in any way disparaging the spatial component of Bakhtin's notion, my

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[5] Michael V. Montgomery's <u>Carnivals and Commonplaces</u> underscores how the spatial side of Bakhtin's notion
proves useful for re-reading topoi as they are articulated in Hollywood and New American cinema.

analysis foregrounds a poetics of time developed by key filmmakers. If this choice necessitates the privileging of time over space, it does so to take note where time "thickens, takes on flesh" in the film form. The congealing of time in the image proves paramount for denoting not only fundamental shifts in film history, but also for spurring broader considerations of culture. The unique chronotopes elaborated throughout this study spur reflection on the intersection where history, visual culture and the manner in which we experience and think time meet. In this regard, the task of examining the chronotopic imagination in filmmaking may be understood as an (un)timely intervention, whereby analysis opens unexplored paths to think our present condition.

To fabricate an unruly time, directors no doubt rely upon an array of technical aspects of filmmaking. Through techniques including editing, camera work, lighting, sound and image juxtapositions, and framing, to name a few, their fictive constructs attest to a diverse time. Equally important, filmmakers utilize gesture and bodily movement to give flesh to their fictions. The body offers a unique viewpoint onto the chronotopes fashioned by filmmakers, and, by way of wordplay, constitute chrono_tropes_, or "time figures." By inventing such figures that move to the beat of an aberrant time, experimental directors stamp bodies with impressions of time. Rather than simply occupying or traversing space through measured movements, as realist cinema would dictate, the body exhibits unusual characteristics or symptoms in their respective films. An avatar of time, the body enters a nexus of figurations that ask viewers to re-think notions of agency, health, vitality, and desire.

Challenging our assumptions of mainstream cinema, and its heroes who actively push the plot forward and evince a physical and mental health, such figures often appear either stricken by time or expressive of a poetic health surpassing conventional representations of strength and

vitality. Subject to fainting spells, acrobatic movements, non-synchronized encounters, Freudian failed actions and stammerings, the cinematic body as trope undergoes a tremendous reconfiguration when it encounters time. It displays where represented time loses its uniformity and where experimental filmmaking subsequently embarks on poetic investigations into aberrant times. By remaining attentive to the imbrication of these two tracks—heterogeneous times measured or figured by aberrant movements and gestures—one can investigate the body as figure of time.

The connection between aberrant times and unconventional movements challenges classical cinematic representation, which anchors images to stable temporal articulations and predictable actions. This difference animates Deleuze's discussion of classical cinema in Cinema 1: The Movement-Image and modern cinema in Cinema 2: The Time-Image. To trace the gap separating the movement-image from the time-image, Deleuze invokes Hamlet's famous line, "Time is out of joint: Hamlet's words signify that time is no longer subordinated to movement, but rather movement to time" (Cinema 2 xi). For Deleuze, the pre-World War II cinema of the movement-image exhibits rationalized movements and a concomitant homogeneous, calculable time. It finds an exemplary structure in what Deleuze terms the action-image. In his reading of classical cinema, Deleuze contends that this structure, both narrative and filmic, of situation-action-new situation motivates the pre-World War II period. Mainstream film develops the narrative context that forces the hero to respond with an action, which installs a new state of affairs. The pattern then repeats until closure occurs.

Deleuze stresses how this organization of images depends upon a sensory-motor schema characteristic of movement-images generally and action-images specifically. The hero perceives a state of affairs that forces him or her to act accordingly. This model also presupposes that

viewers identify with the protagonist. We say to ourselves, "given the situation, the hero has no choice but to respond this way, just as I hypothetically would." In this structure, perception and movement, action and reaction, stimulus and response enter clearly defined relationships that determine filmic articulation. A sense of realism inheres because time appears measured by conventional, and often predictable, sets of movements occurring on screen, in editing, and in camerawork. Perception of crisis logically extends into the next shot, the responsive action that moves the narrative forward.

With the emergence of Italian Neo-realism and later the French New Wave, Deleuze finds reason to contour a new type of response to crisis and a new type of character. Rather than meeting and managing the obstacle head-on, à la John Wayne in <u>Stagecoach</u> (1939) or Bruce Willis in <u>Die Hard</u> (1988), characters become <u>overwhelmed</u> by what they see: "This is a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent" (Deleuze <u>Cinema 2</u> 2). With films such as Roberto Rossellini's <u>Viaggio in Italia</u> (1953) and Luchino Visconti's <u>Senso</u> (1953) "it is now that the identification is actually inverted: the character has become a kind of viewer" (<u>Cinema 2</u> 3), so that "the situation he is in outstrips his motor capacities on all sides, and makes him see and hear what is no longer subject to the rules of a response or an action. He records rather than reacts" (<u>Cinema 2</u> 3).

Such a rupture possesses significant consequences for the cinematic expression of time and movement. Deleuze rightly points out that a new image, the time-image, does not derive directly from a shifted perception of crisis. Characters may feel helpless by what they see or may be temporarily incapacitated, as action-images often convey. Rather, the attenuation of perception capable of being turned into action primes the nascent image. When perception cannot extend into action, time itself inhabits the image. Characters, and viewers with them, do not see a

situation they should react to, but rather they witness time unfolding in the image. Images do not link up with one another in clear, logical progressions derived from the sensory-motor schema. As a result of this reversal, movements often appear as paradoxical and aberrant. An out-of-joint time produces gestures that translate its unruliness, in contrast to the homogeneous movements that subordinates time to calculated measure. With the emergence of the time-image, filmmakers fabricate chronot(r)opes galvanized by unconventional "heroes," whose actions bear witness to a short circuiting of the sensory-motor schema.

From the outset of his cinema books, Deleuze acknowledges a debt to Bergson's notion of duration, in which the continuity of time defies reduction to spatialized segments measured in homogeneous movements. For Deleuze, one must not confuse Being with being-present and understand that "the present is not; rather, it is pure becoming, always outside itself. It is not, but it acts. Its proper element is not being but the active or useful" (Bergsonism 55). Through the time-image, thought encounters implications and foldings of disparate times that always sidestep the so-called presence of the image. Experimentation with time in cinema entails the production of becomings that cannot be reduced to uniform units of measurement. Becomings arise precisely in fissures of the sensory-motor schema and are discerned in chronot(r)opes, in aberrant temporalities that undermine presence, and in gestures that appear "acted upon" by time.

Equally important to his readings of cinema, I would argue, is the figure of Spinoza, the "prince of philosophers." Taking his cue from Spinoza's Ethics, Deleuze's entire oeuvre is haunted by the following dilemma: "We do not even know what a body can do" (Spinoza 17-18). The body often seems to be at the service of a conscious will and thus remains subordinated to thought. Deleuze not only seeks to recuperate the body and place it on equal footing with the

soul. He also seizes upon a parallelism between the body and thought that deflates the putative

split separating them:

> In short, the model of the body, according to Spinoza, does not imply any devaluation of thought in relation to extension, but, much more important, a devaluation of consciousness in relation to thought: a discovery of the unconscious, of an <u>unconscious of thought</u> just as profound as <u>the unknown of the body</u>. (<u>Spinoza</u> 18-19)

One should keep in mind that neither Spinoza nor Deleuze consider the body as <u>terra incognita</u>, a

region one needs to explore, come to grips with and therefore "colonize." Discovery takes place

in inventive practices that produce a profound re-thinking of the body. Such procedures de-

territorialize bodies in order to unlock forces that resist their subjection to control and predictable

articulation. This unknown of the body is precisely what the time-image, which is an image of

thought as well, puts us in contact with.

Whereas the action-image presents a sensory-motor schema that generally renders

expected response patterns, the time-image moves through unfamiliar bodily states and

dispositions. The body fashioned by the time-image displays, to shift the terms a bit, a shift from

"kinetic" action, underscored by speed and energy, to "kinematic" realization (Virilio, <u>Open Sky</u>

27). Paul Virilio stresses that visual technologies, especially film, have forced us to re-think the

properties, drawn from Newtonian physics and thermodynamics, which characterize the body.

Occasioned by photography, later cinema and more recently technologies that amplify

simultaneity, the kinematic body for Virilio figures movement as a disposition of time. Rather

than traversing a given spatial extensity, this body synthesizes and conducts varying

temporalities. Living the present as intensity and potentiality, the body and its gestures question

motion and rest, energy and leverage—in other words "kinetic" movement—as useful ways of

understanding the body. If the arrow of time wavers in its course, this swerve or declension

finds embodiment in kinematic actions, symptomatic gestures and bodily states.[6]

Because they appear as unconventional or unexpected, these states do not simply represent

the obverse or negative outcome of an image of action and thought gone awry. Rather, unusual

bodily states such as fainting spells and impediments such as stammering possess a positive

dimension. They function as chronotropes or figures of an aberrant time that require inventive

interpretations of the body, movement, and time in the cinema. Filmmakers therefore not only

test the limits and capacities of the body, they also explore the unknown regions and

potentialities of the body, or "what a body can do," when it enters into relation with time.

In light of their experimental chronot(r)opes, the films discussed in subsequent chapters

constitute a "minor" cinema in relation to mainstream filmmaking.[7] By contrast "major" cinema

strives to organize spatiotemporal articulations around a dominant chronotope. Inspired by

Fordist and Taylorist principles, the studio system of the 1930s to 1950s stands as a hallmark of

cinema as an industrial art able to organize movement, gesture, and time within a realist

framework. Efficiency of movement, narration and spatiotemporal articulations greatly informed

classical Hollywood filmmaking practices and translated the movements seen on screen.[8]

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[6] In the realm of sport, the kinematic body enters into new relations with force, energy and leverage to re-define kinetic motion. Deleuze notes, "All the new sports—surfing, windsurfing, hang-gliding—take the form of entering into an existing wave. There's no longer an origin as starting point, but a sort of putting-into-orbit" ("Mediators" 121). Along similar lines, R.L. Rutsky envisions Keanu Reeves as an avatar of a kinematic "hero": "Indeed, while in most action films, movement serves as demonstation of the hero/star's power and control, Keanu's action films often involve his being carried along by the movement, surfing it, at times even losing himself in it" (192).

[7] I use the term minor in a Deleuzian sense, which seeks to avoid connotations of "lesser" or "minority" and instead stresses how minoritarian artists, such as Kafka, invoke becoming and fabulation as inventive principles of artmaking.

[8] In their working methods, production houses organized clear and narratively determined movements. The continuity system ensured a regulation of filmic time. As Janet Staiger notes, by 1911 studios placed great emphasis on the continuity script that "provides a precheck of the quality of spatial, temporal and causal continuity and vraisemblance" (150). By the time Hollywood wound up banking on studio realism, it already had established procedures for efficiently regulating filmic spatiotemporal articulations.

Movement, and its expression in (and of) space and time, entailed a process of elimination necessary to maximize profit. Jean-François Lyotard argues, "Writing with movements—cinematography—is thus conceived and practiced as an incessant organizing of movements following the rules of representation for spatial localization," so that "the so-called impression of reality is a real repression of orders" ("Acinema" 170). By repression of orders, Lyotard means the elimination of heterogeneous, non-recoverable movements, those elements that accidentally intrude on Hollywood's finished product.[9] Classical Hollywood gained its prestige and profitability precisely because the organization of production and signification ensured a return on its investment. Temporal stability, rationalized by studios through techniques ranging from synchronization to continuity editing to acting style, produced a uniform and normalizing chronotope.[10]

The organization of movement, time and signification in classical Hollywood cinema constitutes the dominant chronotope in film history. It has affected, positively or negatively, nearly every filmmaking practice since. Within Hollywood filmmaking, the post-war period and waning of the studio system marked little change. Today, the rationalization of time through gesture and movement predominates in most mainstream filmmaking. The integration of music videos, associative montage sequences, and "commercial configurations of sex and blood" (Deleuze Cinema 2 157) has certainly modified the dominant chronotope, yet these factors

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[9] Roberta Pearson notes that the consolidation of verisimilar codes of acting entailed such a repression of useless movements: "Not only were aspiring actors told to 'rest long enough in a gesture', they were urged to avoid excessive movement, which might detract from attitude-striking" (25). In a similar vein, Johannes Riis sees the pause in early sound film acting as crucial to narrative and emotional articulation. The pause "enabled the audience to detect subtle forms of expression," so that "while pausing, the actor prepared the audience for a new intention" (6). The separation of gesture into discrete and coherent components assures a comprehensibility of psychological and physiological states.

[10] Michel Chion emphasizes synchronization's role in establishing film as art and as bound to a uniform time: "We are indebted to synchronous sound for having made cinema an art of time," so that "filmic time was no longer a flexible value, more or less transposable depending on the rhythm of projection. Time henceforth had a fixed value" (16).

nevertheless attest to a pernicious repression of orders. Such elements found in contemporary mainstream cinema have tended to reassert and reinvest movement and time in a calculated scheme made for profit.

Galvanizing the studies undertaken here, "minor" films offer alternative, and quite frequently paradoxical, times and movements that appear heterogeneous when compared to those of dominant cinema. By focusing on individual films by Sergei Eisenstein, Andrey Tarkovsky, Leos Carax, and Abbas Kiarostami, the reader can discern the wealth of creative and heterogeneous temporalities cinema can produce. Along these lines, the theoretically astute Tarkovsky contends in his book Sculpting in Time, "I see it as my own professional task, then, to create my own, distinctive flow of time" (120-21). His quote intriguingly suggests that filmmaking possesses a liberating force when the temporalities it fashions appear as "distinctive" and heterogeneous rather than rationalized and mastered. Each distinctive temporal flux animates idiosyncratic bodily gestures and movements that warrant close study. Inventive in their practice, minor films inspire the reader to call upon a diversity of theoretical sources and develop his or her own tactical explorations. Thus, this work engages in its own experimentation with thinking time and the body as trope.

Spurred by Bakhtin, my theory of the filmic chronot(r)ope draws on concepts and metaphors found in a variety of disciplines: philosophy (Deleuze, Lyotard, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida); fiction (Maurice Blanchot); language studies (Marc Shell); psychoanalysis (Jacques Lacan and Catherine Clément); the writings of filmmakers themselves (especially Eisenstein and Tarkovsky); and media studies (authors like Michel Chion and Mary Ann Doane figure greatly). With these thinkers in mind, I theorize their different, though often related, concepts within the context of filmic temporality and gesture. Each theoretical intervention

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inflects Bakhtin's analyses, and thus opens new perspective on his notion of the chronot(r)ope. Similarly, reading gesture and movement through time affords the opportunity to reconsider other readings of bodily tropes in cinema.

This dissertation draws upon several "postmodern," for lack of a better word, theories of time to make its case for an avant-garde chronotopic imagination present in cinema. Rather than making the films serve merely as examples of these theories, and thus blunting their force as experiments with time, one can seek to place theory and film practice within a dialogue that moves between movement, gesture and time. One can map theoretical shifts and mutations through the novel tropes that theorists employ. In this regard, it is worth recalling the task set forth by Dudley Andrew for film theory. This endeavor "today consists primarily in thinking through, elaborating, and critiquing the key metaphors by which we seek to understand (and control) the cinema complex" (12). Although the "today" he spoke of occurred twenty years ago, the imperative still remains highly relevant. Film theory can chart its own history and production through the metaphors it utilizes, which in turn galvanize new considerations of the "cinema complex."

To facilitate the study of how theorists creatively employ tropes for time, the reading method found in Éric Alliez's Capital Times: Tales of the Conquest of Time proves instructive.[11] In his foreword to that book, Deleuze argues that Alliez "speaks about various conducts of time" ("Foreword" xi), so that "we will pass from one conduct to another, in different milieus and epochs, which relate the time of history with the thought of time. In short, multiple conducts of time, each of which reunites several strides" ("Foreword" xii). By invoking the conduct,

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[11] Alliez was a student of Deleuze, whose philosophy, especially Cinema 2, greatly informs Capital Times. Alliez continues the filmic resonance with Deleuze when the author states, "Our task is to be situated at the point of time's bifurcation in order to let it roll" (2). Fashioning his own "time-image," Alliez attempts to consider how a wild temporality, characteristic of capitalism, has historically affected subjectivity and movements of thought.

Deleuze means that Alliez's re-reading of philosophy passes through certain dispositions or orientations of thinking animated by time, and not simply that time and thinking run through a conduit or duct. Theory and time possess a special relationship, as one can think time through the novel gestures it produces. Every fork in the road that history develops, the emergence of a new chronotope, must be matched by a concomitant theoretical "gait" equal to its task.

Analysis therefore proves productive when it traces the intersection of filmmaking and theory, where gesture traverses the space simultaneously separating and joining them. Because films express their respective chronotopes through a variety of filmic articulations, my readings of individual films also remain attentive to formal considerations. In addition to filmic chronotropes, techniques including editing, camera work, repetition and asynchrony form privileged sites where one can map the interplay of times and reconsiderations of the body.

The four films studied—Eisenstein's <u>Potemkin</u> (1925), Leos Carax's <u>Boy Meets Girl</u> (1984), Tarkovsky's <u>The Sacrifice</u> (1986) and Abbas Kiarostami's <u>Through the Olive Trees</u> (1994)—serve as nodal points that crystallize these varying theoretical departures and expressions of the cinematic chronot(r)ope. Though these films differ in style, subject matter and country of origin (Russia, France, Sweden and Iran, respectively), all of them share important insights on the relation between film, gesture and time. They experiment with forms of time that challenge the rhetorical and stylistic traits of dominant or "major" cinema. Even though their inventive practices generate new chronotopes, they retain a specificity that requires careful elaboration. No chronotope exists in a vacuum, but rather draws its strength from other sources. Each film enters into a dialogue with the chronotopes that preceded them, and in doing so projects toward future filmic and theoretical interventions.

Chapter 2 examines Eisenstein's theoretical and filmic "moves" through the figure of the acrobat. Arguing that Eisenstein adopts Hegelian dialectics to ground his distinctive chronotope, the chapter focuses on a paradox inherent in Eisenstein's position. On the one hand, the time of "sublation" or Aufhebung can never be apprehended as present, because it always passes behind our backs. On the other hand, in moments of ecstasy and pathos, acrobatic movement nonetheless translates dialectical effects. To achieve this translation or synthesis of dialectical time, Eisenstein finds inspiration in Taylorist rationalization of movement. A strict bodily regimen, seen in Eisenstein's theoretical tropes, directorial practices and films, ensures that the viewer properly senses dialectical movement.

Chapter 3 begins its discussion of Andrey Tarkovsky's The Sacrifice by studying Tarkovsky's readings of Eisenstein's writings and films. At odds with Eisenstein's over-reliance on literary figures to explain time, Tarkovsky underscores cinematic time, in relation to the other arts, as a distinctive rhythm or flow. With this difference in mind, I argue that Tarkovsky's final film develops its chronotope through a disparity between two fundamental flows, that of the spiritual and the material. This disparity finds expression in fainting spells or syncopes that afflict the protagonist, Alexander. To restore world order by reuniting these two flows, Alexander makes himself a gift of time.

Chapter 4 focuses on Leos Carax's first feature Boy Meets Girl and how it produces "events" that challenge any uniform sense of time. Carax's chronotope entails a sidestepping of presence manifested by bodies unable to be present (to) themselves or to others. Through sound/image relationships, primarily asynchrony, and gesture, it also challenges the coherence of an identity always split apart by time. Through these articulations, voices and images float away from any meaningful and stable body; narrative encounters and bodily movement lack any

synchronization. As a result, the film develops a virtual space where encounters, such as that suggested by the title, take place or "occur."

Chapter 5 looks at Abbas Kiarostami's Rostamabad trilogy, primarily its last film Through the Olive Trees, to explore the relation between film and testimony. I argue that Kiarostami develops a chronotope that blurs distinctions between film and reality, past and present, event and the capacity of cinema to reconstruct it. An attempt to resuscitate the past, Kiarostami's film emphasizes how stammering, a verbal gesture, and failed actions tend to undermine truthful testimony while also expressing a chronotope galvanized by repetition and failure. According to the logic of the film, making past and present jibe coherently ends in failure, and it is paradoxically this failure that allows Kiarostami to testify to a traumatic past.

Finally, the conclusion reinforces the commonality shared by Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Carax, and Kiarostami, despite their respective differences. It lays stress upon how gesture occupies hiatuses occurring between times, a site where time may fork and the body may become different. Attempts (often failed) of synchronizing bodies and times percolate throughout the films studied and attest to radical disjunctions between temporal modes. To this end, all four filmmakers galvanize their works through repetitions of the hiatus and non-synchrony to invent new bodily dispositions and unruly times. By fashioning aberrant times and gestures, they offer creative responses to two important questions for the analysis and theorization of visual culture-- what could be and what can a body do.

CHAPTER 2
SERGEI EISENSTEIN'S THREE-RING CIRCUS OF DIALECTICAL TIME

Arse over heels! . . . Soon we will have to learn to fly, to swim in the ether. (Virilio, Open Sky 3)

For the first time in the course of history and the existence of humanity, a social system began to be ahead of the creators of artistic works in the solution of these problems [of difference and unity]. Here in our country the builders of real life outstripped the creators of artistic values, and before the artists of our country and epoch stands an unprecedented task—not to be above their time, not ahead of it, for neither is impossible here—but to be on a level with and worthy of their time, their epoch, their people. (Eisenstein, Nature 376)

The introduction contoured two seemingly competing or contradictory trends in visual

representation and culture. Attempts to control and rationalize movement in order to capitalize

(on) time, as in Fordism and Taylorism, encounters failures to achieve such mastery.

Characteristic of a minor cinema, bodies and gestures appear uncontrollable and instead invoke

aberrant times, of which they are symptoms. This split no doubt ensues from ideological

tensions present in modernity, in which the standardization of life and time began to

predominate. Although these two trends appear to be at odds, within the dialectical framework

grounding Sergei Eisenstein's theories of cinema a synthesis occurs. Informed by revolutionary

thought and practice, Eisenstein's cinema and writings accord a positive aspect to both rational

and irrational movements. Rather than merely being the negative obverse of mastered

movement, heterogeneous gaits and gestures evince a dialectical force. By harnessing this force,

the artist converts ostensibly unruly forms and movements, glimpsed through montage

articulation and expressed by the pathos it creates, into a dialectical totality.

Forged from the interaction of homogeneous and heterogeneous movements, the

Eisensteinian chronotope conveys a revolutionary impetus inspired by Hegelian dialectics. Its

central trope is the acrobat or trapeze artist, who moves head over heels to synthesize dialectical

time. The task of this chapter is thus to map S.M. Eisenstein's dialectical theories of filmic time

through the figure of the acrobat. I do not intend to provide an exhaustive overview of Eisenstein's concepts, but instead wish to re-examine them through the tropes for temporality that vitalize their inventive considerations of film and time. I shall argue that the acrobat as figure historically and theoretically facilitates a novel relation to filmic temporality. To grasp the theoretical underpinnings of this chronotope, I work through Eisenstein's films and writings, with greater emphasis placed on the latter than the former. In other words, as tool for analysis the acrobat slides and somersaults between these two aspects and creates an avenue for thinking Eisensteinian time; the acrobat performs as cipher through which one can trace the close relation between theory and practice.

Acrobatic movement possesses a unique position within film history. The backward tumbles by characters in <u>Trip to the Moon</u> (1902) by Georges Méliès accentuate the special effects and abrupt shifts inspired by magical transformation. Roughly two decades later the burlesque of Charlie Chaplin evinces the encounter of resistant bodies with the inevitable forces of mechanization and industrial capitalism. Chaplin's tramp in <u>Modern Times</u> (1936) experiences the rationalized routine of assembly-line labor, which bullies the body into performing predictably timed movements. Compelled to resist the machinic calculation and standardization of gesture, Charlot's burlesque passes through series of acrobatic postures. In such moments, Chaplin's humanism couples with the comedic to engage politically with the stultifying effects of Fordist capitalism.

The acrobat predominates as figure in Eisenstein's own poetics and gives shape to his politics of art. From Méliès, Eisenstein borrows the acrobatic expression of shock as crucial component of montage. In Méliès "time is above all <u>extraordinary</u>, elastic, producing unpredictable effects" (Doane, <u>Emergence</u> 136), and Eisenstein sensed that acrobatic movement

could translate unpredictability, which would nevertheless remain within a dialectical framework. Like his contemporary Chaplin, he connects gesture to the forces of rationalized movement and channels this relationship toward a politics, albeit with quite different aims.[12] Committed to a revolutionary project, Eisenstein invokes an aberrant or perverse filmic time that challenges an image of rationalized temporality, yet also paradoxically relies upon rationalized gestures to accomplish his aims. The acrobat therefore performs a contortionist act as he or she leaps to synthesize this rationalized dialectical time, while also occupying aberrant between-times from which the dialectic gathers its force. By experiencing the affect and shock created by chronot(r)opic movement, the viewer comprehends the dialectical nature of reality.

The viewer becomes transformed into an acrobat through Eisensteinian montage and movement, which turn technique into viewer perception. In this sense, the acrobat functions more than simply a theoretical and filmic chronotrope or figure of time. Because Eisenstein charges his images and movements with shock, the viewer experiences a jolt to the extent that "pathos is what forces the viewer to jump out of his seat" (Eisenstein, Nature 27). This disposition, a tumbling viewer thrust "beside" himself or herself, marks an aberrant, ecstatic time. It nevertheless ensures that dialectical timing, which converts aberrant time into dialectical significance, can occur.

I would like to begin by contextualizing Eisenstein's theoretical chronotrope within media studies, an area in which Eisenstein's concepts are accorded a privileged position. For roughly fifty years, two competing, and perhaps diametrically opposed, theories galvanized film and media theory—film as realism and film as discourse. Today this debate may appear "worn past the nub," as any anthology of film theory, such as Film Theory and Criticism, or film studies

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[12] When recalling his childhood interest in the circus and music hall entertainments, Eisenstein placed Chaplin and French comedians within this tradition that developed the basic principles of montage (Film Form 12).

primers, such as <u>Aesthetics of Film</u>, position realism and Eisenstein as key opposing trends. If I repeat this perhaps worn-out critical gesture, I do so to stress that these trends do share one important and at times overlooked trait. Whereas many theorists set Bazin and Eisenstein in opposition, I see one crucial correspondence. Despite their vast differences, both respond negatively to Hollywood's establishment of homogeneous times by creating novel theoretical dispositions. Comparing their respective theoretical "moves" will illuminate Eisenstein's chronotope, dialectical time, and chrono<u>trope</u>, acrobatic movement. Yet this correspondence needs elaboration and modification within the oppositional framework that nonetheless does exist between Eisenstein and Bazin.

The unequalled mimetic powers of cinema facilitated the realism position, with André Bazin providing its most provocative voice. Grounding realism in ontology, Bazin argued that mechanically produced images hold a close relationship with reality, because "for the first time an image of the world is formed automatically, without the creative intervention of man" (1: 13). The strength of photography and cinema resides not in drawing from other established plastic arts, but from their unique and unprecedented automatic ability to "lay bare the realities" (1: 15). Hence, mechanical reproduction possesses a revelatory force that can expose our vision to the "love" inherent in reality.

For Eisenstein events are dialectically determined, and they are neither neutral nor revelatory by nature. Thus film must present a dialectically motivated interpretation of a given event. Juxtaposed fragments placed within a filmic discourse provide the means to determine the dialectically produced idea. In addition, because dialectical reality proceeds through contraries (thesis and antithesis meet to fashion a synthesis, which in turn creates a new thesis), Eisenstein

sensed that juxtaposition must entail a collision of fragments. Of the organic unity produced by

juxtaposition, he stresses:

> And it is also remarkable that the jump at each point—is not simply a sudden jump to
> another mood, to another rhythm, to another event, but each time it is a transition to a
> distinct opposite. Not contrastive, but opposite, for each time it gives the image of that
> same theme from the opposite point of view and at the same time unavoidably grows out
> of it. (Nature 14)

In addition to these competing theories of cinema, both Bazin and Eisenstein developed

concomitant theoretical figures. Bazin invoked an impressive array of metaphors that helped

readers understand his theories of cinematic realism. To conceptualize photographic realism,

Bazin set forth a poetics of static figures, such as the death mask, fingerprint and mummified

remains that adequately suggest the photographic freezing of time. These metaphors fashion a

sense of the momentary, and yet eternal, power of still images. But what of cinematic, and not

simply photographic, realism and its particular "flow of time"?

For his study of Italian Neo-Realism Bazin invented a new disposition, one that captured a

temporality bound to the fragmentary, accidental, and everyday. Reading a film like Roberto

Rossellini's Paisà (1946) becomes a perilous exercise and entails an unsteady gait. To grasp the

narrative structure of that film, Bazin contends, "The mind has to leap from one event to the

other as one leaps from stone to stone in crossing a river. It may happen that one's foot hesitates

between two rocks, or that one misses one's footing and slips" (2: 35). Through a weakly

motivated narrative, Rossellini's film opens gaps for unexpected moments, as opposed to the

tight control of the frame, editing and movement Bazin saw in Soviet montage and German

Expressionism.[13] One questions the haphazard linking of events, and hesitantly leaping from one

shot to the next provides the proper "conduct." Only a highly limber reading and theorization

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[13] See Bazin's essay "Evolution of the Language of Cinema" in volume 1 of What Is Cinema? for his take on these
film movements.

can grasp Italy's emergent realist movement. These (present) times appear novel and aberrant, precisely because they lack the earmarks of Hollywood modes of storytelling, signification and editing.

Bazin sensed something utterly novel, a new filmic chronotope, with Neo-Realist cinema, namely that in opposition to classical Hollywood, the filmic present did not emerge from narratively motivated and logical connections. Rather, an ephemeral present reflected post-war Italy's disconnected and fragmentary reality. In <u>Paisà</u>, violence unexpectedly erupts, as in Harriet's learning of Lupo's death, which strikes her "like a stray bullet" (2: 36); inversely, a drawn-out present captures the quotidian, as the encounter between U.S. military clergymen and Franciscan monks do in the fifth episode.

In addition to such narrative moments, editing translates post-war Italy's fragmentary reality. To emphasize the gaps inherent in Rossellini's editing and <u>découpage</u>, Bazin returns to the figure of stones:

> The assemblage of the film must never add anything to the existing reality. If it is part of the meaning of the film as with Rossellini, it is because the empty gaps, the white spaces, the parts of the event that we are not given, are themselves of a concrete nature: stones which are missing from the building. (2: 66)

Bazin again grounds his assertion in Rossellini's ability to capture adequately an ephemeral reality. He also distinguishes Rossellini's editing from that of Hollywood. Whereas ellipsis in Hollywood films is an "effect of style, in Rossellini's films it is a lacuna of reality, or rather in the knowledge we have of it, which is by its nature limited" (2: 66). Rossellini constructs a realist space and time, replete with absence and lacunae, whereas the building blocks of the

Hollywood house cannot be without missing stones.[14] Due to tight, character-driven plots, its reality is always complete, leaving no questions unanswered.

Bazin's faith in the revelatory powers of cinema would no doubt have struck Eisenstein as misguided. "Reality" is dialectically determined. Eisenstein simultaneously sought to translate the new post-revolutionary reality and energize a domestic and international audience around the ideals of Communism. Such a desire entailed producing movements through editing and figurations capable of fusing dialectical ideas and reality. In contrast to Bazin's stone skipper, who must partly rely upon chance to cross the river, the acrobat eliminates, as much as possible, the risks of miscalculation, of stumbling and falling. His or her movements are not subject to the whims of reality; rather they evince a determinable historical and theoretical trajectory.

Eisenstein's chronotrope, the trapeze or acrobat, involves an aporetic and troubling logic. On the one hand, in his films and writings Eisenstein performs a well-timed exercise to the measure of a dialectical reality; yet on the other, he makes a leap over what would be the chain of represented and rationalized moments. Operating in the between-times of rationalized temporal uniformity, this paradoxical gesture embodies a central heterogeneity that must be managed or dialectically converted. To help orient us in this aporetic thinking of Eisenstein's gesture, a trip to the circus proves useful.

With Enough Simplicity for Every Wise Man (1923), Eisenstein's film career began at the circus. By staging the play as a three-ring circus and including in it a short film, his first, titled "Glubov's Diary," Eisenstein mapped a dialectical theater. On the one hand, and speaking figuratively, the three-ringed cycle of the dialectic informed and determined Eisenstein's overall

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[14] Bazin applies a similar figure in his study of the great French realist filmmaker Jean Renoir. He notes how Renoir's style often catches off guard viewers accustomed to tight plot construction and characterization: "The most immediately noticeable paradox in Renoir's style, and the one which almost always trips up the public, is his apparent casualness toward the very elements of the cinema which the public takes most seriously: the scenario and the action" (emphasis added) (qtd. in Younger, par.4).

avant-garde project; on the other hand, "Glubov's Diary" employed metamorphic forms to satirize bourgeois life, and hopefully to change the spectator, "who is altered by emotional and even physiological 'shocks'" (Nesbet 156) achieved through editing. These two tendencies appear to be at odds—a highly regulated and systematized dialectical timing must pass through potentially abrupt and aberrant movements that create the "shock."

Eisenstein envisions both an economy of time, a dialectical filmic time that works best when timed perfectly with the Taylorist scientist's watch. Yet something about this ordered timeliness bestows an irrational gait to Eisenstein's thought. His writings, teachings and films-- though I don't necessarily mean to conflate all three--mark an unsteady pace caught between dialectically ordered movements and timed performances, and a between-time whose power Eisenstein must paradoxically conjure and dispel in the same instant.

