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Profane Love, the Heartening Story and Sublation:

The Dialectical Image in Film

Conor O'Kelly

22nd April 2015

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Summary

This thesis develops an understanding of the application of Walter Benjamin's dialectical image. Benjamin's theory of the dialectical image is examined through the comparison of avant-garde and realist film productions and considered through his writing on aesthetics, literature and history. Methods and theories of the sifting of historical debris, second nature, montage, allegory, profane illumination, sublation, experience and the literary, are explored and utilised for the purpose of the identification of the dialectical image in what Benjamin called heartening film. The effectiveness of this method in deconstructing historical myth and establishing Benjamin's sense of a now-time is considered.

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In memory of my sister Catherine Anne O'Kelly, 1979-2007.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Artwork Essay · The Dialectical Image · Second Nature · Now Time · Montage · Correspondence and Constellation

> The "dialectical image," the most important concept of Benjamin's late historiography, articulates how the critic's juxtaposition of images from widely varied historical eras could have a revolutionary effect upon consciousness. William Jennings, 1987.[1]

A quote from Walter Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility' states that 'The function of film is to train human beings in the apperceptions and reactions needed to deal with a vast apparatus whose role in their lives is expanding almost daily.'[2] This line, amongst others, privileges film as an art form which can benefit 'human beings' by allowing them to see the world as it really is. My research uses the forms of avant-garde

[1]Jennings, 1987, p.35–36.

[2]From the second version as published in Volume 3 of *Selected Writings* (Benjamin, 2002a, p.108). This version has the benefit of being 'the form in which Benjamin originally wished to see the work published' (ibid.,

cinema with which Benjamin is traditionally associated to investigate the possibility of this function in films from a realist and 'Hollywood classical' tradition; specifically the films of D.W. Griffith, Abel Gance, Charles Chaplin and Alfred Hitchcock. To use Benjamin's terms, the question of how 'dialectical images' manifest in 'heartening films' is the object of this research.

To answer this question requires a good deal of explication of how Benjamin conceives of this 'vast apparatus' of modernity and also of the unique theoretical model he builds to communicate this meaning. I describe those theories most relevant to my research in this introduction, and in the following chapter I explain the case for the 'heartening film'. I continue to develop these and other concepts in each chapter thereafter. This introduction will concentrate on describing concepts that are of critical importance to an understanding of Benjamin's theoretical framework and that are necessary to understand this research—they include the 'dialectical image', Benjaminian allegory, and 'second nature' and 'now-time'. I will then describe the contribution that this research makes in relation to film studies before detailing the methodology and the structure of each chapter. Before proceeding, I offer an explanation of what follows.

In respect to film studies, the reception of the Artwork essay has, for good reason, dominated Benjaminian discourses, and it usefully encapsulates many of Benjamin's theories. Briefly, this well-known essay suggests that as a result of mass production, the original, unique work of art loses the 'aura' which is associated with its singular form.[3] Through its reproduction in postcards, posters, books and ephemera the original loses its social, traditional, 'ritual function'.[4] Benjamin

p.122), and which he referred to as his 'Urtext' (Hansen, 2012, p.307–308), as opposed to the third version which remained a work in progress up to 1939. (Benjamin, 2003d, p.270). Hereafter the Artwork essay.

[3]Miriam Hansen's groundbreaking 1987 essay, 'Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: "The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology" ', remains a definitive source for a critical appraisal of Benjamin's essay and informs my brief summary (Hansen, 1987).

[4]Benjamin, 2002c, p.105.

does not mourn this loss, rather he sees it as an inevitable development in the history of art.[5] Based on Alois Riegl's theories of a 'will to art', that is, an immanent drive in humanity to create, Benjamin saw film as part of art's continued evolution from haptic (tactile) to optic (space) forms, expression which is always in contact with its historical environment.[6]

In the Artwork essay Benjamin urges that film be used to reveal the true nature of modernity. This was partly an urgent recognition of the powerful use that film was being put to in service of fascist ideology. The use of film is necessary because Benjamin conceives of film as the *only* form that can respond to this threat. Film is the only form that can respond because, in correspondence with Riegl's theory, as the art that reflects its environment most potently, film is also most revealing of the massively changed field of human experience.

The vast apparatus of modernity that has altered modes of experience, brought about by the industrial revolution, is exploited by markets in the pursuit of capital and fascism in its ideological purpose; consumerism fetishises novelty through a bombardment of advertising, fascism aestheticizes violence through its celebration in film. Simply put, these ideologies create what Benjamin calls a 'second nature' which is an internalised consciousness that appears natural to the subject, but is in fact a construct of environmental experience. Progressive film trains the subject to process the overstimulation of modernity and perceive the construction of second nature.

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[5]That said, the theory of the loss of aura has been roundly discredited—paintings which are massively reproduced are still perceived to be invested with aura, for instance, and aura is also now invested in new forms, such as the cult of the celebrity movie star, a fact Benjamin acknowledges in the third version of the essay—in fact, reproduction has *increased* aura. Nonetheless, the historical error does not deny the fact of aura and Benjamin's conception of it; it remains useful in its description and in the study of new forms of auratic production. This research is not concerned with aura.

[6]Jennings, 1987, p.153–157.

The question of how film specifically reveals the vast apparatus of modernity and second nature is the subject of my research. As the Artwork essay makes clear, and as widely discussed, the effect of montage in various forms is Benjamin's major locus for the revealing nature of film. Benjaminian film studies are therefore most widely engaged with theories of montage, and particularly theories which productively relate to the dialectical tradition to which Benjamin, as a historical materialist, belongs. Filmmakers who have been shown to correspond with this tradition include, for instance, Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, Guy Debord, Chris Marker, Alexander Kluge, Alain Resnais and Jean-Luc Godard. In the case of Alexander Kluge's *News from Ideological Antiquity - Marx/Eisenstein/The Capital* (2008, Germany) or Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinema* (2008, France), we have filmmakers who directly and brilliantly engage with Benjamin's philosophy.

This emphasis on these particular types of representation as indicative of popular modes of engagement with Benjamin leads to the first ambition of this research. While analysis of these filmmakers' work leads to productive descriptions of how 'dialectical film' manifests, it is hard to reconcile these films with Benjamin's claim that the 'function' of film is to 'train human beings' in modernity. I am arguing that in the critical reception of Benjamin, filmmakers predominately engage with counter, or avant-garde, cinema. Therefore, and especially when these works engage directly with Benjamin, there is a certain amount of self-referentiality.[7] I will support this claim with a discussion of the relevant research below. This research is interested in the possibility of a broader application and applies Benjamin's theories to films from what has come to be known as the classical Hollywood tradition. I support this application in Chapter 2 with a close reading of a fragment from Benjamin's writing that describes the 'Political Significance of Film.'

[7] I am only claiming this as a predominant tendency. Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005, France) is an example of a film which has deservedly generated a good deal of Benjaminian analysis. While it would not be accurate to describe the film in the tradition of Hollywood classicism it is an example of a move towards realist modes of representation. This is discussed below, (Thomas, 2008), (Rothberg, 2009), (Silverman, 2010), (Silverman, 2013).

A secondary ambition of this research is to demonstrate the use of Benjamin's concept of the 'dialectical image' in the analysis of these films. This theory is most popularly understood in Benjamin's thought image of the Parisian arcades as illustrative of a fragment of history, about to disappear, which reveals the dream of the 19th century. Grasped in our present, this dream of the future reveals the true nature of our present time. Each chapter proposes a dialectical image, which when viewed in the context of these films, provides such insight. I begin an explanation of this difficult concept following this research summary.

A final aim of the research is to approach Benjamin on his own terms. This is, of course, a Sisyphean task, and I have limited my research to correspondences with Benjamin's writing which are most readily applicable to film studies. I expand on this approach in my methodology below.

Having established this research ambition, I must acknowledge at the outset that the resulting text often uses extensive quotation. This is necessary for a number of reasons, not least because of the difficulty of the texts. Benjamin's writing can be obtuse, ambiguous and contradictory.[8] Benjamin's writings are critical texts in the sense of literary criticism, and as such the meanings of the literary, often poetic turns the writings take can be seriously undermined by summarisation.[9] The fact that my research undertakes an analysis around his reception in the English language reinforces this point. Further, Benjamin's critical theory, especially in his late

[8] A sentence from Benjamin's correspondence to Gershom Scholem in 1926 reveals this tendency, which was in fact part of his methodological strategy: 'If I were to join the Communist party some day, my stance would be to behave always radically and never logically when it came to the most important things.' (Benjamin, Scholem and Adorno, 1994)

[9] That Benjamin's writing is considered philosophical and is referred to as philosophy is not in question, simply that his philosophy was formally based on literary criticism. As I explain in regard to the methodology, broadly, Benjamin's philosophy is practised through a process of reading. Robert Stam identifies the problem I try to avoid: 'The analytic method sometimes commits what literary critics used to call the "heresy of paraphrase"; it fails to recognize that the playful, oxymoronic, paradoxical writing of a Walter Benjamin or a Roland Barthes cannot always be broken down without loss into an arid sequence of "propositions," a syllogistic armature from which all the vital juices have been drained.' (Stam, 2000, p.8)

period, conceives of literary montage as the method to communicate his philosophy. Benjamin insists that his methods are the *only* methods with which to understand history and modernity. In light if this, and as I explain below, my own methodology, in attempting to communicate how Benjamin's philosophy works, appropriates a variety of Benjaminian methods as my own. That is, I approach Benjamin on his own terms.

In turning to the dialectical image in film, we should acknowledge the two modes of reception that, in our context, are relevant to the experience it describes. The first mode is that of the historical reception, in the original theatrical viewing. In this case, the sense that these dialectical images 'flash up' is most relevant; this, as we shall see, is closely related to montage and the experience of viewing. The second mode is our mode as critical readers of the images. In this case the relevance of the cinematic 'fragment' is heightened, and in looking over the shoulder of the dialectical historian and archaeologist we are also sifting the debris of history for the unmediated and overlooked.

In one way, Benjamin's dialectical image is attractively simple in its proposition. He contends that deep philosophical insight can be encapsulated in a thought image. In his most famous example, the image of the iron and glass Parisian arcades becomes a dialectical image (see Fig. 1.1 on page 8), of which Susan Buck-Morss says: 'Louis Aragon's novel, *Le Paysan de Paris*, describes in detail one arcade, the Passage de l'Opéra, just before this material space itself disappeared, torn down to build the Boulevard Haussmann.'[10] Benjamin describes this thought image as indicative of the development of commodity fetishism and so the industrial age and, finally, the 19th century itself. The first thing to note is that in Benjamin's use of the shopping arcade, he locates in commodity fetishism *its own negation*. That is, the site of revelation of the nature of commodity fetishism is within its own structure. This is the dialectical basis of the 'dialectical

[10]Buck-Morss, 1989, pp.33–35.

image'. In what is considered the traditional Hegelian dialectical movement there is a thesis/antithesis/synthesis movement, where the antithesis is drawn from the original thesis—and this is the basis of Benjamin's structure. As we shall see in Chapter 2 and in the following chapters, Benjamin's particular complication of this Hegelian movement is important. For now we can see how—in a straightforward manner—the arcades is an element of a vast structure of capital deployment, labour, manufacture, advertising and, finally, the marketplace. One more example of a dialectical image useful to illustrate the point is the figure of the prostitute. Again, in revelation of the nature of commodity capitalism, Benjamin's Convolute O of *The Arcades Project*[11] describes how the prostitute is variously the advertiser, seller, labourer and commodity. What is especially new in the strategy of the 19th-century Parisian prostitute is the use of high fashion whereby 'the more expensive her outfit, the greater her appeal.'[12] Fashion, as an expression of novelty, is of course itself the quintessential trope of the consumer fetish. So the image of the high fashion prostitute encapsulates many ideas directly drawn from the structure it is deployed against.

So, when presented as an antithesis, that is, presented as a counterargument to the overall structure of *which it is part*, the arcades as a material construct is called the dialectical image. The negation comes from within. I want to underline this point for two reasons. First, because in my use of the dialectical image in the film analysis that follows I describe the dialectical image in concrete images from films, and second, because I find this concreteness missing in many analyses that invoke the term—something which I will address following my discussion of key terms. To summarise, the dialectical image is a material *thing*, a thing in the world we

[11] Benjamin, 1999h, p.489–515. Hereafter *Arcades*. I include the standard convolute referencing system when citing the *Arcades*.

[12] Buck-Morss, 1986, p.121.

Figure 1.1: Passage de l'Opéra (photographer unknown, circa 1909, Passage de l'Opéra, IXe arrondissement, Paris, France)

can point to, drawn from within the object of analysis. It is a material thing, in the very sense that Benjamin is a historical materialist.

Now, with this frame of reference—what the dialectical image is—we can move on to the more difficult questions of what the dialectical image does and how it does it. The dialectical image is firstly revelatory; it reveals what Benjamin calls 'second nature', a term I use throughout this research. Second nature is descriptive of the entire environment of modernity, conceived as a constructed and, in fact, unnatural environment.[13] Modernity is alienating in its form of second nature, and the dialectical image describes and reveals it. It is constructive to turn to an example to describe this, and Benjamin uses the 18th-century precursor to cinema, the 'phantasmagoria', to communicate the illusion of modernity. Michael Jennings's 1987 *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism* remains the most comprehensive engagement in the English language with the dialectical image. As one of the most preeminent Benjaminian philosophers, his writing greatly informs my research. In this quote, he describes this important concept:

> Underlying all of Benjamin's thought is the conviction that the seemingly most obvious things—who we are, the character of the physical environment in which we move, and the character of the historical moment in which we live—are in fact denied to us. The world in which we live in fact has, for us, the character of an optical media device: his most frequent description of our world is in terms of 'phantasmagoria.' Originally an eighteenth-century illusionistic optical apparatus, involving shadows of moving figures projected past an audience and onto a wall or

[13] Benjamin uses this term for all material elements *outside* the subject, in subtle contrast to Georg Lukács's form of a socially and historically produced nature which both reifies and alienates *within* the subject. (Buck-Morss, 1989, p.69–70)

> screen, phantasmagoria as redefined by Benjamin becomes a figural image of the world of urban commodity capitalism: an environment so suggestively 'real' that we move through it as if it were given and natural, when in fact it is a socioeconomic construct.[14]

This 'figural image', as Jennings describes it, does not qualify as a dialectical image as it is a precursor to modernism—it is not from within. It does, however, continue to demonstrate the very material and visual form of Benjamin's philosophy. It also demonstrates both the manner in which he uses literary devices, like metaphor and allegory, and his use of art and aesthetics to understand history—methods which I appropriate. So second nature is an illusion which in modernity has the appearance of reality. Susan Buck-Morss's 1989 book *The Dialectics of Seeing* is one of the most imaginative and brilliant receptions of Benjamin's writing, again a pillar of my research. From a discussion on Theodor Adorno's concept of history in *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, Buck-Morss describes how second nature can be demythified with a view to the past:

> What appeared as 'natural' was exposed as 'second nature,' hence historically produced. And what appeared as 'historical' was exposed in terms of the material 'first nature' which passed away within it. But the process of demythification might proceed on another axis: the archaic could be made to appear meaningful in the light of the present; or the very newness and modernity of the present could be made to suddenly release its significance when seen as archaic. To a large extent, Walter Benjamin's writings revolved around this axis.[15]

[14] Jennings, 2008, p.11.

[15] Buck-Morss, 1977, p.57.

Modernity, as second nature, is therefore vulnerable to demythification when viewed in historical context. Again I use this insight in what follows. The nuance of Benjamin's concept of our temporal historical position is also signified in this quote. The concept of our alienation under second nature, and its recognition, relies on an understanding of 'historical progress' as a primary site of this alienation. Part of this critique rests on the traditional presentation of history as something which exists within measurable, chronological time. In comparison to chronological time, Henri Bergson's concept of 'durée' proposes a sense of lived, experienced time, as a more significant and accurate representation of temporality. This extremely influential concept fits well with modernist thinking, especially in relation to psychoanalytic discourses which locate significance in shock and trauma. In application of these ideas to an analysis of history, the historical materialist dispenses with ideas of development and progress, and instead sees history as a series of sublimations of, and reactions to, catastrophe. These reactions can take place at large temporal distance from the original site of shock, and both the trauma and reaction may not yet be recognised long after the event. In this way one action does not logically follow another action, and chronological time is therefore meaningless in the relation of real/Real history. This insight leads Benjamin to the formulation of the concept of 'now-time', which I will expand on after the discussion of the 'how' of the dialectical image. At this point it is worth noting film's formal temporal and spatial power in this regard. In film montage, objects, actions, events and narratives from divergent and separate times and places can be presented in near simultaneity. Thus, the false temporal progress of history can be formally demonstrated.

This understanding is stressed by Benjamin as being of the same magnitude as the Copernican revolution—whereby it becomes understood that the sun and stars are stationary bodies and we revolve around them. The acceptance of the meaninglessness of chronological time is thereby revolutionary in the understanding of history and Benjamin's philosophy. The

recognition of the 'now-time' facilitates a moment of 'awakening', which references both the Benjaminian 'profane illumination' and the Freudian dream state, discussed in later chapters. The significance of this structuring of historical time is not to be underestimated; it is the starting point in the process of revealing second nature. Two quotes from the *Arcades* describe the importance of the experience of awakening:

> The Copernican revolution in historical perception is as follows. Formerly it was thought that a fixed point had been found in 'what has been,' and one saw the present engaged in tentatively concentrating the forces of knowledge on this ground. Now this relation is to be overturned, and what has been is to become the dialectical reversal—the flash of awakened consciousness[...]There is a not-yet conscious knowledge of what has been: its advancement has the structure of awakening.[16]

> Awakening is namely the dialectical, Copernican turn of remembrance.[17]

One further critique of historical progress relates to the well-known adage whereby 'history is written by the victor.' Benjamin goes further: 'There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.'[18] In this, Benjamin stresses his particular domain of research—cultural history. A final quote in relation to second nature comes from Miriam Hansen, another important theorist in the research that follows. Hansen highlights the manner in which history, which is traditionally synonymous with progress, is anything but for Benjamin:

[16]Benjamin, 1999h, p.338–339, K1,2.

[17]Ibid., p.339, K1,3.

[18]Benjamin, 2003c, p.407.

> For Benjamin, actuality requires standing at once within and against one's time, grasping the 'temporal core' of the present in terms other than those supplied by the period about itself (as Kracauer put it), and above all in diametrical opposition to developments taken for granted in the name of 'progress.'[19]

As revealed in the references to Lukács and Adorno above, this concept of demythification of history through a concept of 'second nature' is the shared objective of historical materialists. What is unique about Benjamin is the manner in which the dialectical image tries to achieve it. So with the above descriptions of what it is (material antithesis) and what it does (reveal second nature) in mind, we can now turn to how it does it, the most original, interesting and difficult aspect of Benjamin's theory. In the necessarily lengthy description below, various terms appear that will gain more significance in their later explanations—I note this where relevant. We move in this explanation from a description of Benjamin's development of an explosive style of writing to early examples of avant-garde cinema that influence him. The essential point of this explanation is to describe the basis of Benjamin's concept of montage as a dialectical form, its ability to show rather than tell and therefore his own adoption of the method.

It is useful to start at the end of Benjamin's writing at the point where the theory of the dialectical image is best formulated. Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History' is the last critical text to appear in Volume IV of his *Selected Writings*, published in English in 2003. From 1940, this text is an exceptional distillation of his thought and literary method. Thesis XVI speaks to the discussion above, but also mentions an explosive potential:

> The historical materialist cannot do without the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time takes a stand and has come to a standstill.

[19] Hansen, 2012, p.75–76.

> For this notion defines the very present in which he himself is writing history. Historicism offers the 'eternal' image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past. The historical materialist leaves it to others to be drained by the whore called 'Once upon a time' in historicism's bordello. He remains in control of his powers—man enough to blast open the continuum of history.[20]

The bombast, the defiance, in fact masks a certain desperation. Benjamin was in ill health, and as he completed the essay the German army marched through Belgium and the Netherlands. Benjamin was trying to secure safe haven in the US.[21] The 'blast' that he refers to has numerous precedents in his writing, especially in relation to the dialectical image and montage; here we see how it is the method of destroying 'second nature'. The revelation of second nature is explosive. Benjamin also refers to images and ideas that flash and disappear, a figural description that refers to both the natural phenomenon of lightning and the camera flashbulb. In anticipation of the next chapter, where I analyse the fragment 'On the Political Significance of Film', we can see how Benjamin's line, 'Only film can detonate the explosive stuff which the 19th century has accumulated in that strange and perhaps formerly unknown material which is kitsch,'[22] situates film in the position of the fuse to detonate the material the historical materialist has accumulated.

These two quotes link film, and it is specifically a kitsch 'heartening' type of film, to the explosive effect of the dialectical image. It is montage, in ways in which this research investigates, that executes this sudden appearance of concrete images which perform a dialectical movement.

[20] Benjamin, 2003b, p.396.

[21] Benjamin, 2003d, p.441–442.

[22] Benjamin, 1999h, K3a,1, p.395–396.

In this, the heartening film is 'sublated', in a manner consistent with the revelation of second nature, as is our historical position. I explain sublation and the explosive quality of heartening film in Chapter 2; for now I want to establish montage as the form in which this explosion takes place.

As discussed above, Benjamin conceives of literary criticism as the correct form in which to analyse history. As his thinking develops, and is influenced by film and other avant-garde aesthetic practices, he invents a literary form of criticism that we may term 'literary montage'. In correspondence with other modernist writers—James Joyce is the example I use in Chapters 3 and 4—this montage is highly citational and elliptical. It is dense and difficult and does not 'tell' but rather 'shows'—its form follows function, and this function is a shocking awakening. As discussed in Chapter 5, the similarity of Benjamin's thinking to Marshall McLuhan's 'The medium is the message' is striking. Jennings describes this development:

> Benjamin derives an understanding of the critical text as a constellation of fragmentary material—quotations, theoretical statements, historical data. This notion of the essay as montage or constellation acquires increasing significance in the course of the 1930s as Benjamin's primary form for the representation of history.[23]

It is useful here to think again of the conception of modernity as a site of overstimulation and of art necessarily adopting the most radical and up-to-date forms to break through the stimulation. In explanation of how this works, and in the manner that the montage tries to 'show', we can refer to a number of Benjamin's short quotes on the subject. In essence Benjamin is describing his belief in experience, above explication for example, as a most effective form of

[23] Jennings, 1987, pp.13–14.

communication. Benjamin's stated form for the *Arcades*, and therefore the dialectical image, is enigmatic but precise:

> This work has to develop to the highest degree the art of citing without quotation marks. Its theory is intimately related to that of montage.[24]

This quote is from Convolute N of the *Arcades* titled 'On The Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress'. This convolute is the 'quintessential theoretical convolute' of the *Arcades*.[25] In 'citing without quotation marks', Benjamin is describing his intention to show not tell. This is repeated, again from Convolute N:

> Method of this project: literary montage. I needn't *say* anything. Merely show. I shall purloin no valuables, appropriate no ingenious formulations. But the rags, the refuse—these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them.[26]

This reference to the rags and the refuse is in relation to the manner in which Benjamin considers all 'documents of culture' to be 'documents of barbarism.' That is, any document recognised as culturally valuable has thereby automatically become mediated and put into the service of second nature. This is crucial to Benjamin's philosophy; it is only by somehow escaping the totalising narrative of second nature that cultural objects can retain the power to reveal second nature. To this end Benjamin, throughout his life, collects ephemera like

[24]Benjamin, 1999h, N1,10.

[25]Hanssen, 2006a, p.11.

[26]Benjamin, 1999h, N1a,8. Italics in original.

children's books and 'colporteur' novels (discussed in Chapter 6). Again this appreciation for the overlooked is a method which I emulate and discuss below.

To return to the figural use of flashes described above, the flash is related to montage in, notably, the opening fragment of Convolute N: 'In the fields with which we are concerned knowledge exists only in lightning flashes. The text is the long roll of thunder that follows.'[27] Here, the text is secondary, the quote, axiom or formulation is the shocking force. Returning to his last critical text—'On the Concept of History'—this directive appears again in a slightly altered form: 'Articulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it "the way it really was". It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger.'[28]

Finally, a quote from Buck-Morss signals a complication of Benjamin's use of Hegel whereby the thesis /antithesis does not resolve in synthesis. Rather the formation of of the dialectical image in montage produces a resistance to harmony or reconciliation:

> The conception of 'dialectical image' is overdetermined in Benjamin's thought[...] The principle of construction is that of montage, whereby the image's ideational elements remain unreconciled, rather than fusing into one 'harmonizing perspective.'[29]

This unreconciled fusing is the 'sublation' referred to above and which I return to in Chapter 2. In the interim it is helpful to understand that Buck-Morss is referencing an interpretation of Hegelian dialectics whereby the thesis and antithesis resolve in a synthesis—qua 'harmonizing

[27] Benjamin, 1999h, N 1, 1.