I will introduce briefly Hegel's dialectic, then move to Eisenstein's curious application of it and its pertinence to thinking the theoretical chronotope. For Hegel, dialectical movement, the dialectic itself, is never present for consciousness, and instead operates "behind its back." Hegel writes, "But it is just this necessity itself, or the origination of the new object, that presents itself to consciousness without its understanding how this happens, which proceeds for us, as it were, behind the back of consciousness" (56). Yet this movement can be known or present to knowledge, so that one can consider the Phenomenology of Spirit as charting:

> The path of the soul traversing the series of its own formations as the way stations prescribed to it by its own nature; the soul moves through these way-stations, purifies itself, and thereby raises itself to the level of spirit when, through the complete experience of itself, it reaches the knowledge of what it is within itself. (Hegel qtd. in Hyppolite 11)

These way-stations can never be present without a little bit of the past throwing that present moment off kilter. The soul knows itself and its movement only in an image containing both past and present, and not simply in the apprehension of presents passing. Without a recollection

of what it was inserted into the present, the soul could gain no "perspective" on itself and its

realization. This model of temporality presupposes dialectical way stations, pauses that

recognize difference within the steady and uninterrupted flow of "nows." In turn, the hiatuses or

breaks within the continuum of time will prime the Aufhebung that determines history and

thought.[15]

It is noteworthy that Hegel adds the apparently necessary "purification" of the soul that

burns away its unwanted elements. The movement of Spirit, which culminates in absolute

knowledge, consists of consciousness casting off what always appears as foreign:

> In pressing forward to its true existence, consciousness will arrive at a point at which it
> gets rid of its semblance of being burdened with something alien, with what is only for it,
> and some sort of "other," at a point where appearance becomes identical with essence, so
> that its exposition will coincide at just this point with the authentic Science of Spirit. And
> finally, when consciousness itself grasps this its own essence, it will signify the nature of
> absolute knowledge itself. (Hegel 56-57)

The "outside intruder" fools consciousness because the latter mistakes its "true existence" and

essence for what appears for it. When consciousness overcomes mistaking the insider for

outsider it will complete its journey to absolute knowledge.

The purifying movement possesses a temporal dimension as well. Whether absolute

knowledge could ever be evinced in a present moment remains unlikely. Knowledge moves

toward grasping its own essence, but that actual moment where appearance and essence match

up constitutes a theoretical moment. At this juncture, my concern resides in dialectical

movement itself, and not its final destination. By momentarily unhinging the present the

movement of the soul rests just long enough to cast off the inessential, or the material leftovers

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[15] Perhaps in contrast to Hegelian metaphorics, which figures the way-station as avenue to think the dialectical
pause, Deleuze invokes a radically different highway metaphor. To sidestep the dialectical pit stop, Deleuze stresses
the universal variation characteristic of images that dialectical thought cannot sublate. In The Movement-Image, he
quotes Bergson, who argues that every image is "a road by which pass, in every direction, the modifications
propagated throughout the immensity of the universe" (58).

that obstinately cling to it. Thus, within the course of an unfolding uniform and homogeneous

time, the arrest occurring at the way-station allows a leap to a "greater dimension" in its own

self-realization. Hegel's raising to spirit occurs minus the burden of impure elements and, as I

will demonstrate below, it greatly informs Eisenstein's theory and practice of montage.

Despite Marx's revision of Hegel's dialectic—whether it actually or logically subverted

the latter remains too broad a topic here—Eisenstein often invokes Lenin's reading of Hegel in

relation to his filmmaking. He justifies his Hegelianism, over Marxism, by recourse to a time-

lag between thought and artmaking, as if filmmaking were waiting for its assimilation into (a

Marxist, or Hegelian?) dialectical history! Eisenstein's sense of timing involves a culmination in

Spirit, rather than a Marxist dialectical materialism. The director contends:

> Marx turns this postulate [Hegel's a-priority of the idea] head over heels in the question of
> the understanding of real actuality. However, if we consider our works of art, we do in fact
> have a condition that almost looks like the Hegelian formula, because the idea-satiation of
> the author, his subjection to prejudice by the idea, must determine actually the whole
> course of the art-work. (Film Form 127)

This passage is curious for three reasons—it invokes acrobatics (Hegel turned "head over heels"

by Marx) to grasp the Hegelian character of Eisenstein's filmmaking; it distorts, to some extent,

Hegel's philosophy; it invokes a seemingly non-revolutionary, non-Marxist sense of (materialist)

timing.

The characterization of the artist/philosopher as prey to the "prejudice by the idea" flies in

the face of Hegel and his heirs, however perverse they may be in regard to their master. For

instance, Jean Hyppolite notes, "Commentators have been struck by this characteristic tack of

Hegel's phenomenology: to describe rather than to construct, to present the spontaneous

development of an experience as it offers itself to consciousness and in the way it offers itself"

(10). With great rigor Hegel endlessly affirmed the scientific nature of the Phenomenology of

Spirit, and not its "subjection to prejudice." As Hegel saw it, his exposition of dialectical

movement was precisely that—a description of dialectical assimilations that tend toward relief into Spirit.

Eisenstein invites critique not only from Hegelians but also from other Marxist artists and theorists, justified by Eisenstein's belief that a Marxist artist's time has not yet come. Here, too, a paradoxical logic inhabits Eisenstein's thought, for the simple reason that a revolutionary materialist timing has been thrown out of joint. To the filmmaker and theorist's detriment, Marx has not equaled Hegel's pace. The filmmaker's goal, like Hamlet's, will be to set time right, to bring both gaits into synchrony, as this chapter's epigraph suggests. In this sense, the artist always has the "too-late blues," subject to tagging along (with Hegel), yet lagging behind (with Marx). A fully realized Marxist critique is not yet, but rather waits for its proper time.[16]

Eisenstein's rather odd application of Hegelian principles resides in positing that the dialectical movement occurs not in any one present image (how could it be represented, and thus known?), nor even in the opposition between two images (juxtaposition merely manifests _effects_ of the dialectical process). Rather, the film takes on truly dialectical proportions _only in the interval between images_, or what Eisenstein calls the "pathetic" or "ecstatic." The jump does not occur in the represented filmic present, in any given shot, but in the between-two located in spatio-temporal articulations.[17] The movement of images, thought and time congeal in the arrest and wait for each other to raise the banner of Revolution.

Yet montage assures that the leap works properly by sequencing (some might say narrativizing) dialectical effects. As if we were always reading Eisenstein through a rear-view

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[16] In _Specters of Marx_, Derrida demonstrates that political economy must think democracy in terms of the event, which entails a time "not yet" and always to come: "At stake here is the very concept of democracy as concept of a promise," which "is why we always propose to speak of a democracy _to come_, not a _future_ democracy in the future present" (64).

[17] As Leo Charney astutely notes of Eisensteinian montage, "No one shot [. . .] is fully present to itself at any one time" (134).

mirror, our chance to grasp the dialectic falls to montage, which makes us <u>mistakenly perceive dialectical effects as dialectical causes</u>. Eisenstein's dialectical filmic timing doesn't result from edited conflicts, but the law these oppositions impose make it appear so. Applying a helpful distinction employed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's negative reading of Hegel, in which she opposes the "narrative timing of <u>das Aufheben</u>—the effort of sublation" to the "graphic Time of <u>Aufhebung</u>, the accomplished sublation" (112), I argue that interval and editing accomplish this double task. In the terms utilized here, the interval performs a "timing" of relief mediated by dialectical law. In turn, montage ensures that the <u>Aufhebung</u> is grasped as determining Time. In other words, editing converts timing, which Spivak also associates with the bodily, into a dialectical Time related to the concept. Yet the interval's logic forms the regulating and internal principle, which allows timing to occur at all.

In "The Structure of the Film Form" Eisenstein weds his Hegelianism to direct discussion of the film form to argue, "We can say that a pathetic structure is one that compels us, echoing its movement, <u>to re-live the moments of culmination and substantiation</u> that are the canon of all dialectical processes" (<u>Film Form</u> 173). If we re-live such moments, it is not by witnessing their representation, which would simply portray the effects of dialectical movement. Instead, the pathetic structure produces an (temporal) ecstatic shock that spurs dialectical thinking.

Despite his avowed interest in Pavlov, a strange Freudianism galvanizes Eisenstein's understanding of cinematic time. Freud realized that psychoanalytic treatment must proceed not in accurately re-creating the conditions and circumstances surrounding an event, whether imaginary or real, but in resuscitating the affect produced by the event. The re-living of dialectical time does not occur in the faithful and precise representation of historical events; rather, it resides in the cinematic restaging of the pathetic as means of gaining access to

mediation. When Otto Karl Werckmeister criticizes Eisenstein for betraying historical actuality, he inadvertently approaches the filmmaker's dialectical orientation—"In reality the Potemkin sailors refused to shell Odessa with live ordinance and merely fired blanks" (emphasis added) (45), whereas the film battleship Potemkin launches a barrage of missiles.

For Eisenstein, dialectical history fires (temporal) blank shots, but not as if no historical event ever occurred. Instead, the dialectic motor of history fires temporal blanks that the artist must make explode in the realm of the pathetic. The pathos-inspired film, when regulated properly, sets timing in motion, and the viewer becomes animated as if a marionette. As Dana Polan aptly remarks, "Affect was the key to the unity of reality and industry; affect, if properly used, could bring the spectator into consonance with the 'beat' of reality" (45). Here, the consonant stride means re-living the affect in order to experience Hegelian relieving as animated by dialectical timing; the filmic re-creation, Eisenstein hopes, will retroactively galvanize the viewer into reading timing as produced by Time, and thus into gaining, figuratively, an ambulation in accordance with the dialectic.

In this sense, Eisenstein complicates the relationship between Hegel's dialectic thought and bodily affect set forth by Steven Shaviro in The Cinematic Body. He posits that Hegelianism tends to "subordinate experience" to "references and significations" (27), so that the body and affect only serve to articulate dialectical movement as a movement of knowledge:

> The Hegelian and structuralist equation suppresses the body. It ignores or abstracts away from the primordial forms of raw sensation: affect, excitation, stimulation and repression, pleasure and pain, shock and habit. It posits instead a discarnate eye and ear whose data are immediately objectified in the form of self-conscious awareness or positive knowledge" (27).

Eisenstein seeks to reinstate bodily affect and sensation within this dialectical structure, giving flesh to the moment of sublation. Stimulated by the effects of montage, viewers experience affect and shock as both structuring principles and by-products of dialectical movement. Rather

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than standing in opposition to self-conscious knowledge, the jolt of film viewing is precisely

what brings dialectical timing into accord with dialectical "sense," its meaning and sensible

affect.

One sees the after-effects of dialectical movement and history in series of efficiently timed

poses or gestures, which assure that viewers retroactively understand Time as timing. Inspired

by Lenin's slogan "Let us take the storm of the Revolution in Soviet Russia, unite it to the pulse

of American life and do our work like a chronometer!" (qtd. in Wollen 27), Eisenstein highly

regarded efficient means of signification and movement. Good timing informs his reading of

revolutionary artmaking, and he recommends a pragmatic, if somewhat sadistic, teaching style:

> The instructor's task is only, by a <u>well-timed dexterous shove</u>, to push the collective in the
> direction of "normal" and "fruitful" difficulties [. . .]. That is how they teach you to fly in
> the circus. The trapeze is mercilessly held back, or the pupil finds a fist instead of a
> <u>helping hand if his timing is false</u>. Not great harm if he falls once or twice outside the
> safety net onto the chairs around the arena. Next time—he won't make that mistake.
> (emphasis added) (Eisenstein, <u>Film Form</u> 91)

Eisenstein knows the art of proper timing, whereas the student/trapeze must learn it. He or she

must perfect, down to a micro-level, the movements necessary to present the given subject

<u>economically</u>. Even activities like flying, which would seem to free one from the gravitational

constraints of coordinated movement, appear caught in the grip, the revolutionary clenched fist,

of Eisenstein's rigorous pedagogical and artmaking methods.[18]

As Peter Wollen notes, Russian avant-gardes shared a proclivity for contemporary

movements like Frederick Taylor's scientific management and Futurism. With the former,

scientifically measured movement allowed for "an enormous saving of time" by "eliminating

unnecessary motions" (Taylor 24) performed by the worker; with the latter, physical movement

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[18] Trapeze and acrobatic acts always contain the element of danger brought forth by failed timings and
synchronizations. Eisenstein clearly seeks a fluidity and facility of performance that sidesteps possible failure.

replaced a verism of psychological interiority. In the figure of Meyerhold, Wollen asserts, Eisenstein would gravitate toward thinking theater and film through the body. Attacking Stanislavsky's acting methods, Meyerhold felt, "The key to success as an actor lay in rigorous physical training" (Wollen 27) and that in Futurism he found a weapon, rooted in the circus and its "two trends, towards pantomime and towards acrobatics" (27). Wollen's historical and theoretical take focuses on the development of Eisenstein's aesthetics. His interest in acrobatic training exemplifies the director's borrowings from contemporary avant-gardes, so that Eisenstein failed to develop an adequately original Marxist aesthetic.

For Wollen, in Eisenstein "there was a purely formal and abstract concept of the Hegelian dialectic, mechanically applied and eventually degenerating into an empty stereotype" (70). Though taking a cue from Wollen, my analysis repositions the acrobatic gesture within a vibrant and paradoxical dialectical timing. I do not see Eisenstein's dialectical thinking as having come up short, but rather as necessarily incorporating the timed acrobatic dynamic pose within a greater temporal logic.

One can see a direct lineage starting with these theatrical influences—motivated by the actors' constrained, trained and timed poses—and ending with Eisenstein's films, to the point indeed where in Ivan the Terrible (1944) actors "complained that, because he required them to turn themselves into the exact shapes he held in his own mind, Eisenstein's approach to directing caused them not just mental, but physical agony" (Nesbet 174). Timing of the gesture motivates both facets, so that closely controlled movements in space occasion a temporal uniformity. The well-timed and well-posed gesture stands at a dialectically rational limit; the body's trained posture embodies a regulated image of thought (a "fruitful difficulty"), one that directly systematizes its movements.

Despite the significance Eisenstein accords to the timed and controlled gesture, he also emphasizes its place within a larger dialectical scheme. Editing, music, mise-en-scene and differing camera set-ups must work in concert with gesture. To render pathos, it is not enough for characters merely to adopt ecstatic poses: "The simplest 'prototype' of similar imitative behavior will be, of course, a figure behaving ecstatically on the screen, that is, a character seized by pathos, a character who in one sense or other is 'beside himself'" (Eisenstein, Nature 28). The filmmaker must move beyond this simple "prototype" by rendering the pathetic in camera angles and découpage. For instance, on the interplay of camera and Ivan's gestures, Eisenstein underscores what happens when this interplay departs from a coordinated framework of positions:

> Mentally fixing, as it were, a "card index" of the suitable angles for Ivan, the shooting must pass strictly through these camera setups, quickly slipping by and not falling into those "danger zones" where the figure departs from the plastic canon once established for the film. (Nature 281)

All filmic elements congeal around an idée fixe, carefully constructed to render ecstasy. Without this control, the film runs the risk of "falling into those danger zones," the ephemeral and accidental moments valorized by Bazin in his reading of Rossellini.

Having finished shooting, Eisenstein then edited image and sound according to the scene's rhythm. In turn, this rhythm affects Eisenstein's own disposition towards the image, and his behavior and mood become animated by the tenor of the sequence. Writing about audiovisual editing, Eisenstein confesses:

> For no montage can be constructed if there is no inner "melody" according to which it is composed! This melody is often so strong that sometimes the whole rhythm of one's behavior is predetermined on days when one is editing scenes according to the sound. For example, I remember very clearly the "wilting" rhythm in which I carried out all my everyday activities on the days when editing "Mist" and "Mourning for Vakulinchuk" (in Potemkin [1925]):--in contrast to the days when "The Odessa Steps" was being edited: Then everything flew head over heels, my gait was precise, relations with my domestics—stern, and conversation—sharp and abrupt. (Nature 333)

No doubt Eisenstein hoped viewers would imitate his own demeanor, passing from the "wilting" rhythm and affect characteristic of the "Mourning for Vakulinchuk" sequence to the explosive, "head over heels" posture elicited by "The Odessa Steps." The work of mourning primes viewers for the moment when they can "jump up in their seats," that is, when they can directly sense and thus mimic pathos as dialectical principle.

To accomplish this effect on the viewer, Eisenstein emphasizes the necessity of a regulated gait, whether "wilting," "precise" or "ecstatic." In this regard, Jacques Aumont's analysis of Eisenstein's montage notes the importance of a controlled pacing. Aumont writes, "Eisenstein is the one who knows—who knows how, when, and at what pace to make it known to the spectator. He is one step ahead of the spectator, just far enough to ensure that he is calling the shots" (141). In this formulation, the "knowing" Eisenstein certainly resonates with the Lacanian Other, or "subject supposed to know." I would stress, though, that here a game of "follow the leader" appears at stake. To make dialectical movement accessible to viewers, the avant-garde director must take the lead and scout ahead. The filmmaker's a-priority of the idea must gain the viewer's proper interpretation and conceptualization retroactively.

As components of rendering pathos, the physical agony noted by Nesbet, the avoidance of filmic "danger zones," and Eisenstein's demeanor in editing constitute the necessary price to be paid for dialectical timing. Efficiently figuring the concept, the painful hieratic pose develops a "picture-thinking" in synchrony with Revolutionary aims and timing. As embodiments of the overall Idea, static shapes constitute "way stations" along the road of thought and political action. We are not yet at the ec-static moment in Eisensteinian thinking, its fundamentally dialectical character. Nonetheless, the breaking down of acrobatics into coordinated movement

and timed postures plays a significant part. As renderings of dialectical thought, they visually

display its oppositional effects and ensure that the dialectic will arrive in a timely fashion.

Yet, for Eisenstein movement possesses the ability to transmute figures in ecstatic and

explosive arrangements. Here, Eisenstein establishes a fundamentally hieroglyphic quality to

these transformative moments, so that he once "dreamed of a theater 'of such emotional

saturation that the wrath of a man would be expressed in a backward somersault of a trapeze'"

(Film Form 174). Rather than verbally suggesting meaning, the backward flip acrobatically and

efficiently translates the feeling of "wrath."[19] As a rebus, the head-over-heels tumble evokes the

metamorphic power not only of physical gesture to translate the verbal, but also of editing, where

the static pose suddenly, and as if instantaneously, gives way to inversions and reversions.

Gesture possesses the possibility of transforming the senses in synaesthetic arrangements; it also

figures as one component in a greater scheme of edited conversions.

These verbal/visual interplays or conjunctions form the early basis for Eisenstein's

understanding of editing and the filmic. For him, film as art begins with editing, which other

hieroglyphic art forms legitimate in his argument. Tracing a genealogy of edited forms in art

history, Eisenstein returns to the hieroglyph in Japanese poetry and finds a precursor to cinema:

> The point is that the copulation (perhaps we better say combination) of two hieroglyphs of
> the simplest series is to be regarded not as their sum, but as their product, i.e., as a value of
> another dimension, another degree; each, separately, corresponds to an object, to a fact, but
> their combination corresponds to a concept. From separate hieroglyphs has been
> fused—the ideogram. By the combination of the two "depictables" is achieved the
> representation of something that is graphically undepictable. (Film Form 29-30)

Each hieroglyph represents a fact, neutral in meaning and affective force. Yet when coupled

with another equally neutral fact, a process of multiplication or squaring, instead of addition,

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[19] Eisenstein revives the cinema of Méliès, who similarly emphasized a hieroglyphics at work in hieratic poses.
Hieroglyphic bodies not only deflate realist representation, which is underpinned by three-dimensional space, but
also place gesture within a network of transformative poses. I thank Tom Conley for pointing out this connection.

pushes their combination toward a whole. That is, from combination the dialectical whole

emerges as totality irreducible to the combined sum.

Despite this basic and reasoned dialectical reading set forth by Eisenstein, one immediately

detects a fear. Why does Eisenstein replace "copulation" with "combination," thus avoiding the

necessary sexual connotations? Without discussing this passage directly, Nesbet nonetheless

finds that Eisenstein playfully affirms and denies an arranged sexual encounter in order to affirm

a monstrous coupling. Obeying the logic of a phrase on the order of "it goes without saying," the

director, by swerving away from copulation, nonetheless posits "at the heart of intellectual

thought, a scandalous, blasphemous, or perhaps pornographic image: this was the basic rule of

Eisenstein's essays, films, and lectures" (Nesbet 151).

Working in this vein, Nesbet discovers a fundamental heterogeneity in Eisenstein's own

fascinations. On his trip to Mexico, he becomes interested in bullfighting: "The matador and the

bull meet, pierce each other, transform themselves into a complex package where actor and

object, life and death, can no longer be extricated neatly one from the other" (Nesbet 172). For

Nesbet, one can find such "complex packages" in biographical—his sketches, fetishes, etc.—and

filmic material. They contest any reading of Eisenstein as a filmmaker lacking ambiguity. They

also tend to "scandalize" any attempt to see Eisenstein as totalizing all movements under a

unifying logic.[20]

Nesbet grasps the transformative, perverse side to Eisenstein's films, writings, and

personal history. Yet it needs to be stressed that Eisensteinian montage, in theory and in

practice, exploits potentially subversive figures toward a non-bodily image or Idea rather than

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[20] Along with Nesbet, Ian Christie emphasizes the 1930s as means of re-evaluating Eisenstein's career: "Western scholarly opinion has largely adopted a consensus on the radical 'early' and mystical 'late' periods, corresponding roughly to the 1920s and the 1940s, separated by little more than a traumatic chasm occupying the 1930s" ("Eisenstein" 184). Christie and Nesbet seek to fill in the "traumatic chasm" by noting Eisenstein's productivity in writing, sketching and traveling in the '30s.

combining scandalous images without subordination to dialectical thought. Amidst complex knots of intermingled forms, the extricated Idea nonetheless asserts a greater identity in the end. Rather than subverting dialectical thought and its seeming totalizing character, the forms perform, in a necessary movement, a dialectical <u>conversion</u>.

As a point of comparison, one can look at Eisenstein's contemporary, Antonin Artaud, who conjured a seemingly similar materiality of bodies—also characterized by postures, shapes and so on—for hieroglyphic inscription. Yet in Artaud's work, materiality glides into the uncanny, unleashing a figurability beyond the control of montage's subordination. Of a body's glyphic theatrics, Artaud writes to Gide:

> The movements, the attitudes, the bodies of the characters will be composed or decomposed like hieroglyphics. This language will pass from one sense organ to another, establishing analogies and unforeseen associations among series of <u>objects</u>, series of <u>sounds</u>, series of <u>intonations</u>. (qtd. in Derrida and Thévenin 85)

At once hieratic and mutable, the body for Artaud can transform itself into other modes of writing and produce other legibilities. Endlessly fluctuating between states (solid object, verbal and pre-verbal glyph), the bodies and their parts lose themselves in metamorphoses of forms and writing.[21] Eisenstein's interest in a hieroglyphic synaesthetic production certainly mirrors Artaud's, but with some key and necessary distinctions.

Whereas Artaud hopes to explore "unforeseen associations" of language and thought through hieroglyphic compositions, Eisenstein closely regulates and determines his filmic constructions. For Artaud, the (sexualized) combinatorial process creates an intermingling of bodies and parts that tend to metamorphose into other forms. Eisenstein's erotics, mediated by ecstatic moments, ultimately fit within a controlled, dialectical framework. Playing strange

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[21] Peggy Phalen's "Performing Talking Cures: Artaud's Voice" concentrates on the unified, yet formless and mutating, body in Artaud's theater. Drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari, she suggests that the Artaudian "body without organs" invites a "different way to think about both the present tense and theater's faith in presence" (234).

games of dialectical "twister," his films must nonetheless safeguard altered shapes from congealing in meaningful and stable positions.

For this reason, montage disentangles figures and maintains their propriety under a dialectical thinking, however eroticized it may be. Through the juxtaposition of shots and bodily postures, montage creates ideograms that relieve the hieroglyph of its physical components. At the expense of graphic elements (or "depictables"), the conceptual order subsumes its material, if only to repeat the central motif in Eisenstein—the Russian revolution. Material parts must ostensibly solidify their proper form only at the level of the concept; their "value" lies in "another (conceptual) dimension," one that stands above their status as objects. Dialectical montage reigns in "other" possible relations that fashion unforeseen, unforced meanings.

Nevertheless, converting the acrobatic figure's volatility--its effect and affect of shock--is necessary for a dialectical cinema. Eisenstein's fascination with the chronotrope's metamorphic and metaphoric potential extends to numerous tropes that translate the transformative, dialectically relieving power at work in cinema. Eisenstein connects pathos to changes in physical states:

> The moment of culmination is understood here in the sense of those points in a process through which water passes at the moment of becoming steam, ice—water, castiron—steel. This is that same being beside oneself, going out of state, a move from quality to quality, ecstasy. And if water, steam, ice, and steel could psychologically register their own feelings at these critical moments—moments of achieving the leap, they would say they are speaking with pathos, that they are in ecstasy. (Nature 35-36)

The ecstatic moment entails a becoming-other or becoming-different that temporarily sidesteps dialectical conversion. Yet shifts in qualities gravitate toward an Aufhebung, which functions as a "spirit in the sky," so to speak.

The explosive potential of hieroglyphic figurations retains a sublating function that tends to culminate in Spirit. To this relieving end, Eisenstein sets forth a rather curious analogy for montage, that of the internal combustion engine, which alters liquid into gas:

> If montage is to be compared with something, then a phalanx of montage pieces, of shots, should be compared to the series of explosions of an internal combustion engine, driving forward its automobile or tractor; for, similarly, the dynamics of montage serve as impulses driving forward the total film. (Film Form 38)

Industry and nature wed to sublate materiality, with spirit or air as the final station, in Hegel's terms, of all solids and liquids. One can add that oil and gasoline dynamically spark montage and lubricate its combinations, endowing the film with its vitality. The analogy of film and engine works in the following syllogistic manner: the shot compares to a liquid molecule (Eisenstein asserts, "The shot is a montage cell [or molecule])" (Film Form 53); the proper juxtaposition of separate shots ensures the molecular transformation, or heating, of liquid into gas; the film takes on its total character when the filmmaker gauges the proper temperature and relieves the liquid state.[22] And this engine cycles.

Operating through explosive combinations running on a principle of "clean" signification and totalization, the "total film" assures that the shot passes (on) and is relieved of its liquidity by becoming gas, and the concept stands above all these fervent firings, heatings and mutations. Interested in Hegelian cyclings and repetitions that totalize, traced by Hegel's "airy" tropes, Derrida stresses the dialectical movement that passes through organic life to relieve itself in spirit: "In coming back to itself in the heat, in producing itself as self-repetition, spirit raises itself, relieves itself, and like gas or effluvium holds itself in sublime suspension above the natural fermentation" (Glas 235). In his study of Hegel, Derrida attempts to escape a pernicious

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[22] In "A Rape of the Eye," Tom Conley discerns how Buñuel's metamorphic forms and segmentations of shots entail a non-totalizing aspect: "Far from a Hegelian dynamic or an Eisenstein type of montage, Buñuel's segmentación embraces forms that swarm, as might a colony of bees or a mass of worms—vermin—and that give rise to a 'vermiculated' whole" (203).

logic he sees in his philosophical predecessor. Like Marx, he focuses on the <u>materiality</u> that ostensibly must be subsumed during thought and history's repetitive march toward absolute knowledge. For Derrida, thinking the material leftovers of Hegel's dialectical movement allows him to avoid its totalizing assimilation of thought.

If I include Derrida's reading, I do so not to continue his critique of Hegel. Instead, Derrida's insights support my assertion that Eisenstein owes much to the German philosopher. By aligning himself with a Hegelianism, Eisenstein's art of montage necessarily renders its materials to spirit. How do Eisenstein's films accomplish this raising or heating? One can discern the sublating movement in its narrative, figurative and formal articulations.

Gilles Deleuze's analysis of Eisensteinian montage takes as its principle the passage or leap from the "organic" to the "pathetic." Spirals and squares animate his reading, in which the dialectical process prompts a leap to higher levels of the spiral. Deleuze writes, "The organic was the bow, the collection of bows; but the pathetic is both the string and the arrow, the change in quality and the sudden upsurge of the new quality, its squaring, its raising to the power of two" (<u>Cinema 1</u> 35). In his brief analysis of <u>Ivan the Terrible</u>, Deleuze finds one such "bow," one "end in the twist of the spiral," and the subsequent beginning of a new stage. "This dialectical composition may be seen […] in particular with the two caesuras which correspond to Ivan's moment of doubt—first, when he examines his conscience beside his wife's coffin, and then when he pleads with the monk" (<u>Cinema 1 </u>34). For Deleuze, the figure of the bow primes the leap to another dimension. Yet instead of retrieving dialectical articulation from the film form itself, Deleuze finds "dialectical composition" in characterization ("Ivan's moment of doubt") and narrative (Ivan "pleads with the monk"). The bow does not operate, in Deleuze's

example, as dialectical catalyst. Rather, its function is determined retroactively within the logic of narrative build-up and shift in Ivan's behavior.

To detect the acrobatic chronotrope, in its narrative and formal articulations, I would like to focus briefly on Potemkin. At first glance, and similar to Ivan, Eisenstein's second film has a narrative that moves through "bows and arrows." A dialectical ensemble catalyzes Potemkin, in which the martyred sailor, Vakulinchuk, taken to land and mourned by the Odessa townsfolk, presents a raising of the one for (and to) the many. After the Odessa steps massacre, the film relieves the previous two moments, the death of Vakulinchuk and of Odessa citizens, through the famous rising of the lion (three shots that juxtapose a reposed lion, a partly standing lion and finally a lion on all fours). Though Deleuze does not pursue this line of investigation in his reading of Ivan, one can assume that the second moment constitutes a leaving behind of the corpse, a relieving of the body into spirit, which repeats at another level later in the film. The burial scene, the site of an interring, allows passage to another level and traces out another ring in the filmic cycle or spiral.

The transmutation from solid to liquid to gaseous, in the Eisensteinian three-stroke or –ring system, hinges upon a heating that sublates dead bodies. As the third and final ring of dialectical repetition, spirit constitutes the culmination of historical and organic life, making sure to leave nothing behind. According to Derrida, the dialectic only sublates by entombing the remaining corpse: "The spirit extricates itself from the corpse's decomposition, sets itself free from that decomposition, and rises, thanks to burial. Spirit is the relieving repetition" (Glas 44). Though spirit gains its force as movement through the decomposing body, nothing smells odd. Rather, thanks to a proper burial, spirit extricates and "purifies" itself from its leftovers, whether as flesh or as odor. An array of such funereal figures litters Eisenstein's cinema, and the filmic work of

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mourning ensures that such leftover bodies will attain, and make possible, a greater value "in another dimension."

Consider how the famous Odessa Steps scene develops pathos through acrobatic movements while preparing for a sublated violence. This extensive scene contains 158 shots edited over a 6:45-minute span, yet the opening 14 shots, it appears, determine the others: movement, camerawork, diagonal patterns and emphasis on the body's limbs motivate an acrobatics within shots and in Eisenstein's editing. By displaying the transformative powers cinema possesses, the sequence subjects bodies to torsions and unusual dispositions that evince dialectical movement. Strained to their limits, bodies undergo a carefully managed and regulated aggression attained through cinematic means.

The scene begins with the intertitle "Suddenly!" followed by, in very rapid succession, four shots of a woman violently recoiling her head. Close-ups underscore this forceful reaction, as if a rifle shot snapped her head backward. Curiously, this gesture appears to be the effect of a violent assault that ends the scene. In rapid succession (over three close-ups), a sword-wielding soldier viciously attacks the camera. As if wrapped in a temporal fold, the viewer becomes transformed retroactively into the helpless victim that begins the sequence. To underscore this paradoxical temporal shift, close-ups and soft focus eliminate clear spatial demarcations, as if a violent history passed between any images, as well as between screen and viewer, regardless of their temporal sequencing.

After the four brief close-ups, a medium shot follows, in which a legless man moves from the frame's upper left to lower right. As the shot continues, a parasol, its tip aimed directly at the viewer, approaches and consumes the screen. This moment resonates not only with the assault on viewers discussed above, but also with the final shot of the film, in which the battleship's

prow plunges toward viewers. Tips of swords, parasols and later the surging Potemkin coupled with low-angle close-ups of the face stress aggression directed toward an upper body that will turn head over heels in the next series of shots.

Shot 6 picks up temporally where shot 5 left off. To establish continuity Eisenstein again shows the legless man, this time entering from the top of the frame, descending downward, pausing to perform a 360-degree turn, and then resuming his descent. Shot 7, a deep-focus long shot taken from the top of the steps, places a dark statue in foreground and the fleeing masses in the background. With the torso only visible, the statue's right arm extends horizontally with its palm turned upward. A symbol of Tsarist Russia, the statue appears to sanction the massacre by gesture. Yet it also figures the sequence's slow progression down the body, from tips and heads in shots 1 through 5 to torsos in shots 6 and 7.

By contrast, shot 8, medium in length, displays the legs and feet of frantic Odessans running from upper left to lower right. A woman, initially seated, gets up and contrasts the previous trajectory by fleeing from upper right to lower left. A long shot from the bottom of the steps follows, depicting on a massive scale the event's frenzy and chaos. It also spatially opposes the previous long shot, in which the motionless statue stared down upon the victims, forming another bookend internal to the sequence. By underscoring the lower half or the totality of the body, these three shots prime the acrobatics that will ensue.

Shot 10 shows in medium close-up only knees, which begin to fall from upper right to lower left, contrasting the upper left to lower right diagonal of the steps. Shot from above, shot 11 reverses the previous perspective as another man falls up the stairs as his knees buckle. A sharp downward tilt underscores the discontinuity, which violates the 180-degree rule, in relation to shot 10. A medium close-up, shot 12 resumes where shot 10 left off. But discontinuity

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prevails again with the figure's knees now collapsing from left to right, as opposed to right to left. Finally, shot 13 repeats, in a sort of "instant replay," the previous movement, this time in medium shot.

Throughout the opening shots of "Odessa Steps" Eisenstein accentuates, from a variety of angles and diagonal movements, acrobatics as chronotrope. He does so, in part, to oppose their movements to those of their oppressors. Later in the scene, Eisenstein emphasizes the soldiers' legs and their mechanical cadence. This controlled pace contrasts not only with the chaos of bodies hurtling down the stairs, but also with the (legless) statue/torso. Figuratively, the soldiers carry out the dirty (foot)work endorsed by the head as State. The statue's outstretched arm will find its reverse corollary in victims, particularly the mother of a slain child, who supplicates to the faceless Cossacks.

In shots 5 and 6, the legless man, who will later be doubled by another legless man with crutches, figuratively witnesses his detached legs cave in later, in shots 8, 10, 11 and 12. Legs depart from "whole" figures to perform in fragmented acrobatics of twisting, turning, falling, buckling and so on. The differing angles, sudden downward tilt and discontinuous editing, as in the transition from shot 10 to 11, underline the performative gestures of those victimized by the soldiers.

The fragmented body parts prime a reassembly in three shots that juxtapose a statue of a lion reposing, then rising to its feet and finally standing on all fours. These three shots function to sublate the Odessa Steps slaughter by reversing the <u>downward</u> trajectory of violence. The upward movement of the lion, achieved through editing, inspires thoughts of a "raised consciousness" and ensures a proper burial for the Odessa victims. As such, the transition recuperates totality and regulates the meaning of the Odessa Steps sequence. It re-appropriates

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the previous fragments, the acrobatic movement of legs and hands, into a whole. In this sense, it constitutes, if only temporarily, a "way station" within dialectical movement. Charney sums up this movement by invoking terms similar to those employed here:

> As Eisenstein indicated, the sign that began in a moment of originary inscription does not simply spin off into the future but is reevoked in a specifically configured later moment that (re)appropriates it. This moment regulates wandering drift as it forms a way station on the road to political change. (137-38)

I tend to agree with Charney's assessment that the future recovers and regulates, thus totalizing, the past sign. His emphasis on drift as chronotrope of/for Modernism, which he then applies to Eisenstein, signals where acrobatics, witnessed in fragmented gestures, "floats" in the ether above a Hegelian dialectical drama.

Despite the regulating and sublating function the rising lion enacts, this "acrobatic" figure ultimately forms a moment of pathos. Thrown out of itself, each position clearly expresses ecstasy. In this sense, the transformed lion stands as a Janus-like figure. One face turns toward the Odessa Steps massacre and relieves, or raises, its fragmentary, downward spiral of violence. The other face forms yet another moment of ecstasy to be recuperated later, when jubilantly raised fists and cries of "Brothers!" ensue from the Potemkin seamen:

> Over the heads of the battleship's commanders, over the heads of the tsar's admirals of the fleet, finally over the heads of the censors of bourgeois countries surges the fraternal "hurrah" of the film as a whole, just as within the picture the feeling of fraternity flies from the mutinying battleship over the sea to the shore. (Eisenstein, Nature 13)

The raised voices, anticipated by the rising lions, determine the basic elements of meaning, revolution and fraternity, but in another dimension, hovering "over the heads" of the actors of history.

Raised to the level of spirit floating above history, the film resonates with the Hegelian principles discussed throughout this chapter. Along similar lines, Werckmeister's central critique of Eisenstein resides in the director's fundamental Hegelianism: "(Potemkin) is a

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'victoriously drawn picture of defeat', an interpretive presentation of [. . .] the 'tendency' of history, that vindicates temporary failure as a sacrifice on the advance to final victory" (45). One can add that a successful sacrifice must end with a proper burial to assure dialectical repetition as relief and history as Spirit's timed movement. The timed-out movements of montage and narrative sequencing spread an overly determined temporality across Eisenstein's films. Timed to the beat of the dialectical, edited compositions guarantee that the dialectical film form converts its material. Yet the affect lodged within the dialectical core of the interval obeys a different logic. Never present, the ecstatic interstice nonetheless logically <u>regulates</u> Eisenstein's filmic time, its relief into Spirit.

Inhabitants of the film/time circle have produced as many dispositions as time allots. For Eisenstein, inventing a novel thought-image entails a radical gesture, because <u>film gives time to be thought</u>. The trapeze artist's glyphic function evinces dialectical inversions and reversions; it glides and somersaults to the rhythm of a revolutionary reality. Through the trapeze's simultaneously well-timed and aberrant movements, Eisenstein summons a differentiating force that recovers history in dialectically timed poses. The next chapter will test the theories and films of Andrei Tarkovsky in light of an equally provocative vital force of time and body. Issues of agency and history, concerns that underpin Eisenstein's chronot(r)ope, will re-emerge in Tarkovsky, who foregrounds, like his Russian predecessor, body and gesture as an (un)timely figure.

CHAPTER 3
THE GIVEN OF TIME IN ANDREY TARKOVSKY'S <u>THE SACRIFICE</u>

> I am convinced that Time is reversible. At any rate it does not go in a straight line.
> (Tarkovsky, <u>Time</u> 122)

The second chapter traced Sergei Eisenstein's avant-garde theories of cinema in relation to the acrobatic somersaults that serve to determine and define them. As a cinematic figure, the acrobatic gesture bears witness to a provocative dialectical chronotope. Ambling between theory and practice, Eisenstein's figure marks a revolutionary moment in history, not to mention in film theory and film history. It attests to the socially and politically transformative powers that filmic time and gesture possess equally; it also provides coordinates for mapping Eisenstein's complex theorizations of a dialectical cinema. Through his writings and films, Eisenstein hoped that cinema, based in dialectical theory, could not only spur an alternative filmmaking practice but also change the quality of our world. Committed to a revolutionary politics, the acrobatic figure marks classical cinema as one of its most vital forces. In other words, acrobatic gesture foregrounds the body as site of <u>political agency</u>. This body can modify our world, and its health and vigor evince the power of the dialectic to shape history.

Like his Russian predecessor, Andrey Tarkovsky placed tremendous faith in gesture. His last film, <u>The Sacrifice</u> (1986), exhibits a profound concern for what Tarkovsky perceives as human sickness. A physician of culture, and not its patient, Tarkovsky treats physical maladies as symptomatic of a more profound spiritual and ethical illness.[23] Tarkovsky's diagnosis: the loss of spiritual values has condemned the world to suffering constant technological threats that range from Chernobyl to nuclear catastrophe. Thus, Tarkovsky's gesture of sacrifice differs

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[23] Illness pervades Tarkovsky's work, but I argue, following Deleuze's reading of writers, that the director figures as filmmaker-cum-physician: "The writer as such is not a patient but rather a physician, the physician of himself and of the world. The world is the set of symptoms whose illness merges with man" (<u>Essays</u> 3).

considerably from the Eisensteinian acrobat. Whereas Eisenstein places all gestural movement and its temporal articulations within a dialectical structure that aims toward a future, and thus derives agency from dialectics, in <u>The Sacrifice</u> Tarkovsky emphasizes the <u>sacred, redemptive power of gesture</u> to heal the world.

Although Tarkovsky's characters often suffer debilitating fits and afflictions that rob the body of its capacity to act, action still possesses the power to transform. However, Tarkovsky's notion of agency does not follow mainstream filmmaking convention or that envisioned by Eisenstein's revolutionary politics. Instead of the hero imposing a decisive change, as implied by Deleuze's action-image, the Tarkovskian protagonist suffers and fears events that overwhelm him. When he does act, he does so symbolically, invoking a "higher" power that conventional heroes do not possess. In <u>The Sacrifice</u>, this power is represented as a gift; only by performing an act of self-sacrifice can the body restore world order.

The narrative develops around a family gathering, celebrating the father's (Alexander's) birthday. As the day unfolds inside the isolated country house, we soon learn that nuclear catastrophe is imminent. A loud rush of fighter jets is heard overhead, an occasionally garbled television message crackles a dire announcement, and a sudden loss of electricity intervenes. Brief cutaways to panic-stricken victims fleeing through scattered debris give clues that a third world war is happening. To ward off the terrible event, Alexander performs two redemptive acts. First, after his friend and soothsayer Otto claims that making love to Maria, a servant and so-called witch, will save "everything," Alexander heeds his male companion's suggestion. With trepidation, he pays her a visit and engages in an awkward coupling. Second, Alexander prays to God and vows to sacrifice everything that binds him to the world, including his power to speak.

When the disaster has been averted--though it is unclear whether it even began--Alexander makes good on his promise. He sets the family home ablaze and renounces speaking, only to be shuttled away by ambulance in front of a distraught family. The film ends ambiguously as Alexander's son, Little Man, returns to the tree the father and son had planted together. Tending to the sapling, Little Man, mute throughout the film, finally speaks: "In the beginning was the Word? Why is that, Papa?" By emphasizing child and tree, the final shot nonetheless achieves closure by echoing the credit sequence, which showed Leonardo's Adoration of the Magi, in such a way that the blessed infant and blossoming tree are at the center of its focus.

Between beginning and end, the body evinces strange dispositions, as in Alexander's daughter, Marta, in slow motion chasing chickens through the house, his wife Adelaide's hysterical breakdown, Otto's fainting spell, and Little Man's nosebleed and muteness. In addition to and often through the characters' unconventional actions, the film form often develops an uncannily oneiric quality. Verdant landscapes intermingle with sepia-toned versions, and black-and-white images emerge seemingly from nowhere. Each type of image implies a distinct mode of reality, yet the film complicates any clear reading. Viewers are left wondering whether this is a recollection, a dream, or a figment of a character's imagination. In which tense do these images occur? How do the unusual gestures relate to these indefinite images?

Temporal modes and narrative actions are linked ambiguously in The Sacrifice.[24] Maya Turovskaya quite astutely points out that conventional narratives often employ flashbacks and fantasies to justify a character's decision in the present. Tarkovsky significantly alters this mode

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[24] Michael Dempsey associates this ambiguity in The Sacrifice with "trance films," in its use of "slow, dreamlike pacing created with large, static tableaux, stately camera movements, and an extensive use of classical music" (13).

of narration and its use of time by vaguely linking subjectivity as source of action. Turovskaya writes:

> In this [Tarkovsky's] chronotope the past always exists on an equal footing with the present; the world of the imagination coexists with the real world. It would not be an exaggeration to say that there are as real and as present as the elements of the actual plot. (87)

Here Turovskaya employs the concept of chronotope as narrative function, rather than directly linking it to gesture. She differentiates the "equal footing" of past and present, imagination and real world, from cause-and-effect buildups that use the past to explain the present and a character's subjectivity to justify his or her decisions.

Other commentators and Tarkovsky himself tend to read, quite rightly, Alexander's actions as spiritually symbolic, rather than those of a conventional protagonist. As a teacher and essayist wracked with metaphysical doubt and melancholy, Alexander lacks the clear decisiveness and stable identity of mainstream film heroes. He is a man of many words and few deeds. In his own mind, weakness muddles his thoughts, because initially he cannot even imagine an appropriate response to our dreadful condition and instead wallows in self-doubt. In this regard, Alexander figures as a typical Tarkovskian protagonist, like Stalker or Andrei in Nostalghia (1983). All three seek spiritual solutions to the overpowering forces that render them physically and spiritually frail.

Reflecting on the weak characters populating his films, Tarkovsky wonders, "Why are plots in which people win by far the most common, in literature, theater and film?" (Time 290). Tarkovsky answers his own question to open new narrative possibilities: "Stories of failure could well be a fruitful new departure in art" (Time 290). In citing the promising advantage of failure, of actions undertaken by the hero-as-feeble, Tarkovsky invites speculation on Alexander's own

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status as powerless. In contrast to the conventional hero who drives the narrative forward, Alexander suffers from a lack that suspends any and all narrative motion.

Deriving their readings from Tarkovsky himself, and thus problematically reinstating auteurist analysis, many commentators have attempted to explain the unexpected behavior of Tarkovsky's characters, such as Alexander. Lacking narrative significance, a group of paratactically positioned fainting spells, nosebleeds, hysterical fits and his final sacrifice figure such moments. Prompted by Little Man's (Alexander's temporarily mute son) sudden nosebleed, a trait shared by numerous Tarkovsky characters, Vida Johnson and Graham Petrie contend, "The repetition of unusual physical characteristics or actions from film to film leads us to consider other 'meanings'" (219), those presumably not bound to narrative convention.

In a similar vein, and apropos of the "heroes" in the filmmaker's last three films, Stalker (1979), Nostalghia, and The Sacrifice, Mark Le Fanu sees conventional agency questioned by Tarkovsky: "But in 'late' Tarkovsky we are met with something that can only be described as an elevation of powerlessness, a hostility to conventional action, a quietism" (96). Irreducible to realist representation and lacking narrative impact, powerlessness figures as one possible "other meaning."

Johnson and Petrie propose yet another meaning, bound to Tarkovsky's interest in spiritualism:

> Characters fall, stumble, and trip a great deal, usually as a prelude to some form of self-discovery, spiritual enlightenment, or change of circumstances; the fall may also imply that they need to learn the humility that most of them initially lack. (219)

For Johnson and Petrie, like many others, the unusual bodily attitude—stammering, falling, stumbling, tripping--points to a spiritual sickness inhabiting the body.[25] As Hippocrates argued,

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[25] It's worth noting here that stammering rarely appears in cinema, but like falling down, Turovskaya treats it as a spiritual impediment. She asserts that in Mirror, "Stuttering [exists] not only as a physical handicap, but as the

the epileptic fit constitutes a <u>sacred malady</u> (Virilio, <u>Aesthetics</u> 30). This illness finds its source

not in somatic or mental causes, but rather in the person's lack of proper moral strength. To

follow this reading, when Alexander and Otto suffer black-outs, it is clear that they figure the

body as deficient in spiritual matters.[26]

The body thus exhibits spiritual weakness, and not simply physical or mental

powerlessness. Without contesting the validity of these interpretations, the view observes that

the body also evinces a unique relationship with time. By means of gesture, it expresses the

connection Tarkovsky makes between spirituality and temporal disjunction, what the director

believes to be the source of contemporary illness. For Tarkovsky, the body's disposition,

marked as an effect of time, both manifests our current condition, as well as significantly alters

our times. The body thus functions simultaneously as symptom of our plight and agent of

change.

Alexander's body and mind are so precariously at the edge of despair that he suffers from

time itself. In his case, fainting spells for Catherine Clément symptomatically mark when time

becomes excessive, or too much for a body unable to withstand its pressure: "Then it is a

sickness that, unlike somatic sicknesses, is caught at every moment. Each time it is a new attack,

a new bout. A bout of what, may I ask? questions the doctor. A bout of time" (101). For

Clément, philosophers like Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, despite their obvious differences, invent

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expression of a dumbness of the spirit, a wound to the individual's inner life" that art can "cure" (80). Curiously, stuttering will reappear in my analysis of Abbas Kiarostami's <u>Through the Olive Trees</u>, but not as a "dumbness" of spirit cured by the artist, but rather as symptom of trauma and its unique relationship with time.

[26] Le Fanu echoes this prevalent interpretation: "The piercing gaze of the cinema is not, primarily, in Tarkovsky's work, the search for psychological truth, so much as a search for what he terms 'spirituality'. He seeks out the evidence, in the human, of the divine" (52).

"ruses" and tactical relationships to time that ward off this metaphysical illness.[27] They imply a philosophical health, but one not bound to possessing physical or mental wellbeing; rather, a more profound vigor, bound to dispositions of time, animates their writings.

If Tarkovsky was drawn to Hamlet, and staged a production of the play, one can conjecture that the prince's own malady, "the time is out of joint," resonated with Tarkovsky's own views. When interviewed about Shakespeare's character, Tarkovsky asserted, "Hamlet took his revenge, as we know, in order to set right a time that was 'out of joint'. It would be nearer the truth to say he did so in order to embody the idea of self-sacrifice" (Time 378). As an act of love and of faith, Hamlet's gesture of self-sacrifice doesn't linger in the foggy recesses of a time long past. It still possesses urgency today, because for Tarkovsky (our) time is still out of joint. Today, the threat of nuclear disaster forms one relevant symptom of this dislocation, and Hamlet points the way to re-thinking self-sacrifice as ethical act.

Tarkovsky further discusses Hamlet's act to address our current predicament, arguing, "It is obvious to everyone that man's material aggrandizement has not been synchronous with spiritual progress" (Sculpting 234). Thematically, synchronizing materiality and spirituality constitutes the motivating force behind The Sacrifice, and one can locate Tarkovsky's chronotope in the tension between both worlds. This chronotope is expressed primarily in the actions of the protagonist, Alexander, who acutely senses both facets.

On the one hand, he is afflicted with "time sickness," the non-synchronization of worlds, which instills in him a sense of duty and responsibility.[28] As opposed to Eisenstein's vigorous

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[27] Like Clément, Deleuze notes that "what separates them [Nietzsche and Kierkegaard] is considerable, evident and well-known" (Difference 5), yet both philosophers orient thought toward a "pathology" of philosophy, recognized in their treatment of illness as problem of and for thought.

[28] Suffering time-sickness motivates other Tarkovsky films, most notably Nostalghia, which Tarkovsky made in Italy before going into permanent exile. Peter Green notes that Nostalghia's "hero," a Russian temporarily exiled in Italy, is "sick at heart" and "dies of his illness far from home: nostalgia as a sickness for another place, another time,

athletics, this bodily attitude exhibits a (temporal) weakness or suffering, glimpsed in the

characters' often unusual postures—sudden collapses, hysterical attacks, brief moments of

levitation, and the protagonist's final act, the sacrifice of his worldly possessions and power to

speak. On the other hand, Alexander seeks to perform a restorative gesture that will

miraculously re-align time. Like Hamlet, Alexander thus makes a gift of himself in order to

"correct" our disjunctive time.

Central to the argument of this chapter is the hypothesis that The Sacrifice fashions an

aberrant chronotope characterized by materialism and spiritualism as distinctive flows of time.

From Tarkovsky's perspective, these separate flows of time must be synchronized, or at

minimum be brought into rhythmic harmony. Aligning these two temporal flows necessitates

novel gestures and bodily attitudes, so that the Tarkovskian chronotope animates a tension

between body as stricken by time and body as redemptive force. Unlike the classical movements

organized and justified by the dictates of plot or in Eisenstein's case, revolutionary

transformation, these gestures demonstrate rather unusual symptoms. They attest to a temporal

sickness indicative of Tarkovsky's unique sense of time. If one must heal a strangely afflicted

body and world, then the "cure" must hit directly at the cause of this unique illness, time itself.

The filmmaker's own theoretical writings reveal as much. They define the traits of what I

would like to call Tarkovsky's "chronotopic imagination." To discern its contours it is useful to

bring in other texts, most notably Clément's Syncope and Jacques Derrida's Given Time, to

elaborate the director's relationship of gesture to temporality. The immediate goal will be to

outline Tarkovsky's theories of filmic time, which will in turn provide the basis for discussing

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another state, so severe as to amount to a disease—a sickness unto death" (111). For Tarkovsky, the exilic
experience involves not simply a spatial displacement, but also a temporal one ("another time"). In his second-to-
last film, Tarkovsky juxtaposes different times that profoundly haunt Andrei.

The Sacrifice. At the same time, Tarkovsky's criticisms of Eisenstein prove useful in

differentiating two directors who, despite encountering very similar institutional difficulties

while working in the Soviet Union, fashioned two of the most intriguing (theoretical)

chronotopes in film theory.[29]

Tarkovsky produced a fairly homogeneous theory of cinema, published in English as

Sculpting in Time, the title of which says much about his chronotopic concerns. A collection of

insights compiled over many years with Olga Surkova, the book charts the director's ideas about

cinema as art and possessive of a unique relationship with time. While Sculpting in Time offers

compelling interpretations for many of his films, one must also explore other possible readings

that complicate Tarkovsky's own take. In other words, taking Tarkovsky "at his word," as final

arbiter of his work, proves problematic.

My analysis seeks to avoid several potential traps as it carefully skips, like Bazin's figure

discussed in the previous chapter, across the stones set forth by and in Tarkovsky's interventions.

For one, relying heavily upon Tarkovsky forecloses other possible readings that may lend new

perspectives to his films. Second, basing one's approach on a direct correspondence between a

filmmaker's theories and films can only reinforce an uninformed appreciation of the auteurist

myth. Third, Tarkovsky's writing does not prove germane for the textual and theoretical reading

undertaken here. As Johnson and Petrie note, Tarkovsky's ideas tend to center upon Romantic,

and at times mystical, notions of art and of the artist, a stance that does not prove amenable to

deconstructive, psychoanalytic and semiotic approaches to Tarkovsky (31-32). Nonetheless,

Tarkovsky himself formulates a novel conception of cinematic time, one that differs from

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[29] Both filmmakers encountered tremendous institutional obstacles placed by Soviet authorities. The limited number of films made by Tarkovsky, seven features in twenty-four years, attested to Goskino's snail-paced bureaucracy. Despite this shared experience, significant differences between the two Russians must be discerned, and these crucial disparities pertain to both directors' sense of time and gesture.

Eisenstein's, and gesture, which oddly shares much with his Russian predecessor. Listening to his voice proves instructive.

The last chapter framed its analysis of Eisenstein via his profound influence on media theory. Before the emergence of journals like Screen and their emphasis on structuralist, feminist and Marxist understandings of film, Eisenstein's notion of film as construction vied with Bazin's theory of film as realism for theoretical preeminence. I sought to place Eisenstein's ideas on film within this context, while at the same time stressing his unique reading of time. Tarkovsky's writings intriguingly represent a continuation of the Eisenstein/Bazin debate, with Tarkovsky's own distaste for Eisenstein's theories and films often propelling Tarkovsky's concepts forward. Although an apparent theoretical throwback, Tarkovsky frequently returns to Eisenstein, and implicitly Bazin, to ground his insights. Apparently, Eisenstein's conceptualization of film and time die hard, so to speak.[30] Thus, it is more than useful to weave together Tarkovsky's concepts with his reading of Eisenstein, especially when it pertains to time.

Tarkovsky often addressed Eisenstein's own theories and films to differentiate his approach to cinema. By and large, Tarkovsky views Eisenstein negatively, especially when he takes to task the "literariness" he finds permeating the latter's cinema and theorizations. Echoing other critiques of Eisenstein, particularly Bazin's, Tarkovsky chastises Eisenstein for having done away with the image's inherent ambiguity for the sake of fashioning literary concepts.[31] Tarkovsky writes:

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[30] Robert Ray argues that Eisenstein's lasting influence derives from the director's ability to frame discussion of his films through his theories: "Eisenstein's sensational films enhanced the prestige of his theoretical positions, which quickly triumphed over the alternative proposed by the French Impressionists and Surrealists" (3).

[31] Noël Burch notes that Eisenstein's aspiration to a prosaic universal language, achieved through intellectual montage, ironically attained its opposite: "All the great film-makers were deeply preoccupied with this problem in the late 1920s, but each time an attempt was made to create this 'language' that would function as prose, the result was, paradoxically, a complete 'poetic' abstraction" (60-61).

> Eisenstein makes thought into a despot: it leaves no "air," nothing of that unspoken elusiveness which is perhaps the most captivating quality of all art, and which makes it possible for an individual to relate to a film. I want to make films which carry no oratorical, propagandist speech, but are the occasion for a deeply intimate experience. (Sculpting 183)

This critique hinges on the belief that Eisenstein subordinates the expressive powers of cinema to the (literary) idea. In Eisenstein's rarefied film art, montage saps the image of life, the potential "deeply intimate experience," and thus severely restricts audience interaction.

At the expense of ambiguity or elusiveness, Eisenstein codifies "intellectual formulae," which justify in advance every shot and edit. As a result, the viewer becomes a mere decipherer of Eisenstein's "puzzles and riddles" explained in "word for word solutions" (Sculpting 118). This critique does not stem from an inherent dislike of "intellectualism," of which Tarkovsky ironically was often accused, but rather from the concept dictating, through literary means, filmic representation and editing. For Tarkovsky, cinema draws its resources from life and "personal experience," which each audience member affectively connects to what he or she sees, rather than literary ideas and figures.

To distance himself from Eisenstein and his ostensive literariness, Tarkovsky avows an intense aversion to discussing his own films in terms of "symbols" and stable meanings. When asked by an interviewer, "Is there symbolism in Mirror?" Tarkovsky explains unequivocally of his fourth feature:

> No! The images themselves are like symbols, but unlike accepted symbols they cannot be deciphered. The image is like a clot of life, and even the author may not be able to work out what it means, let alone the audience. (Time 369)

Tarkovsky punctuates his response by stating, "The fewer the symbols the better! Symbolism is a sign of decadence" (Time 369). The decadence Tarkovsky associates with symbolism connects

strongly with Eisenstein's over-determination of meaning.[32] As Roland Barthes famously argued, "the Eisensteinian meaning overwhelms ambiguity" (45).

No doubt Eisenstein functions as a straw man within Tarkovsky's theoretical framework. Tarkovsky follows suit of other critiques of Eisenstein, most notably Bazin's, which position Eisenstein's cinema as resolutely unambiguous. Yet I would also argue that a more profound difference, that of time, distinguishes the two directors' thinking of film. A mixture of Bazin's belief in the fundamental ambiguity of images with Tarkovsky's notion of cinema as creating aberrant time, felt in the temporal "pressure" of each shot, points to the core of Tarkovsky's criticisms of Eisenstein.

For Eisenstein, Hegelian dialectics governs the articulation of shots, which in turn must be synthesized or converted by and to the Idea. If ambiguity is lacking, it is because dialectical time, though often aberrant in any specific instance, nonetheless totalizes in the end. By rendering the dialectic, montage unambiguously assures that a proper totalization occurs and regulates its dialectical effects. Temporal articulation is determined in advance. For Tarkovsky, this subordination of time to the Hegelian concept plays into Eisenstein's inability to recognize the distinct status of film as artwork. Tarkovsky felt Eisenstein mistakenly found the basis for filmmaking in other art forms, most notably haiku, hieroglyphics and literature, that fashion a third concept out of its raw material. By doing so, Eisenstein thus ignored the sheer novelty of cinema introduced at the Lumiére's Grand Café screening: "For the first time in the history of the arts, in the history of culture, man found the means to take an impression of time" (Tarkovsky, Sculpting 62). Whereas the writer employs words or the painter dabs paints, the filmmaker

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[32] As many commentators have noted, historical context provides reason why Tarkovsky discouraged symbolic readings of his films. Ian Christie emphasizes Tarkovsky's "experiences working in Soviet cinema that fuelled Tarkovsky's intense hostility to any interpretation of his films, at least in the sense of revealing a hidden meaning" ("Introduction" xvii). Turovskaya argues similarly that one can attribute Tarkovsky's "dislike of the term 'metaphor'" to its "hackneyed use of 'heroic' metaphor in Stalinist cinema" (78).

expresses himself or herself in blocks of time recorded by the camera. Hence, to create his or her

art, the director must render distinctly different temporal blocks, the raw material, into a sculpted

work.

Tarkovsky explains this process of sculpting in time:

So the filmmaker, from a "lump of time" made up of an enormous, solid cluster of living facts, cuts off and discards whatever he does not need, leaving only what is to be an element of the finished film, what will prove to be integral to the cinematic image. (Sculpting 64)

At first glance, this summary appears rather naive and simple.[33] Tarkovsky merely draws from

Bazin's idea of the "fact-image" (the image presents a "cluster of living facts") and then couples

it to a rudimentary definition of editing (the filmmaker "discards whatever he does not need").

Yet the "facticity" of the image does not derive from its ontological correspondence with its

model, as Bazin argued. Bazin contended that with photographic reproduction, its very

automatism creates the condition for ontological mimesis. The photograph "shares, by the very

process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it is the model"

(1: 14). For Tarkovsky the factual nature of images develops from time itself: the camera

records the fact that time flows through the image. The challenge for the filmmaker thus resides

in joining separate temporal fluxes. Tarkovsky's summarizes his role this way: "I see it as my

professional task, then, to create my own, distinctive flow of time" (Sculpting 120-21).

Time flows differently in any filmic image, so that "the cinema has to be free to pick out

and join up facts taken from a 'lump of time' of any width or length" (Sculpting 65). When you

record a space shuttle launch, a family picnic and a baseball game, for instance, time flows in

varying "widths" and "lengths" in each. In the first, technological history and a narrative of

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[33] Tom Conley has pointed out to me the Tarkovsky's formulation entails an elision of the additive quality of sculpting, as in adding daubs of clay, and instead problematically focuses on the subtractive nature of sculpting the medium of film.

progress inhabit the image. Though the actual shuttle launch may be brief, its interest develops from the image drawing on a deep reservoir of the past (the space race, cold war politics, previous failed missions, and so on). A family picnic also contains great "depth," since other recollections and a family's unique history imbue each image with significance.[34] A baseball game, with its slow pacing and between-inning interruptions, displays a greater "width" of time. In other words, each event possesses its own chronotope. It draws its resources from distinctive flows of time, ranging from important historical events to intensely personal moments, from life at its most mundane to life lived in its sacred aspects.

In Tarkovsky, the pressure of time that "runs through" shots, as well as sequences, often assumes an ambiguous shape. If a film like <u>Mirror</u> (1975) is called "poetic," this is due to the multifarious modes of reality, from history to the most private, from width to depth, that temporal rhythm can affect. Turovskaya explains, "The unusual quality of <u>Mirror</u> lies in its juxtaposition of time scales that are normally subject to different yardsticks of measurement" (67). Historical time seen in newsreels imbricates with the time of the family, its history, and synthesizing or syncopating the two pressures provides the unique structure organizing <u>Mirror</u>. Turovskaya's term "juxtaposition of time scales" misleads somewhat, because the term juxtaposition invokes Eisensteinian montage. One might say each individual flow (history, memory, dream, for instance) carries its own force, its own temporal timbre. Despite the dissimilar nature of these separate reality states and their concomitant temporal pressures, editing makes them resonate.

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[34] Of course, the width and depth will necessarily resonate differently for each viewer. Take the case of home movies. When you are an outsider looking in on another family's videos or vacation photos, they often seem hopelessly boring and tedious because they have too much width, the same thing over and over, whereas for the "insider" they possess significant depth and evoke strong memories.

Tarkovsky's films resolutely avoid employing conventional cues that distinguish these different modes or "time scales" of reality. Eschewing special effects and distortions of the image to represent dreams, as one may find in Hitchcock's Spellbound (1945), Tarkovsky hints at his method: "Dreams on the screen are made up of exactly these same observed, natural forms of life" (Sculpting 71).[35] In Tarkovsky's cinema, dreams resemble objective reality, as do characters' fantasies, reminisces, and flashbacks. As a result, at stake is not the viewer wondering if this sequence is a dream or reality, actual or virtual. Rather, the pertinent question is, how does time flow in this shot, and how does it connect with other temporal currents, whether imaginary or real?

With this notion of sculpting temporal blocks, of creating distinctive flows of time, Tarkovsky's critique of Eisenstein reaches its crux. Even if Eisenstein's images are unambiguous and confusedly based in other art forms, his greatest mistake is in subordinating blocks or currents of time to the concept. On what he sees as a failure of the well-known ice battle sequence in Eisenstein's Alexander Nevsky (1938), Tarkovsky claims: "There is an inevitable contradiction between the frame itself, devoid of specific time-process, and the precipitate style of editing, which is arbitrary and superficial because it bears no relation to any time within the shots" (Sculpting 120). Time cannot flow in the frame because the concept, determined or illustrated by editing, maintains only an "arbitrary" relationship with time. The rapidity of cuts invariably forecloses any distinctive internal flow of time within the frame; shots merely serve as exemplars of a unifying, conceptual time-flow. All tributaries of time feed into one great river of Time, the dialectical whole.

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[35] Tarkovsky underlines how Hollywood's representation of dreams most often relies on predictability: "All too often dreams are made into a collection of old-fashioned filmic tricks, and cease to be a phenomenon of life" (Sculpting 30).

To dissociate his theory from that of Eisenstein, Tarkovsky argues that temporal flow within the image constitutes the unique status of cinema within the arts: "The dominant, all-powerful factor of the image is rhythm, expressing the course of time within the frame" (Sculpting 113). Each shot contains its own temporal "pressure" that neither conceptual montage nor narrative economy can limit. The justification for expressing rhythm within the shot must come from elsewhere. Without resorting to a Romantic definition of the artwork, in which art aspires to attain the sublime, identifying what precisely constitutes this "elsewhere" proves problematic.

To help readers grasp what he means by pressure, and its fundamentally excessive character, Tarkovsky asks a quite simple question, "How does time make itself felt in a shot?" His answer betrays a complexity of thought:

> It becomes tangible when you sense something significant, truthful, going beyond the events on the screen; when you realize, quite consciously, that what you see in the frame is not limited to its visual depiction, but is a pointer to something stretching out beyond the frame and to infinity; a pointer to life. (Sculpting 117-18)

The pressure of time exceeds temporality being reduced to the representational capacity of cinema, the "visual depiction" located within the frame. As a flowing entity, time passes through but more importantly outside the frame; it strays from narrative action and realist representation, not to mention dialectical montage, toward "infinity."

At first glance, Tarkovsky's emphasis on the temporal rhythm within the shot, and rhythmic extension beyond the shot, ultimately towards "infinity," seems like a critique of montage. Certainly, Tarkovsky's predilection for filming in long takes might parallel, and thus reinforce, the validity of this position. Yet Tarkovsky situates editing under the greater force of rhythm, the poetic interplay of temporal currents bearing varying widths and lengths. In this sense, editing appears as a by-product of rhythm, rather than its generator:

> Although the assembly of the shots is responsible for the structure of a film, it does not, as is generally assumed, create its rhythm. The distinctive time running through the shots makes the rhythm of the picture; and rhythm is determined not by the length of the edited pieces, but by the pressure of the time that runs through them. (Sculpting 117)

In creating a "distinctive flow of time," or a distinct chronotope, editing plays an important role, but it must be based in amplifying and resonating the temporal rhythm within a shot and between shots. The opposition between long take and editing is only "superficial," because rhythm forms the primary temporal articulation in cinema.[36]

For Tarkovsky, Eisensteinian rhythm retains a predictability that glides between all aspects of his work: theory, writing, filming and editing. A cipher of this predictability, the acrobat moves with ease between each factor, producing a homogeneous, if not tightly fitting, correspondence between theory and filmic practice. But is the same true for Tarkovsky? Despite formulating a clear definition of filmmaking as sculpting of time, several questions nag his theories, not because they lack clear elaboration, but rather due to their uneasy articulation within the films themselves. How can a filmmaker foresee or plan exactly a temporal rhythm? When does a shot surge toward a different time-scale? Equally important, questions of audience reception trouble Tarkovsky. How would viewers ever notice, if at all, an image pulsating with a "distinctive flow of time"? Even though long takes and mobile camera, hallmarks of Bazinian realism, give the viewer greater hermeneutic leeway, what can guarantee we apprehend properly the temporal effects Tarkovsky seeks?[37]

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[36] Without elaborating how he reaches this conclusion, Deleuze nonetheless points out that for Tarkovsky the shot/montage alternative is "only a superficial appearance, because the force or pressure of time goes outside the limits of the shot, and montage itself works and lives in time" (Cinema 2 42). Montage does not, from a position external to time, determine temporal pressure, but rather results from it.