[28] Benjamin, 2003b, p.391.

[29] Buck-Morss, 1989, p.67.

perspective'. At this point it is sufficient to say that Benjamin's dialectic is more explosive, allegorical and interrupting.

This brief, but precise, summary of the dialectical image is the definition on which I proceed. Before continuing, a rudimentary summary of the dialectical image's objective, form and operation can be made—what it is, what it does and how it does it. The dialectical image is a material thing, drawn from the object of analysis, which reveals a second nature in the object through a flashing up montage. This is the formulation that I apply to 'heartening' film in Chapters 3 through 6. There are of course many complicating factors to this basic formulation. However, these factors can be broadly considered under the categories of method or context. In this introduction I will shortly consider the 'now-time' as one of these contextual factors. I have postponed sublation to Chapter 2, and other useful concepts are introduced in each chapter. However, as stated above, the primary ambition of this research is relatively modest. I attempt to demonstrate the application of the dialectical image in heartening films. In this context, the above formulation of the dialectical image is the most helpful and primary qualifier to be considered in the analysis that follows.

Before turning to the concept of 'now-time' some examples of visual artists who inspired Benjamin's turn to montage will help ground the discussion in the material and historical territory he was concerned with, and from which this research takes a very basic lead. Benjamin always engaged with the philosophical, political, social and cultural terrain of his time. Surrealist expression of the 1920s engages with Freudian expressions of hidden trauma buried in the unconscious. Benjamin relates the idea of the 'now-time' as informed by these Freudian ideas. Similarly, 'now-time' is inflected by Proust's durée and therefore encompass ideas of pure memory that comes flooding back, the talking cure and the unravelling of second nature. These Freudian, surreal, Proustian influences lead to the reconfiguration of historical time around

events of collective trauma. So as a writer that engages with these same ideas, surrealist expressions inform and appear throughout Benjamin's writing. As we shall see in Chapter 4, his adoption of surrealist thought led to his development of the concept of 'profane illumination'. Miriam Hansen, adopting Benjamin's own use of the figural 'telescope', describes how the Artwork essay is conceived as a way of seeing, reiterating the point that Benjamin's philosophy is always engaged with optics and methods of seeing the world in its true form: 'Benjamin actually conceived of the Artwork Essay as a heuristic construction, a "telescope" which would help him look through "the bloody fog" at the "phantasmagoria of the nineteenth century." '[30]

It is in this development of new ways of 'seeing' that we can contextualise Benjamin's contact with the avant-garde. Hansen identifies Benjamin's membership of the legendary 'G Group', founded by Hans Richter and edited by Werner Graeff, who published their avant-garde journal in the early 1920s, an experience, Hansen claims, which 'catalysed' his 'turn to the material phenomena of modern life'. Among other members of the 'G Group' Hansen cites filmmaker Viking Eggeling, architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and artist László Moholy-Nagy.[31] In Chapter 6 we will see how Detlef Mertins links Benjamin's positive view of modernist architecture—as a new manner of framing the city—to Moholy-Nagy's 1929 film *Impressions of the old harbour of Marseille* (1929, France). Moholy-Nagy's film intercuts images shot from the cranes of the Marseille shipyard with those of street poverty (see Fig. 1.2 on the next page). Notable is the abstract quality of the architectural shots which perform brief counterpoints in the wider narrative. In this respect this montage can be described as flashing up.

The dialectic juxtaposition of Moholy-Nagy's photomontage experiments is similar to the work of John Heartfield, and Susan Buck-Morss makes the link from Heartfield to Benjamin

[30] Hansen, 1987, p.182.

[31] Hansen, 2012, p.134.

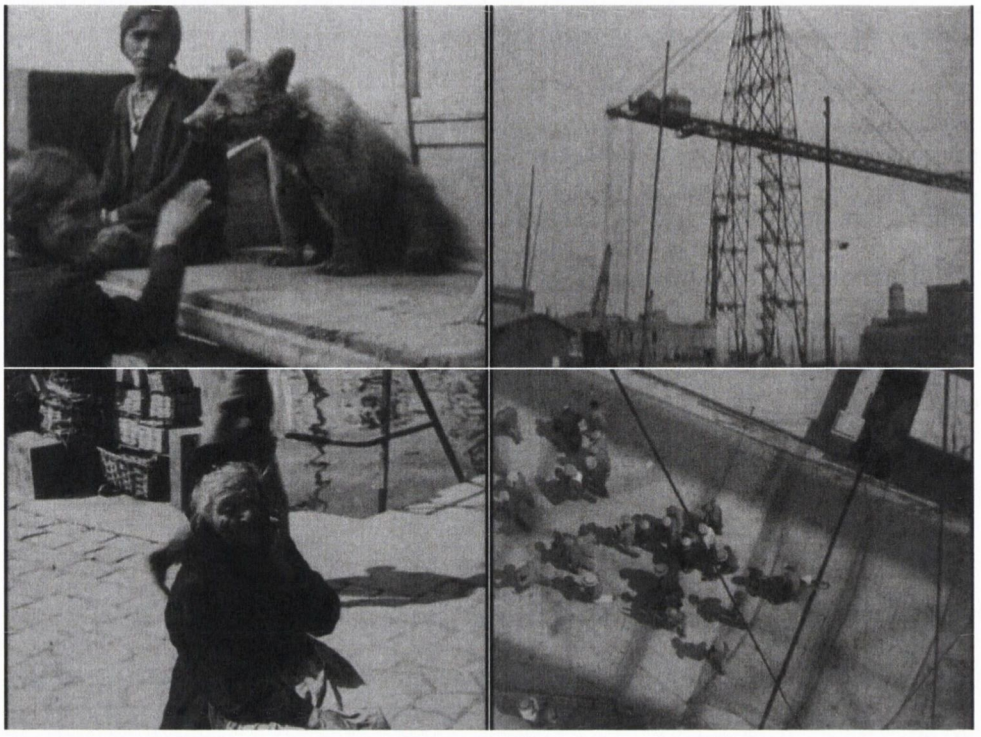

Figure 1.2: Tradition and Abstraction. *Impressions of the old harbour of Marseille* (László Moholy-Nagy, 1929, France)

in her *Dialectics of Seeing*, specifically in relation to a photomontage titled 'German Natural History'(see Fig. 1.3 on page 21). Buck-Morss writes that 'Note that the ideological fusion of nature and history when reproduced by Heartfield through an allegorical use of photomontage allows the gap between sign and referent to remain visible, thus enabling him to represent their identity in the form of a critique.' Buck-Morss explains how Benjamin 'worked similarly in *One Way Street*, constructing a montage of verbal rather than photographic images.' These verbal images 'relied on the semantic gap between these terms to identify critically the objective essence of Weimar's economic inflation and the bourgeoisie's social decline.'[32] In the gap between the

[32]Buck-Morss, 1989, p.62.

title and the depiction Heartfield, and Benjamin, perform critique. Closely related to this is the subject of allegorical representation in Benjamin's theory, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Figure 1.3: German Natural History (John Heartfield, 1932)

In reiterating the centrality of the concrete image that I described above, Buck-Morss pinpoints the foundational aspects of the dialectic exchange that generates the complexity and usefulness of the dialectical image in demythologising ideology in this image:

> Not the medium of representation, not merely the concreteness of the image or the montage form is crucial, but whether the construction makes visible the gap between sign and referent, or fuses them in a deceptive totality so that the caption merely duplicates the semiotic content of the image instead of setting it into question.[33]

In Chapter 4, in relation to Abel Gance's cinema, Germaine Dulac's film *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1926, France) is described by Antonin Artaud as the first surreal film (see Fig. 1.4 on the following page). Dulac's film uses extravagant montage effects, most especially superimposition, to communicate dreams and subconscious expression. In his book *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* Siegfried Kracauer paraphrases a statement of Dulac from 1927 where she criticises the manner in which film has become subservient to literary narrative form and thereby 'Mme Dulac accuses those who imprison cinematic action in a narrative of a "criminal error." '[34] The insistence on the uniquely visual aspect of cinema is indicative of surreal approaches to filmmaking.

With this sense of Benjamin's appreciation for surrealist methods of expression we can apprtoach his concept of 'now-time'. This is a form that also engages with a new way of seeing, in a conceptual sense, and is closely related to his Copernican revolution in the organisation of history.

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[33] Buck-Morss, 1989, p.67–68.

[34] Kracauer, 1960, p.179.

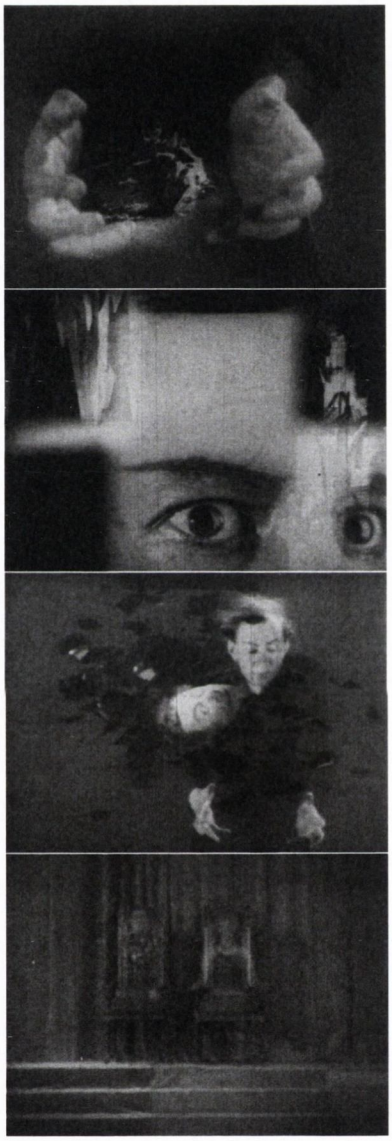

Figure 1.4: Superimposition. *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (Germaine Dulac, 1926, France)

The 'now-time' describes the present time but without the sense of the present in its traditional relation to the past/present/future. This is consistent with the significance of lived time, durée, in comparison to meaningless chronological time. In the erasure of past and present Benjamin means also to communicate how what we can call fateful progress contributes to second nature. In other words, the traditional historical model communicates ideas of an inevitable progress, of intermittent catastrophe as an inevitable part of this history, and of the universe having unfolded and continuing to unfold as it should. This tradition of history in fact arrests progress, in Benjamin's view, whereby both the mass and the individual are denied agency. An alternate form which is often cited, and that implies that the particular 'now-time' is one in which the subject is aware of second nature, is 'the now of recognizability'. This form also adds a visual signifier, and both forms are used in the chapters that follow.

The 'now-time' is thereby filled with urgency in several ways; First in the need to understand the 'now-time' through demythification of second nature, second, in the need to take action in the 'now-time', and third that recognition of the 'now-time' as a fleeting experience. The 'now-time' is comparable to that moment between sleeping and waking, whereby a confusion of dream state and reality are mingled. Arguably Benjamin's particular 'now-time' is also inflected by the rise of European fascism. The sense of the 'now-time' is very succinctly described by Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings in their 2014 biography of Benjamin, when they call it 'The idea of the present as living dialectic of past and future.'[35]

The relationship of the dialectical image to 'now-time' is structural, whereby the dialectical image is recognisable in the correct conception of the 'now-time.' That is, the subject who is aware of second nature, who can conceive of his or her position in the 'now-time', can recognise the dialectical image and release its historically-charged significance. Benjamin's project,

[35]Eiland and Jennings, 2014, Ebook, chapter 2, paragraph 17.

through criticism, experimental writing and ultimately the promotion of film as a political tool, is to contribute to the awakening of this subject to the 'now-time.' As a philosopher Benjamin's subject is western civilisation itself. His project is no less than the dismantling of structures of oppression and tyranny. More specific to his time, Benjamin seeks to address injustices and inequalities wrought by capital and industrial expansion and to rescue man from what he called 'ongoing catastrophe.'[36]

The relationship of the dialectical image to historical revelation and the urgency of the 'now-time' is described by Eiland and Jennings in the 'momentary constellation' of another succinct formulation: 'The dialectical image as a momentary constellation of historical tensions.'[37]

Buck-Morss describes the manner in which the 'now-time' is part of a radical construct 'in which truth emerged only by the setting up of a critical distance between the material and the interpreter, and that meant standing at the present edge of history, on the dividing line between "now-time" and the possibility for a radically different future.'[38]

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[36]Benjamin, 1985, p.50. The full quote from Benjamin's *Central Park* reads: 'Redemption looks to the small fissure in the ongoing catastrophe.'

[37]Eiland and Jennings, 2014, Ebook, chapter 2, paragraph 17. These quotes come from a paragraph which relates a consistency throughout Benjamin's writing career and describes many visual correspondences: 'The idea of the present as living dialectic of past and future likewise informs the "Metaphysics of Youth," written in 1913–1914, perhaps the most important of Benjamin's early unpublished essays. There Benjamin speaks of the present as eternally having been. What we do and think, he says, is filled with the being of our ancestors—which, having passed away, becomes futural. Each day, like sleepers, we use "unmeasured energies" of the self-renewing past. Sometimes, on awaking, we recall the dream and carry its spectral energies "into the brightness of the day." In this way, the waking fortifies itself with dreaming, and "rare shafts of insight" illuminate the layered depths of the present. In awakening its own historical resonance, the present gathers to a moment of decision, by which, rooted in the past, it grounds a future. Here, the motif of "awakening youth" clearly anticipates a central concern of his later thinking, namely, the dialectical image as a momentary constellation of historical tensions, an emergent force field in which the now of recognition wakens from and to "that dream we name the past." At stake in this historical dialectic is "the art of experiencing the present as waking world," what he will come to call "now time." '

[38]Buck-Morss, 1977, p.169.

The relationship of the dialectical image to the 'now-time' is further closely related to an effect of the dialectic image called 'dialectics at a standstill'. This idea communicates an arrest of dialectical progress in the recognition of the dialectical image in the 'now-time'. It is part of the unique Hegelian dialectic that Benjamin uses and is related to the idea of the 'interruption' as a useful moment that is discussed in Chapter 2. Finally, in relation to 'now-time' it is important to include Benjamin's description of the moment of recognition occurring in the 'now-time':

> It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, an image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but figural *(bildlich)*. Only dialectical images are genuinely historical—that is, not archaic—images.[39]

In the discussion of my methodology below I will explain the use of two Benjaminian constructs that I employ in the chapters that follow, but the discussion above forms the major framework from which I can describe my methodology. Before proceeding, however, I want to address the gap which this research seeks to address, that is, the contribution this research makes to the current scholarship which was briefly addressed above.

I have cited Benjamin's statement in the Artwork essay whereby 'The function of film is to train human beings in the apperceptions and reactions needed to deal with a vast apparatus whose role in their lives is expanding almost daily.'[40] This, as my discussion above has shown,

[39]Benjamin, 1999h, N3,1, p.463.

[40]Benjamin, 2002a, p.108.

is a political function. I stated that it is difficult to reconcile this function with the forms of cinema that are most often discussed in relation to Benjamin's writing. My examples, by no means exhaustive, are—Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, Guy Debord, Chris Marker, Alexander Kluge, Alain Resnais and Jean-Luc Godard. To explore the usefulness of Benjamin's dialectical image to film studies I am arguing for the inclusion of other 'heartening' films in the canon of Benjaminian studies. Before discussing the case for 'heartening' films in Chapter 2, there are some important observations to be made on the current reception of the 'dialectical image' in film studies.

One commonality between the directors listed above lies in the high degree of abstract expression they employ. This is a generalisation, but it is useful in the context of a quote from Benjamin in the fragment from the *Arcades* discussed in Chapter 2. Benjamin is defining 'The Political Significance of Film':

> Only film can detonate the explosive stuff which the 19th century has accumulated in that strange and perhaps formerly unknown material which is kitsch. But just as with the political structure of film, so also with other distinctively modern means of expression (such as lighting or plastic design): abstraction can be dangerous.[41]

These films are variously considered as avant-garde, as art or counter cinema. The 'counter' demarcation is specific—it is counter to Hollywood classicism—in that it rejects the primacy of straightforward narrative continuity and realist expression. This is the form that has dominated popular consciousness, and the subconscious, for nearly a hundred years in repetitive plots of violence and romance. Popular cinema is the very site where we can talk about shocks and

[41] Benjamin, 1999h, K3a,1.

dreams that are shared in a global and historical context. In their expression of counter culture discources and through their avant-garde modes of representation these films express a political seriousness that is anathema to ideas of kitsch and mass culture. In contrast, it is the territory of the mass produced and kitsch object or book that Benjamin searches for unmediated fragments in an effort to unravel a truer sense of history. These political, philosophical and artistic films therefore occupy a space that is, for Benjamin, in service to bourgeois ideology. It can be argued that these films are literally educational and therefore address Benjamin's training function. However, given the limited audiences that these films inevitably find, it is hard to see how this strategy could be considered responsive to the urgency of Benjamin's 'now-time.'

My research has not uncovered any writing that mentions the dialectical image in relation to D.W. Griffith, Charles Chaplin or Alfred Hitchcock. Miriam Hansen discusses Griffith's *Intolerance* (1915, US) in relation to Benjamin's writing on utopianism, without redress to the dialectical image. Hansen's analysis is discussed in Chapter 4. Charles Chaplin, written about by Benjamin in a number of articles, letters and the fragment 'The Formula in Which the Dialectical Structure of Film Finds Expression', is discussed widely in relation to the particular jerky gestures that the Tramp displays, but not in relation to the dialectical image. I discuss these gestures in Chapter 2. I have excluded Abel Gance in this list as it could be argued that he falls outside the tradition of Hollywood classicism, I would argue differently. In any case, he is not discussed in relation to the dialectical image, and his *Napoléon vu par Abel Gance* (1927, France) fits comfortably within the broad definition of 'heartening' film that Benjamin describes.

The exclusion of these realist, Hollywood and classical traditions from discussion of the dialectical image is, I believe, broadly understandable. First, although the dialectical image is the high point in Benjamin's development of a philosophical framework, it is nonetheless best

described as a tool or a key to performing Benjamin's own version of historical materialism and it is not the philosophy itself. As such, it is possible to engage thoroughly and correctly with Benjamin's conceptions of, for example, second nature without mentioning it. That said, and as I show, this is a missed opportunity, especially in film studies.

A second reason is, I believe, that despite the so-called cult of Benjaminian studies, the English-speaking reception of the dialectical image as a concept is relatively underdeveloped.[42] The long-awaited final volume of the *Selected Writings of Walter Benjamin* was only published in 2003. Before this the English-speaking world had to rely on variable translations of Benjamin's relatively esoteric Hegelian inflected German.

Despite this, the exclusion of Hollywood and realist cinema can be said to have been established some time ago. A further important point is that the best critical texts written on Benjamin were not necessarily by academics whose interests lay in the moving image. A brief example will illustrate these points. In Michael Jennings's 1987 *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism* we can see how he assigns Benjamin's usefulness to a very particular field of film studies:

> It is by now a truism to say that Benjamin vastly overestimates the power of art in this regard. Movies have long since been coopted just as Baudelaire's poetry has been domesticated and inserted into the canon. But Benjamin's analysis of the ability of film to penetrate an 'optic-unconscious' and lend us some sense of an

[42] As far back as 1989, Susan Buck-Morss states: 'This book is long, and its argument is intricate. It demands effort on the part of the reader. Yet I have tried to ensure that such effort is not compounded by intellectual jargon that speaks only to those already initiated into the world of academic cults (among which the Benjamin "cult" now plays a leading role).' (Buck-Morss, 1989, p.xi)

> alternative form of experience has been borne out by that cinematic tradition which begins with Luis Buñuel and extends through filmmakers like Werner Herzog.[43]

This is, in fact, a contradictory statement. Nonetheless, any nascent usefulness to film studies is firmly assigned by Jennings to the 'counter' category. And in this, Jennings, as perhaps the most accomplished English-language Benjaminian, does in many ways define the boundary of the discussion. This reading of Benjamin concurs with a long history of broad acceptance and reinforcement of the sort of anaesthetisation proposed by Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno in 'The Culture Industry.'[44] While Horkheimer and Adorno are recognised as the major forces behind the Frankfurt School, Benjamin is considered more of a fellow traveller. Benjamin, as we shall see in Chapter 5 on Chaplin, held the sort of popular culture that Adorno dismissed in high regard. Where Benjamin saw the possibility of redemption in kitsch culture, Adorno saw sensational popular distraction. This difference is further reflected in Benjamin's steadfast refusal to join the communist party or in fact to align himself definitively with any specific political organisation. Howard Eiland and Jennings, writing in 2014, suggest that, for Benjamin 'the question of politics came down to a set of personally and socially embodied contradictions', that ultimately Benjamin's complex belief system was irreconcilable to itself and therefore certainly unsuited to political affiliation.[45] The Frankfurt School, rigorously Marxist in its politics and scathing in its criticism of Hollywood entertainment, was also the school through which Benjamin's theories came to be understood. In this context, it is unsurprising that his appreciation for 'heartening' film received little attention.

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[43] Jennings, 1987, p.177 n.13.

[44] Adorno and Horkheimer, 1991.

[45] Eiland and Jennings, 2014, Ebook, Introduction, paragraph 11. Eiland and Jennings use the phrase 'nonconforming "left-wing outsider," ' as a useful description of Benjamin.

It must be acknowledged that there is also support for the Marxist denigration of popular culture in Benjamin's writing. From the third version of the Artwork essay:

> So long as moviemakers' capital sets the fashion, as a rule the only revolutionary merit that can be ascribed to today's cinema is the promotion of a revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art.[46]

The third version is of course the non-canonical version of the Artwork essay that was prepared for presentation in Soviet Russia and edited and amended to reflect this more politically ideological audience. This version, with the advice of Adorno (see Chapter 4), therefore bolsters Soviet formalism and experimentation.

Notwithstanding the above points, I am not denying the appropriateness of discussion of the dialectical image in relation to counter cinema, the above is intended to illustrate the manner in which it is understandable that Hollywood classicism is underrepresented in Benjaminian film studies. Benjamin is a theorist, a critic and a philosopher, and the tool of the dialectic image should withstand application outside his time, place or personality. Benjamin's description of 'The Political Significance of Film' merely provides a framework with which to apply it to a wider body of films.

Given the general lack of academic discussion of the use of the dialectical image in film, and the specific lack in relation to the films under discussion, below I discuss some examples from a wider body of films. These examples demonstrate the manner in which material facts of the dialectical image are lost if they are not understood in the full context of the description of the dialectical image above. Again, these films are not indicative of Hollywood classicism, but

[46]Benjamin, 2003f, p.261.

demonstrate how, even in discussions of counter cinema, the subtleties of the operation of the dialectical image are often lost.

In 1992 in *Film Quarterly* the author of an essay on documentary refers to a long take from Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967, France): 'in this shot Godard uses a long take to create what Walter Benjamin called a "dialectical image"—an internal contextualisation of a specific kind, in which one foreground element is qualified by another.'[47] This formulation suggests a unifying movement where an element becomes 'qualified', that is, explained or otherwise legible. This is in contrast to Benjamin's sense of shock and the replacement of the montage form with a long take is similarly misplaced.

In *Screen* in 2002 Rosalind Galt describes how: 'the structure of *Zentropa* contains something of Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image: where the past and the present are held in a productive tension.'[48] While *Zentropa* may contain dialectical images, Buck-Morss insists that the concrete, material image is the proper site of tension. The structure of a film is a highly ambiguous construct in comparison to the concrete images Benjamin offers. Galt makes a similar claim in her essay 'Italy's Landscapes of Loss', whereby in two films the Italian landscape forms a dialectical image in relation to the general appearance of landscape in a tracking shot.[49] Again, no actual image completes the thesis, and the central Benjaminian element of montage is missing from both examples.

Carlos Gallego's excellent 2010 essay 'Coordinating Contemporaneity: (Post) Modernity, 9/11, and the Dialectical Imagery of Memento' in *Cultural Critique* identifies the relationship between the Lacanian Real and the dialectical image. However, he also attempts to map the

[47] MacDougall, 1992, p.42.