[37] In his writings, Tarkovsky often cites viewer's responses, both positive and negative, to his films. Clearly Mirror did not take hold with all viewers. One respondent felt, "Anyhow, I think your film's a blank shot. It certainly didn't reach the audience, which is all that matters" (Sculpting 8).

Tarkovsky's use of objects in <u>The Sacrifice</u> provides one crucial clue to answering these questions. Consider the glass pitcher of milk that inexplicably jumps from the <u>armoire</u> or the wine glasses that suddenly begin clinking together. Lacking direct realist explanations for their motivation, objects appear to move by a pulsating force. As if touched by an unseen ghost, these vibrating movements constitute remarkably oneiric moments. To heighten the suddenness of these happenings, Tarkovsky either places them within an extreme long take or immediately adjacent to one; in addition, their unexpectedness appears all the more dream-like because actors' movements are kept to a minimum.

Yet these exceptional moments do not derive entirely from an inexplicable narrative source. As in other Tarkovsky movies, they do have causes, in this case the rumbling sounds of fighter jets from off. Yet that conventional cause is severely attenuated, or only understood retroactively. As such, these moments appear oneiric precisely because they cannot be explained immediately by narrative or realist readings. Green reads this recurrent aspect of Tarkovsky's cinema through what he terms the "principle of accountability to natural law" (116), or a realist explanation that could clarify all events. Yet because these moments appear initially so uncanny, all realist readings will encounter a fundamental ambiguity.

Wine glasses suddenly clink against each other, but natural law retroactively determines that the fighter planes cause this phenomenon. But why do these warplanes growl over an extremely isolated estate? Only later do we learn of the impending nuclear holocaust--hence the patrolling fighters heard from off--but that war only presents itself in black-and-white images, themselves effects of war and ostensibly Alexander's imagination, and garbled television messages. The film ambiguously marks these images either as "reality" or in Alexander's (or his

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son, Little Man's) head.[38] Thus an infinite regression of meaning occurs, and the last term that could possibly explain the preceding ones is unstable in itself. In other words, an effect explains an effect explains an effect, and so on.

Part of Tarkovsky's ambiguity thus derives from unusual occurrences tenuously explained by "natural law," but that determination inevitably requires yet another so-called natural law to become meaningful. Because these moments have deeply attenuated causes, one cannot understand them entirely as otherworldly (as if caused by ghosts, for instance), as purely symbolic (the spilt milk is a metaphor) or as subjective ("it's all just a dream"). Nor can an immediate realist-inspired explanation elucidate the uncertainty produced by the unexpected event.

Occupying a "neither here nor there" status, I would argue that these exceptional moments attest to a schism introduced by the pressure of a disordered time. Temporal pressure introduces into representation something uncannily other, something unruly. By unruliness, I mean that by standards of realism, Tarkovsky's chronotope scatters its effects in unpredictability. In this regard, Turovskaya correctly emphasizes time's heterogeneity in Tarkovsky: "In all Tarkovsky's work, this 'individual stream of time' is something which pulsates, moves not smoothly but in jerks, in explosions of meaning, however hard the director insisted upon the amorphousness and simplicity of his images" (100). As "pulsating" force that progresses not uniformly but rather in "jerks," <u>time sends objects and people into convulsive states and movements</u>. The pressure of time both exceeds and undermines any coherent meaningful narrative or realist function applicable to objects and bodies.

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[38] Green argues for retaining this tension between father's dream and son's dream as productive reading of <u>The Sacrifice</u>: "Is the film Alexander's dream of his son, or Little Man's dream of his father; vision of the past or of the future?" (135). This quandary invites, somewhat justifiably, his conclusion: "Perhaps Tarkovsky's black vision is but the unhappy dream of a child. Tarkovsky allows us to view the world from both end of the telescope" (135), or from multiple perspectives.

Like the unexpected movements of objects, the body similarly forms a privileged site where time's pressure makes itself directly felt and legible. In other words, bodies and movements appear prey to an indiscernible or attenuated "cause," read neither entirely as somatic nor as psychological. The pressure of time throws the world off kilter. From out of nowhere, it makes objects pulsate and bodies suffer unusual afflictions. The body acts as indicator of temporal rhythm within the shot, while repeated gestures connect broader segments. Gesture figures prominently when the pressure has become "too much," when one shot or temporal block is on the verge of passing into another. Tarkovsky thus invites viewers to read movement, objects and gesture not as narratively or conceptually determined, in a dialectical sense, but rather as symptoms of time.

Clément's notion of syncope offers a fruitful approach to discerning the relationship between temporal pressure and its unusual symptoms. In Syncope, Clément works through syncope, or the fainting spell that interrupts physical time, in order to reconsider several fields of knowledge. The term resonates in each, and from their consonance Clément draws productive parallels and correspondences between syncopation in music, poetry, Eastern and Western philosophy, dance, and Lacanian psychoanalysis. Through these uncanny intersections, she invites readers to reconsider gesture as temporally and rhythmically determined.

Clément employs syncope to disrupt clear notions of "physical time," or the steady, mastered time upon which Western philosophy depends. In its sudden fits and unusual rhythms, as in the emphasis on the downbeat in music or elision of syllables in poetry, syncope questions the ability of philosophical discourse to master time through a rationalized rhythm.[39] It marks

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[39] Clément sees Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, no doubt drawing on his "Nietzsche Contra Wagner," as foregrounding music as syncope within their philosophies: "With music, it is discontinuity they search for, and hatred of the subject's imprisonment in a system of thought. It is a syncope of thought. Poor dialectic!" (83).

what philosophy can never meaningfully and temporally recuperate: "Hegelian dialectic is caused by a depressive spasm: logical movement goes forward by jolts, haunted by the syncopes that are always possible and that would perhaps halt the logic of history" (62). Syncope always implies a chronotope that reason, especially Hegelian dialectics, can never totalize or rationalize. As such, syncope denotes an aberrant time that escapes reduction to physical time, historical narratives of progress, or the Hegelian logic underpinning philosophical time.[40]

From a purely theoretical and primarily psychoanalytic standpoint, Briony Fer engagingly applies Clément's notion to film. Analyzing the encounter between psychoanalysis and hysteria, most notably their conjunction in Charcot's photographs, Fer posits that syncope marks where the symbolic (in a Lacanian sense) fails to "hold in place the screen of the image, and as such it is always in danger of 'losing' time" (77).[41] Here, the Symbolic as syntagmatic chain that orders time isn't so much foreclosed; rather, syncope makes syntax comes off its hinges, deranges it, and severely endangers the ordered, mastered time of succession.[42] For Fer, following Clément's lead, falling victim to syncope provides impetus to question philosophical mastery of time.

In artworks, syncope manifests itself in gestures tied to the temporally unexpected: "The entire art of syncope consists in preparing surprises; and when technique is abandoned, the

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[40] Drawing upon Hölderlin, Clément's primary target here is Hegel, the great philosopher of rendering all events and times dialectically: "There is chiaroscuro in dialectical mastery. There is no doubt about it: mastering time is the goal of the dialectic" (80).

[41] Working from Charcot's photos, several feminist writers re-visit psychoanalysis and power through the female hysterical gesture. Janet Beizer, Felicia McCarren and Rae Beth Gordon form the most compelling readings, with Gordon especially emphasizing cinema and hysteria. For a psychoanalytically oriented reading of male hysteria and cinema through disaster, see Lynne Kirby's "Male Hysteria and Early Cinema."

[42] Arguing for a politics of syncope, Clément affirms similarly of the arrested gaze, "What is necessary is to seize the moment," so as "to stop the film at a particular image and to blow up the negative. Blow Up. To linger in the moment of syncope" (117). In citing Antonioni's film, Clément points to the fact that the film still and photography retain a special relationship with time, representation, and gesture that undermines science's reliance on succession, of building a coherent narrative, as ground for knowledge. See also Lyotard's The Inhuman, especially the chapter "Time Today" on Charcot's photographs as instantiating an "ontological essay on time" (134).

fainting fit occurs when one least expects it; it is an accident; and no one can foretell the day or the time" (Clément 14). Fainting spells, accidents, the unanticipated embody the effects of something akin to Tarkovskian temporal pressure. In other words, the too-much of time moves in jerks and spasms, fashioning unpredictable gestures. In turn, The Sacrifice will establish its unique rhythm by "preparing surprises" and eroding the stability of "presence."

Early in the film, two syncopic moments overwhelm the body. Fainting spells overcome Alexander and Otto, the town postman and friend of Alexander. Even though Otto's swoon occurs after Alexander's, I would like to focus on Otto's collapse initially. His role is minor compared to Alexander's, the "hero" who suffers a more profound sickness. At this stage, both share the same symptom, syncopes brought forth by time, but Alexander will ultimately pass through greater (temporal) ordeals to attain his sacred, redemptive aligning of time.

The film presents Otto as an eccentric, a "holy fool," an attribute given to him that will partly explain his attack. When meeting Alexander in the first scene, Otto tells his interlocutor that he has been waiting his whole life, "a long wait for something real, something important," but that he also gets "silly notions." Otto then mentions Nietzsche's dwarf, "the one who made Zarathustra faint," and connects it to a somewhat confused synopsis of the Nietzschean eternal return. By bringing up Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Otto prepares viewers not only for his and Alexander's fainting spells, but also Tarkovsky's attempts to treat the duo as doppelgangers. Throughout the film Alexander and Otto are framed together in close-up, often through a reflection, which doubles the pair. Similarly, when Otto tries to convince Alexander to visit the servant witch Maria, a drowsy Alexander confusedly repeats the soothsayer's dialogue.

Giving gifts and making sacrifices also motivates both characters. The birthday festivities commence when Otto arrives with his gift, an authentic map of Europe from the 1600s.

Touching upon the film's thematics, Otto claims it's a "sacrifice," and that "every gift involves a sacrifice." The postman proceeds to tell Victor and Adelaide, who are quite impressed with his gift, that in his spare time he's a "collector. I collect incidents, things that are unexplainable but true." When asked for specifics, Otto describes one of his prized items, a photograph of a mother and son, who had died in World War II. Years later the mother had moved away, "far from her memories," and visited a photographic portrait studio. Upon receiving the print, the mother was shocked by the developed image: it contained both her and her dead son, who was eighteen in the picture, but eerily she was her current age.

After providing his captive audience the anecdote's strange payoff, Otto slowly turns around and then suddenly, violently collapses into a heap. Hesitating for several seconds, Adelaide and Victor approach Otto. The next shot, in close-up, shows Otto's face with eyes closed, as if he were dead. As Victor checks his pulse, Otto opens his eyes. Adelaide asks, "Are you ill?" Otto responds, "No, nothing is wrong." Crawling to a chair, Otto props himself up by stabilizing his weight against its seat. Holding his pocket watch to his ear, Otto explains his malady: "It was only an evil angel passing by, who saw fit to touch me." Perplexed, Victor asks if he's playing a joke, to which Otto replies, "There's nothing to joke about here."

Given Otto's eccentricities, one wonders whether his fall is in fact a stunt or "joke," an exclamation point added to his rather unbelievable story. At the same time, Otto's explanation, that an angel touched him, remains unconvincing to its listeners. Whether read as a joke or an otherworldly encounter, the law of accountability appears stretched toward its limit, the miraculous. For this reason, Johnson and Petrie argue, "Otto is a deliberately enigmatic figure, whose sudden epileptic fall is very different from the stumbling that in other films precedes spiritual illumination" (174). Johnson and Petrie are correct in pointing out that Otto will not

attain spiritual illumination, which they argue for in Alexander's case. I will test that conclusion

in my analysis of Alexander's fall below, but for now Otto remains a crucial, if secondary,

character. While Otto's foibles certainly mark him as an enigmatic figure, his episode functions

to highlight the irrationality of temporal pressure.

Otto's story and black-out provide a foil to Victor, a doctor who no doubt will seek

scientific causes for them. By checking Otto's pulse, Victor naturally investigates a somatic

source for the fall. Despite affirming the contrary, Otto will in fact make a joke when he listens

to his watch, resuscitating the classic Marx brothers' line, "Either this man is dead or my watch

has stopped."[43] Both jokes illuminate how reason (represented by Victor) remains unable to

understand nonsense or the irrational; instead, reason seeks scientific, commonsensical causes.

Victor attributes the fall to Otto's idiosyncratic personality, whereas Otto suspects something

else—that physical time stopped suddenly and he was caught somewhere between rationalized

moments, measured in ticks and tocks, in regular heartbeats (the conventional and medical

definition of chronotrope) felt in Otto's pulse.

Otto's strange avocation similarly emphasizes how time and image cannot always be

reduced to commonsensical interpretations, and therefore his hobby implies a division or

disjunction between legible and visible discursive formations. When it comes to time, reason

will only get you so far, but Otto's photograph possesses the uncanny power to overlay

distinctive times, that of the (present) mother and (past) son. The photographic image's inherent

ability to capture instantaneously the present encounters its other, the forgotten or repressed past

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[43] It is worth noting Otto's status as family outsider, whose so-called prank upsets social order. Clément underscores this mocking aspect of syncope: "The swoon is a weapon in the social game; it is an evasion, a mockery," and connects this weapon to "the same world that will produce psychoanalysis: a vaudevillian universe in which the joke of fainting will at least be taken seriously" (91).

having returned unexpectedly.[44] This miraculous imbrication of times comes with a price.

When these two separate times congeal in the photograph, Otto suffers his syncope. His body

senses a temporal schism or pressure, achieved by the supernatural ability of photography to link

living and dead. Like the soldier, he too returns from the dead (Clément notes that syncope

resembles death), from a temporal nowhere.[45]

Reviving Otto's encounter with an evil angel, the opening shots of The Sacrifice establish

the body as symptomatically marked by the pressure of time; they also introduce Alexander as

powerless in terms of spirituality and action. An unconventional hero, Alexander and his

weaknesses prime viewers for the "too much" of temporal pressure that exerts itself upon him.

Early in the movie, Otto asks him, "Say, how is your relation to God?" Alexander replies, "Non-

existent, I'm afraid." Otto then proceeds to give viewers expository information about

Alexander, who "lectures for the students at the university" and writes essays, but his mood is

also "gloomy," and Otto suggests to Alexander, "You shouldn't grieve so much. You shouldn't

yearn so for something. You shouldn't be waiting like that."

Although slightly baffled by the awkward shift from friendly chitchat to metaphysical talk,

Alexander strongly disagrees with Otto's assessment. Nonetheless, Otto's assertion that

Alexander suffers melancholia soon hits home with Alexander. Moments later Alexander begins

to analyze his, and humanity's, own symptoms. Because technology and power have become

instruments of fear, "We have acquired a dreadful disharmony, an imbalance if you will,

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[44] Of Otto's inexplicable photo, its uncanny sense of capturing the otherworldly, Jim Leach argues, "This
unexplained phenomenon suggests that even the indexicality of photography, deriving from a technological base
which it shares with cinema, cannot exclude the irrational world which are has traditionally explored" (209).

[45] Otto's photo is not any old one, because through the mother's presence it invokes the suffering and mourning
occasioned by war. Which war? Otto never gives a clue, but one would presume World War II. For the mother, her
already dead son returns from the front too late and only in an image. For Otto, who will soon learn of the
impending catastrophe, he collapses too early, figuratively suffering its effects before it even occurs.

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between our material and spiritual development." Alexander then claims it's too late to find a solution and that he is weary of words. A long monologue ensues and leads to self-analysis: "At last I know what Hamlet meant. He was fed up with windbags. If only someone could stop talking and <u>do</u> something instead. Or at least try to."

During Alexander's monologue, filmed in long take, Little Man exits the frame without his father noticing. Initially lost in his thoughts, Alexander discovers he is alone and intently scans his surroundings for the boy. From off we hear the patter of footsteps gathering steam, and Little Man suddenly jumps on Alexander's back. Visibly shaken, Alexander drops to one knee; the camera cuts to the son, blood trickling down from his nose to his shirt. Returning to Alexander, a medium long shot shows him reaching an arm forward in obvious distress. While looking straight ahead and with his jaw slackened, Alexander awkwardly grasps for a nearby tree. He turns to land on his back, as if in slow motion, accompanied by his voice-over: "Dear God, what's wrong with me?" and finally collapses.

The camera abruptly cuts to a black-and-white image of a courtyard strewn with debris; we hear a shepherd's call and thunder from off as the camera pans downward to display a wrecked car, a wooden chair, and water coursing through a small stream. The shot ends on a windowpane that reflects a city seemingly untouched by disaster. As the pan finishes its downward movement, we see ostensible blood spatter then two long drips of running toward the top of the frame. A fade out ends the sequence, and the next shot displays Alexander leafing through a book of medieval paintings. Alexander notes that the paintings possess "such wisdom and spirituality" and are "like a prayer. And all this has been lost. We can't even pray any longer." He then tells his family how happy he is, because he received a telegram from his acting friends,

his fellow "Richardians" and "Idiotists," a reference to his acting Shakespeare (oddly <u>Richard III</u>, not <u>Hamlet</u>) and Dostoevsky.

By placing Alexander's monologue at the beginning of the sequence and the citation of religious paintings at its end, Tarkovsky no doubt emphasizes the disparity between materialism and spirituality. Alexander initially bears witness to his own powerlessness, then finds it reconfirmed in Victor's gift, the book of paintings/prayers that attest to the fact that "we can't even pray any longer." Dialogue and image thus provide convenient bookends for the sequence, but viewers must wonder, what happens in the middle? Why is there no mention of Alexander's black out when he returns home, and in fact throughout the rest of the film? Where does Alexander go during his episode? Why do black-and-white images follow his collapse? Why does non-diegetic sound, the shepherd's call, suddenly intrude on the film?

Before addressing Alexander's metaphysical "plight," I wish to focus on the these last two issues, the black-and-white images of disaster and the sounds heard from off screen. With only minimal certainty can one attribute Alexander's fall to the "law of accountability," with Little Man's playful attack as its cause. Yet the cut to catastrophe's effects is fundamentally "irrational," because it lacks any narrative or chronological motivation. The shift from Alexander keeling over to an apocalyptic vision, set off from the preceding shots by its lack of color, complicates any clear linkage or signification. The edit fashions a sliding effect, in which rational connections are "in danger of losing time," as Fer's reading of syncope posits. Sandwiched between two "presents," Alexander's collapse and his scrutiny of the paintings, the image of disaster constitutes what Deleuze terms an irrational cut, spatially and temporally indefinite.

In his engaging study of Deleuze's <u>Cinema</u> books, David Rodowick describes the irrational cut this way:

> The interval no longer forms part of the image or sequence as the ending of one or the beginning of the other. Nor can other divisions—for example, sound in relation to image—be considered as continuous or extendable one into the other. The interval becomes an autonomous value. (<u>Time-Machine</u> 13-14)

Opposed to continuity editing or Eisensteinian montage, in which association and collision are built upon rational (dialectical) edits, the interstice disrupts stable temporal articulation. Instead of establishing coherent linkages, such as before and after or cause and effect, the irrational cut retains a temporal autonomy from other images. It marks the pressure of time as moving in jerks and spasms; it floats between times, where time gets lost or comes off its hinges, as Hamlet intuited.

Similarly, sound plays a crucial role in developing the interaction of distinct temporal flows. One cannot diegetically locate the shepherd's call, which seems to waver between times. From where, and more importantly when, do these sounds emanate? Claiming provocatively that the idea of Tarkovsky making a silent film is "inconceivable," Michel Chion identifies the shepherd's call as "acousmatic," or lacking any diegetic source: "We may define it as neither inside nor outside the image" (129). In turn, Chion argues that acousmatic sounds and their so-called presence "are more like invocations," an aspect that "is fairly typical of sound in Tarkovsky's feature films: it calls to another dimension, it has gone elsewhere, disengaged from the present" (123-24). The acousmatic call destabilizes the imagetrack and its ability to maintain control over a coherent temporality.[46] As such, the acousmatic marks a temporal schism between sound and image, the pressure of time having undermined the stable correspondence. (Leos

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[46] The acousmatic overlays the film's most ambiguous images. Not long after Alexander's prayer, a black-and-white image shows water dripping <u>inside</u> a house, a figure common in many Tarkovsky's films. We hear it again in one of the film's most oneiric moments, as Alexander ambles through a landscape of snow and mud. Both images hover inconclusively somewhere between recollection, fantasy projection, or dream.

Carax, as the next chapter shows, will use sound and image disjunctions to complicate similarly temporal stability.)

Despite the indefinite nature of the cut, the film nonetheless invites reading its unruliness as closely tied to Alexander's subjectivity. Coupled with a challenge to rational time, syncope contests the stability of a coherent, active subject. Clément's project brilliantly underscores syncope as (feminist) trope that underlines the interdependence of rationalized time and healthy body in philosophy and artistic representation. Thought generally models movement upon notions of health as the easy translation of ideas. In this sense, agency implies a healthy body and clear-minded subject to precipitate change. In Eisenstein's case, dialectical agency relies on a body "in shape," able to undergo history's tremendous torsions and acrobatically fit enough to alter positively historical time. Eisenstein's emphasis on training the body can only underscore this necessity. Similarly, in Taylorism the consultant incessantly clicks his or her stopwatch to gauge a body's productivity; finally, classical Hollywood envisions action, or Deleuze's action-image, as master of narrative events.[47] What happens when the body fails to control time, and instead suffers its unruliness?

Clément begins with a description of syncope and a question pertinent to this study:

Suddenly, time falters. First, the head spins, overcome with a slight vertigo. It is nothing; but then the spinning goes wild, the ears start to ring, the earth gives way and disappears, one sinks back, goes away . . . Where does one go? (1)

Where does Alexander go, when pressure makes time "falter," and thus overwhelms Tarkovsky's hero? In what time does Alexander exist? Does he dream this image of disaster, with the dream-like association of Little Man dripping blood from his chin and the dark liquid sliding down glass

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[47] Deleuze underscores that writing (and one can conjecture filmmaking) must refigure the athletic body as force: "All writing involves an athleticism, but far from reconciling literature with sports or turning writing into an Olympic event, this athleticism is exercised in flight and in the breakdown of the organic body—an athlete in bed" (Essays 2). An athlete in bed or one undergoing "breakdowns" reinstates a different sort of power or health that preoccupies the artist.

as our cue?[48] Is this what Alexander mistakenly believes will be his last dying thought? An

imagining (or memory) of what will be, tentatively, a future disaster? Or simply a cutaway to

another location, another present, in which nuclear catastrophe is now actually unfolding?

Given that Tarkovsky's law of accountability often retroactively explains events, and thus

turns the temporarily irrational into the rational, Alexander's study of the medieval paintings

appears even more curious. Apparently he suffered no somatic affliction, and instead briefly

dropped out of time, the represented chain of presents that precede and follow. His body thus

occupies the interval, with no linkages that can establish what happened and where Alexander

went.[49]

In any event, Alexander appears to have lost time and lost himself as lucid subject,

suffering the syncope as "an absence of the self" or a "cerebral eclipse" (1). Soon after his spell,

Alexander will articulate his fear of this absence. His daughter Marta remembers his acting

Shakespeare and Dostoevsky, and how on stage he once dropped a tray, "and your eyes were full

of tears." Marta's recollection of Alexander's flub suggests something akin to the

psychoanalytic notion of failed action, in which unconscious sources, and not strictly somatic

ones, temporarily impair physical movement. Alexander claims he had something in his eye, but

he then promptly shifts the discussion to reflect on his dislike of acting.

Alexander asserts that he gave up his nascent career because he felt playing others

embarrassed him, "But worst of all I was ashamed of being honest onstage. It was a critic who

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[48] In his intelligent study of childhood and <u>Mirror</u>, Alan Wright notes the special place Tarkovsky accords to children. Drawing on Virilio's notion of picnolepsy, a notion similar to that of Clément's syncope, he avers, "The child absorbs the affective potency of such violent temporal disturbances and acts as a conduit or conductor for their energies. To this end, cinema grants the child the role of emissary in the passage from memory to image" (65).

[49] To explain such irrational cuts and events, several commentators place them as components of Alexander's dream. Even though they argue for a distinctly Tarkovskian ambiguity, their readings create confusion by attributing this so-called dream to varying starting points. One must still explain Alexander's miraculous recovery, and thus move backward in time, perhaps to the opening credits, to make the dream argument work.

first saw that." Alexander notes how an actor's "identity dissolves in his roles. I didn't want my ego dissolved. There was something in it that struck me as sinful, something feminine and weak." Imitating Shakespeare's or Dostoevsky's characters entails the actor becoming other, which Alexander sees as symptom of weakness. Like his fainting spell, Alexander's clumsiness on stage attests not to the embarrassment of having spoiled the fourth wall, but rather to an overpowering sense of loss, of a figurative "identity theft."

The pair time loss/ego loss forms the two coordinates for thinking Alexander's syncope. To drop out of time means to drop out of oneself, a disposition that possesses two effects, like two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, his fainting spell can only reinforce Alexander's repeatedly stated overwhelming sense of powerlessness in the face of materialism's victory. The ego loss associated with syncope therefore forms one test on his road to recovering spirituality, or at least aligning the spiritual "flow" with that of the material. On the other hand, syncope disrupts the ordinary time that has perniciously trapped us in the material. Reason, science and power capitalize on ordinary time, and syncope presents a potential escape route. Despite constituting an ordeal for Alexander, syncope allows him to wage his battle, to paraphrase Nietzsche, against (our) time and hopefully for a time to come.

Ironically, ego loss evinces syncope's greatest strength, something akin to Parsifal's paradox: "You shall be healed by the sword that smote you." Even though it implies the disruption of the subject's identity, syncope provides the tools to re-think time, power and agency.[50] To achieve this reconsideration, to work against "action" as health, Clément suggests

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[50] Following Clément, one could argue that social definitions of health reside in action, which syncope contest at its most fundamental level. Clément associates the "man of action" with mediocrity, so that "the society we live in today is deeply, firmly situated under the sign of this mediocrity; it leaves no room for syncope to break out, it acts and wants everyone to act" (228). Alexander is clearly plagued by questions of action, but his status as unconventional hero, subject to syncopes, makes him an exceptional hero. One must liberate agency from action, which tends to repress syncope as ethical gesture.

several "strategies of syncope."[51] One such tactic emphasizes weakness conceived not as "lacking strength," the healthy body necessary for mastering time, but rather as a site of ruses and refusals. She states, "The world in which I have lived until now idolizes power and force, muscle and health, vigor and lucidity. Syncope opens onto a universe of weakness and tricks; it leads to new rebellions" (20).

The world Clément lived in clearly resonates with Alexander's fictional world. Alexander sees power as devastating a "natural order," so that humankind "has constantly violated Nature. The result is a civilization built on force, power, fear, dependence. All our 'technical progress' has only provided us with comfort, a sort of standard, and instruments of violence for keeping power." All this power instills a profound dread in Alexander, so he prays, "Just let me be rid of this deadly sickening, animal fear!" To rid civilization of its fear and force, Alexander will harness a syncopic tactical power and perform one such "rebellion" or "trick." Prayer will not work, and instead Alexander, buying Otto's pitch, will offer a sacrifice, his sexual encounter with the witch Maria. Like the fainting spell in which the subject experiences ego loss and drops from physical time, this sacred gesture will contest rationalized time. In fact, it will capitalize on temporal pressure, and its aberrant nature, as redemptive power. Due to the preponderance of irrational cuts, unusual gestures and sudden shifts in time, this quite complex scene must be described in detail.

Before setting out for Maria's, Alexander is baffled by Otto's proposed solution to sidestepping catastrophe. Otto makes the case that Maria is a witch, and argues more unbelievably, "You must lie with her. And if you only wish for one thing at that moment—that

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[51] In The Practice of Everyday Life Michel de Certeau differentiates strategies, which normalize and regulate space and the body, and tactics, which open space and the body to creative and plural deviations from strategic operations. Given her stress on syncope as ruse, I think Clément means the syncope possesses a tactical, differentiating force. See especially the third chapter on "making do."

all this will be over—then it will be! There'll be not more of it!" Alexander then responds, "But that's madness, Otto!" and wonders whether his interlocutor is "still having me on with your Nietzschean pranks?" Without further questioning Otto's ostensibly irrational reasoning, Alexander puts on his jacket, grabs his revolver and sneaks out of his home.

His arrival at Maria's is equally strange. When the clock sounds three o'clock, an agitated Alexander implores, "We won't have time." Kneeling beside Maria, he begs her to "save me. Save us all!" When Alexander puts his head in her lap, Maria notes Alexander's confusion and offers to take him home. Yet seconds later Alexander affirms his seriousness when, in a medium close-up, he retrieves the handgun and puts it to his head, stating emphatically, "Don't kill us!" Though reluctantly compliant, Maria nonetheless undresses Alexander, punctuating each action with a consoling tone, "I know. It concerns your home. I know her, she is wicked. Don't be afraid, not of anything, you poor, poor man." All of a sudden, a medium long shot displays the horizontal couple levitating and rotating. Maria comforts Alexander: "There, there. There's nothing to fear," as we hear the soft roar of fighters and the shepherd's call from off. "Nothing will happen to you here." As the camera slowly tracks back from pair, Alexander cries, while Maria comforts him. They rise in mid air, and the camera stops its movement.

The film then repeats the black-and-white images of disaster witnessed earlier, in which several people were seen fleeing. As the camera pans downward, the shepherd's call resumes and an awkward verbal exchange ensues. Maria says, "There, there," only to be interrupted by Alexander's emphatic pleas, "No! No!" Maria asks, "What is it?" Alex stutters, "I c-c-c-can't." Here it is noteworthy that Maria repeats words ("there, there" and "poor, poor") and more importantly Alexander stumbles both physically at the outset of the scene when he keels over on

the bicycle and verbally by stammering the word "can't." As Marc Shell notes, Hamlet connects speech and gesture to limping:

> [Hamlet] requests of the players: "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue." The meaning of the term tripping has an internal dialectic that relates to walking and talking. On the one hand, it means "stumbling," "erring." Thus, one might speak of a tripper as "someone or something that causes stumbling," often with reference to the mouth or tongue. (171)

Although Tarkovsky does not make explicit reference to Hamlet as a "tripper," one can conjecture that the director correlates Shakesperean physical and verbal syncopes with suspensions of time. In this light Alexander's bicycle accident and stammerings do not simply hinder or delay something from happening in time; rather, they function positively and form crucial components of a bodily disposition that expresses a disjunctive time.[52]

The pan downward and interrupted by Maria and Alexander's repetitions ends on Little Man sleeping on the pane of glass, an extension of the shot seen after Alexander's initial syncope. Next we see a black-and-white shot of Alexander on his back and what we believe to be, through dress and hairstyle, Adelaide with her back facing us. A zoom brings us closer to the woman, slowly turning toward us, and we realize that the woman is in fact Maria. In reddish tint, the next shot shows Leonardo's Adoration of the Magi, the painting seen in the credits, now with Maria reflected at its center. Despite the spatial shift to Alexander's home, where the painting hangs, Maria's voice continues, "It'll soon be over." In a slow motion shot, we see Alexander's daughter Marta, inexplicably naked and shooing chickens through the house.[53] A tracking movement left reveals Adelaide and follows her to reveal Alexander lying on the sofa,

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[52] Chapter 5 focuses its analysis in part on stammering and failed actions in Kiarostami's cinema. Kiarostami situates the stutter within the context of testimony and the re-creation of disastrous events.

[53] Clément notes that the technique of slow motion resonates with syncope. Slow motion "stretches out time" and "dives into all syncopes and makes them manifest" (16). Vlada Petric connects Tarkovsky's extensive use of slow-motion, which constitute the "core" of his oneiric images, to Pudovkin's filmic definition, as a "close-up of time."

with normal color having returned. The rest of the scene will suggest that everything is back to normal, as if the disaster had in fact been averted. A call to Alexander's editor confirms that the world keeps, and has kept, on turning regularly. Alexander will then make good on his promise to God by performing his sacrifice. Despite Alexander's strange behavior, the film nonetheless achieves a great degree of closure. After the ambulance carts away Alexander, Little Man revisits the tree that opened the film.

We should wonder, to which sacrifice does the title refer? Alexander's prayer and its subsequent sacrifice? Or Alexander's sexual encounter with Maria, which directly precedes the return to normalcy? The first possible solution rests on reading the film as cyclical, the turns and returns caused by narrative and thematic closure supporting its validity. His sacrifice would thus be a consequence (or deed) brought forth by his words, the prayer to God, and can be determined within a coherent, linear temporality of before (praying) and after (torching the home). Alexander's actions convert religious faith (prayer) into a sacred act, thereby escaping the "prevarication he abhors" (Green 133). In turn, all this occurs within an ordered time. The sacred act restores world order by realigning spiritual and material flows.