[48] Galt, 2005, p.19.

[49] Galt, 2002.

dialectical image onto a very broad definition: 'It is in this manner that *Memento*, when read as a dialectical image, encapsulates many of the central themes surrounding Baudrillard's reading of 9/11, including the polarities of image and event, order and disorder, denial and acceptance.'[50] Again, the absence of a concrete image from within the film denies us access to the dazzling moment of insight promised by the dialectical image. Similar to Galt's description, the dialectical image is claimed by Gallego in overall structure rather than its appearance in montage. As described above in my explanation, in Benjamin's examples and Buck-Morss' words, the dialectical image is an identifiable image, it is concrete and it is material.

In this example from 'Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies', the dialectical image is wrongly associated with a symbolic function (as we shall see Benjamin is resolutely anti-symbolism). The use of depth of field is an interesting proposition but cmpletely rejects Benjamin's insistence on montage. This description does not agree with a flashing up or the revelatory aspect of the dialectical image—no second nature is revealed. The description of how this is a 'new kind of dialectical image' is left undeveloped by Sean Cubitt:

> Composition in depth, once the preserve of Bazinian realism, allowed filmmakers to stack interest across the field of vision through faster film stocks and digital compositing, a technique which encouraged viewers to purchase high-quality DVD versions of films in order to see everything layered into the visuals, from set-dressing to multiple planes of action. Here the isolation of elements in space and their combination into symbolic chains fleeing outward from the central action form a new kind of dialectical image.[51]

[50] Gallego, 2010, p.35.

[51] Cubitt, 2009, p.51–52.

These descriptions give some example of the rather loose manner in which the dialectical image is used. The point is that, when it is invoked outside counter cinema, there is no definition of the concrete manner in which it might appear—in comparison to the very definite theory that has built up in studies of, for example, Godard. By way of example of a much more accurate use of Benjamin's philosophy, I want to turn to the example, mentioned above, of the debate surrounding Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005, France).

Johnathan Thomas writes that Michael Haneke's films serve as a 'polemic against positivist historicism'. Thomas see the manner in which Haneke's films are marked by a 'flashing up' of television news or photographic images that reflect contemporary issues, be they social, geopolitical or ethnic, such that 'he disarticulates these images from a spectacularized image economy and détournes them in the service of countermemory, or as in *Caché*, in the service of constructing what Benjamin called a "dialectical image" ' The effect can be described, Thomas argues, such that these images become a kind of factual counter to the plot's 'conflicts and maladies,' and these plot issues become described as 'symptoms' of wider contemporary issues.[52]

This description of a revelation of wider conflicts and memories fulfils Benjamin's mission of revealing second nature. The flashing up of television news provides a concrete form to anchor the dialectical image. The description of this as a counter to the larger plot provides the element of sublation that Buck-Morss describes above as an 'unreconciled fusing' and indicative of a 'gap between sign and referent.' This is an accurate and helpful description of the operation of the dialectical image.

There is however an issue in the non-specificity of the images of television news and photographs and their ability to shock and unsettle. As Thomas himself quotes the authors of

[52]Thomas, 2008, pp.82–83.

The Language of Psychoanalysis, Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, who write: ' "It is not lived experience in general that undergoes a deferred revision but, specifically, whatever has been impossible in the first instance to incorporate fully into a meaningful context. The traumatic event," they note, "is the epitome of such unassimilated experience." '[53] In *Caché* we have just such a traumatic event and Max Silverman, although he does not call it a dialectical image, describes the moment of Majid's dramatic suicide as incorporating all of those elements that make it such a powerful image:

> In *Caché*, the physical cuts, the severing of personal ties and the policed demarcation lines marking out privileged metropolitan space are the sites of violence and separation that have been repressed in Georges's sanitized world, the *hors champ* which bursts unexpected into the frame. The suddenness of Majid's slitting of his own throat is in stark contrast to the long take of the outside of Georges's house, as if it is the raw event that that bland facade has hidden from view.[54]

Silverman describes how this moment of violence invokes memories of the Algerian War of Independence and the massacre of Algerian protesters in Paris in 1961—the event at the centre of the film's plot. As Silverman points out, this shocking moment is set in contrast to, for instance, the long opening take of the bourgeois home. This description, the flashing and shocking event, the contrast with the long take and its invocation of mass trauma fits well with my reading of the dialectical image.

Between these three discussions above, the manner in which traditional Marxist discussions have concentrated on counter cinema, the undeveloped use of the dialectical image in

[53] Thomas, 2008, p.82.

[54] Silverman, 2013, p.133.

broader applications, and the direction pointed by theorists considering more realist cinema, this research seeks to begin a discourse around the use of the dialectical image in the analysis of Hollywood classicism and popular cinema in general. With this in mind, both avant-garde and so-called art directors are used in my methodological approach to Hollywood classicism—in each chapter a dialectical pairing, drawing a director from each tradition, forms the basis of this development.

In Chapter 2, I analyse a fragment from Benjamin which argues that politically useful film must express a dialectical tension—a sublation—in an otherwise heartening film. The explosive result Benjamin describes is consistent with the experience of the dialectical image. This forms the basis of my argument for the inclusion of films from the so-called Hollywood classical tradition, and in fact any film which can be bracketed under Benjamin's loose term of 'heartening.' The subtleties of the Benjaminian dialectic are examined with particular reference to the idea of the 'taking up' of a film in a moment of abstraction—the sublation referred to above. Benjamin's particular conception of allegory as an ambiguous revelatory form is explained, as is the importance of the 'interruption'. The allegorical structure is of particular relevance to the heartening film, as the interruption is to montage.

Each of the following four chapters uses the same broad dialectical structure whereby I analyse a heartening film alongside a counter, avant-garde or art film. The same dialectical image is identified in both films and discussed in relation to the forms of representation. The objective is the identification of a moment, or moments, of revelation in the heartening film, which can be accurately described as corresponding to the experience of dialectics at a standstill in our now-time. The difficulty of this task is best described by the manner in which Benjamin's study of the Parisian arcades as dialectical image led to the mammoth and unfinished *Arcades*. I cannot, obviously, emulate this undertaking. However, my research does extend into the

historical basis of the particular dialectical images and their representation in literary and visual forms. The result is, therefore, sometimes necessarily digressive, tangential and citational. Again, the operation of the dialectical image springs from literary montage; without a methodological appreciation for this, the experience could not be communicated. I have signposted the developments of my argument throughout, but the sometimes dense material is best understood by reference to the explanations at the start of each of the four chapters.

As discussed above, the revelatory value of the dialectical image is achieved through the defamiliarising of second nature and in relation to a site of historical shock or trauma. In this research, the site of trauma is the memory of the Holocaust. Again, this research is necessarily limited in the discussion of the traumatic effect of the defining catastrophe of the 20th century. Nonetheless, each chapter is, to varying degrees, engaged in a correspondence with cultural memories that persist in relation to the causes and effects of the Shoah.

The most persistent methodological tools I use are the related concepts of correspondence and constellation. While these terms are in common use, Benjamin is one of their originators, and a description of his useful.

Benjamin develops his concept of 'correspondences' between objects, people or philosophical concepts to designate a significant but discursive and informal relationship.[55] Closely related

[55] Benjamin published a German translation of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* in 1923. 'Correspondences' is the title of one of the collection's poems, and in verses which reference symbols, echoes and the sensuality of experience, Benjamin's own name appears:

The pillars of Nature's temple are alive
and sometimes yield perplexing messages;
forests of symbols between us and the shrine
remark our passage with accustomed eyes.

Like long-held echoes, blending somewhere else
into one deep and shadowy unison
as limitless as darkness and as day,

to this term is Benjamin's employment of the philosophically inflected astrological term *constellation*. Jennings states:

> Benjamin derives an understanding of the critical text as a constellation of fragmentary material—quotations, theoretical statements, historical data. This notion of the essay as montage or constellation acquires increasing significance in the course of the 1930s as Benjamin's primary form for the representation of history.[56]

In philosophical terms, objects, or *facts*, are represented by the stars of a constellation. Between these facts are vectors, lines as it were, which join the dots. These vectors can be called propositions, narratives, or indeed stories. In connecting the dots these vectors form constellations; that is, interrelated groupings of facts which together designate a relationship of meanings, and the potential of broader insight indicated by the relationship of facts. In Benjamin's usage we may substitute *dialectical image* for the facts, and likewise *correspondences* are similar to the vectors, or stories, that bind the facts together.[57] In this way, for Benjamin, historical and literary

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the sounds, the scents, the colors correspond.

There are odors succulent as young flesh,
sweet as flutes, and green as any grass,
while others — rich, corrupt and masterful —

Possess the power of such infinite things
as incense, amber, benjamin and musk,
to praise the senses' raptures and the mind's.

(Baudelaire, 1983, p.15)

[56]Jennings, 1987, pp.13–14.

[57]The origin of the term lies with Max Weber. Use and development of the term *constellation* is credited to both Adorno and Benjamin. The earliest reference is in Benjamin's study of German mourning plays, where he writes: 'Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars.' (Benjamin, 2003e, p.34). Benjamin's use is complicated by the possibility of reading his dialectical images as both *constellations* and then, as they become redeployed in another form, as *facts*. Susan Buck-Morss contextualises an instance of Adorno's usage: 'As Adorno employed the

references to facts, such as the flâneur, the fairground automaton and the Parisian arcades, form an interrelated constellation of meaning which reveals second nature.

These concepts are adopted in my research as primary methodological tools. Benjamin's framework is founded on a belief in critical and discursive dialogue with its object of study. To attempt to elucidate Benjamin's allegorical, sensory, philosophical framework without respect to his tangential, quotational, sensory form of engagement would be unproductive.

In respect to the importance of the uncovering of unmediated objects for analysis—the sifting of debris—there is a certain irony in the fact that part of Benjamin's legacy is the celebration of so-called low culture. That is, as technology has facilitated the ever increasing mediation of culture, there is very little that can be said to have escaped the mediating eye of critical theory. Benjamin's celebration of the unmediated nature of so called low art has in fact led to the increased mediation of ephemera, folk art, advertising and all types of previously overlooked media; nonetheless, the conception of the dialectical image as residing in brief 'flashing up' moments of montage leaves an opportunity for against-the-grain discussions of even the most mediated films. This is demonstrated in each of the chapters through the use of stills illustrating the dialectical images discussed. Finally, I would argue that the films of Mary Ellen Bute, Joseph Strick and even Abel Gance have not received the contemporary attention or recognition they deserve, something which I hope this research communicates.

I have outlined Chapter 2 above, I close this introduction with a brief description of Chapters 3 through 6. An important structural element of each chapter is the dialectic pairing of a 'heartening' film with an avant-garde film. As discussed in Chapter 2, Benjamin sees great

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term in his own writings, "second nature" was one of a constellation of critical concepts together with "fetish," "reification," "enchantment," "fate," "myth", and "phantasmagoria," which were used to see through the mysterious "natural" appearance of objects in their "given" form to the historical dimension of their production. The purpose of such an analysis was to destroy the mythical aura of their legitimacy.' (Buck-Morss, 1977, p.55)

potential in abstract form as an explosive element in the overcoming of kitsch 'heartening' expression. In this context, each chapter examines the techniques of avant-garde expression to trace their appearance in the chapter's 'heartening' film. I have, where possible, used film-makers who Benjamin himself wrote about and have referenced his writing. Overall, while not chronologically presented, I have attempted to describe a history of film in relation to these concepts.

Chapter 3 describes the archaic figure of the Wandering Jew as a dialectical image using Joseph Strick's 1967 adaptation of Joyce's *Ulysses* and D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916, US). As a pioneer of American film, Griffith's cinema demonstrates some of the earliest experiments in Hollywood classicism. The forms of superimposition, rapid montage and 'heartening' narrative that are of interest to this research are visible in their most primitive forms in Griffith's cinema, as such his film provides a useful starting point. Griffith's *Intolerance* is specifically useful in its denigration of Jewish characters, given that this chapter explores historic representations of anti-Semitism. Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator' (1921) is used as a basis for examining the adaptation of Benjamin's literary theory to film analysis. The similarity of Benjamin's 'dialectics at a standstill' to the Lacanian encounter with the Real is developed as a key concept and examined in relation to moments that 'flash up' in montage.

Chapter 4 examines Sergei Eisenstein's and Abel Gance's respective films *October* (1928, USSR) and *Napoléon* (1927, France). Exploring representations of the horror of revolutionary violence in both films, Gance's narrative demonstrates a heartwarming sublation in its epic love story. Benjamin's writing critiques Eisenstein's films and he quotes Gance in the Artwork essay. As such these two director's works are amongst very few that Benjamin directly references in his writing. Both of the above films are shown to contain images of bureaucratic violence that recall Simon Wiesenthal's description of Adolf Eichmann as a desk murderer. Contrasting

the symbolism of Eisenstein's 'montage of attractions' with Gance's allegorical 'paroxysmic montage', the importance of the profane illumination of surreal expression in the dialectical image is described.

Charlie Chaplin's *A King in New York* (1957, UK) and Mary Ellen Bute's *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (1965, US) are used to explore the televisual as an alienating technological medium. Again, Chaplin is one of the few directors that Benjamin critiques in his writing and *A King in New York* is analysed on the basis that it is his most bitter or melancholic film, dramatising his exile from the United States, but which nonetheless attempts a comedic and heartwarming outcome. Drawing on Marshall McLuhan's theories of technological effect and considering Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass* (1916), Chapter 5 examines the correspondence between melancholia and automatonism.

Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinema* is perhaps the most acknowledged Benjaminian film and this is discussed in Chapter 6. Godard's *Socialisme* (2010, France) and Alfred Hitchcock's *Lifeboat* (1944, US) are examined in their relation to concepts of intoxication and the effect of the work of art. Hitchcock, as a filmmaker of massive popular appeal, provides the heartening film for this chapters dialectical exchange. Both films are 'limited' setting films in that the action of both films takes place predominantly on boats. These films provide an opportunity to examine cinematic mise-en-scène in relation to Benjamin's concepts of the interior, of architecture and engineering as potentially distracting and intoxicating forms.

Chapter 2

Sublation, Allegory and Interruption in the Heartening Story

The Heartening Story · Sublation · Baudelaire · Allegory · Interruption · Angelus Novus

> The mystifcation which the dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general forms of motion in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be inverted, in order to discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell. Karl Marx, 1867.[1]

In Chapter 1 we established the structure of the dialectic image and the effect that it creates—the dialectical image is a material thing, drawn from the object of analysis, which reveals a second nature in the object through a flashing up montage—and postponed the description of the manner in which it reveals second nature—sublation.

[1] Marx, 1990, p.103.

In this chapter I describe this sublation process in relation to the other postponement from Chapter 1, where I signal Benjamin's description of the political usefulness of film in relation to 'heartening' film. Sublation is its own unique thing; it describes the meeting of thesis and antithesis and expresses a type of resolution. This resolution, in Benjamin's description, is more akin to what he calls a 'taking up' of one within the other. This concept thereby presents not only a resolution but also a negation, and it is very closely related to the philosophy of Hegel who, as is well known, never described a simple thesis/antithesis/synthesis dialectic. In cinematic terms it is useful to think of it as a montage superimposition.

This chapter goes on to introduce Benjamin's concept of allegory using Bainard Cowan's essay 'Walter Benjamin's Theory of Allegory'. Benjamin's valorisation of allegory is in opposition to the symbolic mode of 19th-century Romanticism, which he sees as a construct that produces a false impression of unity through a double articulation.

The concept of modes of interruption that facilitate audience participation is explained in regard to the use of dramatic pauses in Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre. The chapter ends with another concrete image, Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*. Allegorised by Benjamin, this painting becomes a dialectical image that describes Benjamin's concept of history as catastrophe.

As an introduction to the concept of sublation in heartening film, it is useful to remind ourselves of Susan Buck-Morss's description of Heartfield's photomontage, 'German Natural History'. Buck-Morss describes the denuding of second nature as occurring in the juxtaposition between the title and the image—the sign and the referent. This unresolved synthesis or unresolved fusing is the result of sublation, the taking up of one in the other:

> Not the medium of representation, not merely the concreteness of the image or the montage form is crucial, but whether the construction makes visible the gap between sign and referent, or fuses them in a deceptive totality so that the caption merely duplicates the semiotic content of the image instead of setting it into question.[2]

When the sign sets the semiotic content of the signified into question, the effect is what Benjamin calls dialectics at a standstill. The fragment 'On The Political Significance of Film' is focused on identifying how this experiential effect can be achieved in 'heartening' film, that is, how the montage effect of radical artists like Heartfield can be used in mainstream 'heartening' film. This, then, is a question of how these techniques, and therefore Benjamin's philosophy, can be termed *useful* in what is framed as an urgent philosophy. I will refer to the usefulness of moments of montage in the following chapters. I begin at the start of the fragment [K3a,1] from the *Arcades* and work through it to the end. To contextualise this fragment, it appears in the Artwork essay in a much shorter form, and the heartening element is removed:

> On the political significance of film. Socialism would never have entered the world if its proponents had sought only to excite the enthusiasm of the working classes for a better order of things. What made for the power and authority of the movement was that Marx understood how to interest the workers in a social order which would both benefit them and appear to them as just. It is exactly the same with art.

[2]Buck-Morss, 1989, p.67–68.

To begin, Benjamin underlines the practical basis of political usefulness—that art must have mass appeal and must reach an audience if it is to have significance. That Marx promoted socialism as *beneficial* to workers and not just a 'better order' indicates an attitude of political expediency that Benjamin believes is relevant to the use of art for political purposes . He continues:

> At no point in time, no matter how utopian, will anyone win the masses over to a higher art; they can be won over only to one nearer to them. And the difficulty consists precisely in finding a form for art such that, with the best conscience in the world, one could hold that it is a higher art.

There is an elitist aspect to Benjamin's writing which could be said to be 'due in part to those intellectual precepts of the Frankfurt School shared by Benjamin, a faith in the intellectual power of a mandarin elite.'[3] Benjamin therefore conceives that a proletariat cannot be moved by the traditional 'higher' art forms (e.g., painting, sculpture, literature). He concludes that a form

[3]Jennings, 1987, p.33. Jennings is writing in relation to the 'intentional complexity' of Benjamin's essay 'The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire.' He is suggesting that Benjamin's writing is not simply complicated by the nature of the subject matter, but also by the attitude of its author. He contextualises this complexity: 'It is clear that this attitude is in part historically conditioned. These were intellectuals in exile, faced with the wholesale barbarization of their cultural tradition. It was important to them to save what was positive in their culture in a form that could resist further degradation.'

'closer' to the masses, but still 'higher' is needed.[4] Benjamin goes on to dismiss the usefulness of the newest experimental forms of traditional 'higher' arts to political action:

> This will never happen with most of what is propagated by the avant-garde of the bourgeoisie. Here, Berl's argument is perfectly correct: "The confusion over the word 'revolution'—a word which, for a Leninist, signifies the acquisition of power by the proletariat, and which elsewhere signifies the overturning of recognized spiritual values—is sufficiently attested by the Surrealists in their desire to establish Picasso as a revolutionary ... Picasso deceives them ... A painter is not more revolutionary for having 'revolutionized' painting than a tailor like Poiret is for having 'revolutionized' fashion, or than a doctor is for having 'revolutionized' medicine."[5]

The breadth of the difference between revolutionary 'acquisition of power by the proletariat' and the revolutionary formal experiments of the avant-garde is underlined by the comparison to fashion and, therefore, fashion's status as the expression *par excellence* of commodity fetishism. Benjamin is rejecting any causal relationship between the 'revolution' of a form and a *political* revolutionary power. Considering his long history of engagement with aesthetics, with surrealism in particular, and his friendship with Brecht, this is a significant statement—Benjamin

[4]Davies, 2009, p.416. The oppositional difference between the avant-garde and mass appeal (kitsch) is usefully spelt out. Stephen Davies describes the difference in his *A Companion to Aesthetics*: 'Avant-garde art is esoteric; mass art is exoteric. Mass art is designed to engage mass audiences. In order to secure a mass audience, the mass artwork has to be comprehensible to the average man or woman on the street. To this end, it trades in widely shared stereotypes and narrative and pictorial structures that are easily mastered by nearly anyone. Mass art, in contrast to avant-garde art, is prototypically designed with the intention that it be very user-friendly. Ideally, the mass artwork is structured in such a way that large numbers of people will be able to understand it effortlessly, virtually on first contact. Avant-garde art—including that which is multiply tokenable due to its provenance in mass production technologies—is typically made to be difficult, to defy, to rebuff, and even to outrage the plain viewer, reader, and/or listener.'

[5]Benjamin, 1999h, K3a,1.

is rejecting any intrinsic political power in the experimental forms which are emblematic of modernism. Of particular interest is the phrase 'the avant-garde of the bourgeoisie.' In Benjamin's late phase he conceives of the avant-garde as commodified by the ruling class. While his earlier belief in ideas of involuntary memory and surrealism inflected montage as critical practice remain in his philosophy and writing—as a form of critique—he rejects the idea that their practice in avant-garde art can transform social relations. Esther Leslie describes this fragment as expressing 'Benjamin's misgivings about abstract, avant-garde film practice and its ' "arrogant" attitude to audiences.'[6]

Any mass art that will compensate for the 'overturning of recognised spiritual values' must appeal through newly established relations to commodity-fetishism and in a 'warming' sense which is 'ultimately heartening.' Benjamin sees this potential in kitsch:

> The masses positively require from the work of art (which, for them, has its place in the circle of consumer items) something that is warming. Here the flame most readily kindled is that of hatred. Its heat, however, burns or sears without providing the 'heart's ease' which qualifies art for consumption. Kitsch, on the other hand, is nothing more than art with a 100 percent, absolute and instantaneous availability for consumption. Precisely within the consecrated forms of expression, therefore, kitsch and art stand irreconcilably opposed. But for developing, living forms, what matters is that they have within them something stirring, useful, ultimately heartening—that they take 'kitsch' dialectically up into themselves, and hence bring themselves near to the masses while yet surmounting the kitsch. Today, perhaps, film alone is equal to this task—or, at any rate, more ready for it than any

[6]Leslie, 2000, p.259, n.53.

> other art form. And whoever has recognised this will be inclined to disallow the pretentions of abstract film, as important as its experiments may be. He will call for a closed season on—a natural preserve for—the sort of kitsch whose providential site is the cinema.[7]

The dialectic image must be considered in relation to these statements. The dialectical image is conceived as an actualising force of philosophical communication. That is, it seeks to reveal and illuminate historical relations. It is meant to be *politically useful* in the same sense that Benjamin is considering the film medium as politically useful. In the same manner that Benjamin considers and critiques the plot and narrative of Goethe's popular novel *Elective Affinities*, any truth content to be accessed, or any message to be communicated, is only successful if the formal arrangement of elements is appropriate to the content. Benjamin's philosophy, and his method, springing as it does from literature, becomes centred on the importance of formal expression and on the necessity to reveal truth through form. So when he considers cinema in this manner it is the form that is of paramount importance. Benjamin here states that, for political usefulness, film only succeeds when it expresses the commodified (consumer) aspect of its form, when its message is expressed in its kitsch form and not in an art or avant-garde form. Anyone who recognises that cinema is fundamentally kitsch will leave the cinema to kitsch. In the Artwork version of the argument, Benjamin valorises slapstick.

That many avant-garde works engage in a critical dialectic practice through *exploding* juxtaposition and frenetic montage does, however, give us insight into how these dialectical images reach their full potential in popular, mass appeal, non-avant-garde cinema. In this research, these films are used to explore the range of cinematic representations that will be considered

[7] Benjamin, 1999h, K3a,1.

akin to the dialectical image. That is, the critical and political montage of avante-garde cinema is considered in terms of its representational similarity, in moments of superimposition and rapid montage, to the *politically useful* dialectical image.