The spiritual reading of Alexander's gesture foregrounds the beginning and end as producing closure. In fact, to gain hermeneutic currency it must bypass the middle portions--the images of disaster, the irrational cuts, the fainting spells that animate the film. Despite their interest in Tarkovsky's unconventional aspects, commentators bound to this interpretation invoke a predictable structure. The film starts with a conflict--Alexander's powerlessness, his obsession with words—and ends with resolution, Alexander's sacrifice. Along the way, syncopes merely point to tests of his resolve, and therefore are understood retroactively through the hero's final, albeit strange, triumph. At the same time, both the beginning and ending are

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shot in long takes. Although the long take by nature possesses no privileged relationship to temporal pressure, these two shots are the most temporally "stable." By their narrative position, they occur before disaster and after disaster, which has nevertheless been averted in a determinable present.

But the sexual pact with Maria complicates this reading. The "after disaster," which never occurred, makes sense within the context of this scene. Green points out the paradoxical nature of the encounter: "Is this an intermediate answer to his prayers, the response to his vow, or is it an alternative to sacrifice?" (133). Green concludes, "There can be no room for doubt in Alexander's mind" (133), because his final sacrificial act performs the action complementing his words. However symbolic Alexander's sacrifice may be, it still presupposes a lucid subject ("no room for doubt"). Yet the trouble occurs in the middle. Placing the sacrifice, the restoration of a natural order, on the shoulders of Maria entails temporal disjunctions and ego loss that characterized Alexander's earlier fainting spell. Forming the inverse side of Alexander's illness, the bout of time, this syncope will constitute a temporal ruse.

Like the earlier sequence with Alexander's syncope, this scene sandwiches the black-and-white images and odd gesture between two presents, Alexander's decision to visit Maria and his "return" to reality. Yet several elements of this scene leave viewers understandably perplexed. Why does the sleeping Little Man find himself surrounded by images of disaster? Is this sequence his dream, as Le Fanu proposes as one possible reading? Why does Maria inexplicably replace Adelaide?[54] Are we privy to what Alexander wishes for, at the moment when orgasm and thought instantaneously combine to fulfill saving the world? Is this yet another piece for Otto's collection, or simply one of his Nietzschean "pranks"? Equally important, where does

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[54] Given Maria's belief that Adelaide is "wicked," and perhaps that Alexander has paid the servant a visit to escape a dead-end marriage, is this conceivably Maria's fantasy?

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Alexander go when he reaches orgasm? When does this event occur? Let me suggest that Alexander's encounter with Maria performs a sacrifice, rather than "an alternative" to it, as Green suggests. He offers himself as a gift to realign time, to make the perverted natural order healthy once again.

In its ambiguous cuts and gestures, the scene enacts the structure of the gift elaborated in Derrida's Given Time. It's worth remembering that Alexander's ordeal occurs during his birthday, and his family and friends offer him several presents, including the Seventeenth Century map, book of paintings, and a miniature of the family home. Signs of love and social bonds, these gifts circulate within a restricted economy regulated by exchange.[55] Any gift must be reciprocated, but what sort of gift does Alexander offer in return?

Playing with the word "present," Derrida stresses that the restricted economy of giving entails a conventional notion of time. Both giver and receiver must recognize the exchange within a context of determinable presence. Yet he also wonders, "But is not the gift, if there is any, also that which interrupts economy? That which, in suspending economic calculation, no longer gives rise to exchange?" (Given Time 7). In other words, can one think of giving as invoking a general economy, as opposed to a restricted economy based on exchange within calculable presents? A general economy radicalizes the homogeneous time of giving: "For there to be gift, not only must the donor or donee not perceive or receive the gift as such, have no consciousness of it, no memory, no recognition; he or she must also forget it right away" (Given Time 16). Consciousness, memory, and recognition of the gift by giver and/or receiver enter into

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[55] Both Clément and Derrida both avow a debt to Bataille, the writer who placed "obscenity" at the heart of systematic philosophies. Identifying restricted economy with Fordism and general economy with sacrifice, or an excessive giving without promise of return, Bataille intriguingly asserts, "The victim of the sacrifice cannot be consumed in the same way as a motor uses fuel" (56). The resonance of this quote with Eisenstein's metaphorics of the combustion image shows where dialectical thought encounters the gift of time, or what displaces its temporal economy.

a restricted economy oriented around presence. For Derrida, thinking the gift involves a troubling paradox: the gift eludes presence in time, yet it "is not nothing" (<u>Given Time</u> 17).

To return to Alexander's coupling with Maria, the moment of levitation enacts a suspension of time, the paradoxical "instant" of the gift. Like his earlier fainting spell, Alexander goes "nowhere" in time, but this time he turns syncope into the gesture of giving (time). As a donor, when he returns to physical time he will have no memory of his sacred act, and instead will consciously, "with no room for doubt," present another sacrifice. The gift occurring within a general economy, recognized by nobody, will find its double in real time, the famous long take capturing the blaze. Yet these two events differ in kind. The latter enters a restricted economy, which means it occurs within time and presents narrative closure, whereas the former disrupts and suspends time, "happening" outside of physical time. The act of copulation performs "a vacation of the soul, <u>a gift of time</u> [emphasis added]: ego orgasm deserves a detour through syncope, taken by abandoning for a lightning moment men's law of doing. Only after this should one <u>do</u>" (Clément 229). If to one critic <u>Mirror</u> was a "blank shot," and therefore failed miserably as a mainstream film, we might say the same of <u>The Sacrifice</u>. Alexander's gift fashions a blank shot in time, a suspension or rhythmic hesitation, yet in a lightning moment outside of time reconfigures our time.

Syncope as gesture, though suffered when temporal pressure proves too much, exists in a between time, where it carries out its restorative labor. A rhythmic downbeat within the chain of successive presents, it paves the way for Alexander to "do," to fulfill his sacred promise to God. The film thus points to the paradox of Hamlet's (and Alexander's) dilemma. To set right the cursed time, the schism introduced between pressures, one cannot do it <u>in time</u>. Rather, Hamlet and Alexander must make themselves gifts of time, sidestepping presence, while performing an

act that "is not nothing." The film thus gives us two sacred acts: a virtual, impossible giving of time followed by its actual counterpart that participates in time, in "men's law of doing." Embodied by the syncopation of these two gestures, one remembered and one forgotten, Tarkovsky's chronotope presents a "vacation of the soul."

Being between times and physical states entails a process of becoming, in which the subject loses himself or herself. Through syncopic gesture, the body goes on vacation between presents, and one can never know in advance who or what will emerge after the sojourn. In Eisenstein, the trapeze's movement traverses a dialectical space and time by occupying a temporal hiatus. He or she couples a tumbling vitality that enacts a transformation of states, or rings on a dialectical spiral, with a static, "temporary" retreat that opens possibilities of historical agency. In Tarkovsky, Hamlet and Alexander constitute figures who trip, physically and verbally, in and out of time to restore temporal order. To do so, the body must similarly engage in a becoming by occupying a hiatus, the paradoxical moment when one can "give" time. In Carax, as the next chapter will demonstrate, becoming will test the coherence and stability of subjects, who too experience a vacation from themselves and time. Gesture translates a becoming different, which invokes a re-thinking of the body and desire, or what a body can do.

CHAPTER 4
A CERTAIN SUICIDAL TENDENCY OF CINEMA: LEOS CARAX'S <u>BOY MEETS GIRL</u>

> When time or duration forms the medium inhabited, it follows that worthwhile communication between characters can only be formed virtually, as when they pass close by one another in time in a manner comparable to comets and planets in space. (Daly and Dowd 73)

One of the most troubling aspects of Leos Carax's <u>Boy Meets Girl</u> is the unexpected intrusion of dozens of very brief black, soundless images peppering the film. These blank or black images produce two interrelated effects. On one hand, any narrative momentum stalls as one link in the cause-and-effect chain becomes unhinged, however short-lived. The blank image asks viewers to start anew, and seemingly at random, their engagement with narrative causality, while disrupting the viewer's processes of maintaining imaginary involvement with the film. It resuscitates avant-garde techniques from fifty years earlier. As a Brechtian distancing device, the uninvited black image opens new avenues for exploring the relationships between image, continuity, causality, and viewer identification. Similarly, it invokes and internalizes Surrealist procedures of moviegoing, such as entering the theater during the middle of the picture and leaving twenty minutes later or screening the image through spread fingers, as Man Ray did. In both cases, viewers experience disruptions and disorientations, which negate the realist strategies purported by cinema.

Equally important, the spectator suffers temporary black outs or syncopes, as if he or she were experiencing a state of drowsiness or narcolepsy. Carax's technique marks a spectatorial disposition paradoxically at odds and in keeping with those developed by Eisenstein and Tarkovsky. In Eisenstein, viewers experience the pathetic through affective juxtapositions, and figuratively speaking he or she should feel a sudden jolt brought forth by dialectical movement. The ecstatic moment always "occurs" outside of temporal apperception or between determinable moments, yet the acrobatic figure embodies the shock while regulating its sublation into spirit, as

the second chapter argued. For Tarkovsky, aberrant temporal rhythms are expressed in fainting spells and levitations. Viewers do not sense syncope as such, but rather experience the disorienting effects and temporal articulations it fashions. When the symbolic loses hold of the image, Tarkovsky makes the images deranged, because they are subject to distinctive flows of time.

Through the blank image, the viewer senses a temporal absence issuing from elsewhere, beyond representation. In this regard, Carax's film makes syncope a spectatorial disposition, a viewing chronotrope in which we experience the gaps separating past and present or present and future. At any given moment, the viewer suddenly "comes to" and must test and re-test what preceded the blackout and what follows. Every subsequent image and sound becomes a splash of water to the face; often before we've dried the moisture, another brief "episode" occurs and restarts the process.

In Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, and Carax, respectively, the temporary loss of self or eclipse of the ego animates the theoretical and filmic body. When one returns from this "fading" of the subject, something is different. After undergoing the ecstatic instance that throws one outside oneself, one senses the dialectic has accomplished one more turn in its course; after suffering syncope, the body experiences the reunification of two distinctive temporal flows; after emerging from a black out, the subject must recalibrate movement and time, must reorient his or her body to the next sequence of images. Despite possessing many differences and consequences, all three instances foreground becoming as a poetic corporeal trope for characters. At the same time, viewers experience, to some degree, a becoming themselves. They constantly "come to" as something other, outside of the procedures of continuity associated with mainstream cinema. The ecstatic, syncope and black out mark the terrain of the between or middle, the "moment"

when something just was and is about to be. In addition, these figures map the instance when self becomes other, suffered in a seizure of time.

Becoming forms the central bodily disposition in Carax's cinema, particularly in <u>Boy Meets Girl</u>. It affects all bodies on screen, as well as all relationships between characters. Yet becoming, in its filmic articulations, in Carax must be distinguished from that in Eisenstein and Tarkovsky. Despite their obvious stylistic and theoretical differences, both Eisenstein and Tarkovsky explore the body as entity able to withstand tremendous forces, whether dialectical or spiritual. Stressed and strained to their limits, bodily postures evince a time in need of proper regulation. Becoming goes hand in hand with new bodily calibrations, in which the bodies synchronize with a new reality. They coordinate their movements to align disjunctive worlds characteristic of each director's respective chronotope. For Eisenstein, acrobatic movement both synchronizes and synthesizes or converts dialectical timing into a sublated Time; in Tarkovsky, syncope functions as symptom of a time out of joint, yet it also provides the basis for re-aligning material and spiritual temporalities. Separated by time and ideological positions, Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, and Carax essay the inherent difficulty of <u>synchronizing bodies and time(s)</u>. All three filmmakers emphasize the hiatus as suspension of and in time brought forth by gesture.

As the epigraph for this chapter suggests, because time wavers in its aberrancy, Carax's cinema establishes virtual encounters or becomings as his central chronotopic articulation. Characters "pass by" each other rather than synchronizing their movements or coherently communicating face to face. This failure to connect derives from two aspects of Carax's cinema. On the one hand, characters may meet, as the title suggests, by occupying the same place, but they reside in separate times. On the other hand, they share the same time, but remain in

separate spaces. Like comets in space, bodies flirt with one another, but they cannot synchronize their gestures and movements.

A trait of modernist cinema, the reshaping of the body around virtuality defies conventional characterization and definitions of the body's anticipated actions and reactions. This reconfiguration calls into question the action-image that determines dominant cinema. During the Hollywood studio era, Deleuze finds the proliferation of action-images, in which a stimulus/response pattern develops narrative action. He terms this schema the "sensorimotor image," in which gestures and character habits motivate predictable responses. The Western genre perhaps best exemplifies this structure. Often driven by a sense of justice, the protagonist reacts to unjust acts he sees and responds, to his way of thinking, accordingly. At the duel, for instance, another character draws a gun, and this act stimulates the hero to respond in kind.

Thus the action-image, which for Deleuze galvanizes pre-World War II mainstream filmmaking and its global dominance, "inspires a cinema of behaviour (behaviourism), since behaviour is an action which passes from one situation to another, which responds to a situation in order to try to modify it or set up a new situation" (Cinema 1 155). With clearly defined character traits and anticipated behaviors that establish identification, the hero actualizes a given reaction to what he or she sees, usually expected by the cause-and-effect buildup of the narrative. The hero also synchronizes gesture and movement to gain an upper hand on the world he or she inhabits: "The hero only acts because he is the first to see, and only triumphs because he imposes on action the interval or the second's delay which allows him to see everything" (Cinema 1 70).

For Deleuze, this sensorimotor schema shifts radically in post-war film. The coherent, actualized responses associated with the action-image give way to an array of indeterminate motivations, "floating actions" and situations that overwhelm any response. This new type of

image derives from virtual bodily dispositions, in which the strong connection between action

and reaction is severely compromised. As a result, the time-image inserts an indefinite

temporality into characters' movements and gestures. David Rodowick nicely summarizes

Deleuze's take:

> When organized by series, the body becomes an undecidable figure, hesitating between the
> virtuality of the past and the indeterminacy of the future. Rather than a locus of unfolding
> actions, the body becomes a read surface where disparate temporal perspectives overlap
> and conflict without being resolvable in a sensorimotor situation. (Time-Machine 154)

Through the image and gesture's "undecidability," Boy Meets Girl reconsiders the body by

detouring through an indeterminate temporality that evades any present or actualized reaction,

the prime coordinates of the action-image.

"Undecidable figures" adopt unusual postures. Catatonic and zombie states, hieratic poses,

the repeated suicide that ends the film all dispense with coordinated sensorimotor responses and

inflect images with "disparate temporal perspectives." Decisions of characters cannot be placed

firmly within mainstream narrative coding resulting from a cause-effect build-up that logically

explains their behavior. By compromising the stable bodies associated with the action-image,

the film inaugurates a different type of subjectivity, in which flows course in novel directions,

both spatially and temporally. These protean movements chart how desire can suffuse

spatiotemporal articulations without necessarily being grounded in a homogeneous body.[56]

Boy Meets Girl fabricates an anonymous subjectivity through its sound/image

articulations. Fractured voices lend indeterminacy to any body, as if every sound maintained a

sense of anonymity of time and place; delusional statements reflect a concern with unstable

identities and often conflate or confuse contradictory positions; hauntings and phantasms channel

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[56] Daly and Dowd discover an Artaudian impulse in Carax, in which "humans are ventriloquist's dummies,
automata, pinned under the weight of cliché and regulated movement" (71). To counteract movement measured by
calculation and normalization, Carax pushes "poetic language to the threshold of sense and bodies into mannerist or
burlesque postures and attitudes. Alex/Lavant, or novel ways of inflecting language and of folding the body" (71).

desire toward an incorporeal virtuality, emblematic of the encounter, instead of a corporeal goal desired by characters.

Through gaps between sight and sound—achieved through asynchrony, free indirect discourse and repetition--characters' words wander away from bodies and project themselves between times, in dead or indefinite times. Viewers begin to wonder <u>from where and when</u> do voices and images emerge, as they drift away from the stable and coherent bodies associated with realism. Once ungrounded from a firm space and time, voices and language—and the discontinuities they create with the imagetrack—essay a novel relation to subjectivity. In other words, the film asks us to consider how chronotopic expression affects our understanding of the body and the character as subject.

The unstable signifier invites the reader to write in the spatiotemporal fissures opened by sound/image disjunctions. My analysis seeks to install itself in these gaps, while it also attempts to outline the logic at work in the film. Focus is placed on four aspects that render an indeterminate description of time: 1) verbal exchanges between characters through indirect, technological means (telephone and apartment intercom) and through direct, face-to-face communication; 2) repetition of speech; 3) the many superimpositions interspersed throughout the film; 4) the tracking/pan shot that ends the film. I will then connect these verbal and visual facets to the virtual encounters and anonymous subjectivities that characterize the film.

One can discern three types of encounters in the film. First, the narrative proves a letdown be remaining sparse and unmotivated even by modernist standards. Like Michelangelo Antonioni's <u>L'avventura</u> (1960), a slow-moving film devoid of "adventure," the title ironically announces exactly what the story <u>won't be</u>, a formulaic version of "boy meets girl." Second, the title <u>does</u> meet our expectation by producing a series of filmic encounters. Characters meet one

another in a virtual space achieved through editing, parallelism and superimposition. Third, sound and image often fashion discontinuities, or encounters that disrupt the first two levels. My interest lies in this third aspect, but I will provide a brief survey of the first two levels.

The narrative often functions by omission, recalling Jean-Luc Godard's story-telling predilection. Commenting on Luchino Visconti's <u>Senso</u> (1953), and how it cut exactly when he wanted to see more, Godard jokingly states, "If I were ever to film the life of Christ, I would film the scenes which are left out of the Bible" (222). Intervals, "dead times," waitings and artificially produced chance encounters create a loosely woven narrative structure. The film introduces characters who never take on any narrative importance; the quotidian becomes painstakingly captured in long takes; wearisome conversations replace motivated dialogue; deadlier still, hieratic poses hold for long periods. The eventual "payoff," the actual rendezvous between "boy" and "girl" that occurs rather late in the film, hardly possesses conventional significance.

Catching up in space and time determines narrative exchanges, both verbal and visual. The numerous tracking shots work similarly, as the camera tries to catch up to and meet characters. When Alex covertly delivers several records and a note to his ex-girlfriend Florence, whose ostensibly present-tense dialogue with her lover inhabits the soundtrack, the camera temporarily leaves Alex and rapidly tracks through the apartment corridors. Only a minute later does the camera re-encounter Alex, and the conversation, at the door.

The catch-up logic of the tracking shot finds itself doubled in dialogue. Bernard longs for the days when he waited for Mireille to catch up and equal his love; Alex explains that he needed to do the same with Florence; and Alex recounts a dream, in which he read his own autobiography that ended with his death. Much like Zeno's paradox of Achilles and the tortoise,

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any narrative rendezvous happens too quickly or too slowly. All the filmic and narrative relationships participate in "out of synch" encounters, which further questions whether a meeting of separate times (or speeds) can ever take place in one subsuming time.

Nonetheless, through a series of chance meetings mediated by several other characters, the boy, Alex, does meet the girl, Mireille. Three "virtual" meetings—achieved through sound, superimposition and a photograph—prime the final "actual" rendezvous. Their first encounter occurs randomly, as Alex happens upon Bernard, Mireille's boyfriend, relaying a message to her through the apartment intercom. Alex follows Bernard to a café, where he picks up an invitation accidentally dropped by the latter. The invitation concerns a party "celebrating the tenth anniversary of Stan's death," and it is there that Alex physically contacts Mireille.

Through editing, superimposition and parallelisms, the film produces virtual encounters before the actual narrative linking takes place. When Alex walks along the Seine and listens by headphones to his own soundtrack, which we hear, the camera tracks with him. While crossing a bridge, he comes across a young man staring at the river below. A woman enters the frame and embraces her partner. The film cuts to a medium long shot with the couple on the right and Alex watching them intently on the left. As if they were standing on a record turntable, the pair spins around mechanically and fluidly. Oddly, Alex throws some coins at their feet, apparently mistaking a private moment for a public performance. Yet this synchronization of bodily movements and music prepares viewers for the first visual encounter between Alex and Mireille.

After leaving behind the couple, Alex continues his goalless journey. A medium shot from behind Alex tracks with him, and he moves with mechanically exact precision, as if on a conveyor belt. With eyes closed and arms outstretched before his torso, Alex finally catches up with Mireille, whose superimposed feet briefly overlay Alex's outstretched arms and hands. A

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second momentary superimposition occurs, and a third time occasions a dissolve back to Mireille practicing dance steps in synch with the music. The sequence ends when the song finishes, and Mireille flops on the bed in repose. The next shot parallels the previous by displaying Alex in exactly the same resting position.

When Alex extends his arms in front of him while walking, he adopts the posture of the zombie or sleepwalker. Instead of moving the narrative forward, he appears to be an emanation gliding through space. This gesture recalls neo-realist cinema, especially that of Visconti, in which "it is as if the action floats in the situation, rather than bringing it to a conclusion or strengthening it" (Deleuze, Cinema 2 4). Narratively weak actions create textual situations and bring forth filmic encounters. The ethereal bodily disposition figures gesture as site of virtual exchange between characters.

To reinforce this encounter as virtual, music connects separate spaces, and perhaps distinct times. As Michel Chion notes, "Music is cinema's passe-muraille (between walls), capable of instantly communicating with the other elements of the action," so that "out of time and out of space, music communicates with all times and spaces of a film, even as it leaves them to their separate and distinct existences" (81). Through her dancing feet, Mireille engages a filmic passe-muraille, or to pun a "passe-mireille," to connect both characters.

Though Carax has expressed a significant debt to silent filmmaking, Boy Meets Girl also galvanizes, in this instance, music to correspond to visual parallelism.[57] On the one hand, music achieves a linearization of time (we hear the entire song, from beginning to end) to maintain continuity of duration. On the other hand, the superimpositions create communication between

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[57] On Carax's debt to silent American filmmaking, Jonathan Rosenbaum notes of his films: "What they seem to owe to the silent American cinema, above all, is the raw sense of physicality," which exhibits "a cinema of untrammeled gesture and acrobatic exertions" (23). As noted in chapter two, Eisenstein admired Chaplin's acrobatic energy, which informed his own use of gesture, albeit for different ends. Carax and Eisenstein share a proclivity for circus entertainment and acrobatics that figure bodies occupying in-between states and always primed for metamorphoses.

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spaces and times in a non-linear fashion. A distinctly separate space and time come to haunt the image of Alex's homogeneous and continuous journey.

Yet a third level, also relevant to the rendezvous, employs <u>discontinuity</u> between sound and image to generate indeterminate signifying practices and unstable temporalities. In these moments, discontinuity throws off kilter a linear past-present-future model of time. Although not conventionally synthesized, these disruptive moments connect characters and times through heterogeneity. The filmic text does take on coherence, but only through tensions between sound and image that lend alterity to the film. These tensions place sound and image on equal footing to create two heterogeneous series or bands.

As a corrective to the privileging of sight over sound in film studies, many theorists of consequence have revised the notion that sound remains subordinate to image. I would like to focus briefly on the work of Michel Chion, a composer and film theorist, which extensively elaborates how sound determines meaning and time in film. In <u>Audio-Vision</u> he avers, "The cinema is a vococentric or, more precisely, a verbocentric phenomenon" (5). This rather curious proposition emphasizes that the "added value" afforded by sound "engages the very structure of vision—by rigorously reframing it" (7). Chion's studies present compelling evidence that sound, especially the voice, organizes our understanding of filmic temporality.

Emphasizing the relationship of sound to time, Chion remarks, "Synchronous sound does impose a sense of succession" (13) and that "sound <u>vectorizes</u> or dramatizes shots, orienting them toward a future, a goal, and creation of a feeling of imminence and expectation" (13-14). This vector still tends to linearize image temporality by pushing it toward a telos or "a future, a goal." Though indebted to Chion for his astute observations of film sound, I also contend that

the sound/image relationship offers the possibility of a non-linear and non-teleological

fabrication of temporality.

Curiously, Carax helps animate Chion's discussion of filmmakers' unwillingness to

employ technological advances in sound. Noting a crisis at work in filmmaking, he asserts:

> We could continue down the list and note that from the oldest (Bresson) to the youngest
> (Carax), there seems to be a contest of who can show the least enthusiasm for the new
> sound resources: just about everyone either neglects them or uses them without inventing
> anything new. (153)

Although Carax's two most recent films, <u>Les amants du Pont Neuf</u> (1992) and <u>Pola X</u> (1999),

may revise Chion's take, I would tend to concur with his reading. But instead of disparaging

Carax, I find it necessary to consider <u>why</u> Carax appears "old school," an anachronistic dinosaur

whose contemporary is not Lucas or Spielberg but rather Bresson or King Vidor. What, exactly,

deters Carax from employing these new resources, and thus makes his films seem out of synch

with his contemporaries? Or, to remove the thorny question of authorship, what effect does <u>Boy</u>

<u>Meets Girl</u> achieve in its so-called lack of new aural possibilities? In other words, how does the

film "invent anything new," a novel type of legibility, in its use of sound?

Despite recent technological advances (i.e., Dolby Surroundsound) that securely "place"

sound in the image, sounds most often emanate from a spatially indefinite locus. Dubbed foreign

films, for instance, often reveal an incompatibility between the space implied by what we see and

by what we hear; while we see two characters speaking out of doors and in long shot, we hear a

conversation taking place in the closed confines of the recording studio. Generally, strong

narrative cues cover this inconsistency by centering the viewer's attention away from the

disparity. Because the viewer naturally lends spatial homogeneity to sound/image relationships,

most heterogeneous articulations pass unnoticed. Yet several filmmakers strive to widen the gap

and to thus foreground the rupture between tracks. Their films attest to the indefinite nature of sound/image interactions and the spaces they establish.

Throughout Boy Meets Girl, the soundtrack persistently manipulates differences with image space to weave a rich texture of articulations. Several of these spatial articulations focus on telephone- and intercom-mediated exchanges between characters. Alex receives a phone call from his father, who reminds his son to kill him should he deteriorate in old age. In medium shot, the take holds on Alex throughout the sequence. While Alex's voice spatially matches that of the shot and his immediate surroundings, the father's voice sounds as if it emanates from the same space. Convention would of course either leave the other voice silent, making the viewer infer the conversation's content, or suture it through an aural subjectivity (Alex's, in this case) to link seamlessly the two spaces.

This odd "sharing" of aural space by father and son point out that any sound lacks a specific location, and only our imaginary investment in a realist space can cover over that fact. To conceptualize this unlocalizable aspect of sound, Chion employs the idea of "point of audition." This term has two meanings, one spatial that asks, "From where do I hear, from what point in the space represented on the screen or on the soundtrack" (90) and the other subjective, in which viewers hear what a character hears. In the case of telephone conversations, viewers most often listen to the other's voice as if we were the on-screen interlocutor. This subjective point of audition sutures any dislocations of space that might occur.

Working against this convention, the rendering of Alex and his father's phone exchange resolutely avoids connecting the spaces through subjective aural perspective. Instead, the two spaces, ostensibly quite distant but linked technologically, spatially overlap within the shot, attesting to a folding of aural space into image space. Many consequences arise from this sort of

folding. First, by foregrounding the father's voice and the space it implies, the conversation

departs from realism. Disjunctions of sound and space break apart a homogeneous narrative

surface. Second, by veering away from a subjective realism achieved through aural suture, the

sequence positions the spectator as a writer rather than a reader. Once divorced from the

imaginary space occupied by its bearer, normally manufactured by the subjective point of

audition, the father's voice accentuates a discursive function that viewers must actively interpret.

Third, without either a spatial or subjective point of audition, the normally stable split between

subjectivity and objectivity in sound/image interactions becomes clouded.

To replace this dichotomy of subjective/objective, I argue that the film fabricates a tension

between actualized space, what we can see and imagine by point of audition, and a virtual space

that prevails in its indefiniteness. An image cannot represent directly this virtual space, but a

heterogeneity introduced by sound/image disjunctions can express it. A second phone

conversation, between Bernard and Mireille through their apartment intercom, also tests the

subjective/objective binary. Much like Alex's exchange with his father, it challenges the

stability produced by points of audition, but with a different articulation. In this instance, sound

frays Bernard's character, turning him into a ventriloquist dummy.

After Bernard leaves his apartment, he calls from downstairs to tell Mireille to drop off the

keys should she go out for the night. Listening to the loudly played "Holiday in Cambodia" by

the Dead Kennedys, Mireille states that she won't be leaving. At the outset, the conversation

retains spatial coherence by lip synchronization and diegetic sound. The linkage and

differentiation between the interior space (Mireille's voice and the music) and the exterior space

(Bernard's voice and random street noise) maintains the realism of direct sound recording and

stable points of audition. Yet slowly, almost imperceptibly, synchronization attenuates as

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Bernard begins a monologue about his love for Mireille. At times, sound and image "straighten out" the folds introduced by non-synchronization, while at others the synchrony loses all integrity.

Asking viewers to interrogate filmic construction, asynchrony disrupts coherent character subjectivity, a hallmark of realism. Along these lines, Mary Ann Doane astutely notes, "Even when asynchronous or 'wild' sound is utilized, the phantasmatic body's attribute of unity is not lost. It is simply displaced—the body in the film becomes the body of the film" ("Voice" 364). Without the stable and unified locus of a body and subjectivity, we begin to ponder, from where does Bernard's voice emanate? Are we hearing his private, subjective thoughts while the image shows a mundane conversation? Are we hearing a prior conversation or one reflecting on their relationship after the fact? Answers to these questions become impossible, as his voice drifts away from his body. In the case of Boy Meets Girl, the body in the film broken by asynchrony equally affects the body of the filmic unity.

The imagetrack complicates matters further by interspersing shots of Mireille unaffectedly staring at the phone she holds out in front of her. In a strange sort of Kuleshov editing experiment, the film links her blank expression with the monologue's content to underline the voice's indefinite status. We can read the sequence in several ways. First, we could be privy to Bernard's private thoughts, whereas Mireille hears only the content of his banal comments. Second, Bernard's voice could be what Mireille reads "between the lines." Her interpretation would thus color the discourse viewers hear. Third, Bernard's voice could be her reminiscence. Other possibilities exist.

Regardless, the articulation between sound and image, and the space(s) and time(s) it implies, appears not sutured but rather complicated by the edit between Bernard outside and

Mireille inside. By having Mireille stare at the phone, the imagetrack invites us to <u>see</u> sound and its indefinite spatiotemporal articulations. Although the cut between Mireille and Bernard ostensibly establishes visual spatial and temporal continuity, linking the two through an object, it also begins to weaken that continuity. Montage, in this sense, does not create a stable meaning but rather undermines it.

These issues of enunciation and subjectivity also pertain to time and to chronotopic expression. Our inability to locate a voice's origin troubles our understanding of time. Bernard's speech remains indefinite and virtual, because it lacks the synchronization giving it a temporal "vector." As a result, his severely disturbs the temporal articulations at work in the film. Who is speaking? In what time, if ever, does this voice occupy the present? Is the image in the present? Voices from an indefinite temporal source prevent a stable "presence" from taking place. In these indeterminate moments brought forth by asynchrony, Bernard begins to voice a temporally unstable identity.

The interchange of actual (or synchronized) and virtual (or non-synchronized) movements located in Bernard's speech establishes a poetic function analogous to free indirect discourse. According to this logic, an unstable time finds its expression in an ambiguous mode of verbal discourse. By oscillating between an objective and subjective discourse, between direct and indirect modes of address, the sound/image relationship operates discursively without personalization. Bernard's split speech frays him as coherent character. As such, his psychotic dialogue forces the viewer to focus on the enunciated content and on the textures of language itself.

As Bernard turns to walk away from the intercom, Mireille states, "You don't love me anymore." We hear the muffled song in the background, yet Mireille's voice signals a

disjunction in space: its loud volume and dubbed quality cannot connect it directly to the

diegesis. Bernard returns from off screen and replies, "Hello? What?" to which Mireille says,

"You heard me Bernard." In a manner reminiscent of Michel Simon's non-synchronized

repetitions in Jean Renoir's <u>Boudu Saved from Drowning</u> (1931) and <u>La chienne</u> (1931), Bernard

mouths "yes, yes, yes" in rapid, non-synchronized succession.

> Shot against the apartment façade, he continues:

> But don't say that Mireille. Why do you say that? I know it's not easy. I'm indifferent to
> you, but that's not indifferent to me. I love loving you, but my head's a mess. It took us
> awhile for us to love each other equally. I wanted your love to catch up with mine. And
> when it did, a tune started going 'round in my head. You know I love it when we kiss.
> But then the tune went: "What's she doing here? Who's that monster? How dare she
> touch me with her mouth? She must think I like it! Her breath stinks." I know you smell
> good, but I've convinced myself that you stink.

First, the discourse shifts ambivalently between love ("I love it when we kiss") and hate ("How

dare she touch me with her mouth" and "I've convinced myself you stink"), between sober

reflection ("It took us awhile for us to love each other equally") and confusion ("I'm indifferent

to you, but that's not indifferent to me").

Second, discerning between another discourse (the tune) and Bernard's discourse becomes

difficult as they overlap. He states, "a tune started going 'round in my head. You know I love it

when we kiss. But then the tune went." At first glance, the phrase "You know I love it when we

kiss" seems to quote the song. Instead, we discover retroactively, but not without ambiguity, that

the line defers the "catching up" of the quoted lyrics and ostensibly inserts his thoughts. A

composite of his voice and another voice blends his discourse and doubles, at the level of

enunciation, the actual/virtual indiscernibility discussed above. Viewers cannot determine

"who" speaks or, through asynchrony, when this oration occurs.

After the word "stink," the film cuts away from Bernard outside to Mireille, in medium

shot, staring vacantly at the phone. A cut to Alex in medium close-up follows to establish the

first visual connection with Mireille. Reinforcing her link to Alex, the film returns to Mireille's

blank face, but this time in close-up. A cut then places us outside the apartment, where we see

Alex and Bernard from inside the lobby.

This short sequence that interrupts Bernard's dialogue visually "telescopes"—through the

long shot to medium shot to exchanges of close-ups—the link or engagement between boy and

girl, though no direct physical or aural contact occurs. By visually emphasizing Alex, the film

not only establishes a crucial narrative encounter, but also complicates things by adding a third

subjectivity. Alex's fascination with Mireille's voice, her "phonogeny," directly confronts the

verbal discourse offered by Bernard. She may "stink," but her perfumed voice initiates Alex's

desire.