Kitsch art, mass produced, available, accessible and easily negotiated, provides a heartening appeal to its audience. Benjamin believes that the commodified nature of kitsch art can possibly be surmounted within the subject through a dialectical process. Benjamin is never interested in art for art's sake, rather in its political usefulness. For this objective he sees the mass produced forms as most suitable. This is an explicit statement that mass produced, kitsch and easily interpreted forms of art may overcome their base nature through a dialectical reversal. The 'providential site' of cinema returns the fragment to the sense of an opportunistic use of cinema and reinforces the popularity and mass appeal of the medium. He continues:

> Only film can detonate the explosive stuff which the 19th century has accumulated in that strange and perhaps formerly unknown material which is kitsch. But just as with the political structure of film, so also with other distinctively modern means of expression (such as lighting or plastic design): abstraction can be dangerous.[8]

These two lines are a summation of Benjamin's thesis. Benjamin has, to this point, drawn a clear distinction between the values of abstract and kitsch cinema for political application. However, a subtle recovery of abstraction speaks to a dialectical exchange between abstraction and kitsch. On the one hand abstract cinema is useful for experimentation, on the other the kitsch is necessary to reach the masses. In the last two sentences of this fragment it is important to note the sense of moderation in his final construct 'abstraction can be dangerous.' The

[8]Benjamin, 1999h, K3a,1.

provisional *can* leaves a hitherto unexpressed space for abstraction. The explosive detonation of the first line both returns to the language of the dialectical image's potential to blast us from the continuum of history and speaks to the power of abstraction.

In this way the dangerous potential of abstraction rhymes with the fact that 'only film can detonate the explosive stuff.' Therefore the danger of abstraction cannot be construed as undesirable, but rather a force that needs to be contained or controlled.[9]

Benjamin has earlier suggested that kitsch appeal must somehow dialectically surmount its inherent base materialness, and in his penultimate line he expresses that *film* (now neither abstract nor kitsch), can explode the material (capital/industrial) legacy of the 19th century. So while the fragment seems to vilify abstraction and praise kitsch, there is also a controlled space opened for abstraction, a space both in the previous proposal that kitsch can be surmounted dialectically, and in the final '*can be dangerous*'. In this, by suggesting a dialectic 'taking up', Benjamin is proposing the expedient use of kitsch and its negation. Benjamin is proposing that abstract expression retains potential as a spark which can detonate the inherently kitsch film, through some sort of reversal of its kitsch form.

There is then a place, albeit dangerous, for abstraction, but it is prominently overshadowed in its political usefulness by forms of mass appeal kitsch in heartening and warming the audience

[9]The comparison to lighting is also revealing. Light is a recurring motif throughout Benjamin's writing, and has its own convolute—T, Modes of Lighting—in the *Arcades*. The illuminating potential of light—here we are referencing the hermeneutic and metaphoric meaning of enlightenment—is most keenly described in its function in the glass-ceilinged Parisian arcades. It has a revealing and illuminatory function, but also an illusory potential. Its comparison to abstraction therefore reveals a potentially dangerous but nonetheless important function: 'Original projects for city lighting were based on the eighteenth-century Enlightenment's "idea of universal illumination"; but its reactionary potential was anticipated as early as the 1830s: "1836 Jacques Fabien publishes *Paris en songe*. He develops here how electricity through the overabundance of light, produces multiple blindings, and through the tempo of news sending brings on insanity." A century later, urban illumination characteristically obfuscated reality, dazzling the masses rather than aiding them in seeing clearly. Commercial lighting turned shop facades into fairy scenes. Light advertisements created "new types of writing." ' (Buck-Morss, 1989, pp.308–309)

to filmic exposition. It is a hybrid cinema that Benjamin proselytises, kitsch and heartening and warming, but with explosive potential. This is the entire correspondence of this fragment, the expression of a dialectic exchange between abstract and kitsch for political usefulness. In the following chapters, and especially in the examination of cross-dissolves and superimpositions, I consider abstraction within films as just such a potentially explosive and thereby deconstructing element.

The alternative would seem to be a cinema rid of abstraction, a complete break from the Surreal, the Freudian, the optical unconscious, the metaphysical and all the other experimental inflected forms with which Benjamin's writing has long engaged. This is obviously not what Benjamin is saying. From Susan Buck-Morss's reconstruction of the chronology of the *Arcades Project* we can say that this fragment (K3a,1) was produced 'early', that is pre–1935.[10] Therefore this fragment predates the Artwork essay of 1935, which does not itself address antimonies of abstract or kitsch expression but is consistent in its valorisation of film as a revolutionary medium. In its consistency of address to the *mass* form of cinema we can thereby say the Artwork essay is also consistent, if only by the lack of contradiction, in this earlier expression of the dangerous potential of abstract film.

In relation to my application of these ideas to my research, I examine methods of abstraction in the avant-garde films of Strick, Bute and Godard and compare them to 'heartening' films. Broadly, the films discussed by Griffith, Gance and Hitchcock tell the respective stories of a young man saved from the gallows, the love affair and military triumph of Napoléon and the rescue of a motley crew of shipwrecked patriots. With respect to the methods of abstraction displayed in the avant-garde films, I explore how these same methods of abstraction perform a 'taking up' of the heartwarming stories and in produce alternate narratives. By concentrating on

[10]Buck-Morss, 1989, p.47–53.

the montage effects of these films, we can judge the usefulness of the concept of the dialectical image in film.

One further description of how a kitsch performance can become revelatory is described in a 1935 fragment—'The Formula in Which the Dialectical Structure of Film Finds Expression'—unpublished in Benjamin's lifetime but collected in the third volume of his *Selected Writings*. This fragment describes the dialectic exchange between abstract and kitsch, specifically in Charlie Chaplin's Tramp character.

Benjamin describes Chaplin's walk and gait as the most defining feature of his success:

> His unique significance lies in the fact that, in his work, the human being is integrated into the film image by way of his gestures—that is, his bodily and mental posture. The innovation of Chaplin's gestures is that he dissects the expressive movements of human beings into a series of minute innervations. Each single movement he makes is composed of a succession of staccato bits of movement. Whether it is his walk, the way he handles his cane, or the way he raises his hat—always the same jerky sequence of tiny movements applies the law of the cinematic image sequence to human motorial functions. Now, what is it about this behaviour that is distinctively comic?[11]

Benjamin is claiming that the visual form of Chaplin's presentation accurately matches cinematic form. Benjamin believes that Chaplin's movement mocks or mimics cinema and that the audience unconsciously recognises this and finds it comic. That is, *nothing* is inherently funny about Chaplin's movements, except their visual mirror of film form. This undermining

[11] Benjamin, 2002b, p.94.

of the cinematic form, the pointing out of the means of production, is a reversal of the kitsch nature of Chaplin's narratives. Chaplin's bodily expression is an abstraction of expected bodily movement, rather than a continuous flowing motion his body chops through space. Benjamin expresses the significance of this in the opening line of the fragment:

> The formula in which the dialectical structure of film—film considered in its technological dimension—finds expression runs as follows. Discontinuous images replace one another in a continuous sequence.[12]

In the previous fragment, Benjamin has framed the difference between abstract and heart-warming film as a classic dialectic. In this fragment, written contemporaneously with the Artwork essay in 1935, Benjamin explicitly relates his conception of the dialectic in film to the continuous replacement of the image. That is, it is a *fundamentally* visual phenomenon that, while it objectifies narrative, *occurs* visually. In this context, and with the above in mind, it is useful to rehearse the development of the basic dialectic in Benjamin. Following Hegel closely, rather than conceiving of the dialectic as a thesis/antithesis/synthesis movement, Benjamin conceives of it as a thesis-antithesis/sublation movement. This sublation is complicated by Benjamin's explosive and historical particularities. Kaja Silverman addresses the subtleties of the Benjaminian dialectic:

> The dialectical image is not well served by the name Benjamin gives it. It consists not of a thesis, antithesis, and resolution, but rather of something more closely approximating a Baudelairean 'correspondence." It makes manifest the resemblances linking temporally divergent moments to each other, permitting them to

[12]Benjamin, 2002b, p.94.

> 'communicate." These similarities render null and void concepts like progress, development, and cause and effect. As Benjamin himself acknowledges in an important passage from *The Arcades Project*, they therefore bring 'dialectics' to a 'standstill'. Finally, the dialectical image blurs the distinction between word and image.[13]

Silverman is correct that the dialectical image appears to misdirect through its name, and it is precisely this blurring of distinction between word and image which I seek to unravel in this research through a focus on the material visual image. However, Hegel never phrased dialectics in terms of a thesis/antithesis/synthesis relationship. Rather, the 'action' which takes place between the dialectically interacting subjects is called *Aufhebung*, translated into English as 'sublation'—*aufheben* is 'to sublate', *aufgehoben* is 'sublated'. This term is the closest we have to the German original, and was coined specifically for the purpose of communicating the specifics of Hegel's philosophy.

To communicate this critically important term correctly I use a lengthy definition from Glenn Magee and two extended quotes. The definition in Glenn Magee's *The Hegel Dictionary* relates the act of sublation directly to dialectic exchange and states 'the meaning of this term is a key to understanding the dialectic itself'—an insight that justifies this close attention:

> '**sublation (n. *die Aufhebung*; or v. 'to sublate', *aufheben*)** Hegel frequently uses the separable verb *aufheben* in his writings. This word is notoriously difficult to render into English, but in recent years the seldom-used English term "sublation" has become a popular translation (though its use in translations of Hegel actually

[13] Silverman, 2002, pp. 4–5.

> dates back to Stirling's 1865 *The Secret of Hegel*). Hegel explains the meaning of *aufheben* in his *Science of Logic*: "*Aufheben* ... constitutes one of the most important concepts in philosophy. ...*Aufheben* has a two-fold meaning in the language: on the one hand it means to preserve, to maintain, and equally it also means to cause to cease, to put an end to. ...It is a delight to speculative thought to find in the language words which have in themselves a speculative meaning; the German language has a number of such." Thus, *aufheben* essentially means to cancel or abolish, and to preserve or retain. *Aufheben* can also mean to "raise up", which Hegel makes clear elsewhere. Hegel's use of *aufheben* often connotes all of these meanings simultaneously. He frequently employs *aufheben* when speaking of transitions in the dialectic, and the meaning of this term is a key to understanding the dialectic itself.'[14]

We can see how Buck-Morss's various definitions of the sublating effect of the dialectical image attempt to communicate this difficult concept. Her 'unreconciled fusing' and 'gap between sign and referent' communicate these elements of sublation. We must also keep in mind the positive aspect in which the result also 'raises up' and the preserving, maintenance function. For

[14]Magee gives a specific example: 'To take one example, in *The Philosophy of Right* the dialectical sequence family–civil society–state appears. The family is "sublated" by civil society in the sense of being "cancelled": civil society, in which adult individuals compete with one another, is the antithesis of the family, which is characterized by the bond of love. In the state, the divisive relations of civil society are also sublated in the sense of being cancelled: the state binds people together as civil society never can. However, at the same time, in the idea of the state we find the world of distinct, competing individuals preserved or retained. Further, we find that in a sense the state has not only preserved the family in providing a means to secure and protect it, the state has also in effect created a higher type of "family" in which individuals are able to overcome their differences and achieve fellow-feeling through identifying themselves with the nation. Thus, in the concept of the state, the family and civil society are not only "cancelled" (in the sense of being conceptually overcome), but also raised up and preserved. Starker examples are to be found in Hegel's Logic, where, for example, being and nothing are cancelled, raised up, and preserved in becoming. See also being, nothing, becoming; dialectic; ethical life; negation.' (Magee, 2010, p.238)

Benjamin, this 'raising up' through sublation is an inherently positive movement, something that is later challenged by Adorno and Horkheimer in their *Negative Dialectics*.

In the introduction to his translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Science*, George Di Giovanni notes that the uncommon usage of 'sublate' and its lack of an equivalent in English presents a difficulty in communication:

> **aufheben**, **Aufhebung**. The commonly accepted translations of these terms are "to sublate" and "sublation." These are terms of art which were originally coined by Stirling precisely for the purpose of translating the corresponding German words but have now made their way into the OED. Much as I have tried to replace them with words that are just as common in English as the German equivalents are in German, and having even experimented for a while with Suchting's suggestion of "to suspend" and "suspension," I finally had to give up and return to the traditional translations of "to sublate" and "sublation." The fact is that the only common English word which would somewhat adequately render the double meaning of the German *aufheben* is the lowly "to take up" (which, incidentally, is the translation of the Latin *tollere* from which "to sublate" was coined). "To take something up" means "to take it away" while at the same time to "appropriate it." But "to take" is in English an all too widely used word, and with too many shades of different meanings, to allow the technical narrowing that Hegel has in mind.[15]

Di Giovanni refers to James Hutchison Stirling whose 1865 analysis of Hegel explicates the concept of sublation in relation to chemical elements. We can see how Di Giovanni's 'elevating'

[15] Hegel, 2010, p.lxvii.

or 'taking up' is a more precise and modern refinement. Nonetheless, Stirling's original construct stands and contributes to the understanding of the dialectic as it refers to Benjamin:

> Idëel and Moment we can take together, as they both refer to the one process of Aufhebung [...] Water is Hydrogen and Oxygen; in it they are aufgehoben, and become Idëel[...] In this way, one can see how Hydrogen and Oxygen are in water withdrawn, each from its own Immediacy. [...] I drop this Gold into that *Aqua Regia*, and it disappears ; it is aufgebohen, but it is not destroyed[...] it is now a *moment*. In Hegel, however, the *moments* are more than synthetic Differents collapsing to a simple One; each is very much the other, and in consequence of the other, or each, while itself reflected into the other, holds the other reflected into itself, and so is the other [...] All through Hegel, indeed, this reciprocation or mutuation of the moments is the great fact: 'each sublates itself *in itself*, and is in itself the contrary of itself.' *Sublation, resolution, elimination,* &c. will be now intelligible as translations of Aufhebung.[16]

The above definitions of the sublating effect should be considered in relation to Benjamin's statements on the politically useful film and the sublation that he calls for. In the manner in which he suggests films can 'take "kitsch" dialectically up into themselves' we can read Benjamin as proposing a sublating movement between the kitsch and the abstract. That is, whereby the kitsch is sublated through dialectical exchange, all of the above movements need to be considered. These definitions include several seemingly contradictory and difficult concepts whereby sublation means; to preserve, to maintain, to cancel or abolish, to retain, to cease, to put an end to, to raise up, 'to take something up means "to take it away" while at the same time

[16]Stirling, 1865, pp.76–77.

to "appropriate it." "it is now a *moment*' and how 'each sublates itself *in itself*, and is in itself the contrary of itself.'

It is the presentation of discontinuity as continuous that forms the dialectic.[17] This idea of discontinuity suggests images that do not produce a logical or linear expression. However, as we have seen, Benjamin only considers heartwarming, kitsch, mass appeal films as politically useful, and when he proposes that 'Only film can detonate the explosive stuff which the 19th century has accumulated', it is the explosion he is interested in. Given that Benjamin's dialectic explosion is the result of the dialectical image, and given that only discontinuous images are 'The Formula In Which The Dialectical Structure Of Film Finds Expression' and finally that the film must 'take up', that is sublate, kitsch, I hereby attempt a more concrete sketch of the *politically useful* dialectical image in film:

> To be politically useful, a film must have mass appeal and embrace the inherent kitsch nature of its form—it must be heartwarming. Within this structure, the film must sublate the kitsch, that is take it up in a dialectical movement. For Benjamin, the dialectical antithesis of heartwarming film is a potentially explosive abstraction. This explosive abstraction is supplied by the dialectical image. The dialectical image is a material thing, drawn from the film, which reveals a second nature in the film through a flashing up montage.

In my research this description has formed the basis of my understanding and investigation of the dialectical image. There are various implications of this formulation. While 'political

[17] 'The formula in which the dialectical structure of film—film considered in its technological dimension—finds expression runs as follows. Discontinuous images replace one another in a continuous sequence.' (Benjamin, 2002b, p.94)

usefulness' may not be a strict requirement of the dialectic image, the explosive illumination that it generates implies an actuality that is most fully realised in the context of a political awakening and was Benjamin's original intent. And this is Benjamin's claim when he speaks of film's function as a training and innervating mechanism. The definition that I have outlined above opens a space for the analysis of films that have not been examined trough the Benjaminian theory of the dialectical image. As stated, my heartening examples are the films of Griffith, Gance, Chaplin and Hitchcock. My definition above therefore questions the political usefulness of, for instance, Eisenstein or Godard, if we agree that these films fail to find a wide audience through heartening narratives. In these works I recognise the dialectical construction of their form, but identify their films as forms of art, critique or philosophy.

The avant-garde films discussed hereafter are in the main considered as examples of critique that form a correspondence with Benjamin's own philosophical writings. These films provide examples of how montage can express both philosophical insight and abstraction, as we have seen above, and therefore the translation of Benjaminian dialectics to film form. The heartening films discussed hereafter are considered for their moments of abstract sublation, as examples of the dialectical image in its full political manifestation, symptomatic of or contextualising a post-Holocaust 'now-time.'

The importance of allegory to Benjamin as a political form is crucial to an appreciation of Benjamin's writing and philosophy. Buck-Morss describes this importance in *The Dialectics of Seeing*: 'Indeed allegory was the "antidote" to myth, and precisely this was to be demonstrated in the *Passagen-Werk*.'[18] Allegory is especially important to representation because of its brokenness—its ability to operate on several contradictory levels produces ambiguity rather than certainty. This encapsulates the nature of history for Benjamin. Allegories indicate that

[18]Buck-Morss, 1989, p.164.

there is a hidden, elusive meaning that can never be fully resolved or understood. Allegory points to a certain 'unknowability' or put another way it denied the existence of objective truth. This idea then—unknowability—becomes the real story of allegory rather than any actual 'true' meaning contained in the allegorical story. Benjamin creates a temporal and material image for this idea in the aphorism 'allegories are, in the realm of thought, what ruins are in the realm of things.'[19]

Allegory gains particular political significance when Benjamin conceives of certain epochs as engaged with one form of literary, dramatic or artistic representation or another. Benjamin believes that a certain epoch's favoured form of representation both constructs and therefore reveals its second nature. This is made visible through culturally important or popular works of art. For instance, Benjamin conceives of the Baroque period as particularly engaged with allegory, whereas the Romantics favoured symbolism. Modernity has the opportunity to engage with allegory in a very profound way through cinema. Jennings notes: 'Benjamin says of film and photography, allegorical works produce a certain "productive self-alienation" in the beholder. Allegory enables the mass of humans to see their own alienation, to recognize the fragmented, oppressive character of history.'[20]

In the artistic production of allegorical representation there is a tendency to introduce correspondence from diverse sources and periods or from alternative forms. The result produces a non-totalising subjective meditation : 'Because of the great freedom that arises from the insight into allegory's random, nonsignificative character, the sources of this object of knowledge are diverse. Allegorical works raid other, often traditional forms for specifically allegorical

[19]Benjamin, Jephcott and Shorter, 1979, p.17.

[20]Jennings, 1987, p.172.

insights.'[21] This recalls Benjamin's developed style of writing, his dissemination of the debris of history. According to Jennings, Benjamin sees this form of address as possible in film: 'Like certain uses of film and photography, allegorical texts resist assimilation into a tradition of domination.'[22]

Benjamin's allegorical theory is informed by his study of the 19th-century poet Charles Baudelaire. Benjamin argues that Baudelaire chose lyric poetry as his form because, in its traditional rhyming structure, it would have a chance at a lasting appeal for an increasingly over-stimulated, mechanised population. However, Baudelaire did not write symbolic poetry, as was the popular mode, he wrote allegorically. There is a sense, therefore, of the form of Baudelaire's poetry having been rendered in a necessarily functional role in the service of communicating deeper truths. This method of using a simple poetic form to communicate deep truth is similar to Benjamin's idea that kitsch film could provide a Trojan horse for politically useful abstraction.

In his essay, 'Walter Benjamin's Theory of Allegory', Bainard Cowan traces Benjamin's constant return to, allegory as his chosen form: 'Critics and historians have justifiably emphasized the different phases of Benjamin's intellectual life, but what impresses one about his writings on allegory is the essential consistency of their direction throughout his career.'[23] Cowan's essay is a brilliant explanation of allegory in general and Benjamin's use in particular. Here a short review of his essay provides great insight into the philosophical underpinnings of Benjamin's use of allegory.

Cowan emphasises a transformative aspect in the allegorical form: 'In Benjamin's analysis, allegory is pre-eminently a kind of experience' and how this experience is not only an intellectual

[21] Jennings, 1987, p.172.

[22] Ibid., p.176.

[23] Cowan, 2005, p56.

one but how 'the signs perceived strike notes at the depths of one's being.'[24] Benjamin favours allegory as representational form over the 19th-century Romantic preoccupation with symbolism, and Cowan traces Benjamin's justification as laid out in his study of German Baroque mourning plays—*The Origin of German Tragic Drama*.[25]

Benjamin argues that the symbol offers a false knowledge, a 'divine' apprehension, whereby:

> The unity of the material and the transcendental object, which constitutes the paradox of the theological symbol, is distorted into a relationship between appearance and essence. The introduction of this distorted conception of the symbol into aesthetics was a romantic and destructive extravagance which preceded the desolation of modern art criticism.[26]

Benjamin characterises the 19th-century mentality as having conceived of this unity symptomatically in response to the alienation of its fragmenting capitalist environment. Cowan describes this turn away from allegory: 'The symbol, with its hallmark of unity, arose from a mentality that could not tolerate the self-combating tension, the *Zweideutigkeit* within allegory—a tension, however, characterizing human life.'[27,28] The ambiguity of *Zweideutigkeit* is a defining

[24] Cowan, 2005, p57.

[25] Hereafter *Origin*.

[26] Benjamin, 2003e, p.160. This transcendental and material unity is perhaps best exemplified in the theological symbol of 'The Body of Christ', it can be seen in Keats's romantic impulse in 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'

[27] Cowan, 2005, p.58.

[28] *Zweideutigkeit* translates readily as ambiguity, but also communicates a tragic potential. See Samuel Weber's distinction: 'Tragedy, according to Benjamin, has as its distinctive precondition the dominance of myth. It is this dominance that is decisively challenged by the defiance of the tragic hero. His death is interpreted as a sacrifice: a sacrifice of his person to the future of the community, to a people that will no longer be dominated by the (polytheistic) powers of a mythic world, which Benjamin describes with two key words: "demonic" and "ambiguous" (*zweideutig*): "The decisive confrontation (Auseinandersetzung) with the demonic world order gives tragic poetry its historical-philosophical signature. The tragic relates to the demonic as paradox does to ambiguity" ' (Weber, 2008, p.144)

feature of allegory for Benjamin, a nuance that is not always recognised in the form. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* describes the sense of ambiguity in the form of a double meaning:

> The term derives from Greek *allegoria*, 'speaking otherwise'. As a rule, an allegory is a story in verse or prose with a double meaning: a primary or surface meaning; and a secondary or under-the surface meaning. It is a story, therefore, that can be read, understood and interpreted at two levels (and in some cases at three or four levels). It is thus closely related to the fable and the parable. The form may be literary or pictorial (or both, as in emblem-books). An allegory has no determinate length.[29]

In comparison, Benjamin sees the symbol as Medusa-like in its ability to draw the viewer to its gaze, a 'symbolic other that is free from all real conflicts' and which distracts from contemplation or recognition of one's own face, 'the face of history.'[30] Symbolism fails through its attempt to express experience through its redundancy in signifying that which is already signified. The unitary indexicality of the symbol repeats itself in a tautology of expression/experience. Cowan relates this to Derrida's 'Of Grammatology':

> If experience is always already given in signs, insofar as any experience is significant, then the very concept of experience designating as it does 'the relationship with a presence' becomes 'unwieldy' and must be replaced by a term which gives notice

[29]Cuddon and Preston, 1998, p.20.

[30]Cowan, 2005, p.58.

> that the mind in encountering reality is already writing, even at the zero-point of this encounter.[31]

Rather than designating something else that it signifies, allegory becomes its own form of experience. In contrast to an attempt to express experience, allegory represents experience. This is a form of experience that, in its attempts to fill a gap, recognises a lack in the world, that is, a truth which it seeks to reveal. As Cowan explains: 'A substantive notion of truth is the first assumption of any theory or practice of allegory that sees it as more than a usable technique, as rather what Benjamin calls "a constant against the historical variable".' This distinguishes allegory from a post-structural state of semiotic play because 'Truth exists as a goal[...]'. This 'Truth' however cannot be expressed in the manner the symbol attempts. Benjamin distinguishes knowledge as being possessable and presentable whereas 'truth is unpossessable and impossible to present'.[32]

There is a sense in this of allegory representing both an empty and ungraspable experience. This is Benjamin's intent—it is conceived as the representation of an inward melancholia that perceives a lack, or that perceives history as a catastrophe. Its basis lies in the original theological fall from grace. When Jennings describes Benjamin's adoption of Charles Baudelaire as an exemplary allegorist, he summarises: 'Allegory, in its brokenness, is the aesthetic form that bears the most responsible relationship to a history that is a permanent catastrophe.'[33]

Benjamin argues that the content of allegorical form, and its development, provides exemplary insight into the formation of identity and the forces shaping a rapidly changing society—the revelation of second nature. As an artistic vehicle, allegory has a double power in Benjamin's

[31] Cowan, 2005, p.58.