Bernard then goes on to add:

When I look at you, it's not your beauty I see, but the space you take up: standing, sitting, laying down. As I watch you the tune goes: "I don't want this girl anymore." I don't want anyone else to have you, yet I don't want to be loved. The few times we talk now, I don't take you seriously. I talk and listen, but I'm watching you. I see your shell and insult you silently, to hurt myself. Then I feel pity for you and myself. I hate us: lonelier together than apart, who could ever love us? We're gluey together. I want it to be like before. To stop all the spying, to stop all the sabotage. Bye, angel, I won't be home late.

Bernard exits the frame, and Alex slowly approaches the intercom, which Mireille disengages

after a few seconds.

Again, Bernard constantly vacillates between contradictory statements. First, Bernard

comments on the utter difference between seeing and speaking, which plays itself out so

emphatically in the filmic articulations, by saying, "I talk and listen, but I'm watching you." One

can either be deaf and see or be blind and listen. Second, like the oscillating narrative structure,

his remarks teeter unusually between intense expressions ("to stop all the sabotage") and the

mundane ("I won't be home late"). Third, the song goes "I don't want you anymore," yet

Bernard says, "I don't want anyone else to love you." This slight difference establishes a tension

between direct ("I don't want anyone else to love you") and indirect (the song's "I don't want you anymore") discourses without clarifying the subject of the enunciation. Instead, his fluctuating speech moves through a series of ambiguous subject-positions. In all these moments of slippage, his speech approaches that of the psychotic, who mixes the other's voice and his or her own.

Lacan's remarkable studies of the delusional's and psychotic's discourses can inform our understanding of Bernard's statements. Without in any way "psychoanalyzing" Bernard or the film, I instead refer to the reversals and ambivalences his discourse displays. The meshing of the tune's voice and his voice marks a "puppeting" relation with the other. For Lacan, the psychotic establishes an imaginary, and not symbolic, relation to the other that ostensibly parrots. Of the patient who says, "I said, 'I've just been to the butcher's', and he [the interlocutor] said 'Sow!' to me," Lacan sees a confusion of the subject's and the other's voice. He continues:

> She receives her own speech from him, but not inverted, her own speech is in the other who is herself, the little other, her reflection in the mirror, her counterpart. <u>Sow!</u> Gives tit for tat, and one no longer knows whether the tit or the tat comes first. (51)

An ambiguity infuses the psychotic's speech, so that "one no longer knows" where the subject's and the other's speech begins and ends. A stable subjectivity wavers in the between-two of delusional speech. Who starts and ends a given exchange? Can one even assign a point of departure? We always seem stuck in the middle, between a confusion of subject/other and before/after.

In the film, Bernard's speech and the other's speech at times form an indiscernible, and highly ambivalent and aggressive, composite of voices. The sequence doubles the indefinite status of a subject of enunciation and a localized time and space. As such, Bernard's symptomatic and overdetermined discourse signals a virtual relation between image and voice,

signifier and signified, space and sound, and lastly, subject and object. Inhabiting the gaps separating these binaries, psychotic speech perplexes any attempt to render each term distinct.

Bernard is not the only character who finds himself subject to psychotic discourse. Late in the film, Alex spills his love for Mireille in a synchronically attenuated monologue. As Mireille hums, Alex, from voice-off, confesses he feels his life has been wasted. Inattentive, Mireille asks, "What?" Alex repeats verbatim with voice-on what we just heard, as if inner thoughts now became spoken without censure. A largely intimate and long dialogue between the boy and the girl follows, with Alex confessing, "If I could only escape monologues, Mireille. Mental diarrhea!" and "But if I shut up, she'll kill herself." Discourse again wavers between subjective and objective, between actual and virtual, as Alex's spoken thoughts retain the trace of his internal monologue. He not only reflects on his own thought process ("mental diarrhea!") but also changes his address to Mireille from direct ("if only I could escape monologues, Mireille") to indirect ("she'll kill herself").

This play between actual and virtual engages the interior monologue that, as Doane nicely puts it, forms a "privileged mark of interiority, turning the body 'inside out'" ("Voice" 369). For Doane, internal monologue can "manifest" what "exceeds the visible: the 'inner life' of the character" ("Voice" 369). Yet Alex's reflections cloud the difference between a "normal" internal monologue and that of the psychotic. Our ability to understand adequately Alex's "inner life" appears greatly compromised, because his speech consistently confuses inside and outside.

Echoing in advance Doane's observation of bodies turned inside out, Lacan stresses that the delusional's discourse dives so deeply into the inside that it appears to emanate from the outside: "[The unconscious subject] is present, alluded to […] but on this side, in a sort of

internal beyond" (123). Though turned inside out, the subject and his or her voice comes from

elsewhere, paradoxically stated by Lacan as a "sort of internal beyond."

Lacan then goes on to ask, "Don't we analysts know that normal subject is someone who is

placed in the position of not taking the greater part of his internal discourse seriously?" (123). A

confusion of inside and outside, and its projection or actualization in speech, characterizes the

delusional's "monologue." By adding an unnecessary urgency to Alex's statements, the film

positions him as taking his discourse far too seriously—"If I shut up, she'll kill herself." So he

can't shut up. To ward off the disastrous climactic moment, Mireille's suicide, he must continue

to speak, though his psychotic discourse vacillates between addressing Mireille and himself.

Alex does not try to persuade Mireille to reconsider suicide, nor does he inquire why Mireille

might end her life. Instead, he irrationally hopes to conjure statements that prevent the event of

death. He hopes that endless babble will foreclose any present actualization of Mireille's

death.[58]

Despite being verbally silent in many parts, the film cannot stop talking. But rather than

moving toward a goal, the film tends to repeat itself. Here, the playful attitude toward

indeterminacy of voice, space and time extends to repetition of dialogue. Two types of repetition

occur, with one operating strictly within a given shot and the other across two shots. Both

instances foreground the subject's inability to be synchronized, to be fully present to itself.

The first occurrence places Alex at a phone booth, where after having missed his train, he

tries to re-connect with Mireille. Apparently rather nervous, he scripts his speech on the

rectangular telephone unit itself, then proceeds to read it aloud. Believing the caller is Bernard,

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[58] Daly and Dowd contend that Alex's speech, although often moving in fits and starts, resembles that of the
visionary: "His status as autiste-bavarde ["autistic man-chatterbox"] means that he renders communication subject to
aberrant reconfiguration; because he is also enfant-vieillard ["elderly child"] time is thrown out of joint by his
visionary propensities" (6).

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Mireille does to not pick up the receiver, which establishes another missed or mistaken encounter so prevalent in the film. Alex's prepared speech thus goes undelivered. Yet by writing out his "script," Alex places speech and writing within a redundant circuit. Even though his rehearsed comments go unspoken to Mireille, writing re-marks (upon) speech.

Viewers therefore hear (and don't hear) what they read, and the film conflates visual, scriptural and verbal levels of filmic discourse. In this sense, the telephone establishes a "hieroglyphic" reading of the film, in which tensions between sound, writing and image disrupt realist representation and coherent signification. On the phone booth we see the word "Telephone" scripted above Alex, whose head is visible though a sizable circular hole in the glass pane. As if having been carved out by a violent gunshot, the hole finds itself surrounded by crystalline formations spreading outward.

We thus simultaneously "see" the telephone's ear hole visually duplicated by another cavity, while we read in "telephone" the phoné, or capture of sound in writing. Noting the written presence of the fragment "-phone" in Brian De Palma's Scarface (1983), Tom Conley argues, "These crucial moments in film indicate how spectators can discover where the medium acts out, as it registers writing taking place, its own principles and technical conditions" (Hieroglyphs xvi). By "acting out," the film ironically announces its underlying logic, in which the "tele-" that links distance never happens, nor does the dispatched message arrive at its telos. The scene exposes an obsession with missed encounters as failures to arrive somewhere, whether physically, visually or aurally. Synchronizing bodies appears impossible.

I would like to emphasize here that films often use intercom and telephone communication to comment on technology. On the one hand, often in mainstream films, failure to communicate by phone reinforces a character's desire for contact. As Hamid Naficy notes:

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> Because of its live ontology and concomitant immediacy, intimacy, and intensity, the telephone is most susceptible to both epistolary prohibition and transgression. The inability to contact at critical moments, and the overwhelming desire to do so, turns the telephone into a highly cathected, even magical instrument. (117)

Having missed his chance on the phone, Alex rushes toward Mireille's apartment to bridge the auditory gap. By replacing auditory desire with physical contact, his actions thus display a familiar trope of mainstream filmmaking.

Yet, the cathected energy potentially coursing between Mireille and Alex displaces to another level, that of hieroglyphic writing. A sort of "magic marker," the telephonic hieroglyph invites viewers to see not only character motivations but also writing, sound and image as possessed by an intensive energy. The telephone doesn't connect two interlocutors, as in "reach out and touch someone," but instead reduces their verbal exchange to a dis-connection of identities.

This moment of rehearsing a speech functions on three levels that remain consistent with the scenes discussed above. First, the exchange compares to other verbal encounters in their mediation through technology (intercoms and telephones proliferate in the film). They evoke the internal monologue or "inter-communication," in which self and other distinctions tend to vanish. Second, such test runs tend to distance viewers from filmic representation and rupture, like Bernard's asynchronous monologue, any identification between viewer and character. In this sense, Alex's verbal drill recalls Brechtian epic theater, in which an actor should "do all he can to make himself observed standing between the spectator and the event. This making-oneself-observed also contributes to the desired effect" (Brecht 58). The desired alienation-effect takes hold of speech when viewers witness dialogue not as realist and motivated, but rather as preparation for a final version.

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This preparation brings us to the third crucial aspect introduced by repetition. When a film so resolutely submits to torsion the relationship between speech, character, point of audition and temporality to create indeterminacy, it also asks us to hear all speech as virtual. In other words, at any moment viewers may retroactively read dialogue as <u>an exercise waiting to be actualized in a completed film</u>. Are we seeing rushes? Are we seeing the film Alex dreams of making, whose title happens to be <u>Boy Meets Girl</u>? Thus, is Carax's film also Alex's film? Repetition tests the actual/virtual distinction by converting dialogue into the possibility of residing in another "take," in a fully constituted world.

Though not formally radical, as in asynchrony, the doubling of speech still occurs within a clearly defined space, the phone booth. Yet another sort of repetition breaks apart, like asynchrony and unstable points of audition, clear spatiotemporal articulations. Twice the film establishes this third type of disjunction between sound and image. Both instances focus on terms rich in semantic range to disseminate meaning and to conjure paradoxes of time. The first occurs at a café, to where Alex follows Bernard immediately after the latter's intercom monologue. Sitting at the bar, and in shots highly reminiscent of Godard's <u>Vivre sa vie</u> (1962), with pinball machines muttering in the background and with short, curt conversation, Alex orders a small lemonade. In medium close-up, the waiter replies that small drinks aren't being served, states "<u>alors</u>," and waits for the patron's response. A medium shot of Alex and Bernard, sitting adjacently, holds in silence for a few seconds until we hear "<u>alors</u>" repeated. A slight gap in time motivates the exchange, so that speech must catch up to the imagetrack.

As if mimicking the narrative obsession with catching up, the dialogue renders failed meetings as not occurring within the same time. Across the cut, the first <u>alors</u> ("then" or "that time") waits for itself, announcing its coming while simultaneously arriving at a second moment,

which calls forth a third, fourth, etc. instance; it anticipates itself as response ("then, then"). "Then" has just arrived in speech, yet it will come again, and again, and so on. At the same time, <u>alors</u> performs what it says—"that time," but in two distinctly separate times, according to the articulation of the imagetrack. These paradoxes of time, of waiting for <u>alors</u> that occurs more than once, designate what cannot actualize in time, yet what always verges on emerging in the present. What gets verbally repeated, therefore, is a moment of deferral ("and then") that fails to get in synch with its image counterpart.

The second instance occurs at the party, where Mireille repeats a snippet of dialogue—fall—over a cut that visually maintains absolute spatial and temporal continuity. Like <u>alors</u>, "fall" <u>slips in between two images</u> and thereby lodges a disseminating function that projects forward and backward across the text. As an interstice in relation to images, the "fall" is always about to happen or has just happened.

I would like to pause and focus on the polysemy introduced by "fall" and its rich etymology, because the word's semantic range also relates to temporal indeterminacy; that is, both the word and its "place" in image articulation invite creative interpretation of speech and image. To connect the term to producing a difference, or a chance element, in meaning and in time, recalling Derrida's ludic essay on chance and meaning proves useful.

In "My Chances/<u>Mes Chances</u>: A Rendezvous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies," Derrida traces the etymology of the Latin <u>cadere</u> and discovers a nexus of fortuitous polysemic associations:

> As you know, the words "chance" and "case" descend, as it were, according to the same Latin filiation, from <u>cadere</u>, which—to indicate the sense of the fall—resounds in "cadence," "fall" (<u>choir</u>), "to fall due" (<u>échoir</u>), "expiry date" (<u>échéance</u>), as well as in "accident" and "incident." (5)

Mireille's spoken fall presents a chance to read indeterminacy as shuttling between sound/image relationships and semantic abundance. As a leftover of filmic discourse, because of its unnecessary repetition, the fall inaugurates a tension between image and voice. Indeed, the repeated word folds itself between times and plays with the catching up that pervades the film.

Instead of occurring in a present or a future present, as "timely" paying of debts, incidence and proper time of expiration might suggest, the restated term retains the sense of accident. Passing its proper time, the fall happens too quickly or too late and appears accidental within a homogeneous temporality. Yet this untimely accident, as Deleuze cautions, forms a crucial factor of time itself: "The 'too-late' is not an accident that takes place in time but a dimension of time itself" (Cinema 2 96). Though perhaps unforeseen or unintended, accidents constitute components of a variable time rather than simply occurring in a proper or determinable time.

By the logic of this repetition, Mireille's voice impossibly occupies one space in two different times, though the image bears out the commensurability of space and time. Through the edit, the film performs a strange Heisenberg experiment. When viewed from the image's perspective, Mireille and her speech move continuously through space and time; when viewed from the soundtrack's perspective, she becomes, like Lewis Carroll's Alice, split by an event and its disjunctive temporality. It would seem that two different temporal yardsticks, one measuring image and one measuring sound, become effectuated across the cut. Unlike Bernard's asynchronous speech and the tensed voice that opens the film, both of which defy actualization in the image, Mireille's line is ostensibly actualized in a small gap in time. Or, rather, we can deduce that her dialogue simultaneously affirms two paradoxical positions at once.

It would be perhaps wise to examine the cut by the paradoxical logic of sense, since what appears at stake is the compromising of the viewer's good sense. This "good sense affirms that

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in all things there is a determinable sense of direction (sens); but paradox is the affirmation of both senses or directions at the same time" (Deleuze, Logic 1). Deleuze opens his Logic of Sense, a book that charts the non-sense articulated by the works of Carroll, the thought of the Stoics, and the novels of Klossowski, with Alice's puzzling becomings. He finds her incessantly becoming different, even though she occupies a present space-time. Comparing Alice's becomings to Mireille's speech can help understand how paradox relates to time.

On Alice's becomings, Deleuze continues, "This is a simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristic is to elude the present. Insofar as it eludes the present, becoming does not tolerate the separation or the distinction of before and after, or of past and future" (1). Lacking a standard unit of measurement, or the good sense that establishes a determinate progression of time, Alice's becoming demonstrates the logic of the event. She confounds distinctions of actual and virtual by always becoming dissimilar and moving between measurable units of time. Always on the move, Alice's constant state of betweeness breaks open any firm relation of time to its representability. She occupies no position by which one could measure her. How can one judge what she is or when she is, given she is perpetually becoming something different?

Deleuze's understanding of the event asserts that within and anterior to any logic built upon identity, similitude and representation an aspect of non-sense or aporia inheres. He avers, "The logic of sense is necessarily determined to posit between sense and nonsense an original type of intrinsic relation, a mode of co-presence" (Logic 68). I want to stress the co-present relation of sense to nonsense. By using this term, Deleuze does not say that sense comes first and nonsense simply destabilizes meaningful discourse, as in gibberish. He also does not mean the inverse: that language begins with nonsense, and sense serves merely as an effect of language's instability.

Deleuze affirms a third path in which language oscillates between sense and nonsense. One cannot reduce language to models of communication or signification, because words often lose their senses in nonsensical or aporetic relations. Similarly, one cannot reduce images to the present because any image contains a host of temporal relations that disturb a homogeneous time. In this sense, what sense and nonsense are to language, actual and virtual are to images. Language and images constantly swivel between the pairings sense/nonsense and actual/virtual, respectively, and the indiscernibility Deleuze associates with each pair galvanizes the creation of events. Language becomes an event when it shuttles <u>between</u> sense and nonsense; an image becomes an event when its temporality moves between past and future or invokes indeterminate times.

Such becomings galvanize numerous filmmakers from Chris Marker to Assia Djebar. In their films, the event takes shape around a world "in progress, in gestation." Speaking of Djebar's <u>La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua</u> (1979), Réda Bensmaïa notes that in her film the "universe is not a totality that preexists the elements that constitute it; rather, it is an apparently chance juxtaposition or dissemination of dispersed fragments (of [hi]stories and events) in search of a unity to come (or to be created)" (84). Virtual fragments do not derive from a pre-constituted totality or world, which could then be retroactively pieced together to form an actualized whole; rather, they figure a becoming-world through the event as virtual.

In <u>Boy Meets Girl</u>, as in Djebar's film, this non-sensical logic appears played out in sound and image encounters, in little "events" that disrupt the representation of space and time. These moments question our ability to distinguish and judge the difference between actual and virtual. By Mireille's imbricated speech, we can add one facet to the event discussed above. In this

instance, sound functions to disjoin the image from a spatial and temporal continuum and to <u>sink it into the virtual</u>.

One privileged aspect of the imagetrack gains our attention, because it creates, like the complication of sound and image, a paradoxical virtual event. This aspect consists of the five superimposed faces that flash briefly. Despite their strange and unanticipated presence, the superimpositions visually connect two people, such as Alex and Florence or Maité and her lover. Each part of the image haunts the other. The superimposed faces remain strictly virtual in relation to the diegesis; or, rather, they confound our ability to determine actual and virtual.

The relation of face to image invests the film with a <u>phanstasmatic</u> quality. By phanstasmatic I do not mean a reflected "imaginary" produced by a subject (someone's imagination), nor do I mean, in Lacanian terms, a psychoanalytic imaginary register. If anything, the superimpositions approach the Lacanian Real. The phanstasmatic serves as an excessive leftover that runs along the surface of representation and eludes a "presenting" or actualization. Because of this disruption of the realist representation, one wonders from where and when do these images emerge? Why do they persistently haunt the film?

The superimposition imbricates two images whose encounter fastens itself to the paradoxical logic of the event. In this manner, the overlaid image forms a unique subset of the encounter. By creating a phanstasmatic image, the superimposition produces textual fallout that exceeds our ability to determine its temporality. Since we cannot ascribe an origin to the superimposed face, its indefinite status complicates the split between actual and virtual. At the same time, the link between a physical attribute and a body becomes weakened.

The soundtrack had already stressed an unhinging of voice from body, as witnessed in Bernard's non-synchronized speech. Superimposition rhymes the soundtrack as words and faces

float indeterminately across the <u>body of the film rather than originating from a body in the film</u>, to paraphrase Doane. Characters not only haunt each other, but the film also haunts them and itself; it questions whether any film can construct a homogeneous body. In other words, can a movie actualize a series of voices, faces and feet to congeal around a stable identity?

At the party celebrating the tenth anniversary of Stan's death, Alex asks the hostess, Stan's sister, to use the phone. In a bedroom filled with infants, Alex makes his call then turns on the TV set. Initially, we see the ending of a children's show, with the characters Nicolas and Pimpernel saying goodnight to viewers. Alex then hits the play button on the VCR. Flashing intermittently, as if poorly edited between two tape decks, images of the distraught hostess mirror her fragmentary words, "It's so sad, oh Stan, Stan." Repeating the dialogue, she paces in front of a double mirror and removes her wig to reveal a bald head. A quick cut shows her facing the camera, but with her wig on but severely mussed. Alex shuts off the machine and enters the kitchen.

There, Alex re-encounters the hostess, who upon seeing a cracked coffee cup reminisces about her past with Stan. Despite geographical barriers, she and Stan would telepathically communicate every night at an appointed time. One night, "three years ago," she forgot their "telepathic date" and later discovered that Stan died in a car accident that same evening. She pours Alex some milk, from a bottle labeled "Nova," and stresses that Alex must drink through the chink in the cup. As she exits the kitchen, the brief superimposition, ostensibly of Stan, invades the image.

Several aspects of this sequence strike the viewer as curious. First, the film posits an obvious contradiction between the invitation in writing, which celebrates Stan's death ten years ago, and the hostess's speech, which remembers that Stan died three years ago. Second, the

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children's TV show addresses a character named Pimpernel, and the hostess pours Alex a glass of Nova milk. Viewers recall that Maité, with daughter Pimpernel and Nova skis in tow, phones her lover to end their relationship. She too finds herself haunted by a superimposed image. Third, the words "so sad" refer back to the unattributed dialogue that opens the film ("It is still so slow, so heavy, so sad. Soon I will be old and it will at last be over"). Fourth, asking Alex to sip from the cup's chink involves a trope characteristic of the film—the split between sound and image, actual and virtual, and so on. Fifth, (missed) communication by telepathy re-inscribes the technological factors that govern many of the characters' relationships. In one sense, the superimposed image forms a telepathic link to the dead. Last, the party scene remakes, stylistically and thematically, Alain Resnais's Last Year at Marienbad (1961) by incorporating statuesque poses of elegantly dressed partygoers, completely silent portions, cinematographically sharp contrasts between black and white, and repetition of a glass breaking. The Resnais film questions whether an event was actualized, and if it was, when. It too channels voices and times in ambiguous ways.

Yet what exactly is being linked through the superimposed image of Stan? To the hostess, Stan's memory occurs only in indefinite times (three or ten years), in a fractured object/identity (represented by the coffee cup), or in nights spent in telepathic communication. To add to the hostess's unreliable or unbelievable narration, the film connects her subjectivity to others. For the viewer, the names Nova and Pimpernel parallel the hostess and Maité, creating something like a shared memory or haunting, but the initially unlocalizable "so sad" connects her to a virtual and temporally indefinite voice. Rather than giving a portrait of a woman who has experienced loss, depicted in Stan's superimposed face, the film destabilizes any coherency by displacement. His memory floats away to other subjects and to indeterminable times.

By imbuing voices and images with a phanstasmatic quality, the film disrupts our identification with bodies in the film. Characters find themselves haunted by a foreign presence that shows itself to create indeterminate times and indefinite relationships. By doing so, this presence calls forth a new type of body and subjectivity that oscillates between times. The relationships established by the film fashion a sort of escamontage, or conjuration of events phanstasmatic in nature, that challenge a stable "presence," whether bodily or temporal.

The body's phanstasmatic aspect constitutes a central concern for Deleuze and Lyotard, both of whom employ the phantasm to contest rigorously any philosophy, especially Platonism, oriented around presence. Owing much to Klossowski, Deleuze's Logic of Sense recuperates the phantasm, if only to overturn the essence/appearance dichotomy, prominent in Plato's thought, by substituting the actual/virtual pair. In a manner relatively consistent with Deleuze, Lyotard inflects the phantasm with a pulsional or libidinal valence to challenge the restrictive economy he sees at work in semiotics, colonialism, psychoanalysis and certain strains of philosophy. The phantasm doesn't engender bodies within a restricted economy, but rather conducts or operates libidinal flows, which arise between surfaces and travel along textures, colors, words and images.

According to Lyotard's reading of Klossowski, the phantasm constitutes "an object fabricated out of pulsional force turned away from its 'normal' use, as a generator" (Libidinal Economy 72). The "normal" use cited by Lyotard involves actualization, where a body takes coherent shape as a subjectivity. Libidinal trajectories intersect at a given actualized point to form an identity, however precarious it may be. Yet this affective force also inscribes a virtual factor within a body, and this excessive power returns to haunt the actualized corporeal object or subjectivity. Instead of operating within a restricted economy, and the measurable temporality it

implies, the phantasm forged by intensities and libidinal pulsions slides between actualized figures and their "proper time." A type of "strange attractor," the phantasm connects transversally, rather then directly, to mix incorporeal events and "libidinal bodies" across the forms they inhabit. Stan's superimposed face functions along these lines; its force "attracts" the hostess, Maité, Alex and the unattributable voice heard at the outset toward an indefinite memory.

The highly unconventional ending, the fourth and final articulation to be studied, crystallizes the many facets undermining the stability of representation and subjectivity. In its presentation, it too links a character's narrative action to the virtual. Having become separated on the subway, Alex attempts to reach Mireille by phone. Thinking that the caller is Bernard, she refuses to answer. She prepares her bath, then moves to sit beside a sliding glass door, whose reflection doubles the image of her face. Alex hurriedly runs to her apartment, where he finds Mireille awkwardly stretched out in a chair and bleeding from the stomach and mouth. In dying breaths, she asks Alex, "Help me."

The camera circularly pans from Mireille to a window facing her apartment. In a deep focus shot, two neighbors, a man and a woman, who have witnessed Mireille's action, stand in the window frame. The camera proceeds to track across the courtyard toward them. After a rapid dissolve that moves us closer to the couple, the camera pans upward to the star-lit sky. It completes its circuit when we return to her apartment, which Alex enters again, but this time viewed from inside the courtyard. Approaching her from behind, Alex unreservedly grabs her about the waist, causing the scissors to penetrate her skin. The film ends with an extreme close-up of blood spreading across her white gown.

Suicide presents a very sensitive topic, as it intersects with numerous discourses that position it differently, often for suspect purposes. For this reason, writing about its representation in film or media cannot avoid the complex political, psychological, gendered, religious or ethical dimensions that traverse suicide. One thinks immediately of Michel Foucault's essay "The Simplest of Pleasures," written rather late in his life (1979), and whose point of departure recalls a published study that proposes, "Homosexuals often commit suicide," an assertion that sadly and dangerously constitutes homosexuality as weakness, as failure.

Satirically echoing the study's conclusion, Foucault responds that gays would prefer to marry death rather the opposite sex. Continuing the irony, Foucault states, "But, the story goes, they're just as incapable of dying as they are of really living. In this ludicrous account suicide and homosexuals are portrayed as to make each other look bad" (295). An unsympathetic reading of Boy Meets Girl might position Mireille's suicide as fully in keeping with a film that tinges every encounter with failure. By this thinking, the film speaks of disconnection as the root of our contemporary social condition and suicide as its logical outcome. Or, the only escape from or definitive act within a world filled with alienation and "incapability of living" becomes a passionate exercise in suicide.

Given that the film involves a woman's suicide, my analysis in no way tries to skirt the representation's gendered aspect. In other words, reducing the issue to a purely textual level, rather than also discussing a complicated social reality perhaps symptomatized by film, proves problematic. No doubt, Carax's film associates verbal abuse—Bernard's "I know you smell good, but I've convinced myself that you stink—and a dependency framed by gender—Alex's "If I shut up, she'll kill herself"—with Mireille's decision, though in a vague way. These moments of abuse and power, and what they ostensibly lead to, cannot be called innocent. I find

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them rather troubling, because the film tends to repeat discourses associating women (or gays, for Foucault) with weakness, passivity, dependency and masochism.

Despite the pernicious discourse surrounding homosexuality and suicide, Foucault's essay also paradoxically suggests that suicide holds both a political and ethical import. Without valorizing suicide itself, he stresses its relation to thinking, discovering that the bond between thought and the Cartesian <u>cogito</u> breaks with suicide. Preparing one's suicide entails a novel relation to subjectivity, desire and time.

Along these lines, Foucault affiliates suicide with the Chantilly district of Tokyo, where you:

> Sense there the existence of places without maps or calendars where you can enter into the most absurd decors with anonymous partners to look for an opportunity to die free of all stereotypes. There you'd have an indeterminate amount of time—seconds, weeks, months perhaps—until the moment presents itself with all clearness. You'd recognize it immediately. You couldn't miss it. It would have the shapeless shape of utterly simple pleasure. (297)

Though he mixes sexuality with death, like the study he criticizes, Foucault asks his readers to consider the anonymous, indeterminate status he bestows on each aspect.

One can make suicide a lifestyle, but one not bound to the parameters of a "weak" or masochistic subjectivity. Preparing one's suicide holds a special place as an event, in which flowing intensities and affects mingle with anonymity, indeterminacy, in a map- or calendar-free site. These anonymous intensities fabricate a "shapeless shape" of pleasure, which gains recognition only because it doesn't resemble something. Like a simulacrum or phantasm, it flashes as an intensity between well-defined, or actualized, forms. For Foucault, to desire differently means to acknowledge the shimmer of an unknown shape, to unmap the body from its clichéd coordinates, to wait indefinitely, to lose oneself in anonymous encounters.

Carax's film attributes great importance to suicide and connects it to repetition. Primed by Mireille's doubled face, the film shows the event twice, yet in one largely continuous mobile shot, to emphasize a doubleness of the act, its fundamental repeatability. In terms of the event, actualization directly concerns a subject, a "person" or identity to whom something happens in a state of affairs. On such and such a day, X event occurred to Y, and the actualized portion can be delimited as a present moment.

Yet another component of the event escapes any present and reduction to a state of affairs. Because this other part floats away from the present, it simultaneously eludes a stable and coherent subjectivity. This other aspect renders the event impersonal or anonymous. When Foucault mentions the map- and calendar-free places he found in Tokyo, he touches upon the twosidedness of any experience or encounter. On the one hand, the subject experiences pleasure in the sexual act; on the other hand, the playful encounter removes both the spatial (map) and temporal (calendar) coordinates that determine any experience.

Pairings of stable subjectivity and a non- or a-subjectivity, actualization and virtualization, homogeneous and heterogeneous temporality expresses the event. Whereas Foucault sees a positive force to the event's duplicity, Deleuze believes that disaster best renders the event's two-faced relation to the subject. In <u>Logic of Sense</u>, Deleuze wonders, "Why is every event a kind of plague, war, wound, or death?" (151). That is, why do all events always appear to contain a disastrous element, or always resemble a disaster? Finding inspiration in Blanchot, Deleuze contends,

> On one side, there is the part of the event which is realized and accomplished; on the other, there is that "part of the event which cannot realize its accomplishment." There are thus two accomplishments, which are like actualization and counter-actualization. It is in this way that death and its wound are not simply events among other events. Every event is like death, double and impersonal in its double. (152)

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The event's virtual side cannot be reduced to actualization, but it forges an opportunity for counter-actualization, for other times to come. But this virtual side nonetheless doubles, like a phantom shadow, the event as it becomes actualized.[59]

Suicide befalls a subject who experiences it in an actualized present moment (the one who commits suicide can thus say, "my death" reserved only for me). But suicide also retains a trace of anonymity that pushes it toward the virtual, toward a counter-actualization (someone dies). Although Mireille does accomplish her act, and thus actualizes her own death, we can never determine in what way or in what world this completion occurs. Because the virtual side of the event forecloses any clear answers to these questions, viewers must wonder who or what subjectivity performs the act.

The final tracking/pan shot expresses the duplicity of any event that wavers between actual and virtual. The camera does not repeat the same event twice, nor does it give us two subjects' versions or perspectives of the same action. If it did, we would still be within actualized versions, and we could therefore legislate whether one is true and one is false. Good sense and actualization's measurability allow such legislations by determining a direction of sense and stability of space and time. The unexpected final shot severely weakens these determinations through its ambiguity.

The camera retraces its course to fabricate simulacra of the event, showing that any moment has two sides that remain indefinite, both temporally and for the subject herself. By repeating the suicide, the shot diverts its own ability to represent Mireille's action. Yet repetition

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[59] As Carax argues, "We make films for dead people or phantoms" (qtd. in Daly and Dowd 6). Edgar Morin's The Cinema: Or the Imaginary Man explores cinema through doubles and the phantasmatic as affective forces in the image. He quotes a story that seems astutely aligned with Carax's concerns: "As a little boy said to Max Jacob, 'They make the cinema with dead people. They take dead people and make them walk and that's cinema" (43). Due to the cinematic capacity to produce simulacra of bodies, the dead haunt the living by doubling them.

also contains a positive dimension, as it duplicates a difference. Any image possesses two faces split my difference, and repetition allows this paired relation to be signified.

In this way, the camera's movement visually doubles Mireille's spoken "fall," in which non-sense occasions an undecidability of meaning and realist representation. Whereas good sense can legislate whether an event is real or imagined, true or false, or actualized or virtualized, non-sense confounds such distinctions. For this reason, the shot appears non-sensical, but not meaningless or contradictory, which good sense can assign as values. Instead of putting repetition at the service of a determinable sense, time and action, the mobile shot employs repetition to express how one cannot limit the event to determinable meanings, a stable temporality and a coherent subjectivity.

The event maintains a unique relationship to repetition, which the shot shows. In addition to actual/virtual and subjectivity/anonymity, Deleuze reads the event through yet another dichotomy, bare and clothed repetitions, which animate the event. Bare repetitions relate the event to actualization and the proliferation of repeated images that ensue, whereas clothed repetitions effectuate a counter-actualization "for all times, and hopefully for a time to come."

Clothed repetitions pertain to a factor of non-presence produced by a difference internal to time. Rather than repeating several external perspectives of one event, clothed repetitions display multiple perspectives internal to one event. This means that repetitive images figure the differential of time—that which swivels between actual and virtual—and not the one (present) time. Boy Meets Girl explores potential poetic powers of liberating clothed repetitions. The one event, Mireille's suicide, contains a bundle of differing perspectives and times at work in any occurrence. Though her suicide may actualize one possibility, the camera's repetitive rendering of the event indicates that other possibilities exist.

As Alex states that "I don't want to fulfill my dreams; I want to re-dream them," he posits a power of repetition not bound to actualization (bare repetition). The line certainly does point to a critique of youth's inertia, in which one remains stuck in an endless journey of non-actualized aspirations. One cannot make the virtual dream and actualized reality directly correspond in a mimetic copying. That is, one's dreamed image will fail to find its actualized double in time.

If the final sequence possesses a "dreamy" quality, it's not simply because camerawork and editing fabricate a resemblance to an oneiric logic. Alex's re-dreaming enters the domain of the event, in which everything slides away from fulfillment and toward an indeterminate virtuality. One must also factor the repetition of a non-actualized time, a time of the event produced by difference. Re-dreaming galvanizes the strength of clothed repetition that frees action from duplicating or actualizing a virtual state. To re-dream does not mean to dream always the same. Instead, it signifies that untying a subject from a desired goal and emancipating actualized action for a time to come form crucial components of repetition. Thus, dreaming allows one to differ (from oneself), and this differing finds signification only in clothed repetition.

Boy Meets Girl addresses the following question: if the event contains a non-present aspect, then how can a film render its effects upon the subject? Its answer lies in sound/image disjunctions, superimpositions and camera movements that free those components from realist representation and its concomitant stable subjectivity. As a result, bodies and gestures in and of the text undergo significant strain, with their coordination and synchronization put to the test. Like Eisenstein's acrobat and Tarkovsky's Alexander, Carax's figures swivel between synchronizing and failing to synchronize times. Viewers thus come to occupy the position of the café waiter, still waiting for a "then" or a "that time," a word that would suture disparate times.

But that time is always (in) another time, and the body one could actually meet appears to be

marked by forces (voices, faces) always issuing from a temporal "elsewhere."

CHAPTER 5
INTERRUPTED TIME AND BEARING WITNESS IN ABBAS KIAROSTAMI'S <u>THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES</u>

<u>Enlaced, separated: witnesses without attestation, coming toward us, also coming toward each other, at the detour of time that they were called upon to make turn</u>. (Blanchot qtd. in Derrida, Demeure 32).

Perhaps one of cinema's most compelling aspects is its power to testify to "having been there," its inherent indexicality, even when its form may be entirely fictional. On such and such a date, workers demolished a wall, and the Lumiére brothers were there to document it; this is how Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg looked in 1959, when Godard was making <u>Breathless</u>, as the director famously noted. Cinema's appeal to veracity resides in this fascinating power to document and bear witness to a present, which viewers will necessarily, by nature of the medium's technology and distribution, consume as past. In this sense, as a recording apparatus cinema always possesses a historiographic dimension. The past clings to the present, the image we are currently watching.

Due to this realist capacity, documentary filmmaking often gravitates toward bearing witness to a past event, whether through eyewitness interviews, still photographs, reenactments, or expert testimonies. Through these means, filmmakers often contour a rather comfortable and predictable mimetic correspondence between past and cinematic representation. They develop a fully consistent, homogeneous chronotope by attempting to document faithfully the event "as it was." Contributing to the audiovisual historiographic archive, documentarists cite cinema's evidentiary power, which the realist mode of filmmaking buttresses. A past event takes on meaningful coherence and becomes a believable "reality" precisely because realism tells us so. Devices such as continuity editing, narrative causality, the interview format, and authoritative voice-overs contribute to this reality-effect at work in the documentary chronotope.

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What happens when a film seeks to re-create an event, but subtracts these realist means of doing so? By eschewing a purported realism, such a film summons new paths to understanding the connections between image and reality, present and past, documentary and fiction.[60] This chapter argues that Abbas Kiarostami's <u>Through the Olive Trees</u>, the third film of the Iranian director's loosely connected Rostamabad trilogy, invites viewers to reconsider these connections. Set in a Northern Iranian village recently struck by a particularly devastating earthquake, the film tries to capture village life before, during and after the tremor. In doing so, it provides a testimony to catastrophe and trauma, yet it accomplishes this task by questioning the very modes we associate with cinematic veracity. Interruption, repetition, and an uneasy conflation of "reality" and "filmed reality" test the film's status as testimony, and its unusual chronotope bears the mark of a profound inability to revive the past.

In <u>Through the Olive Trees</u>, remnants of disaster appear everywhere. By visual and verbal evidence within the film, we know where and when an earthquake tore apart the villagers' lives. Houses reduced to rubble, scores of residents relocated to a nearby highway and a makeshift schoolhouse provide visual indication of disaster. Verbally, local residents discuss their physical displacement and remember lost family members and friends. At first glance, the film provides an index of the disaster, despite being framed within a fictional structure.

Yet Kiarostami's film also displays a marked failure to represent catastrophe, which manifests itself through a film-within-a-film tactic. Instead of showing the ups and down of filmmaking, as many films containing the moviemaking process do, Kiarostami organizes the narrative around a fictional director's <u>failed efforts</u> to finish his movie. By being structured

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[60] Gilberto Perez notes this interplay in Kiarostami's cinema: "As if to declare how film combines fiction and documentary, Kiarostami makes documentaries that own up to fiction and he also makes fiction films in the documentary vein descending from neorealism" (269).

around repetition and failure, the narrative moves in fits and starts, to the point where anticipated closure seems impossible.[61] Compounding matters further, the fictional filmmaker's goals remain vague for viewers. Only in glimpses can we gather that he endeavors to render the event's effects, yet he also calls for a creative reworking of them. (For the sake of clarity and economy, I designate Through the Olive Trees as Olive Trees and the film within the film as "the film" to distinguish them. Similarly, I refer to Kiarostami as the director of Olive Trees and the "filmmaker" or "Keshavarz," the actor's name, as the fictional director of the film within the film.)

Narrative tension occurs when the filmmaker's interpretations, though indeterminate, run against the villagers' own set of personal "issues." The Rostamabad residents perform as themselves, but the film imagined by the fictional director never takes any sort of consistent shape. Intentionally and unintentionally refusing to act out the script properly, the residents undermine attempts to reconstruct their recent disastrous history. Unable to get past the split between reality (the actual natural disaster) and fictionality (how the filmmaker aspires to mold that reality), the residents' refusals galvanize repetitions of failures and interruptions. Fiction and the real can never seem to jibe, and that difference prompts the film's narrative and thematic repetitiveness, its particular chronotope.

Interruption and repetition operate on two imbricated registers. On the one hand, viewers identify with Keshavarz, and thus our desire for narrative closure must pass through that of the director's. The perpetually aborted takes within the film reveal Kiarostami's predilection for narrative indeterminacy, his deliberate shunning of tidy stories and endings. After wrapping up a

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[61] Stéphane Goudet underlines the interruptions and blind alleys characteristic of the Rostamabad films: "Hence in our traveling trilogy there is a systematic lateness, wrong turnings (false beginnings and false endings), erring ways and labyrinths, the repetitions and the inability to get anywhere" (257).

day of shooting, the central character Hossein chases after Tahareh, to whom he was married in the trilogy's second film Life and Nothing More (1991) and developed a relationship during shooting. In the version played out in Olive Trees, Hossein has unsuccessfully tried to woo her. In a long shot and take, the suitor chases after Tahareh through an olive grove. Because the scene lacks dialogue and close-ups, it remains unclear whether Hossein's final try at seducing Tahareh works, and along with Keshavarz viewers must accept an ambiguous outcome.

On the other hand, interruption and repetition signal that reviving and reconstructing the past remains a problematic endeavor. Access to a traumatic past is continually foreclosed, and instead of playing out competing virtualized or symbolic versions of what actually happened, as one finds in Kurosawa's Rashomon (1950), for instance, Kiarostami's film underscores the fundamental repeatability that trauma inaugurates in representation. In other words, if one is to testify to the past, it is through failed versions and repetitions of failed versions that paradoxically give voice to trauma. In its structure, Olive Trees shows that to bear witness the artist must engage in practices akin to stuttering and aphasia as productive representational tactics. These practices mark a film "caught permanently in oscillations between temporary caesuras" (Shell 43), a film embedded by the cinematic equivalent of written dashes. The caesuras and hiatuses at work in Kiarostami's film form crucial components of its testimonial structure and essay a novel relation to historical time.

It should be noted that Kiarostami often explores cinematic representation in light of testimony, with often surprising results. In addition to interruption and repetition, tensions between reality and fictionality conspire to undermine the meaningfulness and stability of bearing witness. Consider the director's Close-up and Taste of Cherry. In Close-up, a film crew creates an ostensibly journalistic account of how a man, Sabzian, successfully posed as the

Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf. Based on a true story, the real-life participants play themselves in this fictional account. Insinuating himself into a family, the poser promises that its members will act in his newest film. Slightly suspicious, the family eventually confirms Sabzian's sham and takes him to court, where they end up dropping all charges.

At trial, the impostor defends himself, though the courtroom scenes confuse the defendant's identity, and thus compromises his ability to clear his name. Both judge and plaintiffs frequently shift between addressing the accused as "Sabzian" and "Makhmalbaf," derailing any link between name and individual, legal subject able to tell the truth and charlatan speaking as an other. At times Sabzian speaks as if he were Makhmalbaf; at others the family refers to the imposter as Makhmalbaf; the presiding Raj Agha equally shifts between both proper names, as if "Makhmalbaf" might have made Sabzian's virtual film.

Complicating matters further, Kiarostami's film crew places itself inside the courtroom and takes charge of questioning at times. Here, the filmed trial does not simply reconstruct the event, but forms part of the actual trial itself. As a result, several questions arise. Are we seeing the film Close-up or the film within the film? Does the film within the film and Kiarostami's questioning affect the guilt or innocence of Sabzian? Are the courtroom proceedings directed at Kiarostami or the family and judge? Does Kiarostami play himself or a fictional director? Filmic and verbal discourses produce endless shifts of enunciation and enunciated that render, rather comically, testimony as indeterminate. In their indefiniteness, these displacements signal a fuzziness surrounding legal testimony, because determining which discourse (filmic or juridical) prevails proves nearly impossible.

In Taste of Cherry, a suicidal man makes a rather odd proposition to three complete strangers. For financial reward, he wants someone to bury him after he finishes performing his

final act. In other words, he seeks someone to bear witness to his death and give him a proper burial. The first stranger, a young and somewhat bewildered soldier, refuses. The second, an older gentleman, reminds the protagonist that Islam forbids the act, and he stresses that when he was once low, the sweet taste of cherry pulled him through his problems. At this point, his life-affirming message appears to bolster expectations of a happy ending. But the film quickly quashes this assumption when the protagonist finally gets his wanted "assistant," a taxidermist at the local zoo.

Late at night, the protagonist lies down in the already-dug grave, and the image fades to black. Uncertain of what to expect, viewers remain, like the protagonist, stuck in an indeterminate zone wavering between life, death and testimony to death, or three separate moments in time. Will he actually carry out his act? Will the taxidermist make due on his end of the bargain? Surprisingly, the final image shows, out of nowhere, the film crew rehearsing with soldier/actors, recalling the first character invited to bear witness; on the soundtrack we hear Louis Armstrong's "St. James Infirmary." Viewers never discover if suicide or witnessing it actually occurred. The self-reflexive ending provocatively removes the burden of bearing witness from a narrative character, the taxidermist, and firmly places it within the purview of film itself.

In both films, Kiarostami attenuates the ostensible reality of the event, whether juridical or personal, and the capacity of cinema to represent it. In the first case, the defendant appears split by two recognized identities, Sabzian and Makhmalbaf. Viewers wonder, can one speak in the other's name, or <u>as if</u> one were the other, and still have a firm grounding in the recreated past? Equally important, who is the addressee of Sabzian's defense--the judge, the wronged family, Kiarostami or the film viewers? The film shuttles between all four possibilities in this strange

"inmixing" of film and film within film. In the second case, the truth and meaning of the suicidal event remain cloudy at best, as both issue not from a documentary image that deflates narrative expectation. The outtake that ends the film does not confirm a final truth, what really happened to the would-be suicide victim, but instead sidesteps the event altogether.

In Olive Trees, Taste of Cherry and Close-up the film within the film congeals around testimony or witnessing—courtroom testimony in Close-up, witnessing a stranger's death in Taste of Cherry and bearing witness to disaster in Olive Trees. The trio also questions the split between reality and fictionality by blurring the distinction between film and film within a film. As such, they playfully inspire new ways of understanding the at times fragile link between testimony and cinema. In light of Olive Trees and its playfulness, let me suggest that Lyotard's notion of the differend, which Lyotard employs to address the theoretical difficulties underpinning all testimony, proves useful as one avenue for exploring Kiarostami's film. To contour this connection, I will initially discuss Lyotard's complex concept, which will elucidate Kiarostami's unique chronotope and the figures that animate it.

Since the holocaust especially, the importance (and difficulty) of bearing witness has assumed a prominent role in philosophy.[62] In The Differend Lyotard examines testimony in light of the holocaust and takes as his entry point the phrase, "no one ever died in a gas chamber." Journalistic discourses rarely take such an assertion seriously, since common sense and overwhelming documentation relegate it to a hateful agenda. Although vigilance over such race- and religion-baiting remains absolutely necessary, many people nonetheless would find refuting the phrase worthy of little attention.

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[62] I am not comparing Auschwitz to an earthquake, which would constitute a false mimesis. Instead, here I want to underline the productive force associated with incapacities to speak, which the stutterer so acutely activates.

The Differend does take this holocaust denial seriously, though, and I believe this concern

serves as one of the its merits. Lyotard does not set out to prove the denial wrong; nor does he

set out to analyze explicitly the agenda it cloaks. At the same time, he avoids arguing that

language is meaningless, or conversely that phrases can mean anything, and thus contentions for

and against are useless. Instead, he employs the problematic phrase to discuss the thorny terrain

of speaking, time and testimony. He asks, under what circumstances can a testimony gain

acceptance as a truthful discourse? Who can speak such a discourse? Who can understand it?

When can a verifiable testimony occur?

The phrase "no one ever died in a gas chamber" proves troubling because it undermines

the notion of a "phrase universe," upon which truthful testimony is built. Constituting a phrase

universe entails adequately developing four instances—"the addressee, the referent, the sense,

the addressor" (Lyotard, Differend 13). If a testimony answers "yes" to the following four

questions, its phrase universe can assume believability: Is the addressee capable or competent to

understand the phrase? Can testimony establish a referent? Can both parties agree the testimony

makes sense? Is the addressor competent and forthright in speaking about the event? The phrase

"no one ever died in a gas chamber" questions the fourth instance, which in turn destabilizes the

other three. If a person can testify that someone in fact did die in a gas chamber, the addressor

should be dead. By the same logic, if he or she survives to tell about the death camps, then he or

she is either lying or unqualified to speak about it, because he or she is still alive.

For Lyotard, the inability to dispute the pernicious phrase "no one ever died" constitutes

the "wrong" that the differend can "correct." By wrong, Lyotard means that when one phrase

universe subtracts the verifiability of one or more of the instances of another, it necessarily

harms the latter. Put more simply, we take on lawyers not only because they possess more legal

knowledge than we do, but also because they speak a discourse that most of us cannot. If I represent myself at trial, I wrong myself because I fail to enact recognized procedures or phrase universes that make my case legally sound and arguable. Therefore, hiring a lawyer attests to the utter difference, or differend, occupying the space between legal speak and everyday speak.

The differend does not sort out disputes between two parties, one of which could establish that they were wronged. Such a disagreement still implies <u>one phrase universe</u> that could determine one party is right and one is wrong. In other words, the differend does not constitute a "meta-phrase universe," to which specific and particular phrase universes would appeal. Rather, the differend creates an idiom that, in its difference, could legislate between two competing phrase universes or regimens without wronging either. Lyotard summarizes the inventive procedures necessary to bearing witness: "What is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them" (<u>Differend</u> 13).[63]

Lyotard states the relationship between phrase regimens and the differend in the following terms: "Genres of discourse do nothing more than shift the differend from the level of regimens to that of ends" (<u>Differend</u> 29). A given discourse, say legal discourse, appropriates a phrase for its own ends. Though a phrase hypothetically belongs to other discourses, when one discourse "hijacks" a phrase it therefore wrongs another discourse. Lyotard continues, "But because several linkages are possible does that necessarily imply that there is a differend between them? – Yes it does, because only one of them can happen (be 'actualized') at a time" (<u>Differend</u> 29). Here, Lyotard invokes a temporal dimension of testimony and the differend. The differend loses a differentiating force precisely because one discourse actualizes it at the expense of others.

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[63] Echoing Lyotard, Derrida argues for the paradoxical poetic invention necessary in the act of bearing witness: "There is here the genius of the witness who reminds us that the testimonial act is poetic or it is not, from the moment it must invent its language and form itself in an incommensurable performative" (<u>Demeure</u> 83).

When this happens, the differend assumes a "virtual" existence that cannot compete with the actualized discourse.

Paradoxically, creating a differend involves articulating what is always coming or has just passed, yet never is. As such, bearing witness to the differend entails affirming multiple temporalities. One must attest to the underline virtual event without ever actualizing one version of it, which a genre of discourse does: "The differend is the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be" (Differend 13). Inventing an idiom for the differend, one that could escape its reduction to actualization, becomes the discomfiting demand testimony places upon us. As I noted in the previous chapter, for Deleuze the co-presence of sense and non-sense in becoming accomplishes such a demand, since it appeals to "a simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristic is to elude the present" (Logic 1). Lyotard evokes an uncannily similar assertion, "These [differends] only come by not arriving" (Differend 77). Insisting upon multiple senses and temporalities, the differend invokes a "not yet" that nonetheless can still be affirmed.

One actualized genre at a time, a competent and compliant witness, and a discourse that makes sense and establishes a referent recognized by all: these elements underpin our assumptions about truthful testimony. They also constitute the normalizing chronotope of mainstream historiographic and documentary film. Taking these three aspects point by point, consider conventional films that testify to a historical event, such as Ken Burns's Civil War (1990). Its genre is documentary, the mode we generally associate with factual testimony. By foreclosing other genres, such as fictional and experimental films that tend to undermine our faith in objectivity, documentary consolidates its evidentiary power. Second, through expert and eyewitness testimony, it grounds its historical referent. Those who lived through an event or

have extensively studied the period, historians as experts, are competent to speak of it. Third, narrative structure and realist articulations unify filmic discourse and ensure clear legibility. The sheer weight of these combined three elements consolidate a discourse the addressee or viewer can understand.

When films, such as the essay-film genre or other hybrid forms, consciously subtract or distort any of these facets, explanations beyond those provided by conventional readings emerge.[64] For instance, Close-up questions the addressor/addressee side of the equation. Continually shifting between the names and identities Sabzian and Makhmalbaf, the film complexly harnesses an "as if" to testimony. Often, Sabzian defends himself as if he were really Makhmalbaf and also as if he were adopting the mask Makhmalbaf. In turn, by dint of this sliding, the addressee—uncomfortably shifting between the judge, family, Kiarostami and viewers—remains equally indefinite. By contrast, Taste of Cherry would appear to challenge the referent/sense aspect of testimony. As the final jarring image emerges, viewers never learn whether a suicide occurred or the taxidermist actually held up his end of the bargain.

Movies that test Lyotard's assumptions, such as Wim Wenders's or Chris Marker's essay films or what Janet Walker terms "trauma cinema," fashion unconventional chronotopes.[65] They take issue with filmic realism, the compelling claim to revive mimetically the past and make sense of it, by challenging any or all four instances of testimony discussed above. They invoke other, non-official histories by mixing genres, treating their material reflexively, citing traumatized bodies that cannot articulate the past, and displacing the past referent to elicit

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[64] On the syncretic nature of essay films and how they tarry unconventionally with history, see Nora Alter's important book Projecting History on New German cinema.

[65] Janet Walker: "I define trauma films and videos as those that deal with traumatic events in a nonrealist mode characterized by disturbance and fragmentation of the films' narrative and stylistic regimes" (19). Also see E. Ann Kaplan and Ban Wang's introduction to Trauma and Cinema for an excellent overview of recent scholarly interventions in the field of trauma.

unexpected connections to our present. In turn, they invent idioms for the differend. This in no way means that essay or trauma filmmakers perniciously identify with Lyotard's pro-Nazi adversaries; rather, they create a new ethics of representation that testifies by differends, in images and phrases that "cannot yet be."[66]

Through his own filmmaking tactics, Kiarostami demands we reconsider our assumptions about the four instances of testimony outlined by Lyotard. Rather than envisioning the past through one mode of filmmaking, Kiarostami mixes the look of documentary and fictional modes. Similarly, a unified perspective becomes impossible, as film and film within film freely mingle without clear demarcation. In turn, viewers, the addressees of filmic discourse, wonder who or what film is addressing them. Through stammering and misguided or failed actions, characters evince unusual bodily dispositions that question their ability to speak of the past. With movements animated by trauma, they reveal a blockage that forecloses the representation of past events. Yet trauma assumes several forms, from disaster to sexuality to a proper home, which endlessly displaces the film's ostensible referent, the earthquake. Equally important, other Kiarostami films stand in as referents, to the point where viewers get stuck in circuits of simulacra. The reality serving as backdrop refers to yet another film, which refers to another film, and so on.

My analysis focuses on four interconnected devices that "trouble" representation but nonetheless allow me to map a "differential" structure and chronotope: 1) the film within the film that organizes the narrative; 2) the abundant failures to finish an adequate take; 3) the survivors' homelessness and inability to fashion a proper home; 4) the numerous references to the first two films, Where Is the Friend's House? (1987) and Life and Nothing More of the

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[66] Placing Kiarostami within the context of Iranian filmmaking, Hamid Naficy argues that the Rostamabad films "are examples of the ethicalist cinema emerging after the revolution" (245).

trilogy. Through these four aspects, Kiarostami fashions differends that essay the tenuous relationship between past and present, event and bearing witness. Bodily figures and gestures inflect each of these aspects, attesting to symptoms manufactured by an unruly, always displaced past. Through their failed actions and stammerings, these gestures embody the unusual temporal logic at stake in the differend. They are part and parcel of its idiom.

One can glimpse the differend most prominently in tensions between documentary and fiction modes of filmmaking. In Olive Trees, this tension plays itself out in Kiarostami's use of the film within the film. Historically, this procedure is neither original nor rare, but comparing its uses helps to situate Kiarostami's film. Turn of the twentieth-century short filmmakers such as R.W. Paul had already incorporated moving images into their films to heighten and dispel simultaneously the illusionary power and realism they purport. Paul's The Countryman and the Cinematograph (1901) replays a primal scene in film history, a locomotive rushing toward the audience. Astonished by the rapid advance of the train, the countryman reacts incredulously to the film playing within the frame. Paul's short works for comedic purposes, as the befuddled country bumpkin throws up his arms in terror. The short plays with the spectator's misrecognition of a virtual disaster, the image of an approaching locomotive, for its real counterpart.

Directors like Jean-Luc Godard and more recently Olivier Assayas employ the device to challenge realist representation as well as to comment on the financial stakes of filmmaking outside the mainstream. The opening shots of Godard's Tout va bien (1972) display an anonymous hand that writes the checks covering every aspect of the film we are about to see. Foregrounding the economics principally "masked" by commercial filmmaking, this shot invites

a Marxist reading. Such an approach would contend that Godard "exposes," instead of hides, the material conditions investing every act of making, exhibiting and distributing movies.

A third type of film explores the mixture of pain and joy encountered in the course of filmmaking. François Truffaut's Day For Night (1973) pays homage to the art of cinema while commenting upon its production. By following the vicissitudes of filmmaking, it rejoices its own completion, and thus as a corollary cinema too. Briefly, the film-within-the-film tactic has tended toward producing a Brechtian alienation effect as well as critiquing, or celebrating, the cinematic apparatus in its totality.

Despite having predecessors, Kiarostami presents a novel repositioning of this tactic. He ingeniously manages to retain its distancing effects, yet he also employs it to blur differences between image and "reality." In this sense, he shares much in common with Paul's play on the disastrous intermingling between film and film within film. Maintaining an asymptotic relation to an actual locomotive, the virtual version comes too close to its real counterpart. Yet Paul's film contains an image within an image, and thus contains two perspectives, that of "seasoned" viewers accustomed to filmic trickery and that of the "naïve" viewer. The humorous effects result entirely from knowing that the bumpkin's perspective is the "wrong" one.

Unlike Paul, Kiarostami unusually mixes two perspectives, and we often cannot discern their difference. For this reason, it shares much with Boy Meets Girl and The Sacrifice in showing the doubleness of a given "reality." The Carax film ends with two versions of one event, looping a circuit of virtualities; in Tarkovsky, discerning the differences between temporal modes becomes a challenge. In both cases, the two times do not display differing perspectives on one event. Rather, a split internal to time produces manifold versions of events. By attenuating the difference between perspectives within the film and of the film, Olive Trees

fashions a Borgesian map equally proportional to what it maps. In other words, we can never be quite certain whether we are watching <u>Olive Trees</u>, the film within the film, or a citation of the first two films of the Rostamabad trilogy.

<u>Where Is the Friend's House?</u>, the first film, adopts a theme familiar to Kiarostami's viewers: children and the ethical choices they must make. A young, rather absent-minded student must remit his homework the next day or face expulsion from the school. His friend, Ahmad, returns from school that day and discovers he has accidentally taken his classmate's notebook. Against his stern mother's wishes, Ahmad attempts to give back the notebook, but becomes lost, returns home to a scolding, and ultimately completes the classmate's work for him.

<u>Life and Nothing More</u> follows Farhad Kheradmand, an actor ostensibly playing the director of <u>Where Is the Friend's House?</u>, and thus a "displaced" Kiarostami, in his search for the two boys who starred in the previous film. With his son in tow, he treks from Tehran to Koker in hope of discovering their fate following the earthquake. Along the way, Kheradmand invites victims to recount their stories of survival and loss. Several obstacles block his path, from traffic jams to impassible piles of rubble to incorrect directions, and he never reaches his destination nor learns unequivocally whether the boys survived. Kiarostami mixes evidence of the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, often captured through the car window, with a reflexive play on images. When asking passersby about the boys' whereabouts, Kheradmand holds up a movie poster, its title scripted in French, as means of identifying them.

When he does meet one of the actors, the local remarks that his house miraculously survived the devastation, but then adds that it was his house in the film that survived. Kheradmand then encounters Hossein, who explains how his recent marriage unfortunately has been dampened severely by the loss of sixty relatives. Although not assigned any special

significance in <u>Life and Nothing More</u>, this conversation with Hossein will become the focus of <u>Olive Trees</u>. The latter film will attempt to re-enact Kheradmand and Hossein's exchange, but with limited results.

By resuscitating the second film, <u>Olive Trees</u> opens self-reflexively while also invoking the indeterminacy achieved by overlapping perspectives.[67] Filmed in long shot and framed by olive trees, a middle-aged bearded man addresses the camera and states, "I'm Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, the actor who plays the director. The other actors were hired on location. We're in Koker, about 400 kilometers, no, 350 kilometers north of Tehran, where an earthquake destroyed everything last year." Here, the dialogue affirms a contradictory temporality. The director claims that the earthquake struck last year, which would make the year of filming 1991, yet <u>Olive Trees</u> was released in 1994. Keshavarz can only be referring to <u>Life and Nothing More</u>, released in 1992.

Kiarostami leaves the scene open to multiple interpretations. First, we can simply forget the first two films and believe Keshavarz's statement at face value. In this reading, Kheradmand does not enter the picture at all, and Keshavarz's chronicle of disaster would be completely divorced from Kiarostami's previous films. Second, by giving us the temporal slip in dialogue, Keshavarz could be acting the role of Kiarostami/Kheradmand in <u>Life and Nothing More</u>. <u>Olive Trees</u> would thus offer a remake of the previous film, but with one crucial substitution of actors. This replacement would in turn affect our understanding of <u>Life</u>, because Kheradmand would then be "just another actor." (Indeed, he appears in <u>Olive Trees</u>, as an actor, not director, replaying his scene with Hossein.) Third, Keshavarz's mistaken date (one year instead of three)

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[67] Laura Mulvey also notes how Kiarostami's self-reflexive filming style remains consistent with the Iranian New Wave. She writes, "The characteristic film of the Iranian New Wave shrinks in scope and expands in time, moving away from dramatic plot, action or romance into scaled-down events and location-based stories of great simplicity" ("Afterword" 259).

would place emphasis on <u>lying</u> as a mode of documentation. As a result, we wonder if all his

statements will remain open to multivalent, equivocal readings.

All three readings presuppose that the trilogy be read in sequential order. It actually makes

more sense to reverse <u>Life</u> and <u>Olive Trees</u>, because Hossein's obstinacy in the latter does not

exist in the former. In <u>Life</u> his conversation with Kheradmand goes off without a hitch, but the

re-enacted version is characterized by aborted efforts and failed takes. <u>Olive Trees</u> appears to

<u>rehearse</u> the version that retroactively reaches fruition in the past, in <u>Life</u>. The confusion of dates

would reinforce this reversed interpretation, yet Kiarostami clearly wants to maintain a tension

between timelines. Rather than reading the three films in order of release, Kiarostami

superimposes the last two films, without assigning either a privileged temporal perspective.

After introducing his film, the director surveys a group of young women to play the central

female protagonist. Finding a few potential actors, he tells his producer to jot down their names

and addresses. Again, the director's dialogue at the beginning contradicts what we see:

> Slippage in this scene occurs on the level of genre as we move back and forth across the
> boundary between documentary and fiction, but the slippage also involves a temporal
> component as well, as we shuttle from the acknowledged past context of "were hired" to
> the obvious present context of actors "being hired" before our very eyes. (Bransford, par.2)

The opening scene perturbs any clear sense of determinable time or stable genre, while

maintaining a self-reflexive structure. Viewers experience a troubling simulacrum, in which the

actors Kheradmand and Keshavarz appear interchangeable. In this sense, what the Borgesian

map presents as spatial duplicity, this scene presents as temporal duplicity.

Kiarostami/Kheradmand/Keshavarz will make a film and hire actors, yet which one does and

when he does remain open to interpretation.

Through an uneasy mixture of fiction and documentary modes, past and present, and the

superimposition of the final two films in the trilogy, the initial scene unfolds a "fiction of a

testimony," in which "without the <u>possibility</u> of this fiction, without the spectral virtuality of this simulacrum and as a result of this lie or this fragmentation of the true, no truthful testimony would be possible" (Derrida, <u>Demeure</u> 72). Derrida asserts that all testimony contains a trace of fiction, without which attestation would be impossible. Fictionality haunts ostensibly truthful statements, and thus witnessing can never escape the specter of a simulacrum. Given the direct address that opens the film, which we associate most often with "truthful" documentaries, the two slips, the wrong year and "were hired," confuse true and false, Keshavarz and Kheradmand, <u>Olive Trees</u> and <u>Life and Nothing More</u>. Through the slipping dialogue, every image splits to form simulacra, and the indeterminacy of images presents a structure of testimony as Derrida describes it—caught between true and false, reality and fiction, identity and its ghostly double. Kiarostami aptly describes the relationship between reality and fictionality that informs his filmmaking practice: "We can never get close to the truth except through lying" (qtd. in Perez 267).

Indeterminacy returns in scene 4 that shows a clapboard, on which we see written "Scene 4, Shot 1, Take 1." Here, writing also happens to designate the very same take we are seeing in <u>Olive Trees,</u> as if the order of shooting in each were sequenced. At the same time, we cannot determine whether the perspective comes to us from <u>Olive Trees</u> or the film. Placed in pro-filmic space, the clapboard offers itself to the view of camera and audience. Viewers thus see double, because the so-called "real" movie occurs at the same place and from the same perspective as the fictional movie <u>Olive Trees</u>. Scene 14 also establishes a mirroring by the same means.

By overlapping shots, the film challenges the distinction between the "finished product" we expect to see in theaters and the rough, or error-prone images seen in rushes, for example.

Occasionally, we see in mainstream cinema flaws like continuity errors or unrealistic accents that dispel filmic allure, yet few films devote so much time to making failure and interruption a structuring principle. Viewers ask themselves, will this be the real take, the one desired by the director and, indirectly, Kiarostami, or will this be yet another botched attempt?

Several mitigating factors prevent adequate completion of the film. One obstacle emphasizes, by opposition, the transitoriness of the living and the hospitality of the dead. In one scene, a local camped-out resident tells the filmmaker that the souls of the departed answer you if you say hello or goodbye. He then yells a greeting, which echoes throughout the valley. Of course, we hear no reply, but his attempt reinforces the idea that speaking with the dead, through the medium of film, will be much simpler than speaking with the living. Contacting the deceased earthquake victims presents no barrier, according to this verbal exchange, and instead the survivors will pose the real difficulty in taking stock of the disaster.

The next shot places the filmmaker and principal actor, Hossein, riding in the back of an open-bed truck. Hossein—whose so-called real-life past relationship with the protagonist, Tahereh, will ultimately undermine the fictional film—suggests that the dead are friendlier than Tahereh, who will never respond to Hossein's repeated greetings. Those who can speak for the dead, or represent them, lack a proper home, which the dead now possess. Thus, for the film to succeed, the hospitality offered by the dead must find an equivalent among the living. Paradoxically, for the victims' testimonies to be heard, the film implies, they must become dead.[68]

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[68] Derrida's Demeure, a commentary on a Blanchot short story, uncannily connects witnessing to the abode, from where testimony issues forth: "The extension to a home, a lodging, a residence, a house first stems from the time given for the occupation of a space and goes as far as the 'final resting place (dernière demeure)' where the dead reside" (78).

This aporetic logic of the dead, and not survivors, bearing witness plays out one aspect of the crystal-image, or an image in which actual and virtual carry out a constant exchange. When an image takes on the status of the actual, the formerly actual image becomes virtual in turn. For instance, Deleuze reads the fête in Jean Renoir's Rules of the Game (1939) and its theatricality as carrying out a perpetual movement of exchange. Like chess pieces, characters endlessly swivel between beast and human, master and servant, automata and human, theater and "real life," and so on.[69]

Similarly, the crystal image can make the dead survivors, but this resuscitation proves costly for the living. If you rotate the image to make the dead actual, the other face becomes lost in the virtual, much like the switch performed by Renoir's actors. Deleuze writes, "The virtual survival of the dead can be actualized, but is this not at the price of our existence, which becomes virtual in turn? Is it the dead who belong to us, or we who belong to the dead?" (Cinema 2 74). One cannot occupy a virtual and an actual existence at once, which Hossein and the villager's remarks to the filmmaker suggest. This choice faces the director—when he makes the hospitable dead actual, the living survivors must take their place on the other side, so to speak.