[32] Ibid., p.59–60.

[33] Benjamin, 2006, p.18.

conception. On the one hand, and as outlined in *Origin*, the 17th-century form of allegory displayed by generic 'mourning' plays served to innervate new perceptions of redemption in societies which had been transformed by Lutheran and secular movements.[34] On the other hand, viewed from Benjamin's historical position, these allegories lay bare the societal forces, the superstructures, at work in their time. The crude violence of the mourning plays reveals the destruction and catastrophe of their historical times. This very simple reduction of the dialectical potential inherent in allegory, as Benjamin describes it, corresponds with the power of the sublation of the dialectical image.

Allegory then, for Benjamin, is not an aesthetic or a rhetorical device, rather a priveleged medium that approaches a philosophical construct, almost dialectically opposed to the false content promise of the perfectly signifying symbol. As a medium, and as explored in Chapter 5, allegory is the message in the same manner that Marshall McLuhan conceives of the totalising power of the medium. It is also, ironically, the 'empty' and unresolved aspect of allegorical representation that holds a possibility of redemptive understanding. This manifests as a melancholic understanding that appears again and again throughout Benjamin's writing. In the manner that allegory does not attempt to express truth but rather represent truth, 'Benjamin insists, the truth *is* the form. Representation is thus not to be viewed for its end product but for its process. The activity of representation is the dwelling-place of truth, the only "place" where truth is truly present.'[35]

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[34]Peter Osborne and Matthew Charles describe how Benjamin theorises that in post reformation and increasingly secularised society this redemptive potential takes a melancholic turn as the possibility of redemption fades. The allegorical element of historical suffering is surpassed by present political struggle and injustice. The redemptive possibility becomes conflated with inward melancholia. Mourning plays of the 17th century speak to this changed environment through crude depictions of violence and suffering. (Osborne and Charles, 2012)

[35]Cowan, 2005, p.60.

In his later writing concerning Baudelaire, Benjamin again concentrates on the allegorical power of his poetry. As Benjamin comes to value the allegorical form as a crucial form of critical thinking, inevitably his own writing assumes all the unresolved ambiguities, melancholias and artistic impulses that he understands the form to embody.

The centrality of allegory to Benjamin's dialectical image is related to the New German Cinema of Werner Schroeter by Michelle Langford in her 2006 *Allegorical Images: Tableau, Time and Gesture in the Cinema of Werner Schroeter*. Within this study, Langford especially privileges montage and the Benjaminian fragment. Langford's description of the elements that constitute Benjamin's allegorical model is insightful and relates some of the ideas outlined above:

> Walter Benjamin's theory of allegory is based on a number of structural and conceptual elements including: the privileging of the fragment, the ruin and processes of decay; the destruction or subversion of hierarchies; and the tendency to draw attention to the mode of construction being used, giving it a self-consciously constructed quality.[36]

Theorising allegory as a 'way of seeing' Langford associates the effect of Benjamin's allegorical insight to Giles Deleuze's time-image. This is supported in the context of the time-image evolving from the ruin and rubble of the second world war and in the manner that it challenges an established hierarchy. These ideas relate to Benjamin's concept of history as an ongoing catastrophe, allegories as ruins of thought and the sense of second nature as part of the established hierarchy. Langford argues that allegory is similar to the time-image in its fundamentally fragmentary nature. Langford quotes Deleuze's description of the major features of the time-image

[36]Langford, 2006, p.55.

to support this argument: 'the dispersive situation, the deliberately weak links, the voyage form, the consciousness of clichés, the condemnation of the plot,'[37]

Langford relates the manner in which the time-image creates ambiguity through allegorical form:

> Similarly, for Deleuze, the cinema of the time-image offered new ways of seeing in a world that (due largely to the Second World War) had been subject to processes of fragmentation, destruction and decay. Like allegory, time-image cinema emerges out of the rubble and in doing so generates the capacity for cinema to take on an explicitly allegorical function.[38]

Where the movement-image subordinates time to action—time is only produced through movement—in the time-image movement, action, development are all based on temporal difference. I would argue that in this sense the idea of the movement-image resonates strongly with the Benjaminian idea of second nature where time is understood in terms of progress (movement). In contrast Deleuze's time-image speaks to Benjamin's 'now-time', a concept of time that stands outside linear clock time and relates vastly temporally separate times and events.

To summarise, if through the time-image, cinema is freed to take on an explicitly allegorical function, as Langford suggests, then it uses the same form as Benjamin's dialectical image. In Deleuze's conception of time as the structuring component of modern film experience he privileges temporality over narrative in the same manner that Benjamin's 'now-time' is the key to understanding a true history. Further, the ruinous and catastrophic conditions that precede

[37] Deleuze, 1986, p.210.

[38] Langford, 2006, p.55.

both the time-image and the dialectical image result in respective fragmentary forms. Finally in both cases there is a 'condemnation of plot' in the broadest sense whereby both theories challenge established hierarchies.

Langford's analysis in relation to Deleuze and Benjamin is original and while she does not discuss 'now-time' or the dialectical image in relation to these ideas, I believe it provides a valuable insight which could be developed further. I examine similar concepts in my discussion of Eisensteinian/Symbolic dialectical montage and the Benjaminian/Allegorical montage in Chapter 4 on Eisenstein and Gance.

A short explication of the importance of the concept of interruption as conceived in Benjamin's writing closes this chapter. Throughout this research, moments of montage are described as flashing up within scenes and mise-en-scène. These moments, rapid edits for instance, could be described as 'interrupting.' The concept of interruption describes how Benjamin comes to view interruptions as productive. I say that he comes to view them as such in the sense that he does not originally recognise this potential. Here there appears to be a contradiction in Benjamin's thought whereby on the one hand he warns against the dangers of over stimulation in modernity, and on the other the 'interruption' comes to be understood in his writing as productive. This dichotomy and its resolution are discussed by Howard Eiland in his essay 'Reception in Distraction'. The possibility of revelation in distraction is best described in his observation that even in madness or intoxication, these experiences 'do not necessarily exclude a certain profane illumination'.[39] I discuss the significance of interruption in this regard in Chapter 6 in relation to the intoxicating effect of mise-en-scène.

[39]Eiland, 2005, p.6.

Relating the interruption of montage to Benjamin's own work in the *Arcades*, the form that it takes can seem to be so tangental that each fragment seems to interrupt the previous line of thought. It causes the reader to constantly pause and reconsider their position and train of thought. Quoting Benjamin, Buck-Morss describes how this is a primary methodological intent:

> For Benjamin, the technique of montage had 'special, even total rights' as a progressive form because it 'interrupts the context into which it is inserted' and thus 'counteracts illusion' and he intended it to be the principle governing the construction of the *Passagen-Werk*.[40]

This sense of the interruption as a flashing productive force can be specifically traced to the epic theatre of Bertolt Brecht who Benjamin counted as a close friend. Brechtian drama uses dramatic pauses to both signal its anti-realist impulse and, in a Marxist mode, to engage the spectator in the production. The audience can productively reflect on what has happened and recognise the constructed nature of the play. In this way the play therefore affects a less convincing and monolithic verisimilitude. The flow and rhythm of the narrative is broken and the audience is given time to consider the truth or value of what they have witnessed before it proceeds. This interruption therefore denies the audience what could otherwise be a passive mimetic reception. The audience is thereby engaged in the production of meaning rather than simply recieving a director, playwright or actor's 'message.' Esther Leslie's *Walter Benjamin: Overpowering Conformism* describes it as a productive estrangement:

[40]Buck-Morss, 1989, p.67.

> In Brechtian drama the interruptions of montage counteract the illusion of a completed reality that can be passively consumed and complacently acknowledged by audiences. Passive consumption is seen to be the mode of reception effected by naturalist theatrical mechanisms. Brecht's aesthetic system, in contrast, conveys conditions that are actively 'discovered' through their startling analogies to the real, but are only consciously recognizable and ready for reconstitution in the perplexing moment of their estrangement.[41]

The interruption then corresponds to the sublating moment in that it references the viewer's position. While the dialectical image is engaged with a formal productive shock in the artwork, the interruption is considered primarily from the audience's perspective.

To close this chapter I want to return to the sense of recurrent catastrophe that Benjamin saw as the defining aspect of history. In one of the most famous and lyrical of his passages, Benjamin references Paul Klee's painting and allegorises the concept of history as an irresistible force that leaves destruction piling up in its wake. While Benjamin's description predates the second world war it is impossible to read it in our 'now-time' without the memory of the Holocaust. The following chapters keep this memory in mind as I examine the construction of the anti-Semitic second nature that permitted it, the technological advances that enabled it, and the cinematic representation that reflect it.

> There is a picture by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. It shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face

[41] Leslie, 2000, p.98.

> is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us, he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is *this* storm.[42]

[42] Benjamin, 2003b, p.392.

Figure 2.1: *Angelus Novus* (Paul Klee, 1920)

Chapter 3

The Wandering Jew

Montage Effects · The Task of The Translator · The Real · Anti-Semitism · Christian Utopianism · James Joyce · D.W. Griffith · Joseph Strick · Disney

> —History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake. James Joyce, 1922.[1]

This chapter describes a dialectical image based on the ancient myth of the Wandering Jew. The figure of the Wandering Jew is shown in two films; D.W Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916, US) and Joseph Strick's *Ulysses* (1967, US). In this chapter, the example of heartening film is *Intolerance* and the avant-garde example is *Ulysses*. The chapter introduces various montage effects which I argue can be understood in terms of Benjamin's own literary methods of montage. I support this with reference to Benjamin's own writing on translation. This chapter also begins an exploration of the idea of the Lacanian Real as being closely related to the experience of the dialectical image.

[1] Joyce, 1986, p.28.

The expressions of anti-Semitism that are explored in this chapter are intended to illustrate the way in which images 'flash-up' and thereby the manner in which second nature is both constructed and can be revealed through cinematic montage. I explore the same methods in each of the following chapters. The dialectical image that is constructed is intended to illustrate the sublating effect of the conflicting representations of the Wandering Jew. Just as the Parisian arcades are used by Benjamin to critique the industrial age, the Wandering Jew is representative of the prejudices that fuelled the Holocaust. By examining the representational meaning of its appearance in these two films we benefit from an understanding of our 'now-time' and forms of cinematic representation.

As mentioned above, this chapter begins with descriptions of montage effects that may be said to formally 'flash up' within a film's narrative. Variations of flashing montage effects that are used throughout the rest of my research are differentiated below. These effects include scene cuts, brief moving images, brief freeze frames, rapid montage, jump cuts, cross-dissolves and superimpositions. Superimpositions are shown to be especially privileged in the manner they formally correspond to many of Benjamin's dialectical constructs and in the manner that these images create a sublating or palimpsestic composition from two disparate images.

I use a number of strategies in this chapter to translate and demonstrate the literary concepts discussed in the first two chapters to cinematic concepts. Chief among these strategies is the use of the cinematic adaption of James Joyce's *Ulysses* by Joseph Strick to illustrate montage effects and the manner in which they can sublate heartening narrative. Contemporaneous with Benjamin, Joyce uses a highly citational writing style that is immersed in mythology and is readily compared to montage. I return to Joyce in Chapter 5, again via an adaptation, with an analysis of Mary Ellen Bute's *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (1965, US). This chapter begins

with a literature review of the critical writing that acknowledges the relationship between Joyce's writing and cinematic form.

Benjamin's essay 'The Task of the Translator' provides the framework under which I analyse Strick's *Ulysses*in relation to Joyce's novel. For Benjamin, a successful translation is not one which successfully translates words or phrases, but rather one which translates the essential ideas of the original and takes into account both its reception and historical time. That is, the translation is a new form which should represent the original in our 'now-time'.

Thirdly, I use an insightful analysis by Carlos Gallego in which he notes how the flashing and shock effect of the dialectical image in revealing history is similar in form to the Lacanian Real. This begins an investigation in my research where I examine how the flash of the dialectical image may also be expected to reveal a relationship to the Lacanian Real. Slavoj Žižek's concept of the Imaginary Real and the manner in which it can be just as horrific as the Real is also cited.

Having established these frames of reference for the analysis of Strick's *Ulysses* I show how Strick's use of montage highlights certain elements of the novel, specifically anti-Semitism, sexual anxiety and the death of Leopold Bloom's son. A review of the reception of Strick's *Ulysses* shows how this approach is original.

Taking this framework, an analysis of Strick's *Ulysses* examines moments of anti-Semitic expression and sexual anxiety. These representations are shown to be highlighted by the montage effects shortly described below. Ultimately in Joyce's book the character of Leopold Bloom, the Wandering Jew who spends his day traversing Dublin, is portrayed as a heroic everyman. Similarly in Strick's film an image portraying Bloom cradling a beaten Stephen Dedalus is sublated by the film's single superimposition showing Bloom's dead son, Rudy. Joyce's Wandering Jew is shown to be a complex and sympathetic character.

Having established the avant-garde use of montage forms in *Ulysses*, the chapter continues by examining D.W. Griffith's 'heartening' *Intolerance* for evidence of a second nature construct and dialectical images that reveal it. With the support of scene timings, Griffith's relatively primitive but epic film is shown to feature a wide disparity in the length of its four interwoven narratives. The Judean, or biblical, narrative is foregrounded in my analysis as the narrative with the shortest screen time and the fewest scenes. Within this narrative, anti-Semitic representations of the Wandering Jew are examined and compared to iconographic Christian representations. The anti-Semitic characterisation of the Wandering Jew is shown to be metaphorically represented throughout the film by 'uplifters' and 'meddlers'. The use of montage effects in these depictions is shown to be consistent with flashing montage. The film's utopian finale reveals a fundamentalist Christian message through multiple superimpositions.

A final representation of the mythic Wandering Jew is shown from Disney's *Three Little Pigs* (Burt Gillett, 1933, US). This provides a coda to the chapter's engagement with the cultural memory of the Holocaust and the anti-Semitic expression that facilitated it.

Here a brief description of the biblical story of the Wandering Jew provides some context for the its basic context as anti-Semitic myth. In the 1882 *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* by Sabine Baring-Gould, the earliest extant mention of the myth of the Wandering Jew is attributed to Matthew Paris, who recounts a description from 1282. The story describes how Jesus, on his way to crucifixion, is mocked and struck by a Jewish porter in Pontius Pilate's court. The porter urges him 'Go quicker, Jesus, go quicker; why do you loiter?' Jesus replies 'I am going, and you shall wait till I return.' In this moment the porter is condemned to walk the earth until the second coming.[2] In its original form, the Wandering Jew story is therefore a

[2]Baring-Gould, 1882, p.7–8. The full story from Baring-Gould's book reads: 'At the time of the passion of Jesus Christ, He was seized by the Jews, and led into the hall of judgment before Pilate, the governor, that He might be judged by him on the accusation of the Jews; and Pilate, finding no fault for which he might sentence

Christian myth that describes the Semitic torment of the Christian 'Saviour' at the moment of his greatest suffering.

In the use of the Wandering Jew as a dialectical image, this chapter begins my engagement with explorations of cultural memories that seek to contextualise the conditions that facilitated the Holocaust. To that end, these films demonstrate expressions of anti-Semitism from far outside Germany, Austria, Vichy France or any other countries that can be easily implicated in cooperation or collaboration with Nazi deportation and extermination. Joyce's novel and Strick's film both include anti-Semitic expression by Irish and English characters. Griffith's film demonstrates anti-Semitism at an authorial level. All of these expressions are sublated in expressions of religious or nationalistic ideology, a fact which reveals their constructed, Benjaminian second nature.

This chapter begins by describing the various montage methods available to the film editor. They are all in some way descriptive of a sublating effect in that the act of editing always joins two images, and the result is thereby always potentially indicative of Benjamin's dialectical image. However, within the context of these effects, working within the framework of Benjamin's call for an abstract taking up of otherwise heartening stories, it is the content and context of these sublating images that makes them dialectical. That is, they must, in their specific content and contextual use, be said to interrupt or disrupt classical Hollywood modes of representa-

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Him to death, said unto them, "Take Him and judge Him according to your law;" the shouts of the Jews, however, increasing, he, at their request, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus to them to be crucified. When, therefore, the Jews were dragging Jesus forth, and had reached the door, Cartaphilus, a porter of the hall in Pilate's service, as Jesus was going out of the door, impiously struck Him on the back with his hand, and said in mockery, "Go quicker, Jesus, go quicker; why do you loiter?" and Jesus, looking back on him with a severe countenance, said to him, "I am going, and you shall wait till I return." And according as our Lord said, this Cartaphilus is still awaiting His return. At the time of our Lord's suffering he was thirty years old, and when he attains the age of a hundred years, he always returns to the same age as he was when our Lord suffered.'

tion and to contribute to the sublation of what may otherwise be considered kitsch narrative construction.

The most literal and common manner in which an image 'flashes' up in cinema is in a scene change, where a cut presents a completely different mise-en-scène. This editing action describes montage in its most basic and ubiquitous form. A cut which is rapidly followed by another cut can be described as more indicative of flashing montage by virtue of the fact that a flash appears and disappears rapidly. This we can term a brief shot, and it can be further differentiated as a static or moving shot, depending on whether the scene's content is moving or stationary. This is relevant in the sense that a frozen tableau can, for instance, create effects of calmness or solemnity, or it may, as we shall see, create an iconographic status within the mise-en-scène.

I use the term rapid montage to describe editing that joins several of these brief shots together. This multiplication of images can also be described as flashing montage in the images' rapid appearance and disappearance.

Jump cuts describe shots which cut to broadly the same mise-en-scène thereby creating a sense of sudden motion. In this case, while two different images can be said to be joined together, the sublating effect is much diminished by the similarity of the mise-en-scène. The only example used in my research is in *Ulysses* where a series of jump cuts is used within a rapid montage and in a flash forward, thereby creating a sublating effect through different mise-en-scène.

The overall pace of montage in a film obviously affects what we can term rapid montage, and the pace of the films discussed in this chapter is of particular relevance. For example, while discussing Strick's *Ulysses*, a shot that lasts half a second is relatively rapid, whereas in Griffith's *Intolerance*—a film made before the effective patterns of the classical Hollywood system were firmly established—a shot of several seconds will be shown to be rapid in the overall context of

the film. Similarly, in the case of *Intolerance*, a film constructed with four complexly intercut narratives, the overall length of time dedicated to each narrative is shown to be relevant in consideration of what constitutes 'flashing up'.

Formal methods that visually correspond fully with the sublating movement of dialectical image are the related effects of superimposition, cross-dissolving, and cross-fading. These images create composite forms from two or more images. Howard Eiland's 2005 essay 'Reception in Distraction' provides a summary of the many and varied ways in which cinematic superimpositions correspond with Benjamin's concepts of alternative historicism. Eiland, as one of the two translators of the definitive English version of the *Arcades*, provides a valuable description of Benjamin's extensive recourse to superimposition:

> It is worth noting, in this regard, how often Benjamin returns to instances of superimposition in his evocation of nineteenth-century interiors and street scenes, museums and exhibitions, illustrations and window displays. Such effects play a part in what he calls 'the masks of architecture'. The flâneur sees—or rather feels—the ghosts of earlier times and places haunting the streetcorners and building facades he passes by; the collector, in gazing into the distances of his object, summons up the various stages of its history; the hashish eater is witness to 'the colportage phenomenon of space', a myriad of phantasmal figures and happenings from the past populating the room he inhabits; the man who waits encounters an image of the expected woman superimposed on that of some unknown woman; the young Marcel, at the opening of Proust's great novel, quoted by Benjamin towards the end of Convolute K, finds a whole series of remembered rooms in which he had formerly slept whirling madly through the darkness of the bedroom

> in which he awakens one night in a state of disorientation. In these and many other passages of *The Arcades*...we meet with 'a past become space', a past embedded in things, as the etymon is embedded in a word. Memory is spatialized, at such moments, in more or less perceptible imagestrata, something as in cinematic superimposition, or photomontage. One might also think of it as a collage effect, or a sort of palimpsest, through the translucencies of which the present is inscribed as the 'essence of what has been'. In the experience of a single passage, understood as a threshold in space and time, there may be a coexistence and coming-to terms of distinct events, or levels of an event, including our reception of the passage in what Benjamin names 'the now of recognizability', that critical moment of interpretation at which a particular historical object attains to legibility, is actualized in a particular reading.[3]

Of all cinematic montage effects, the composite form of superimpositions most literally relates to the experience of recognising history in its demystified form. The superimposition visually corresponds to the idea of a sublating image—one image being taken up by another. In this process, in the resulting form that Kaja Silverman describes in my introduction, there is the production, not of a synthesis, but of a correspondence between the two images. This research is specifically investigating the sublation and the taking up of kitsch images through abstraction in heartening film—the superimposition provides one of these forms of representation. This process is recognised in current critical thinking in its applicability to critical, avant-garde and so-called art cinema. Max Silverman, in a similar description to Eiland, describes the manner in which memory and history interpenetrate in a 'palimpsestic structure whereby one element is

[3]Eiland, 2005, p.12–13.

seen through and transformed by another.'[4] This sublation that takes place in this palimpsestic structure is later related by Silverman to Godard's montage and superimpositions in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (2008, France), whereby 'Godard's montage disrupts habitual associations to establish new connections.'[5]

While Godard's *Histoire(s)* are not heartening stories—they are more aptly described as philosophies, critical essays or works of art—Silverman's formulation describes the dialectic strength of the superimposition to reveal second nature. Where Godard uses superimposition to self-consciously establish these connections, I argue that the effect is useful in a symptomatic reading. As stated above, the fate of European Jews in the 20th century is the cultural memory that concerns this chapter.

I define superimposition as the placement within a mise-en-scène of one or more external images through multiple exposure, digital editing or other manipulation. This effect may or may not involve the cross-fading of either image. I use cross-dissolve to refer to the fading in or out of images *between* scenes, again through multiple chemical exposures or other means.

There are many possible combinations of these basic methods. As we will see in later chapters, in the case of directors like Gance and Godard, the imbrication of multiple images can reach epic proportions, to the point where discerning the quantity or content of the images is impossible. However, for the purpose of the dialectical image, the point remains the same—in their deployment within classical and heartwarming narratives these effects are fleeting. For Benjamin they remain 'dangerous' abstractions.

[4]Silverman, 2013, p.4.

[5]Ibid., p.130.

The temporal nature of the cinematic form creates an illusion that is descriptive of Benjamin's conception of the teaching of history as the presentation of an illusion of progress. Similarly, my analyses that follow are not predominantly concerned with narrative story or plot development. While narrative explication is used to contextualise the dialectical images I describe, this serves an overall argument that these revealing images flash up in montage. The concept of 'dialectics at a standstill' which the dialectic image occasions, related to the dramatic pauses of epic theatre, should always be considered as a moment of potential revelation, an interruption to occasion illumination. This quote from the *Arcdes* helps to explain Benjamin's statement of dialectics at a standstill in relation to the superimposition. If we consider cinematic superimposition as standing outside the tradition of temporal continuity we can conceive of them as figural:

> It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, an image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but figural *(bildlich)*. Only dialectical images are genuinely historical—that is, not archaic—images.[6]

The investigation of the cross-dissolve as indicative of the dialectical image is not, then, a question of the movement between before and after, or a movement to a final synthesis of images. Rather, it is a question of an image constellation that forms and the correspondence that occurs as a result—the composite creates a 'figure'. In the sense that Kaja Silverman speaks about the dialectical image blurring the distinction between words and images, so the discrete elements

[6]Benjamin, 1999h, N3,1, p.463.

in the superimposition or cross-dissolve are to be read as signifiers of ideas (words) as much as they are visual elements of narrative development. It is the extrapolation of the correspondence between these image constellations and our historical time that is the revelation of the dialectical image.

It is then my contention that within rapid montage, cross-dissolve and superimposition lie complex and hidden constellations of meaning. Faithful to Benjamin's construct wherein seemingly 'natural' history—second nature—conceals truth, so these moments of montage appear natural within the overall narrative. Hollywood classicism is, after all, predominantly concerned with continuity. The power of the dialectical image lies in its ability to reveal second nature through those very structures which most embody it. In the second nature of commodity and capital fetishism we count the arcades, the gambler, the prostitute, materials that both embody and reveal the constructed nature of the industrial age. In Benjamin's philosophy, this is a formal relationship, whereby the smallest elements of a structure contain the whole.[7] Similarly, flashing montage effects occupy the same atomic relationship to cinematic form. This does not mean that the whole becomes obvious or self-evident in its minutiae, rather that reading these montage effects in their isolation makes a historical understanding of cinematic representation more intelligible.[8]

[7] This is discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to the concept of the 'Monad'

[8] In the chapter 'History and Dialectics' in his *The Savage Mind* (1966), Claude Levi-Strauss discusses the act of dissolving in enigmatic terms which relate to this approach and defends the thesis of reducing the whole for the purpose of analysis: 'I am not blind to the fact that the verb "dissolve" does not in any way imply (but even excludes) the destruction of the constituents of the body subjected to the action of another body. The solution of a solid into a liquid alters the disposition of its molecules. It also often provides an efficacious method of putting them by so that they can be recovered in case of need and their properties be better studied. [...]Levels of reduction cannot therefore be classed as superior and inferior, for the level taken as superior must, through the reduction, be expected to communicate retroactively some of its richness to the inferior level to which it will have been assimilated. Scientific explanation consists not in moving from the complex to the simple but in the replacement of a less intelligible complexity by one which is more so.' (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p.247–248)

With these forms—superimposition, cross-dissolve and rapid montage—in mind, I now explore James Joyce as a writer who engages with cinematic form. This foundation provides a context for a discussion of Benjamin's essay on translation and the reception of Strick's film before an exploration of sublating, flashing montage and the image of the Wandering Jew in Strick's *Ulysses* and Griffith's *Intolerance*. This research id offered as a justification for using Joyce as a bridge from the literary to the cinematic. To translate Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image to the screen I have relied on Joyce as a writer who is profoundly aware of and influenced by cinematic form. This conceptual bridge provides the basis from which I will begin my discussion of the Wandering Jew.

To establish a correspondence between James Joyce's writing and cinematic expression it has become commonplace to mention his role in establishing The Volta, Dublin's first dedicated cinema, in 1909. This connection is revealing; however I believe it is best contextualised by emphasising a phrase from Joyce's *Ulysses* that reveals his depth of understanding of visual representation and also relates to Benjamin's own writing.

One of Joyce's most celebrated expressions of the power of visual representation recalls Benjamin's own preoccupation with the visual and the blurring of text and image. Martin Jay's *Downcast Eyes* (1993), an imaginative and exhaustive investigation of the historical denigration of the ocular and visual in culture, opens with a paragraph that utilises twenty-one visual metaphors to underline the relation between literature and visual experience. Jay's paragraph is constructed to emphasise the reliance of both the written and oral traditions on visual acuity. Within this persuasive fragment, each phrase is a visual cliché, metaphor or idiom. However,

James Joyce's phrase 'ineluctable modality of the visual' is the only idiomatic term which has the distinction of being attributable to an identifiable source.[9,10]

The inclusion of the famous phrasing of this 'ineluctable modality of the visual' not only describes the powerful sensory impact of the visual, be it an image or a landscape; it also signals the significant strength of the materially seen object—that which is visualised. Both gazing subject and the object of the gaze are implicated in the phrase. However, and this is the dialectic turn in Joyce's phrase, the seen object includes the printed word—it has an ironic self-referentiality in both Jay's and Joyce's texts—and in turn these printed words create images. These mental images that are created by words fully express the *ineluctable* nature of the visual—when we read stories, novels, biographies or histories, we cannot but imagine a visual representation of the subject. The blurring of the difference between text and image is thereby poetically formulated.

This 'blurring' describes the manner in which the signification works both ways, and this precisely describes why Benjamin is interested in dialectical *images* and why he conceives of them as the most powerful literary form—they are powerfully visual.

Nicholas Miller describes the textual power of the visual: 'Stephen Dedalus ruminates on the irreducibly textual nature of visual perception[...] The modality of the visible is ineluctably

[9]Joyce, 1986, p.31.

[10]'Even a rapid glance at the language we commonly use will demonstrate the ubiquity of visual metaphors. If we actively focus our attention on them, vigilantly keeping an eye out for those deeply embedded as well as those on the surface, we can gain an illuminating insight into the complex mirroring of perception and language. Depending, of course, on one's outlook or point of view, the prevalence of such metaphors will be accounted an obstacle or an aid to our knowledge of reality. It is, however, no idle speculation or figment of imagination to claim that if blinded to their importance, we will damage our ability to inspect the world outside and introspect the world within. And our prospects for escaping their thrall, if indeed that is even a foreseeable goal, will be greatly dimmed. In lieu of an exhaustive survey of such metaphors, whose scope is far too broad to allow an easy synopsis, this opening paragraph should suggest how ineluctable the modality of the visual actually is, at least in our linguistic practice. I hope by now that you, optique lecteur, can see what I mean.' (Jay, 1993, p.1)

textual: to see is to read.'[11] Joyce, through Stephen, expresses the textual, signifying nature of visual sensation. In the 'ineluctable modality' of Joyce's construct he describes a structural effect of vision which dominates our senses. Joyce continues '[...]at least that if no more, thought through my eyes' and thereby also infers that the visible can be a superficial sensation, can mask deeper meaning, and this insight again points in the same direction as Benjamin's belief that the visual signification of dominant culture produces a second nature.[12]

Joyce's writing has become increasingly associated with cinematic modes of representation; this relationship with film form was recognised early in his career and has been increasingly critically appraised. Joycean academic Derek Attridge notes that: 'the *Evening News* pointed out in 1922 that "his style is in the new fashionable kinematographic vein, very jerky and elliptical" '.[13] In 2001, Thomas L. Burkdall's *Joycean Frames: Film and the Fiction of James Joyce* provided a comprehensive survey of cinematic allusion in Joyce's oeuvre and concluded that 'We must locate the place of the cinema in the history of the modernists and grant the movies their rightful status in the cultural matrix that informs and frames the fiction of James Joyce.'[14] Luke McKernan's 2004 *James Joyce's Cinema* catalogued the opening and programming of The Volta, the cinema mentioned above that Joyce established and briefly managed. Also in 2004, the *James Joyce Quarterly* published a feature section *James Joyce and Film* comprising four articles. Most recently, the 2010 collection of essays *Roll Away the Reel World: James Joyce and Cinema*, edited by John McCourt has expanded the field significantly.[15]

[11] Miller, 2002, p.23.

[12] Joyce, 1986, p.31.

[13] Attridge, 2004, p.77.

[14] Burkdall, 2001, p.99. Burkdall's book provides a thorough history of the academic recognition of cinematic allusions in Joyce's writing with relevant sources dating back to Eisenstein's writing of 1929.

[15] McCourt, 2010.

Derek Attridge's describes Joyce and *Ulysses* in a manner that could be mistaken for a description of Benjamin and the *Arcades*: '[...] he had challenged all who wished to write after him by producing a designedly encyclopedic epic, whose sustained mythical parallelism raised in an acute form the post-Nietzschean and post-Jungian questions of the nature of history as repetition.'[16] The epic and encyclopedic nature of the *Arcades* mirrors Joyce's dense formal experiments, and both writers deploy extensive aphorism, citation and quotation in rendering labyrinthine literary montages. In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce describes the concept of the eternal return by having his book begin on the same line it ends. Benjamin, in his final essay, 'On the Concept of History', writes how 'The basic conception in myth is the world as punishment—punishment that actually engenders those to whom punishment is due. Eternal recurrence is the punishment of being held back in school, projected onto the cosmic sphere: humanity has to copy out its text in endless repetitions.'[17] Both Benjamin's and Joyce's writing is engaged in the exploration of mythological representation—while Joyce creates modern myth with reference to ancient forms, Benjamin reveals their structure.

Burkdall's conclusion above, placing cinema at the centre of Joyce's modernist writing, is developed with specific reference to Chaplin. In a chapter titled 'Cinema Fakes Film and Joycean Fantasy', Burkdall observes an aspect of the 'Circe' chapter of *Ulysses* which corresponds to Benjamin's interpretation of the power of Chaplin's comedic gait and my description of the melancholic automaton in Chapter 5:

> In many of the episodes of *Ulysses*, Joyce also imbues humans with apparently mechanical qualities: reminding one of the machine-like antics of silent film stars such as Max Linder, Charlie Chaplin or Harold Lloyd. The characters in 'Wandering

[16] Attridge, 2004, p.73.

[17] Benjamin, 2003b, p.403.

> Rocks' resemble automatons, comprising the moving parts of a Dublin machine; in 'Sirens," the humans are frequently reduced to brief musical equivalents; while in 'Oxen of the Sun," Bloom, Stephen and the medical students all find themselves subjected to the ventriloquism of the author's gestational/literary-historical obsession; finally, in 'Circe," Bloom's stiff-walk turns his movements into mechanical ones.[18]

A final affinity between Joyce and Benjamin lies in their shared engagement with quotation, minutia and the fragmentary as a store of meaning and revelation. Michael Jennings describes the importance of the seemingly trivial to Benjamin: '[...]by 1927 the concentration on the seemingly inconsequential detail or fragment had long been one of the most important elements in Benjamin's theory of literary criticism.' Jennings catalogues readings of German Idealism as Benjamin's theoretical basis: 'Leibniz's monad, Goethe's *Urphänomen*, Schlegel's aesthetic fragment, and finally Alois Riegl's application of Hegel's concrete universal to art history all play a role here. The immediate result was Benjamin's concept of a "truth content" that lies buried in fragmentary form in the literary work.'[19] Besides a concept of its 'truth content' the analysis of the inconsequential fragment provides an especially fertile opportunity for revelation. Fragments, by virtue of their having escaped the totalising narrative of history, 'have been ignored in the larger process whereby the dominant class ascribes truth value to its ideologically inspired version of history.'[20] In Benjamin's, and it would seem Joyce's understanding, fragments have not yet become co-opted or 'worn out.'

[18]Burkdall, 2001, p.73–74.

[19]Jennings, 1987, p.25.

[20]Ibid., p.25.

Joyce's oeuvre offers the same opportunity for crystallised truth with a broader 'totalising narrative', work which contains so many allusions, metaphors, quotations and puzzles, Joyce famously boasted, that it would keep scholars busy for centuries.[21] Joyce and Benjamin share an affinity for small moments of revelation within broader, sometimes grand and esoteric, narratives.

In the end, however, my research examines cinema experience and effect, and so it is through cinematic adaptation that I explore Joyce's literary montage. This chapter, with recourse to the original text, uses Joseph Strick's 1967 adaptation of *Ulysses* as a *translation*, in the Benjaminian sense, of the original text. Having established the formal methods described above as indicative of the dialectical image, I go on to trace their early expression in Griffith's *Intolerance*.

Benjamin provides his own interpretation of the role of the translation in his essay 'The Task of the Translator'.[22] This essay shares the same philosophy of historicity that Benjamin relates in his formulation of the dialectical image, specifically that the effect of the work of art, viewed historically (as a translation inevitably views its original), must reflect the work of art's historical effect and position rather than any serving a slavish linguistic or signifying repetition. His argument lies in the proposition that a work of art never 'tells' the audience anything, rather it seeks to express 'that which lies beyond communication', he states that 'Translation is a form'[23] and therefore must express the essential elements of the original in its own unique way. As stated, he contends that this translated expression, if it is cognisant of the historical effect of the original, complicates and develops the original. Essentially, any meaning in a work of art is

[21] 'If I gave it all up immediately, I'd lose my immortality. I've put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality' (Ellmann, 1982, p.521)

[22] Benjamin, 1996.

[23] Ibid., p.254.

complicated by history, and translation must reflect this. In elucidating the dialectical image, I read Strick's *Ulysses* translation as corresponding with the anti-Semitism of the Holocaust. I consider Joyce's text as containing symptomatic traces of the historic violence that followed in 1939 and Strick's translation as revelatory of those traces. This method follows Paul de Man's interpretation of Benjamin's 'Translator' essay, whereby he states:

> [...] the relationship between the translation and the original is not to be understood by analogy with natural processes such as resemblance or derivation by formal analogy; *rather we are to understand the original from the perspective of the translation.* To understand this historical pattern would be the burden of any reading of this particular text.[24]

In particular, I take Strick's translated cinematic perspective of *Ulysses* in this chapter to analyse the foregrounding of Bloom's Jewishness, and therefore the questions of Semitic representation in the original, and his status as a cuckold. In establishing a correspondence to dialectical images to represent these narrative elements, I look for the abstract expression in Strick's film in an effort to marry Benjamin's proposal of the dialectical images imbrication with abstract expression and sublating images.

The choice of these tropes proves particularly revelatory in relation to Strick's interpretation of the 'Circe' episode in their representation of aspects of the Subject's relation to the Lacanian Real. This is based on a concept of the dialectical image as revelatory of a 'Phantastic' ideological construct and consistent with Slavoj Žižek's interpretation of Lacanian theory of the Real, whereby the fantasy mask reflects the Real and relates to it. Žižek writes about the Imaginary

[24] Man, 2000, p.22–23, italics added.

Real, a version of the Real which he most often deploys in relation to representations of horror in film:

> Yet the Lacanian notion of fantasy [...], cannot be reduced to that of a fantasy-scenario which obfuscates the true horror of a situation. The first, rather obvious thing to add is that the relationship between fantasy and the horror of the real that it conceals, is much more ambiguous than it may seem. Fantasy conceals this horror, yet at the same time it creates what it purports to conceal, namely its 'repressed' point of reference. Aren't the images of the ultimate horrible Thing, from the gigantic deep-sea squid to the ravaging twister, fantasmatic creations par excellence?[25] [p.190–191]

In this way the fantasy creates its own horror in its masking of the Real horror. Žižek continues: 'A fantasy constitutes our desire, provides its coordinates, i.e. it literally "teaches us how to desire." '[26] Žižek uses the example of Jennifer Lynch's *Boxing Helena* (1993), whereby the outcome of a repressed sexual desire for the Venus de Milo results in fantastic mutilation via bleeding, cutting and penetrating amputations that emulates the statue by creating a perverse facsimile. The relationship of this 'horrible Thing' to the original is in communication with the Real, it references the Real sexual fantasy. The point being, the mask shares representational form, and is in correspondence, with the Real.

If we understand the Lacanian Real as always situated in a repressed history we can move back to a discussion of Benjaminian theory. In a brilliant and succinct insight the relationship of the dialectical image to the Lacanian Real is described by Carlos Gallego. He describes the

[25]Zizek, 1999.

[26]Nobus, 1999, p.191.

potential for both the Real and an understanding of history in its revealed, unnatural state to shock the subject:

> Benjamin's qualification of the dialectical image as 'suddenly emergent' and as 'a flash' highlights its ephemeral nature. However, though the dialectical image is certainly ephemeral in its appearance, its effects can be lasting, perhaps even timeless. The shock effect of historicity can be understood in terms of an impossibility being made evident, much like Jameson implies when he compares History to the Lacanian Real: '[It] is not terribly difficult to say what is meant by the Real in Lacan. It is simply History itself'. In this regard, both History and the Real are, in a sense, constant and ephemeral, accessible only through their effects, like a flash. The dialectical image's enduring effect is thus attributable to its capacity for shock, which is ephemeral in its manifestation but lasting in its influence.[27]

From this I want to point out how the combined observations of Žižek and Gallego provide a useful approach to translation of the dialectical image from the literary to the cinematic. Firstly, the translation can be conceived of as a screen of the Real—the original. More importantly, in their concentration on the Real, these theorists correspond to Benjamin's relation of the task of the translator to translate the essential element of a story in its evolved historical resonance. In the case of Griffith's *Intolerance*, as mentioned in the introduction, I conceive of the religious fundamentalism in the narrative, and its fantastic utopian finale, as masking a Real anti-Semitic sentiment. In the manner that he describes the mask as providing 'coordinates' to the Real, this formulation of religious fervour masking religious bigotry is in agreement with Žižek. Equally, Gallego's relation of the shared revelatory shock effect of the Real and the dialectical image

[27] Gallego, 2010, p.60.

corresponds to anti-Semitic representations in the film. The figure of the Wandering Jew as dialectical image is crystallised around these formulations.

What the identification of this dialectical image reveals is the second nature manner in which anti-Semitism was an integrated and ubiquitous cultural phenomenon. What is truly remarkable is that this film is widely understood an apologia to the racist narrative of Griffith's *Birth of A Nation* (1915, US).

The anti-Semitism inherent in the figure of the Wandering Jew is obvious to us today. What it reveals in the now-time, in the context of its appearance in Griffith's film, is the contemporary power that these second nature constructs had in contributing to the denigration and attempted genocide of the European Jews. While Strick's *Ulysses* is primarily used to aid the translation of the modernist literary form to film, the Real nightmares of *Ulysses*—anti-Semitism, a dead child and cuckolding—create further phantasies and nightmares of anti-Semitic prejudice, psycho-sexual humiliation and illegitimacy that manifest in montage and dissolved dialectical images. However, within the character of Joyce's Bloom we can identify a different correspondence to the Wandering Jew stereotype that provides a final dialectical turn and contributes to the dismantling of second nature. As a Greek Jew ('greekjew' as Joyce calls him) we have a protagonist, a hero even, who synthesises the two traditions that are the basis of all contemporary Western religion, philosophy and culture—Hellenic and Judaic. By highlighting this unequalled legacy, Joyce provides perhaps the most effective dismantling of the second nature of the Wandering Jew stereotype.

A short review of the critical reception of Strick's *Ulysses* shows the limitations that an attempt to frame the adaptation in terms of the original creates. Rather than opening space for

discussion of an essential meaning in the original, or the relation of Joyce's historical work to the present, the discussion veers towards the translation of form rather than meaning.

Within the high modernist academic context of Joycean studies, within the context of the totalising narrative that *Ulysses* presents, it is perhaps unsurprising that, as Margot Norris says in 2004 in relation to Strick's adaptation: 'Academic criticism of the film has been surprisingly scant [...] and surprisingly negative.'[28] In contrast, she characterises its popular critical reception as overwhelmingly positive. Quoting from press reviews, including a *Los Angeles Times* review that describes it as 'a remarkable achievement, a further chapter in the maturity of film,'[29] Norris asks how the tepid academic reception can be reconciled with these reviews. This question is compounded by the film's wider public and industry success. As Norris notes earlier in her short monograph, the film opened in a thousand cinemas in the US, was nominated for a Palme D'or at Cannes, and recouped its entire production cost in one year-long run at a London theatre.[30]

This lack of academic appreciation remains resolute. As Norris points out, 'Three further books on film and fiction by Joyce critics (Morris Beja, Richard Pearce and Thomas Burkdall) mention the film barely, if at all.'[31] Anthony Finn's analysis, also in 2004, is indicative of Joycean academic approaches to the film. Finn writes: 'In this article I will discuss Josef[sic] Strick's 1967 film of James Joyce's *Ulysses* in relation to his faithfulness to Joyce's novel [...]'[32] Invariably Joycean criticism orbits this question, whereby it is asked whether Strick's rendering is faithful (a word which carries a burden of reverence) to its source material.[33]

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[28]Norris, 2004, p.70.

[29]Ibid., p.71.

[30]Ibid., p.26–27.

[31]Ibid., p.70.

[32]Finn, 2004, p.64.

[33]Ironically Finn concludes that: 'Arguably, the commitment to textual fidelity undermines the narrative aspects of Strick's work.' (ibid., p.64)

Keith Williams's analysis in 2010 also misses the opportunity to 'view the original through the translation.' In the introduction to his essay he states that:

> This essay examines how Joyce's 1922 novel extends the classical principle of *ek-phrasis*—verbal imitation of visual representations—into the age of moving images. In turn it considers in what ways this literary 'cinematicity' is engaged with in the film adaptations of *Ulysses*.[34]

Williams provides an excellent overview of the possible correspondences with cinema in Joyce's novel—including montage, parallel action, quick change, stop motion and so on—and analyses both Strick's adaptations and Sean Walsh's 2003 *Bloom*. While it is a thorough and insightful investigation of these adaptations' varying fidelity to the original, it reaches the conclusion that: 'Wisely, neither aspired to the impossible, i.e. 'allincluding' fidelity matching modernism's most ambitious epic in content *and* form.'[35] This is a predictable outcome, any reader of Joyce could conclude that another form, any form, would inevitably fail judged by 'fidelity' to the original. As Williams points out, the films don't attempt the impossible—to judge them by that standard is unhelpful. In this manner, Strick's adaptation of Joyce has always been viewed in comparison to the original, rather than as its own original work, or as the reinterpretation that it inevitably is.

So these approaches are the opposite of Benjamin's entreaty to view the original through the translation, they ignore the development and reception of the original—the work's afterlife. These approaches also presuppose that in a new form, the translation *should* and could remain

[34]Williams, 2010, p.158.

[35]Ibid., p.171, italics in the original.

somehow faithful to what, especially in the case of Joyce's complicated narrative, will always be a subjective reading. Benjamin's 'Translator' essay:

> For a translation comes later than the original, and since the important works of world literature never find their chosen translators at the time of their origin, their translation marks their stage of continued life.[36]

Benjamin contends that in time, when a work's significance is understood, translation is possible. This stage marks a continuation and, in fact, a development of the original. Benjamin's argument is based on both the change of form in a translation and its temporal distance. As discussed above, Benjamin differentiates between a bad translation by 'transmitting'—that is, trying to *relay* the original—and a good translation, which tries to communicate 'that which lies beyond communication' and 'the unfathomable, the mysterious, the "poetic"'.[37] Benjamin continues:

> Translatability is an essential quality of certain works, which is not to say that it is essential for the works themselves that they be translated; it means, rather, that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability.[38]

This also points to how we should translate the literary dialectical image to film. While Benjamin describes formal elements of the experience—montage, flashing up, dialectics at a standstill, interruption—that provide directions to identification of the form in film, it must always be the content that qualifies the dialectical image. This is an image that reveals the

[36] Benjamin, 1996, p.253.

[37] Ibid., p.253.

[38] Ibid., p.254.

constructed, false aspects of second nature, while also embodying it in the dialectical sublating sense. The conception of this image as the mask in the encounter with the Lacanian Real provides a useful corollary.

It is the 'specific significances inherent in the original' in the quotation above that I now wish to examine. In the identification of moments of significance in Strick's film, I identify aspects of his presentation that are in agreement with Benjamin's abstract versus heartening formulation, that develop the afterlife of Joyce's cinematic novel and that prove appropriately translatable. These moments manifest in rapid montage, cross-dissolve and superimposition. I then apply this analysis to Griffith's *Intolerance* to find if occurrences of these stylistics can be said to be indicative of dialectical images in his early classical film form.

We are introduced to Bloom in Strick's *Ulysses* through a voiceover from an English character named Haines. As his dialogue overlaps from a previous scene, Bloom is shown in a kitchen preparing food. Haines, in conversation with Stephen Dedalus, remarks 'Of course I'm a Britisher, and I feel as one. I don't want my country to fall into the hands of the Jews. I'm afraid that's our national problem just now.' Strick cuts on the word 'Jews' showing Bloom preparing breakfast at home, thereby establishing his Jewishness (see Fig. 3.1 on the next page).

The scene continues with the voice of Bloom's wife, Molly, off screen, shouting 'Poldy! Hurry up with that tea, I'm parched', and a shot showing Bloom ascending the stairs with a tray (see Fig. 3.2 on the following page). The action cuts to a bedroom interior with Molly reclining in bed, she chastises Bloom with the line 'What a time you were' as Bloom pours her tea and delivers her mail (see Fig. 3.3 on page 99).

This scene establishes the characteristics of Strick's Bloom in a number of fundamental ways. Strick's cut on the word 'Jews' in Haines's dialogue most obviously links Bloom to Haines's

Figure 3.1: Bloom making breakfast. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 8min 08sec.

Figure 3.2: Bloom brings Molly breakfast. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 8min 37sec.

anti-Semitic expression and establishes his Jewishness. Strick has edited Joyce, whose original text refers to 'German jews'.[39] In this, Bloom becomes more pointedly the object of anti-Semitism than in Joyce's original text. Similarly, the omission of the 'German' qualifier marks the anti-Semitism as a universally applicable prejudice and not a specific political or historical one—otherwise it could be attributed to Joyce's historical time. Strick therefore takes a specific

[39]Haines's line is an adjustment of Joyce's text, which reads:'—Of course I'm a Britisher, Haines' voice said, and I feel as one. I don't want to see my country fall into the hands of German jews either. That's our national problem, I'm afraid, just now.' (Joyce, 1986, p.18. Joyce uses the lowercase 'jews' throughout.)