The dead remain in a virtual state, and the filmmaker presumably endeavors to give them an actual existence. Aspiring to revive them from their slumber, he wants testimony, whether fictionalized or not, to actualize the virtual. Yet Hossein's unusual temporal logic thinks otherwise. According to Hossein, the house will act as a cause for Tahereh's desire, but only by being an effect of disaster. By hoping to build a dwelling for Tahereh after the earthquake,

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[69] Curiously, comparisons to Renoir often animate discussions of Kiarostami's so-called interplay between reality and illusion. Drawing on Gilberto Perez's reading of Renoir, Stephen Bransford writes, "Many critics have commented upon Kiarostami's innovative blend of reality and illusion, but few have been precise about which elements should be regarded as real and which elements should be regarded as illusion" (par.4). I find this pairing of real/illusion oversimplified and misleading, because it posits one perspective of an object or world that would be real and one that would be illusory. The actual/virtual couple posited by Deleuze concerns multiple perspectives emanating from one object or world.

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Hossein ultimately wants to make himself desirable to her and her family as if they were living before the event. His desire rests on a virtual level, caught between a past that never was and a future that can never be. In this way, Hossein as a living character desires as if he were dead, and if he does actualize his desire, then the living survivors in turn assume a virtual existence. Unfortunately for the filmmaker, he too stands between both times and worlds, unable to activate either one. By occupying this untenable in-between position, both Keshavarz, and viewers with him, experience a maddening series of aborted takes and repetitions of interruption.

I mentioned above that Olive Trees shows us thirteen retakes, spread across two scenes, none of which satisfy the filmmaker in any way. On one hand, we get a sense of progression in time through the "take 1," "take 2," "take 3" scripted on the clapboard, that is, in writing. On the other hand, running counter to the forward trajectory charted by the clapboard, a wearying sameness of shots and dialogue makes viewers feel stuck in an eternal circuit of repetition. We move one step forward, but end up in exactly where we began.

These uncanny repetitions of failure always occur in the same place in the film script. For the filmmaker, the trouble does not concern what we usually associate a failed take with—poor understanding of the scene by the actor, fumbled line of dialogue, or technical difficulty. Instead, we note that problems persist around the actors' ability to set aside reality in favor of fictionality. The actors either cannot or refuse to follow the fictionalized version of their story. Thus, the filmmaker discovers the perhaps inherent impossibility of making his film. More rehearsals, more polish, etc. will not alleviate the difficulties that appear as structural and not cosmetic in nature.

The first set of retakes, in scene 4, falls short because the actor, when approaching the female lead, stammers. His speech becomes something like a Geiger counter, in which the

nearer he gets to her the more he clumsily speaks his lines. When the filmmaker inquires why her presence forms a figurative "hot zone," the actor reveals a severe discomfort in talking to women. Perhaps a verbal symptom of something deeper psychologically, the stammerer's speech underscores the difficulty of setting aside reality in favor of fictionality. He cannot play act, and thus have a normal relationship with women either in reality or in fiction. Marc Shell notes, "Many stutterers cease to stutter when they take up a dummy or a persona" (196), and actors including Marilyn Monroe, James Earl Jones, and Louis Jouvet have shed their speech impediment by acting as ventriloquists. They liberate themselves from their stammering by becoming other, by sensing the split between reality and fictionality. In this scene, Kiarostami cues the audience to an underlying concern of the film. Representation and reality, past and present often commingle, and sorting out the difference between them becomes crucial for the filmmaker. Yet the stammerer's own past, which psychoanalysis would argue unconsciously determines the symptom, undermines the filmmaker's present goal, the resurrection of the past.

In this context, stuttering indicates a traumatic past. It marks where the past bobs up and down in the present, without congealing into coherent speech and thus testimony. Following Deleuze, stuttering forms a verbal gesture, so that "gestures are also vocal, and apraxia and aphasia are the two sides of the same posture" (Cinema 2 190) and "characters speak like they walk or stumble, for speaking is no less a movement than walking" (Essays 111). As bodily dispositions, stuttering, aphasia, and apraxia gravitate toward testimony as heard and seen through a non-compliant body. In one sense, these maladies brand the body as incompetent to bear witness, and thus constitute a failure of the fourth instance posited by Lyotard. In turn, the viewer as addressee adopts an uncomfortable position, in which he or she desires to finish sentences and shots, yet remains equally incapacitated by the film. Yet, stammering also maps

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where representation and testimony rub uneasily together; it figures the differend, the "not yet" on the tip of the tongue, the coming of the end of a word or sentence.

Along similar lines, Carax and Tarkovsky attribute the stammer to the process of becoming. They too summon forth repetition of a coming into being characteristic of the differend. In Boy Meets Girl, Alex stumbles out his name when speaking to Mireille, as if his name were infinitely and indefinitely repeatable. Mireille and Bernard too engage in repetitions of speech that figure the not yet by perturbing image continuity; speech waits for its image counterpart to synchronize voice and body in an actualized version of the event. In The Sacrifice Alexander's physical syncopes are matched by his tripping over "I c-c-can't." As suspensions of time, his awkward gait and stammerings mark the moment between distinctive flows of time that paradoxically separate and unite (in time). Kiarostami repeats these gestures, but places them within the context of testimony.

It is worth noting here that within philosophical discourse, stuttering possesses a problematic relationship to the past and bearing witness. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe analyzes Paul Celan's "catastrophic," stammering poetry as an interruption of art. A survivor of Auschwitz, Celan forged a poetics of testimony through "the motif of panting, babbling, or stammering" (Lacoue-Labarthe 69) to challenge mimesis. For Lacoue-Labarthe, Celan's interrupted style shows that to testify to the catastrophic event means "to speak 'in the cause of the strange', in the name of the strange and the alien. That is, to use in and as one's own, proper language, the alien language, the language of estrangement" (59). By creating its own idiom, catastrophic poetry overturns the close bond between mimesis, representation, the proper, and a stable home. Through stammering and babbling, poetry fashions a disquieting alterity that disrupts linguistic transparency and regard for "presence."

What is striking about this scene is how it envelops the entire film form. Stuttered speech does not simply mark the character as incompetent addressor of statements, but rather attests to the fact that the film itself cannot complete its own testimony. Deleuze's Essays Critical and Clinical pursues the effect and affect stuttering produces on language itself. When minoritarian writers such as Kafka invoke stammering figures:

> It is no longer the character who stutters in speech; it is the writer who becomes a stutterer in language. He makes the language as such stutter: an affective and intensive language, and no longer an affectation of the one who speaks. (Essays 107)

Galvanized by interruptions and repetitions, Kiarostami's film makes filmic language stammer to testify to a mute past. Yet this past enters the film not as inarticulable, and thus beyond capture in language or image. Rather, the film expresses disaster as event by opening gaps in mimesis, by figuring trauma through repetitive verbal and visual gestures.

Soon after the director's difficulties with the stutterer, another actor/resident, Hossein takes on the role, yet a new, though highly similar, problem occurs. The second set of retakes in scene 14 contours these newly discovered issues. In this scene, we perceive that the utter difference between the fictional film and the reality of village life will pose even greater dilemmas for the film crew. Initially, Hossein notes a discrepancy between the deaths of twenty-five villagers and what the script calls for, which is sixty-five. (He does say sixty or sixty-five villagers died in Life). Then, the real sticking point emerges. Because Tahereh refuses to speak one line of dialogue, five takes meet with no success. Here, to understand Tahereh's difficulty, viewers retroactively connect the retakes to scenes 8 and 9 that outline Tahereh and Hossein's past.

Scene 8 shows Hossein and Keshavarz traveling by car. The former recounts how he became interested in Tahereh the day the earthquake struck, but the love was unrequited. Unable to integrate the uncanny correspondence between lost love and lost village, Hossein constructs a paranoid fiction to explain the misfortune—his broken heart destroyed both her family and their

houses. Because all village dwellings were leveled by the disaster, he hopes that taking on

masonry work will persuade Tahereh to change her mind and repair the destructive work

occasioned by his heart. Here, the film stresses the importance Hossein attributes to a proper

home when he states, "No house, no woman." The next scene directly connects these issues to

the filmmaking process itself.

In scene 9, Hossein futilely tries to persuade Tahereh's grandmother that he's worthy of

the Tahareh's love. He plays the house card again, reminding her that the surviving family needs

a home, but the grandmother remains resilient in protecting Tahereh from Hossein's uninvited

interest. As the disappointed Hossein walks away, he accidentally passes through a filming

session, and an angry "Cut!" is voiced from off screen. This moment of interruption, due to

Hossein's despondency over Tahereh's refusal and his lack of a proper home, primes the retakes

of scene 14.

The film's longest scene shows nine total takes for two separate scenes (four and five takes

for each, respectively). Two key factors drive the first narrative--Hossein can't find his white

socks and Tahereh, watering the houseplants, accidentally wets Hossein's guest (Kheradmand).[70]

In both cases, the house is "out of order," because Hossein forgets where his socks should be

(inside his shoes) and Tahereh mistakenly disturbs her visitor. Between takes, Hossein begins an

extended attempt to convince Tahereh that he is worthy of her love.

He initially notes the discrepancy between Hossein as scripted character and Hossein as

real person. In a long shot that frames both Hossein and Tahereh, he states:

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[70] Marc Shell notes that Renaissance thought often associated "speech impedance with proximity to flowing water" (31). I do not know whether Kiarostami was aware of this connection when making his film. Nevertheless, in the scene physical error, Tahareh's miscue, continues, figuratively speaking, the verbal stammer that had impeded the filmmaking process earlier.

Tahereh, when I ask about the socks, don't go thinking it's me. It's not. It's what the director wants. I'm not the kind who keeps asking: "Where are my socks?" If I get married, I'll have enough tact to put away my socks, my clothes and all my things!

Tahereh remains resilient in ignoring Hossein's pleas by keeping her head buried in a book. She offers neither a verbal nor gestural response.

After another failed take, Hossein takes up the issue of marriage and proper home again, during which Tahereh retains the same unresponsive posture. Hossein makes his appeal:

If you dare not say yes, turn the page of your book. That will be my reply. The problem, I think, is the house. So I'll go and see the owner and talk to him so that he'll give me this house. It won't cost a lot. We'll be able to live here because it brings us luck. Ever since we got here, flowers have bloomed inside, flowers to wish us welcome. I swore I'd never do any more masonry again. If I have to do it, it will be only for you. But I want to know if your heart's with me. If you turn a page, I'll have my reply.

Hossein seeks to make the virtual, film-within-the-film house a "model" that Tahereh can recognize as desirable too. If he can make the film house his own by buying it, then their relationship can continue and potentially flourish.

Improper forms of address, or the culturally determined "places" within a household, galvanize the second set of retakes. Whereas the script tells Tahereh to address Hossein formally, she insists on using simply "Hossein." Tahereh's reluctance prompts the director to remind her, "He's got a name, hasn't he? Mr. Hossein. Say 'Mr. Hossein', you forget this?" Four more takes fail due to Tahereh's misreading her scripted lines. In a last effort to make the film work, Hossein instructs the director that local customs allow the informal mode. But the filmmaker implies that filming has ended not only for the day but perhaps overall by telling Tahereh, "Pick up your book. It's over."

The concepts of home and place connect all of the traumas and subsequent displacements present in the film. To name a few: 1) because he lacks a proper home, Hossein retroactively "causes" the disaster as a displacement of Tahereh's refusal; 2) the relocated school children take

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lessons from the filmmaker, recalling the same-age children who appeared in Where Is the Friend's House?; 3) the home that Tahereh and Hossein share in the film's script "stands in" for Hossein's imagined home; 4) the guest/filmmaker can find hospitality and witnesses only in the dead. One wonders if Tahereh simply accepted the fictional home, would the film within the film ever finish.

Yet because of Tahereh's past relationship with Hossein, she turns down a chance to make fictional home and real home function properly. In other words, her disavowal of the split between reality and fictionality ultimately undermines all of the displacements mapped around the home. As a result, her refusal activates a profound psychoanalytic content that operates through displacement and redundancy. Not only do residents of Rostamabad find themselves without address, and thus without a home, but testimony and its aborted attempts emerge as primarily sexual in nature. That is, a "proper home," as defined by Hossein, prevents him from marrying Tahereh, and thus as a corollary prevents the filmmaker from fashioning a "proper home" for the film. What blocks one level, the home tied to sexual relations, displaces to block another, the making of the film within the film. Instead of making a film that would allow residents to "act out" their trauma effectuated by natural disaster, Kiarostami shows that another trauma forecloses that possibility. Olive Trees depicts the difficulty of bearing witness not as trauma inaugurated by the natural disaster, but rather by the sexual relation itself.

Earlier, Hossein's hope for marriage and a new house met with Tahereh's resistance. In her mute response to the filmmaker, she declines again, siding with a reality that retains the traces of transitoriness, both literally and figuratively. The stable place envisioned by the filmmaker remains virtual, because the troublesome scene between Tahereh and Hossein revolves around building a "proper" home. Here, actualization means propriety, with husband

and wife constructing a secure space buttressed by sexual coupling. By adopting the filmmaker's desire (to complete the film), Hossein sees an opportunity to fabricate a home that will win over Tahereh. If she can recognize Hossein's virtual desire, to build the "proper" home within the film, she too might desire Hossein. For the filmmaker, he must assume Hossein's desire, because "no house, no woman" also means "no house, no woman, no film."

If Kiarostami's cinema is littered with ambiguous characters driven by unclear motives, Tahereh remains no exception. Women do rarely figure centrally in Kiarostami's cinema, and when they do, they generally embody stereotypical roles as housewives, idealized rural women, or mysterious figures. For this reason, Saeed-Vafa sees Tahereh as typical of Kiarostami's representation of women. She contends, "The provocative images of omnipresent schoolgirls in black lead to the single image of Tahereh, who never becomes a character. Throughout the film she is treated as a desired woman, quiet and mysterious" (Rosenbaum and Saeed-Vafa 69). I do not dispute that Tahereh lacks the "well-rounded" development associated with mainstream film characterization. All we know about her is that she refuses to cooperate, which may invoke, especially for Hossein, mystery. Even when the camera is off, she snubs Hossein and concentrates on her reading, which also separates her from the illiterate suitor.

Rather than considering Tahereh simply as an "individual" developed around adjectives like enigmatic, reticent, etc., I stress her position within the narrative and filmic structure. True, her defiance makes representing her story, and the village's story, impossible, which means ascribing an adjective, say "defiant," to her character. Yet Tahereh also embodies blocked desires—Hossein's romantic and the filmmaker's practical ones—and thus derails the film within the film. She figures as an avatar of the differend by interrupting the actualization of a present moment, one bound to the other's desire.

In this regard, Tahereh's position takes on relevance as a place where something akin to Freudian "failed actions" assume positive structural value. One can compare these moments of not saying "Mr. Hossein" to other films. For instance, of the numerous failed actions in Oshima Nagisa's Death by Hanging (1968), Maureen Turim argues:

> Here the narrative rather than the subject is at stake; the narrative itself performs as if it were governed by an unconscious, a prior repression overdetermining the representation and sequence of events. This explosive unconscious "erupts" through a self-consciously designed organization, of course; the 'failed action' is a theoretical ploy. (70)

By arguing the subject is not at stake, Turim avoids "psychoanalyzing" characters and instead emphasizes the "theoretical ploy" that animates narrative logic in Oshima's film. (Non)actions reveal a filmic unconscious glimpsed through its structured subject-positions. Similarly, Kiarostami evinces a theoretical acuity on par with Oshima. Tahereh refusal to speak "Mr.Hossein" invests the film with unconscious desire determined at a narrative level. Her position, constructed by non-actions, obstructs character desire (Hossein's and Keshavarz's) and shifts desire to the narrative.

By rebuffing the other's desire, Hossein's and the filmmaker's, Tahereh questions the latter's authority, his ability to legitimate a stable place or home that would make his film possible. In other words, her rebuke challenges a desire built upon power, the proper and authorization. The film thus opposes two modes of authority, the filmmaker's and Tahereh's, which rely upon two types of witnessing. On one side stands historical discourse as mode of testimony; on the other sits a failure to testify, from which bearing witness nonetheless becomes possible.

The filmmaker represents historical discourse not because he strives to depict faithfully the event. His vague goals and the fact that he manipulates the number of dead (sixty-five versus twenty-five) undermine a truthful discourse. Instead, he struggles against regional practices,

homelessness and Tahereh's silence to fabricate a stable place that might legitimate his film. In this regard, I would like to suggest Michel de Certeau's The Writing of History as a way of reading the filmmaker's position. De Certeau discerns procedures of authorization that legitimate discursive truthfulness. These procedures always erect a stable and homogeneous place to guarantee an ostensive integrity of discourse. Of historical writing, de Certeau avers that it "takes the law of place for granted. It legitimizes a place, that of its production [. . .] to explain whatever is different as 'foreign', and whatever is inside as unique" (Writing 343). Countering the "law of place" established by authorized discourse, Tahereh's refusal remains foreign to that discursive law. Failing to integrate Tahereh's non-speech, Keshavarz experiences a stubborn knot that his discourse cannot untie.

The filmmaker desires to recreate an event and to make those who survived it undergo it again. Sharing similarities with Close-up, in which the real Sabzian must relive his brief fame, Olive Trees also shows what exceeds any recreation. Oddly, this differential excess appears as an effect of a lack or failure, whether Tahereh's rejection or the stammerer's failure to complete words. Yet within the structural context of testimony, lack contains a positive dimension, in which not speaking quite paradoxically presents the only chance to bear witness.

When the filmmaker's law of place attenuates, and the homogeneity that place tries to install, difference comes to haunt the director's chair.[71] The procedures that legitimate testimony, the four instances analyzed by Lyotard, cannot crystallize into a coherent form.

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[71] One could read Keshavarz's inability to make his film as an allegory of Kiarostami's own position. Despite his international success, Kiarostami remains a problematic figure in Iranian filmmaking. Azadeh Farahmad argues, "The political escapism in Kiarostami's films is a facilitating, rather than debilitating, choice, one which caters to the film festival taste for high art and restrained politics" (99). Kiarostami's "escapism" bears upon a putative inability to critique Iranian theocracy. Yet, as I have tried to show, Kiarostami develops an ethics of representation that is political by dint of testifying to differends. To borrow Hamid Naficy's compelling notion of "accented" filmmakers, Kiarostami marks his films with accents through stuttered speech and failed actions. Such accented moments problematize critiques such as Farahmad's. See Naficy's An Accented Cinema.

Lacking this solid locus, the film-within-the-film's discourse produces alterity by repeating failure. Through these breakdowns and interruptions, Kiarostami harnesses a poetic power of repetition that ramifies across several filmic levels. Failures of the film within the film, the sexual relation between Hossein and Tahereh, and the stammerer's unfinished words attest to a cinema that makes difference, or the differend, an active force. This repetition marks Olive Trees as a "foreign film," and thus estranged from itself; the many interruptions prevent it from attaining any homogeneity.

Coming one at a time, testimonial phrases actualize one version of history, while others remain in virtualized states. To gain credence, this actualization depends upon a discourse that authorizes one version over others, that constructs a stable edifice at the expense of other histories. Yet minoritarian authors develop chronotopes that challenge the "one-at-a-time" temporal logic and realist practices underpinning conventional historiographic cinema. They invoke many times and histories or, in Kiarostami's case, a past that testifies in stammerings, failed actions, and repetitions of failed actions. In turn, they revive Lyotard's call for an ethics of testimony: "What is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them" (Differend 13). One might add that what is at stake in filmmaking is testifying to differends, to the power that speech, gesture and image ironically possess when the present cannot legitimately actualize the past; to the power of a witness situated "at the detour of time that they were called upon to make turn."

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

But the fact that real space has only three dimensions, that Time is not a dimension of space, really means this: There is an efficacity, a positivity of time, that is identical to a "hesitation" of things and, in this way, to creation in the world. (Deleuze, <u>Bergsonism</u> 105)

This dissertation has explored moments in cinema when the direction of rationalized movement reverses course, and the body appears to be struck by convulsive gestures and attitudes. In instances such as these, the body and time itself exceed what can be rationalized and require new tools for analysis, ones that can measure heterogeneous movements and temporalities. For this reason, Bakhtin's notion of the literary chronotope constitutes an invaluable concept for film analysis. It can help explain the distinctive and often indeterminate temporal flows that course through images. Equally important, the chronot(r)ope provides the means to think through the imbrication of heterogeneous times and aberrant gestures in cinema. The bodily attitudes expressive of unruly times facilitate a re-thinking of the corporeal in cinema and call for creative interpretation.

Films imprinted with the chronotopic imagination contest the representational capacities of dominant or major cinema by fabricating a minor cinema. Their images undermine the realist impulse of a major cinema grounded in presence and strongly resonate with Gilles Deleuze's description of moving images: "The cinema doesn't reproduce bodies, it produces them with grains that are the grains of time" ("Brain" 372). By producing grains of time filmmaking does not fashion exclusively a reproduction of something, a story or body for instance. Rather, filmmaking can <u>produce</u> a multiplicity of temporalities, each of which cannot be reduced to an all-subsuming homogeneous time. Any image contains a wealth of temporal relations not bound

to replicating the world "out there."[72] A modulating force of time imparts to images a <u>double</u> reading that moves between past and present or present and future. Layers of the past and future complicate the presence underpinning any represented event. By the same token, the game of time and its discontinuous relations fashion a novel image productive, by way of invention, of bodies.

As many early commentators on cinema noted, unlike theater film subtracts the live presence of the actor and substitutes his or her phantom body double. One could argue all films work with stunt doubles, uncanny substitute bodies or mediators that waver between presence and absence, resemblance and difference.[73] The actor once performed the role, but that presence on celluloid is now apprehended as absence. In this sense, despite the apparent ability to record real time, cinema has nevertheless always ensconced the image and body in a problematic of time. Films retain the traces of an event whose presence has evaporated in and by historical time. By retaining a tension between actualized event and its trace, between the reproduction and production of time noted by Deleuze, the chronotopic imagination makes inventive use of this paradox. It simultaneously erodes our faith in the represented presence of the image and of the body and instead substitutes aberrant times and gestures. This substitution invites viewers to speculate on what can films teach us about our own present, on what could be, and what a body can do. Analyses of specific films have inspired several responses to this two-fold quandary that I will now seek to synthesize.

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[72] John Marks nicely summarizes Deleuze's take on cinema as a non-representational medium. He writes, "At their most innovative and powerful, the images created by the cinema cease to 'represent' reality and constitute their own reality" (141).

[73] Edgar Morin stresses this latter tension as fundamental to our experience of the moving image: "We are in fact gripped by the profound, contradictory feeling of our resemblance and our difference" (38) from on-screen bodies. This experience greatly informs psychoanalytic theories of spectatorial identification with the Ego-ideal. See Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."

In its effort to contour a chronotopic imagination at work in cinema, this dissertation has drawn comparisons between four seemingly disparate directors and their films. At first glance, positing that Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Carax, and Kiarostami are filmmakers that possess a commonality seems somewhat dubious. From Eisenstein's rapid-fire montages to Kiarostami's Iranian neorealist long takes, from Tarkovsky's sepia-toned landscapes to Carax's sharply contrasted black-and-white chiaroscuro images, the four films differ considerably in style and subject matter. At the same time, the historical contexts in which these filmmakers and their films emerge vary greatly. Eisenstein and Tarkovsky shared a homeland, Russia, and overcame similar institutional hurdles, State-funded production and censorship, which eventually forced Tarkovsky into exile. Yet their "times" remain quite different. Whereas Eisenstein worked in the fervor of post-revolutionary Russia, Tarkovsky always had an eye pointed toward the West, which he felt was more accommodating to his concerns. Kiarostami has managed to work and live within a repressive theocracy, with many Iranians highly critical of his putative pandering to Western tastes. For his part, Carax, a director working in the West, revives the French New Wave and its 1950s culture of cinephilia.

Although one must take note of the filmmakers' respective differences, one can also underscore the uncanny correspondences at work in their films. The term uncanny should be taken in a general sense and can be invoked as a critical tool when analysis denotes a resemblance. The spark or shock associated with recognizing the resemblance of two things occurs precisely because an utter difference separates and distinguishes them. It is difference that grounds and manufactures resemblances, rather than analogical thought that always refers difference back to the same. For this reason, theory and criticism often work productively when they compare seemingly disparate films or written texts. By remaining attentive to difference,

theory paradoxically discerns patterns and associations across texts that otherwise may go undetected. Part of the joy of writing this study has been my own encounter with such uncanny moments, which in turn I have endeavored to articulate.

Consider the pervasive presence of stutterers in the works of Tarkovsky, Carax, and Kiarostami. Tarkovsky's <u>Mirror</u> begins with the cure of a boy's stutter by hypnosis, which in turn spurs its semi-autobiographical reflections assembled from shards of the past and present. The stammer infuses Alexander's dialogue with Maria and verbally doubles the physical syncopes he undergoes. The stammer also connects Alexander to Hamlet, a mammering figure who trips over "words, words, words" and who senses that "time is out of joint." In <u>Boy Meets Girl</u>, the character Bouriana stutters his name when spelling it out to his telephone interlocutor, and Alex similarly gives his name as "Alex, Alex" to Mireille, his love and mirror who spurs his own reflections. She too repeats snippets of dialogue across edits, locating the stammer as disruptive of synchronization and continuity. In Kiarostami, stammering derails Keshavarz's hopes of completing a usable take, yet viewers discover repeatedly throughout that <u>Through the Olive Trees</u> is a film that stutters insistently. Kiarostami's film quite remarkably associates verbal fumbling with testimony as a mode of bearing witness. One could even add that the increasingly amplified, through font size, intertitles "Brothers! Brothers!! Brothers!!!" in <u>Potemkin</u> figures verbal stammering in Eisenstein's silent cinema.

Stuttering entails a gap between letters and words, and the outcome of the pause is never guaranteed in advance. In an effort to speak fluently stutterers employ substitutions that "often effect changes in meaning" (23), as Shell avers. What happens in the middle of words or sentences gains prominence because the "end" can turn up unexpected results. It is the emphasis placed on the hiatus or hesitation that marks these films so markedly, and not just simply by dint

of the presence of stammerers. All four films develop their distinctive chronotopes through bodies and gestures temporarily placed on "pause." In doing so, they challenge our expectations of what the next image will bring, what subsequent posture or attitude will the body adopt, and what temporality the image implies. The expression of heterogeneous times and non-rationalized bodies, the chronot(r)opic imagination, would appear to start from the middle, between times and bodily states.

In Eisenstein's films and writings the acrobat performs a timing exercise <u>between</u> dialectical way-stations. Montage consolidates time and prepares the way for dialectical conversion, yet the somersaulting body slips and slides between dialectical Times. Although this body is rationalized by way of Taylorist models of efficiency, which fascinated and inspired Eisenstein, it also synthesizes a time that occurs "behind our backs." In <u>The Sacrifice</u> Alexander's body synthesizes distinctive temporal flows, those of the spiritual and the material, by taking pause, like Hamlet, between times. The gesture of syncope paradoxically indicates where time becomes unhinged, where the schism between flows "occurs." Yet it also enacts a restorative function by giving time, and thus curing humankind of its spiritual illness. Suspensions, levitations, fainting spells, and pauses mark a body struck by temporal pressure, but one also able to heal a temporal disjunction.

The case of <u>Boy Meets Girl</u> figures an incessant waiting game, in which bodies and voices seek to catch up to one another in a determinable present. The body is caught between states and times characteristic of the Deleuzian Event. The film playfully lingers between radical disjunctions between speech (<u>alors</u>, the "then" or "that time") and image, between two versions of a suicidal gesture, and between events as they are in the process of becoming. Dead times and indeterminate times percolate throughout the film, and the body conducts (and is conducive to)

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disparate temporal flows. In <u>Through the Olive Trees</u> the filmmaker Keshavarz seems stuck in an interminable circuit of failure. Stuttering and failed actions perturb the filmmaker's ability to make past and present jibe. The film is always "on its way" somewhere, much like the lead characters in <u>Life and Nothing More</u> or <u>Where Is the Friends House?</u>, the first two films of the Rostamabad trilogy. And being on its way to resuscitating the past in the present becomes the structuring principle of Kiarostami's film, in which the traumatic past glimmers absently through repetitions of the in-between.

The emphasis on the in-between also enables one to reconsider the theories set forth by Tarkovsky and Eisenstein. To think time in cinema, one must put bodily tropes into motion--the acrobat who moves head over heels and the indecisive Hamlet cursed by time unhinged--that allow for comparative analysis. Theory often works through and with what Deleuze terms "intercessors" or "conceptual personages," figures that intervene on the philosopher's behalf. These figures "use all their resources of athleticism to install themselves within this very difference, like acrobats torn apart in a perpetual show of strength" (Deleuze and Guattari 67). For Deleuze, the intercessor inspires the thinker to not only reflect on our present condition, but also to engage in imaginative conceptual practices. Through their rather odd athleticism, these figures can galvanize creative re-workings of the body, thought, image culture and time.[74] For Eisenstein, his frequent visits in writing to the circus position trapeze artists and acrobats as theoretical intercessors. Both figures animate his discourse and charge his affective writing. By thinking through Hamlet, Tarkovsky points to his belief in the fundamental incompatibility between distinctive flows of time. Hamlet's "self-sacrifice," as Tarkovsky sees it, aligns aberrant times with the gesture of giving.

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[74] In <u>What Is Philosophy?</u> Deleuze and Guattari provide an extensive catalogue of figures and personages found in philosophy, science, and literature.

The translation and transposition of figures found in theory into filmic articulation has grounded the readings set forth throughout this dissertation. If theoretical tropes ambulate across boundaries, and therefore engage the in-between of theory and practice, they similarly stimulate and nourish analysis of individual films. What is striking about these four films is how they show that the in-between becomes repeatable. Few films insist on and persist in organizing images and gestures through repetition to such a degree. Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Carax, and Kiarostami invest their films with clothed repetitions, or repetition of difference, as opposed to bare repetitions, or repetition of the same. The repetition of shots and acrobatic gestures in the Odessa Steps sequence of <u>Potemkin</u> display the spiraling, sublating power of the dialectic; the recurrence of syncopes in <u>The Sacrifice</u> demonstrates that the body not only suffers bouts of time, but can also make itself a gift of time; in <u>Boy Meets Girl</u> doubled dialogue and events, as in Mireille's suicide, emblematize bodies in the process of becoming; the failed re-enactments and stammerings in <u>Through the Olive Trees</u> testify to the fundamental repeatability of traumatic events. All of these temporal indicators place emphasis on repetition as a "difference maker," and they figure the body as occupying the hiatus separating actualized versions of an event.

When bodies reside in the temporal hiatus, they often seem to waver between a temporal sickness that saps their energy and a strange vigor that dispatches the arrow of time down a different course. When viewed from the perspective of the action-image, these bodies often exhibit a failure to act decisively and forcefully. Instead, if they embody difference, they do so to offer positive and innovative approaches to conceptualizing what a body can do. Acrobatics in Eisenstein's films and writings figure the body as uncomfortably subject to dialectical movement yet able to carry out syntheses. The Eisensteinian body undergoes contortions and leaps that perform a sublation of time. In <u>The Sacrifice</u> Alexander experiences bouts of time that

make him faint, fall down, and stumble over words. Ironically, these very same conditions allow him to synthesize the disjunction of flows in a gift that suspends time. Carax revives acrobatics in the form of Alex, whose exceptional circus talents coexist with a disconnected body. By the same token, Mireille's doubled suicide places gesture between an actualized disastrous outcome and other, virtual possibilities of time. Lastly, Kiarostami infuses the structure of Through the Olive Trees with physical and verbal impediments. Yet failed actions and stammerings make the body a witness to a traumatic past by repetition.

By engendering difference and repetition in this manner, filmmakers inspire a chronotopic imagination to unlock a power of time and the body that resist rationalization and subjection to control. Rather than mastering and speculating on time, their films evince a kinematic health, in which hesitation positively and productively galvanize creation. If cinema is perhaps nearing its end, its chronotopic imagination nevertheless places an urgent demand upon us: our understanding of visual technology and culture will depend on inventing future figures, ones that will affect conceptualizations of time and body. To accomplish this task, the cinematic chronotopic imagination places its faith in a coin toss. The "heads" side bears the emblem, "what can a body do?" and on the "tails" side reads the inscription, "what could be?" Galvanized by the invention of conceptual personages read through aberrant times and gestures, I think that the films and theories studied here show this gesture is worth repeating.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Thomas Odde spent his high school years attending Minnehaha Academy. After graduating, he briefly attended the University of Minnesota-Duluth before transferring to the University of Minnesota. Majoring in film studies, he pursued an interest in Italian cinema by conducting research at the Cineteca Nazionale in Rome, Italy. Other undergraduate interests included psychoanalytic approaches to film, the effect of writing upon the image, and Italian neorealist cinema. He earned his B.A. in film studies in June 1992. Thomas came to the University of Florida in August 1994 to continue working in film studies at the graduate level. His master's thesis, "Godard's Petrolglyphic Cinema: Pierrot le fou and Economies of Writing" explored how image, writing in the image, and sound interact in Jean-Luc Godard's early films. It argued that oil companies and filling stations tend to fashion a hieroglyphic or "petrolglyphic" filmic writing. Thomas earned his M.A. from the University of Florida in December 1996. He received his Ph.D in 2006 and since then his work has focused primarily on representations of time in cinema, the intersection between theory and practice, and avant-garde cinemas.