Figure 3.3: Bloom pours tea and delivers mail. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 8min 40sec.

historically situated prejudice and, through a moment of montage, applies it definitively to Bloom. Strick's use of cinematic parallel action to achieve this anti-Semitic slur is particularly pointed when we consider Strick has amalgamated scenes from two episodes of Joyce's text, in Joyce's text the scenes are separated by some thirty-two pages and two intervening episodes.[40]

This first denigration of Bloom is immediately reinforced by a second characterisation that is built upon in the scene and throughout the film: Bloom's costume of an apron over his clothes is an emasculating invention of Strick's—there is no apron mentioned in Joyce's text. While Joyce's text conveys the same emasculation through Bloom's interior monologue and extended dialogue with Molly, Strick's visual acuity achieves the same translated effect. Through the conflation of this visual invention with the anti-Semitic slur, Strick has encapsulated the major traits of Bloom that he is to emphasise throughout the film.

Strick's placement of the camera above Bloom as he ascends the stairs diminishes his stature, and as he performs the role of servant in pouring his wife's bedside tea he delivers a letter that sets the appointed time for an afternoon tryst with the character Blazes Boylan. Ostensibly a

[40]This page count relies on the reconstructed edition edited by Hans Walter Gabler et al. (Joyce, 1986).

business appointment, this meeting is in fact a cover for intended adultery, and Strick indicates the fact with a montage that can be properly described as avant-garde or abstract. Montaging four jump cuts and an image of Boylan over four seconds, Strick portrays Molly and Boylan progressing from flirtation to consummation in Bloom and Molly's marital bed (see Fig. 3.4 on the following page).

Bloom is aware of Molly's infidelity, and through these rapid jump cuts the viewer shares the same premonition of impending adultery that Molly and Bloom are privy to. This moment points to the dialectical image insomuch as it fulfils the criteria of a moment of dangerous abstraction in an otherwise heartening story as defined in my introduction. Dangerous both in its illicit Real content and in the sense of Benjamin's fear of audience alienation; jump cuts are far outside the tradition of classical, or heartening, cinema practice that the film has faithfully followed to this point. The jump cuts also serve as a most literal formal translation of the flashing effect that Benjamin ascribes to moments of insight—like lightning, blink and they are gone.[41]

While it may qualify on these formal levels, the test of a dialectical image must be at the level of its revelatory nature. That is, Benjamin's Parisian arcades embody capitalist 'second nature', that which has become seemingly natural—all at once obvious ciphers for commodity fetishism but whose significance had nonetheless become culturally invisible through the sheer saturation and progress of industrial capitalism—I would suggest that the 'specific significance' that Strick attaches to Bloom's status as a humiliated Jewish cuckold speaks to a reading of history that considers the plight of the Jewish people in the 20th century as understood within the same sort of 'second nature.' Bloom is further denigrated as the film progresses.

[41] 'In the fields with which we are concerned knowledge exists only in lightning flashes.' (Benjamin, 1999h, N 1, 1)

Figure 3.4: Rapid montage. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 9min 34sec. - 9min 38sec.

How is this supported by this nascent dialectical image of the Wandering Jew? Strick reads in Joyce's novel representations of anti-Semitism that, as Margot Norris states below, in the 1960s still had resonance at a global level—this film was made two years after *Ship of Fools* by Stanley Kramer (examined in Chapter 6), an Academy Award-winning feature that allegorises the spiral of anti-Semitism that led to the Holocaust. Strick's translation of Joyce's 1922 novel is perhaps *most* interesting in its engagement with historical representations of anti-Semitism. At a time when assimilation of the cultural memory of the Holocaust was still only beginning, Strick's film complicates the place of Joyce's novel in the modernist canon by translating and foregrounding its representations of anti-Semitism.

If we consider again the anti-Semitism expressed by Haines in the overlapping dialogue at the start of the scene—'I don't want my country to fall into the hands of the Jews. I'm afraid that's our national problem just now'—as a nationalist territorial fear of Semitic power and domination, and then consider Bloom as the film's Semitic representative, we are shown the unfounded and indeed ridiculous nature of Haines's prejudice. Bloom is incapable of territorial claims, domination or usurpation. In fact the opposite is true, Bloom is shown to be usurped and cuckolded, he is unable to control his own territory, his home or even his marital bed. The anti-Semitic threat is thus a fantastic construct. It is nonetheless true, however, that this fantastical threat becomes fascist ideology and has catastrophic historical reverberations.

In its use of montage, in the unprecedented use of jump cuts, this scene heavily underlines what may otherwise, from our historic Benjaminian viewpoint, be viewed as an 'emptied out', exhausted response or jaded cliché in the reception of Joyce's novel—Bloom's status as a cuckold. Again we should read this obviousness, in the same way that Benjamin reads the shopping arcades as obvious but nonetheless revealing signifier of consumerist ideology. The revelations are in the details of the arcade, its iron construction, its inhabitants, the manner in which it

is a fake interior. Perhaps the most incendiary detail of Bloom's cuckolding is his knowledge and even facilitation of it, these questions are addressed below in relation to early 19th-century theories of degeneracy.

The markedly cinematic flourish of these jump cuts also reveals the cinematic apparatus in a manner similar to Benjamin's claims for Chaplin's mocking gait. While Joycean studies necessarily grapple with the often overdetermined complexities of the novel, Strick cuts in this series of images to the core—a sexual inadequacy in Bloom's marriage—a Real encounter that lies at the troubled heart of the novel. Strick's interpretation then fixates, I would argue, on these two intertwined characteristics of psychosexual drama and anti-Semitic history.

Margot Norris, in one of the few thorough analyses of the film, writes that:

> Strick's decision in the 1960s to foreground anti-Semitism, with its magnified post-World War II resonances, as the dominant political theme of the film of *Ulysses* can consequently be read as a progressive manoeuvre in the face of the critical and literary ethos of the time.[42]

This progressive claim is based on her analysis that the 'New Criticism' of the 1960s valued formalism over politics and that Strick's privileging of the anti-Semitic content in *Ulysses* was a choice which was out of step with prevailing critical temperament. Norris goes on to observe that this reading suppresses an alternative representation, one which might have dealt with Irish political and national concerns. A similar view is shared by Joseph Kelly:

[42]Norris, 2004, p.73.

> Strick's film is notable today for its largely depoliticized version of the novel. While it is true that he foregrounded Joyce's criticisms of anti-Semitism, Ireland itself is relegated to the local colour of the story. In Strick's hands, Joyce has little to say about colonialism or nationalism.[43]

In a similar vein, Norris writes that in 1966 'The film was made in an Ireland just prior to the new convulsions that wracked Northern Ireland[...]', whereas 'In the 1960s, anti-Semitism still reverberated as a global problem that could fruitfully replace British Imperialism as a universal figure of oppression.'[44]

While it may be fair to say that the film had little to say about colonialism or nationalism in an overtly Irish context, the foregrounding of anti-Semitism, in its 'post-World-War II resonances', points to a directorial intent that is nonetheless engaging with real political aspects of the novel. In its direct address to anti-Semitism it confronts the atrocities of the Jewish Holocaust, which as Norris points out were still relevant.

In this manoeuvre, in a manner which I would argue reveals a bias of interest, Norris undermines what is clearly Strick's intent by suggesting his anti-Semitic narrative is some sort of replacement, a stand-in, for the real story of British imperialism. This is despite the fact, which Norris acknowledges, that little to none of Strick's content is invented.[45]

Rather, it should be argued that this manner of address is global rather than local, that it approaches questions of nationalism, colonialism and the subaltern in a manner which self-consciously frames the discourse of *Ulysses* such that questions of anti-Semitism become the

[43] Kelly, 2008, p.532.

[44] Norris, 2004, p.73–74.

[45] Ibid., p.47. The script was, she says, 'strictly limited to Joyce's own words.' As we have seen, this is not entirely true, her statement does not consider omission, conflation, concatenation of scenes and allusions.

predominant concern, as is Strick's reading and directorial choice. This is in concord with Benjamin's 'Task of The Translator'.

This may also explain why the film met such great academic resistance and why Joseph Kestner finds that 'Strick's *Ulysses* is a strange amalgam of popular success and academic flop.'[46] Norris and Kelly can be said to be expressing dissatisfaction with Strick's film in its lack of fidelity to the novel by omitting narratives which speak to Irish national concerns. Norris, critical of Strick's decision to ignore the historical setting of the book, argues that '[...] a period film set in turn-of-the-century Ireland could have glossed more effectively the dense texture of allusion incident that continually gestures towards Irish colonial history [...]'.[47] This may be the case, but in translating the novel to the 1960s, Strick has created the opportunity to tell a different story, one that addresses nationalism and subjugation but which is also cognisant of more recent historical events.

The scene contains one further image which further denigrates Bloom and cements the viewer's impression of him as a Jewish 'womanly-man'.[48] When Bloom playfully models Molly's undergarments by her bedside, his feminine characterisation is further reinforced. Again, while this scene conflates some of Bloom's later expression of interest in women's clothing, it can nonetheless be described as an invention of Strick's, this action does not take place in Joyce's description of the scene (see Fig. 3.5 on the next page).

Our next encounter with Bloom is introduced by Strick in a very similar manner to the ironic juxtaposition of Haines's anti-Semitic prejudice and the reality of Bloom's kitchen cuckold identity. Strick returns to the Stephen Dedalus narrative, again manipulating Joyce's episodic

[46] Kestner, 2004, p.344.

[47] Norris, 2004, p.74.

[48] 'Professor Bloom is a finished example of the new womanly man.' (Joyce, 1986, p.403)

Figure 3.5: Bloom modelling. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 10min 05sec. - 10min 10sec.

structure to produce parallel action. At the end of a scene of Stephen in discussion with the school headmaster, Mr. Deasy, Strick again cuts to a new scene featuring Bloom as the dialogue overlaps. The discussion between Dedalus and Deasy climaxes as Deasy tells a joke:

> Deasy: I just wanted to say, Ireland they say, has the honour of being the only country that never persecuted the Jews, do you know that? No. And do you know why?
>
> Dedalus: Why sir?

Deasy: Because she never let them in. She never let them in, that's why.[49]

Deasy's laughter continues on the soundtrack while the film cuts to Bloom as he exits a shop displaying a Star of David (see Fig. 3.6 below). Bloom's Jewishness is thereby further underlined by Strick in a manner again unmotivated by the novel (nowhere does Joyce describe a Star of David in a shop window). The historic misapprehension that is the premise of Deasy's joke is revealed in this shot, and the image can be described as all at once 'taking up', 'negating' and otherwise sublating Irish Jewish history. In Strick's film of 1967, this 'joke' has a far greater significance than its literary precedent of 1922. Strick's choices can be said to reconfigure our understanding of anti-Semitism in the early 20th century and produce new cultural memory that is drawn from high modernism but exists in 1960s popular culture. *Ulysses* was a box office success, we can therefore claim it to be politically useful in the sense that it reached, and engaged, the masses.

Figure 3.6: Bloom and Star of David. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 16min 04sec.

When Strick cuts to Bloom framed with the Star of David, he has moved to the streets of Dublin where he remains for the majority of the film. In this mise-en-scène, we move to the

[49]Joyce, 1986, p.30.

representation of anti-Semitism coded at the most basic level of Joyce's book—the Wandering Jew. The city-wide and day-long journey that Bloom takes is indicative of a caricature that Timothy Martin describes as 'the Wandering Jew, embodied in Joyce's most celebrated creation, Leopold Bloom.'[50] The Wandering Jew is a medieval construct and is explicitly Christian in origin. In medieval anti-Semitic legend, a Jew was said to have cursed Jesus on his way to be crucified and was punished by having to wait for Christ's Second Coming.[51] This medieval anti-Semitic caricature inspired Goethe in his plans for an epic poem—'Der ewige Jude'—which translates as 'The Eternal Jew'.[52]

To briefly contextualise this caricature we can consider Nazi propaganda posters which crudely illustrate the stereotype. These images exist within the wide body of material that was produced for the purposes of othering the Jewish people and was ultimately used as justification for the catastrophic violence of the Holocaust (see Fig. 3.7 on the next page and Fig. 3.8 on page 110). This image as propaganda reaches its apotheosis in the 1940 propaganda film *The Eternal Jew*, directed by Fritz Hippler (see Fig. 3.9 on page 111). There is a striking correspondence in Baudelaire's poem 'The Seven Old Men' to Fig. 3.9):

> He wasn't bent, he was broken, and his spine
> formed so sharp an angle with his legs
> that his stick, as if to add a finishing touch,
> gave him the carriage and the clumsy gait
>
> of some lame animal or a three-legged Jew!

[50] Martin, 1990, p.49.

[51] Mercatante and Dow, 2009, p.1024.

[52] Ibid., p.1024.

He pounded past in the mud and slush as if
his shabby boots were crushing dead men's bones—
Hostile, rather than indifferent ...[53]

Figure 3.7: Nazi propaganda poster at Yad Vashem Museum, Israel

Joyce, and Strick, turn these caricatures humorous; as described above, the first mention of national concerns becomes ironic in the cut to Bloom in his apron. When the stereotype is directly invoked twice more in *Ulysses*, it is caricatured and then lampooned through exaggeration. Joyce's writing succinctly describes elements of the stereotype and provides a context for the visual representations above and those we will see in *Intolerance*. First, when Buck Mulligan sees Bloom at the National Library, he uses the phrase in mock awe and fear: '—The wandering

[53]Baudelaire, 1983, p.92–93.

Figure 3.8: Nazi propaganda poster at Yad Vashem Museum, Israel

jew, Buck Mulligan whispered with clown's awe. Did you see his eye? He looked upon you to lust after you. I fear thee, ancient mariner. O, Kinch, thou art in peril. Get thee a breechpad'.[54]

Again, in the hallucinatory episode when Bloom assumes the form of 'Reuben J Antichrist.' We get such a comprehensive inventory of anti-Semitic slurs that the list becomes farcical:

> *(Reuben J Antichrist, wandering jew, a clutching hand open on his spine, stumps forward. Across his Joins is slung a pilgrim's wallet from which protrude promissory*

[54]Joyce, 1986, p.179.

Figure 3.9: *Der Ewige Jude* (*The Eternal Jew,* Fritz Hippler, 1940, Germany)

notes and dishonoured bills. Aloft over his shoulder he bears a long boatpole from the hook of which the sodden huddled mass of his only son, saved from Liffey waters, hangs from the slack of its breeches. A hobgoblin in the image of Punch Costello, hipshot, crookbacked, hydrocephalic, prognathic with receding forehead and Ally Sloper nose, tumbles in somersaults through the gathering darkness.)[55,56]

[55]Joyce, 1986, p.413. Italics in original.

[56]Roger Sabin, in tracing the provenance of the character 'Ally Sloper', a cartoon character with an oversized nose from the English *Punch* magazine from 1867, claims the character went on to inspire Chaplin's 'Little Tramp.' (Sabin, 2003).

As we can see, Joyce mocks the stereotype, Bloom is ultimately a hero in Joyce's novel. However, the correspondences to anti-Semitism that Strick highlights indicate the relevance of the characterisation to Bloom's fellow countrymen. Strick leaves us in no doubt that the cultural memory of early 20th-century anti-Semitism encoded in Joyce's book had just as much, or more, relevance in 1967. As we shall see, the humorous turns of Joyce and Strick are missing from Griffith's 1915 film.

Before briefly considering the 'Circe' episode in Strick's adaptation, I want to contextualise its representations by another conflation of scenes that Strick molds from Joyce's text. At the centre of Joyce's text and narrative, almost literally—on page 313 of 644 in the Gabler edition—the act of infidelity erupts in Bloom's mind as he considers his sexuality and marriage. As he masturbates on Sandymount strand, both to the thoughts of the liaison at his home and as a girl—Gerty MacDowell—on the shore exposes herself to him, the text is interrupted nine times by the word 'cuckoo'. Later in the hallucinatory 'Circe' episode it is repeated three times.

Strick does not attempt to communicate this Freudian signifier in his own depictions of these scenes but instead adapts it for his reinterpretation of the most notorious scene of anti-Semitic content in the novel.

As Bloom eats and drinks at Barney Kiernan's pub, Strick inserts a cuckoo clock that trumpets 'Cuckold' four times to remind Bloom that the time of his wife's infidelity is approaching (approximately 4.30pm). The image of the cuckoo is displayed for approximately half a second and motivates a brooding reaction shot from Bloom. Strick also places Boylan in another part of the pub, another invention, which facilitates a deep shot that frames them both (see Fig. 3.10 on the following page).

Figure 3.10: Boylan and Bloom, Cuckoo, Reaction. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 38min 04sec. - 38min 34sec.

When Boylan departs the bar, the scene continues with Bloom subjected to a concerted tirade of abuse from a character known simply by the nationalist moniker 'The Citizen'. Bloom is initially ridiculed by questions alluding to his wife's infidelity and relationship with Blazes Boylan. He is asked if his wife is going on a singing tour with Boylan and responds 'My wife? She's singing, yes. I think it will be a success too. He's an excellent man to organise, you know. Excellent.' The scene progresses until Bloom is challenged by The Citizen 'Do you even know what a nation is?' and 'What is your nation if I may ask?' and his response 'Ireland, I was born here, Ireland' elicits a spit from The Citizen.

As a response to his goading, Bloom makes several impassioned statements, and Strick uses elements of Joyce's text nearly verbatim from the novel:

> —And I belong to a race too, that is hated and persecuted. Also now. This very moment. This very instant. —Robbed. Plundered. Insulted. Persecuted. Taking what belongs to us by right. At this very moment, sold by auction in Morocco like slaves or cattle. —I'm talking about injustice. —But it's no use. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life. —Love. I mean the opposite of hatred.

When Bloom briefly leaves the bar, the patrons mistakenly come to the conclusion he has gone to collect winnings from a horse race. There is a discussion of how Bloom is deeply changed since the death of his son. How he prepared for fatherhood by shopping for baby clothes, a point that draws ridicule from The Citizen. The Citizen makes his feelings known on Bloom's return: 'Mean scut. There's a Jew for you! All for number one. Cute as a shithouse rat.' As

Bloom is bundled out of the bar, he responds: 'Mendelssohn was a Jew and Karl Marx and Mercadante and Spinoza. And the saviour was a Jew and his father was a Jew. Your God.'

Bloom is interrupted by his companion, who tries to defuse the situation stating 'He had no father. That'll do now.[..]' Bloom, undeterred, responds 'Well, his uncle was a Jew. Your God was a Jew. Christ was a Jew like me.' At this, The Citizen attempts to assault Bloom, who escapes in a car.

The scene has built from Bloom's private ruminations on his wife's infidelity to questions of his Jewish identity and its relation to his nationality, and finally to a climax that introduces the question of the paternity of 'The Saviour' and the celebration of divine cuckolding inherent in Catholic mythology.

In this context, the image of the flashing cuckoo, transplanted by Strick from elsewhere in Joyce's novel, condenses all these allusions. Strick's cuckoo is imbricated in the allegorical birth of Christ, in the questioning of the legitimacy of Jewish national identity and, finally, in Bloom's private cuckolding. The cuckoo, in Strick's translation, becomes overdetermined in its signification, in its sudden and brief celluloid appearance can described as a flash of the Lacanian Real.

In turning to the 'Circe' episode, a quote from Steven Helmling identifies a correspondence between Joyce's Freudian inflections and Benjamin's own writing. While Benjamin's Freudian engagement is notoriously uneven—most visible in 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire'—this quote does indicate a shared canon that is in contrast to Benjamin's contemporaries, and indicates the viability of associating the dialectical image with the Lacanian Real:

> Adorno was wary of any assimilation of his own project to psychoanalysis (the closest he comes, and it is not very close, is his late lecture 'The Meaning of Working Through the Past'; and his work holds itself much more aloof from Freud than that of such colleagues as Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, or Herbert Marcuse, let alone Benjamin, whose methexis in Freud brings him closer to the Joyce of the 'Circe' episode than to the practice of any member of the Frankfurt School.[57]

In the 'Circe' episode, Joyce's correspondence with cinematic form is widely accepted. In his introduction to *Roll Away the Reel World: James Joyce and Cinema*, John McCourt, quoting Keith Williams, states 'In more recent times, with contributions from Thomas Burkdall, Austin Briggs, and practically all the contributors to this volume (among many others), it has become increasingly clear that cinema played a vital role in *Ulysses*, especially in "Circe", with its "protean deformations of time, space, body and identity" '[58] The abstract quality in these scenes is at the level of content, while there are a vast number of differing mise-en-scènes, the surreal, unlikely and fantastic content renders an abstract quality that is complemented by a fast, if not rapid, edit.

These eclectic deformations provide some explanation for Norris's observation that '*Ulysses* had close to 2000 camera set-ups, compared to the average film, which has three or four hundred.'[59] From the 150 pages that make up the fantasy episode in the novel, Strick depicts multiple sequences that reinforce the caricature of the degenerate Jew. Included are a courtroom scene where Bloom is accused of propositioning prominent Dublin ladies with obscene letters, and where Bloom is shown to be excited at the prospect of corporal punishment. Bloom is further

[57] Helmling, 2003, p.15.

[58] McCourt, 2010, p.5–6.

[59] Norris, 2004, p.25.

denigrated in a scene where a doctor describes his examination as revealing that Bloom is an exhibitionist, prematurely bald from self abuse and a virgin, he continues:

> Professor Bloom is a finished example of the new womanly man. His moral nature is simple and lovable. Many have found him to be a dear man, a dear person. He is a rather quaint fellow on the whole, coy though not feeble minded in the medical sense. Another report states that he was a very posthumous child. I appeal for clemency in the name of the most sacred words our vocal organs have ever been called upon to speak. He is about to have a baby.

The speech is delivered by the Doctor to an audience of Bloom's male acquaintances, including Blazes Boylan—his wife's lover—who sniggers at the diagnostic revelations. Strick takes the dialogue almost verbatim from the novel. However, the audience featuring Boylan and the location and mise-en-scène is entirely his own creation. Instead of an audience of the general public on Dorset Street (as in the novel), Bloom's humiliation is exacerbated by his naked vulnerability on an examining table in front of his peers. (see Fig. 3.11 on page 118 and 3.12 on page 118).

A critical overview of the conflation of Bloom's sexual humiliation with anti-Semitic expression is traced by Robert Byrnes in the *James Joyce Quarterly* article, 'Bloom's Sexual Tropes: Stigmata of the "Degenerate" Jew'. Byrnes catalogues the psychiatric research that influenced Joyce's portrait of Bloom, including Krafft-Ebing, Jung and Freud. Byrnes implicates a broad historical context in the characterisation:

> Joyce's templating of Bloom on Krafft-Ebing resonates with wider historical obsessions than critical memory may appreciate. Degeneracy theory had quickly

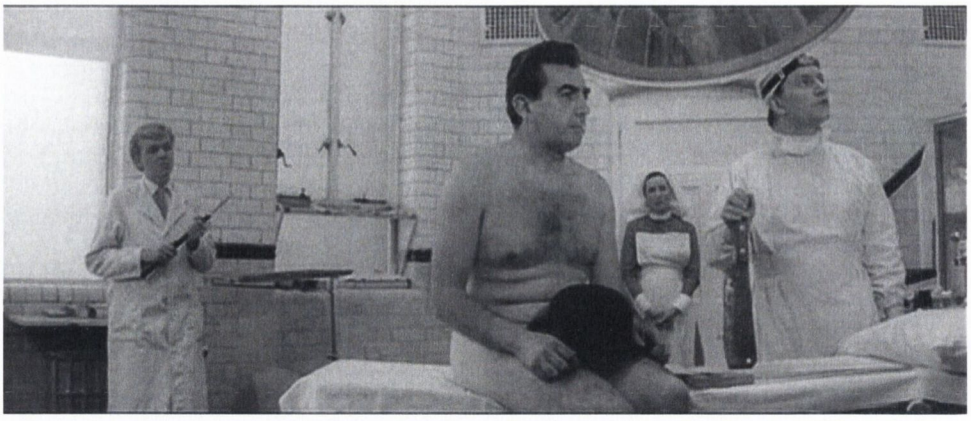

Figure 3.11: Bloom's humiliation. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 69min 3sec.

Figure 3.12: Boylan sniggers at Bloom. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 69min 22sec.

emerged from its medical context to invade the social sciences and to infuse culture criticism. For a number of reasons it found ready soil to grow in. In part the model of hereditary taint was consistent with the social determinism the European academy had inherited from Comte. In part its argument seemed congruent with that of Darwin's *Origin of Species*; degenerate lines, will-less and perverse, would presumably extinguish themselves. But the model clearly appealed to the larger European imagination as a metaphor for its own intensifying cultural malaise.

> Political radicalism, sexual perversion, aesthetic decadence seemed to pass via the very seed of the elders into more virulent expression in their young.[60]

Strick has heightened the humiliation of Bloom from material whereby, as Byrnes points out: 'Maurice Samuel, writing in the Jewish journal *Reflex*, thought Joyce had resurrected the "medieval tradition of the Jew-monster, half-comical, half-horrible, wholly grotesque," in order to "work an immortal classic around it." ' Byrnes also highlights Richard Ellmann's biographical research that: 'traced Bloom's Jewishness and androgyny to Otto Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter* (*Sex and Character*), an anti-feminist, anti-Semitic work which, after assigning character and intelligence to men and will-less mental vacuity to women, lumps all Jews, male and female, with the intellectually disenfranchised women.'[61]

Byrnes ultimately argues that Joyce was affecting high comedy and shared none of the anti-Semitic prejudices or beliefs described in the novel, his claim is based on the contention that: 'By 1914 the works of both Krafft-Ebing and Weininger had lost their status as science and had come to look like ingenious reinventions of humoral psychology.'[62]

Writing in 1999, Erwin R. Steinberg disagrees with Byrnes. In his essay, 'Otto Weininger's "Sex and Character" Was Never "Prime Material for a Comedy" ', Steinberg details how, in fact, Otto Weininger's book was republished twenty-two times, right up to the publication of *Ulysses* in 1922. Further, he shows how theories of eugenics, as described in the writing of Weininger and Krafft-Ebing, still in circulation, influenced a US Supreme Court decision in support of sterilisation in 1925.[63]

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[60] Byrnes, 1990, p.307.

[61] Ibid., p.304.

[62] Ibid., p.305.

[63] Steinberg, 1999.

Strick's denigration of Bloom is equal to Joyce's. As his interpretation of 'Circe' continues and, in a series of rapid scenes, Bloom's humiliation becomes complete as he is cross-dressed, ridden, sat upon, used as an ashtray and beaten by a fantasy circus mistress (see Fig. 3.13 on page 120). In this scene, in the same way that he derives erotic enjoyment from his cuckold status, the depth of 'degeneracy' in Bloom's character is communicated by virtue of his participation and *enjoyment* in his sado-masochistic treatment.

Figure 3.13: Bloom dominated and emasculated. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, Ireland) 75min 19sec & 75min 57sec.

Strick's characterisation of Bloom is notable in the fact that it precedes the 1975 publication of Joyce's erotic letters to his wife, Nora. Mirroring the fetishisation of the dominant female,

humiliation, erotics of flatulence and references to anal intercourse, the honesty and directness of their expression prompted admiration from Slavoj Žižek. As he describes the difference between what he terms the 'virtual image' of someone, that image with which we each generally deal with each other, and the Real:

> I'm dealing with the virtual image of you. And this image has reality, in the sense that it, none of the less, structures the way I am dealing with you. And then this idealization is crucial. The negative proof, a wonderful one, would have been letters between James Joyce and his wife Nora. Where, as far as I know, they went very, very far, almost to the end, into accepting each other in the vulgar reality of bodies. Like, all the sounds, the bad smells, etc. That was even part of their sexual interaction. It's incredible. I admire this in Joyce.[64]

Again Žižek reminds how the mask—if we consider *Ulysses* as in some way representation of Joyce himself—forms a close relationship the Real. Finally, in the closing scene of the 'Circe' episode, Strick uses the *only* superimposition in the film to portray a scene of intense psychological drama. In a manner that spectrally resurrects Bloom's dead child, Rudy, an image of the dead child fades into a tableau of Bloom cradling Stephen's body after he has been assaulted. The child has previously been shown in a bedside photograph in the jump-cut bedroom scene, Strick's narative thereby links the death of the child with Bloom's sexual inadequacy, as does the novel. This shot is broadly narratively consistent with Joyce's story, which reads in the original:

> BLOOM: [...](Silent, thoughtful, alert he stands on guard, his fingers at his lips in the attitude of secret master. Against the dark wall a figure appears

[64] Wright, 2004, 2min. 54sec.

> slowly, a fairy boy of eleven, a changeling, kidnapped, dressed in an Eton suit with glass shoes and a little bronze helmet, holding a book in his hand. He reads from right to left inaudibly, smiling, kissing the page.)
>
> BLOOM: (wonderstruck, calls inaudibly) Rudy!
>
> RUDY: (gazes, unseeing, into Bloom's eyes and goes on reading, kissing, smiling. He has a delicate mauve face. On his suit he has diamond and ruby buttons. In his free left hand he holds a slim ivory cane with a violet bowknot. A white lambkin peeps out of his waistcoat pocket.)[65]

These words are the final lines which draw the fifteenth chapter to a close, in the corrected text they are also the final lines of the second of the three 'books' which make up *Ulysses*. Strick, in his singular use of the superimposition, has attempted to convey the gravitas of the moment—the horror of the Real become manifest.

Rudy's appearance as a spectral visitor is consistent with the comprehension of moments of the dialectical image as representative of explosions of the Lacanian Real. It also fulfils the definition of a moment of abstraction. Rudy's young death is framed in the novel as an originating cause of Bloom and Molly's psychological and sexual distance. The tragic death of their first and only child assumes the form of a teleological lightning rod which explodes their relationship and interactions—it is the nature of their history from which they find it impossible to awake. Bloom, in this image of the Wandering Jew on the streets of Dublin, is a complex and entirely sympathetic character. He is the Judaic Hellenic hero who, in the popular idiom, we are rooting for. This figure should be kept in mind when we turn to Griffith's entirely one-dimensional Jewish character.

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[65] Joyce, 1986, p.497.

Figure 3.14: Rudy from beyond the grave. *Ulysses* (Joseph Strick, 1967, US) 84min 03sec - 84min 04sec.

Strick's characterisation, then, foregrounds not just historical anti-Semitic prejudices and theories of racial degeneracy, of theological mythology and Christ's legitimacy, the horror of the Real and questions of national identity, but it also forms a constellation with Joyce's authorial voice and biographical history. Strick communicates all of these tropes through moments which engage with representations that conflict with classical narrative techniques; they rely on rapid editing, superimposition and surreal content. In the climactic and unique use of superimposition of the spectral Rudy it can also be argued that Strick references the history of cinema itself and the early 'trick' films of directors like Georges Méliès. [66]

Taking these insights, I want to begin again at the birth of so-called classical cinema and consider the evolution of these techniques in the context of a dialectically opposite representation of Jewishness that is nonetheless less contemporaneous with Joyce. Miriam Hansen writes extensively on Griffith's *Intolerance* in her 1994 book, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*. Hansen's close analysis of the film identifies Griffith's heavy use of intertitles in the film as evidence of a literary correspondence in the film and Griffith's self-identification as a writer. In particular she focuses on Griffith's attempts to delineate his American cinema as a type of universal language, a modern cuneiform or hieroglyphics. This literary dialogue is complementary to a correspondence with Benjamin's dialectical image, and Griffith is also a contemporary of both Benjamin and Joyce. Further, Joyce's writing has been extensively linked to Griffith's innovations.[67] These connections form the basis of a constellation and correspondence between Joyce, via Strick, and Griffith. Again, Griffith's literary aspirations contribute to the translation of the dialectical image to cinema.

[66] This appreciation for the development with film history is also consistent with Strick's single use of jumpcuts within the film, a much more recent development associated with Godard's 1960 *Breathless*.

[67] Burkdall discusses Griffith separately four times in one hundred and twenty-three pages. Williams mentions him in relation to parallel editing (Williams, 2010, p.166). Norris notes allusions to *Birth of a Nation* (Griffith, 1915, US) in *Finnegans Wake* (Norris, 2004, p.13)

I use brief elements of Griffith's lengthy film to correspond to the images of the Wandering Jew described in Strick's film. The dialectical image described places Griffith's Christian iconography and utopian Christian finale in the role of constructed second nature. The history that it hides, or masks, is the film's anti-Semitic content. This content is therefore described as 'flashing up', the Christian imagery and, indeed, narrative dominates.

Within the framework of the dialectical image as a sudden sublating instance that interrupts a heartening story, I want to concentrate mainly on two stories from Griffith's four allegorically parallel narratives of intolerance through the ages. The first story concerns a modern melodrama that centres around a downtrodden working-class couple who are victimised by moral crusaders and capitalist society. Ultimately, their baby is taken away from them and the husband is only saved from wrongful execution through a last-minute dash to the gallows. The second story employs Judean biblical stories of Jesus to illustrate his life as a battle against intolerance through messages of goodwill and kindness. Griffith's film contains two further narratives—a historical Babylonian epic and a narrative of Huguenots in the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in Paris—another Christian story.

There is no equivalent to Strick's jump cuts in Griffith's early cinema. Nonetheless, an analysis of Griffith's division of screen time between each narrative reveals a pattern of emphasis whereby the Judean story can be said to provide a Benjaminian flash of insight or an occasion of elucidating fragmentary knowledge.

Considered at a level of montage, the four narratives increasingly overlap each other as the film progresses. This is especially true as the film reaches its climax and Griffith uses montage to increase tension and suspense. The film is divided into two acts, and in the second there are 15 scenes of a length of one minute or less, in the first act there is only one. In the 167-minute

running time of the film, only 17 minutes are spent on the Judean narrative, and it contributes the shortest scene of the film. Interrupting a scene from the modern story and depicting an image of Jesus proselytising to children, it lasts only 13 seconds, and is also the aforementioned only scene with a running time under one minute in the first 108 minutes.[68,69,70]

A comparison of each narrative in Table 3.1 demonstrates that the Judean story is represented in only eight of the film's fifty-four scenes and less than a sixth of the screen time of the two main narratives (modern and Babylonian). While the Huguenot story is not represented to a much greater degree, the Judean narrative nonetheless remains the most fragmentary. As we shall see, there are further aspects of its presentation that mark it as deserving of closer inspection.

Table 3.1: Comparison of scene density and screen time between different eras in *Intolerance*

	Modern	Judean	Huguenot	Babylon
Number of scenes	20	8	9	14
Total screen time	01:02:16	00:16:58	00:18:24	01:05:21

As mentioned, the shortest scene is from the Judean narrative. It depicts a biblical tableau scene (Luke 18:16) and is preceded by the intertitle 'Suffer Little Children'(see Fig. 3.15 on the next page). The emotional impact of this image is heightened considerably by the fact that it is preceded by a scene from the modern story where the young couple's child has been taken into care by force. The modern scene ends with an image of the mother desolate, collapsed on

[68] A definitive version of *Intolerance* does not exist, complicating the process of comparing shot lengths. Versions of between 166 and 198 minutes exist, the longest of these owe their extended length to slower playback transferred to VHS and DVD. Griffith also edited different versions up to 1926. There is, however, only one disputed biblical scene—the adulterous woman parable—which has a sightly extended diegesis in the longer versions. I have taken all timings and stills from the 2013 Cohen Media blu-ray restoration.

[69] In the context of discussing the screen time of the four narratives in *Intolerance* I am using the term 'scene' to describe the continuous representation of the particular era on the screen before a switch to a different narrative era.

[70] For a breakdown of the individual timings for each scene please see Table A.1 in Appendix A on page 402, for scenes sorted by scene length please see Table A.2 in Appendix A on page 403.

the floor. The injustice of the loss of the child to moral reformers is keenly communicated in this attempt to parallel the mother's suffering with the parable of Jesus's love and care of children. Following this brief biblical interlude, the film returns to the modern narrative.

Figure 3.15: Suffer Little Children. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 80min 33sec.

The imposition of an image of this brevity within a different narrative is unique in the film in its own right, but the imposed scene is also unique in its stationary camera position and its lack of action. The carefully composed image, with Jesus at its centre, is literally an iconic reference. This same formulation can be applied to the next shortest scene in the film, again interrupting the modern narrative, this time at the climax of the story. As the young man, wrongly accused of murder, awaits his execution, Griffith cuts to biblical Calgary and the triptych of crosses. This time the image is held for 19 seconds before switching back to the modern narrative (see Fig. 3.16 on the following page). The scene can be said to to depict little or no action in the

19 seconds, but the shot is composed of a number of superimposed images including crucifixes, the crowd, a starburst sky and a background, the result is a surreal fantastic landscape.[71]

Figure 3.16: Calgary. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 163min 16sec.

The third shortest scene is again Judean and for 22 seconds it depicts Jesus carrying the cross on his way to crucifixion.[72] In comparison to the others, this scene has several brief cuts within it depicting crowd reactions (see Fig. 3.17 on the next page).

Jennings writes that 'As Benjamin is at pains to clarify, dialectics is for him the collision of static images.'[73] These biblical images that Griffith chooses are not just practically static in

[71] Due, it appears, to rudimentary technical skill, the superimpositions also slightly but discernibly fade in and out while vibrating in the frame.

[72] Another scene is also 22 seconds long and depicts a Babylonian racing chariot which is cross-cut with the modern car chase.

[73] Jennings, 1987, p.208.

Figure 3.17: Carrying the cross. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 161min 40sec.

the filmic sense, but they are static in the sense of the iconic signifiers they communicate. The goodness of Jesus, his subsequent suffering and crucifixion, these images serve as reminders and reinforcements of stories that carry deeply ideological baggage. The scenes are economical and static because the ideas they communicate are already deeply embedded in culture. For Griffith they have dialectical power when parallelled with his modern story, they add weight to his denouncement of the reform movements that had lobbied for the censorship of *Birth of a Nation*.[74] The equation, through the cross-cutting of biblical injustice with his modern story, performs an economical narrative function.

[74] Hansen states that: 'Thus the founding myth of *Intolerance* is crucially intertwined with the masking of racist ideology in and surrounding *Birth*, just as the film's attack upon uplifters and "meddlers" conflates contemporary reformers with the tradition of abolitionism denounced in the earlier film.' (Hansen, 1994, p.164)

So the biblical narrative, despite its relative shortness in the overall narrative, constructs a deeply Christian, sublating image—through intercut montage we can say that it takes up and inflects a Christian ideology into the entire film. As a narrative shorthand for a story intolerance, it is uniquely used by Griffith in his montage.

Miriam Hansen is a celebrated Benjaminian scholar, and her reading of the Artwork essay is considered a critical contribution in its English language reception. While Hansen's analysis of *Intolerance* does not discuss the dialectical image—she is broadly concerned with the manner Griffith attempts to establish American cinema as the definitive in *Intolerance*—she does, however, provide an insightful descriptions of the first scene of the Judean narrative. She states that:

> The space of the Judean episodes is one of devotion, drawing the viewer into a semicircle of familiar images—hence no need for an illusionist diegesis—while the time of ritual suspends both narrative and historical time.'[75]

Hansen is arguing that each of the narratives has its own cinematic form, a strategy that ultimately serves to reinforce the modern narrative as superior, marked as it is by Griffith's own methods and style.[76] This suspension of historical time, however, which Hansen will argue is frustrating to the audience, can also be interpreted as underlining the timeless authenticity of the Judean narrative, its weight as religious dogma, and also therefore its timeless truth and value. As Hansen continues 'The temporality of devotional space [...] becomes thematic in the first, and only fictional, episode of the Judean set.'[77] In this case, this first scene, although

[75] Hansen, 1994, p.178.

[76] Hansen notes that: 'As a number of critics have pointed out, the individual narratives allude and partly respond to different types of film then competing for the favors of American audiences'. (ibid.)[p.174]

[77] Ibid., p.178.

fictional, gains *devotional* veracity from its association with the 'non-fictional' Judean scenes (including depictions of the Marriage at Cana, the Woman Taken in Adultery and those scenes already mentioned).[78] Hansen describes this first scene:

> A sequence of nineteen rather tightly framed, alternating shots shows how the Pharisees [...] interfere with the activities of people in the street—a potter working at his wheel, a toothless old man eating, and a youth carrying a heavy bundle—by forcing them to pause in a kind of freeze-frame effect for the duration of the Pharisees' prayer.[79]

The depiction of the Pharisees in this scene is a negative caricature in the extreme, and the intertitle that introduces them performs a peculiar series of functions (see Fig. 3.18 on the following page).

The intertitle first announces 'Certain hypocrites amongst the Pharisees'. By using the word 'Pharisees', Griffith again makes a claim to authenticity and historicity. As Hansen notes, Griffith's films were heavily promoted on the basis of the research and academic rigour that was undertaken in their development. This is borne out by the qualification 'Pharisee—A learned Jewish party', which serves as an explanation for the audience, as we shall see, this can be understood as 'An educated Jew', a designation that had a particular meaning at the time. So this particular Pharisee is portrayed as a hypocrite. However, I would also argue that the intertitles implicates *all* Pharisees and all 'learned' Jews. This is achieved first by the formulation 'Pharisee—A learned Jewish party' and then by the second imterrtitle which references 'these

[78] It is introduced with the intertitle 'Ancient Jerusalem, the golden city whose people have given us many of our highest ideals, and from the carpenter shop of Bethlehem, sent us the Man of Men, the greatest enemy of intolerance.'

[79] Hansen, 1994, p.178.

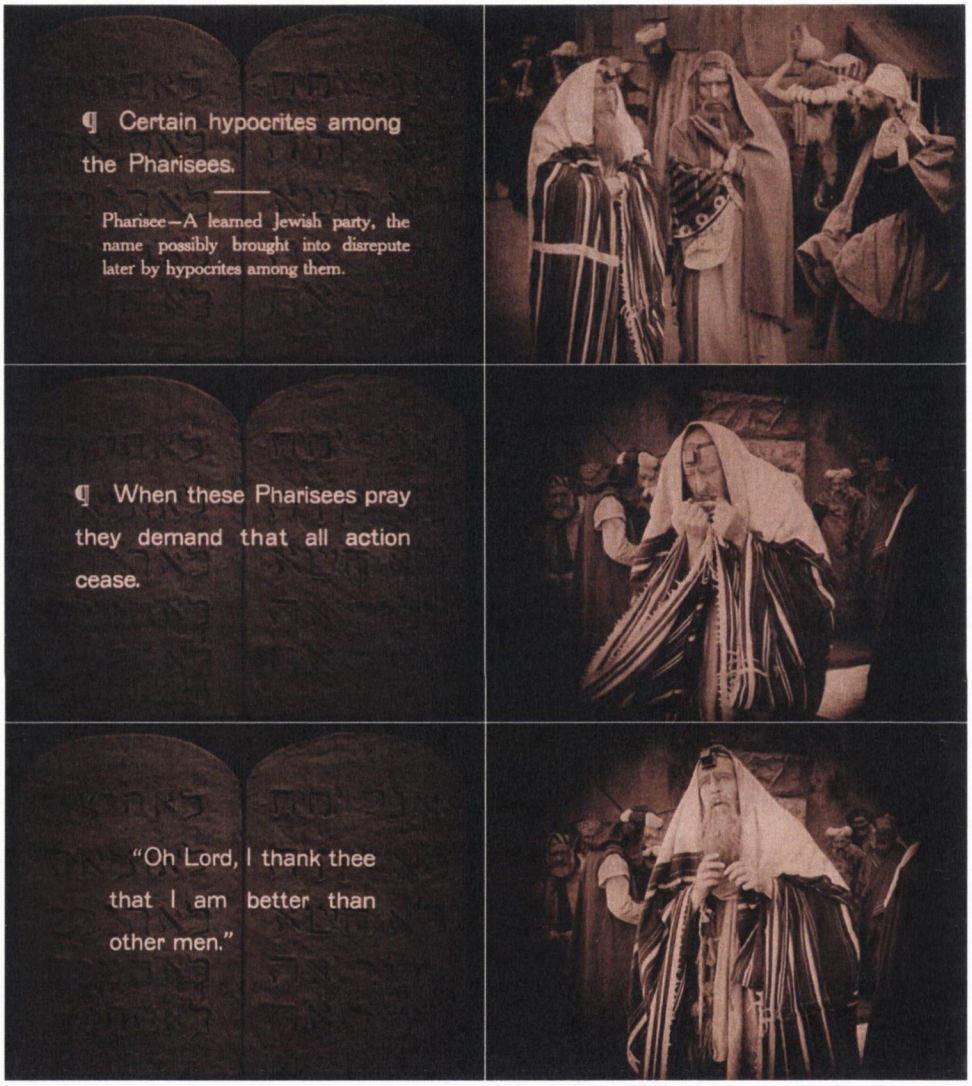

Figure 3.18: Pharisee. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 8min 34sec. - 9min 07sec.

Pharisees' rather than 'these hypocrites' or 'these hypocritical Pharisees.' The emphasis is focused on Jewish characterisation rather than a hypocritical nature. An audience could further view the education of Jews in a generally negative light.

While this interpretation of the intertitle is debatable, the fact that the Pharisee depicted is 'a learned Jewish party' is clear. As Hansen notes, the Pharisees 'interfere with the activities of people in the street' to the point that they cannot work, are overburdened and even forced to stop chewing mid-mouthful. The image of the Pharisee praying is intercut with these figures caught in what Hansen calls 'a kind of freeze-frame effect' (see Fig. 3.19 on the next page). For a scene introduced with a promise of the 'Man of Men' (i.e., Christ), it is a strange and surreal departure.

Griffith further denigrates the Jewish character with an intertitle that reads 'Oh Lord, I thank thee that I am better than other men.' The Jewish character is self aggrandising, lacking humility and his religious practice causes disruption and hardship to those around him. I would draw attention to the fact that the character is literally introduced as a Wandering Jew as he walks through the streets of Bethlehem. Contextualising this as forming a Benjaminian dialectical image, we can see how the 'freeze frame' effect that his prayers have on the film's presentation and action performs the same arrest and moment of abstraction as Strick's jump cuts and Chaplin's bodily innervations—the apparatus of the cinema is foregrounded and provides a moment of heightened ideological revelation. The abstract quality of this frozen shot only finds a corollary in the iconic image of Jesus, in this sense it is perverse inversion.

As discussed, the interruption of the modern narrative by the Judean story attempts to parallel injustice and intolerance through the ages. The hypocrite Jew character finds a counterpart in the 'modern reformers' as the main cause of suffering in the modern allegory. When the film

Figure 3.19: Waiting for Pharisee to finish. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 9min 28sec. - 9min 50sec.

returns to the modern narrative, an intertitle explicitly refers to the reformers as Pharisees (see Fig. 3.20 on the following page).

While a history of Jewish Americans' characterisation as 'uplifters' is beyond the boundaries of this research, a short reference from Bruce Afran and Robert A. Garber's *Jews on Trial* (2005) does provide some context. In 1916, Louis D. Brandeis was appointed to the US Supreme Court; he was the first Jew to be appointed to the highest court, and his nomination was not without controversy. Former Attorney General George W. Wickersham, in correspondence with former President William Taft, both in opposition to the appointment, wrote that Taft's critics were: 'a bunch of Hebrew uplifters of the same stripe as Brandeis.' Philip Carchman states that: 'Such messages were clear and unmistakable. Taft was probably not overtly anti-Semitic but represented a prevalent mind-set.'[80] Coincidentally Brandeis and Griffith were both natives of Kentucky, and in 1916 Brandeis delivered a speech entitled 'A Call to the Educated Jew'. This 'prevalent mind-set' reveals just how deep seated these prejudices were—in the context of 1916 the former Attorney General's comments were not overtly anti-Semitic.

In the modern story, the Jenkins siblings—a wealthy industrialist brother and sister—ultimately fund the reformers by reducing factory wages and breaking a strike. The reformers' actions precipitate various calamities including violence, poverty, emigration, death, murder, the removal of the child from the couple and, ultimately, the narrowly averted execution of the young man. Not only are the Jenkinses shown to be influenced by the 'Pharisee' reformers, but Mr. Jenkins is shown to share the same characteristics as the hypocrites. In the modern narrative, Mr. Jenkins complains that his workers should be resting for work rather than dancing, in the Judean narrative the Pharisees similarly complain as Jesus turns water into wine (see Fig. 3.21 on page 137).

[80] Afran and Garber, 2005, p.157–158.

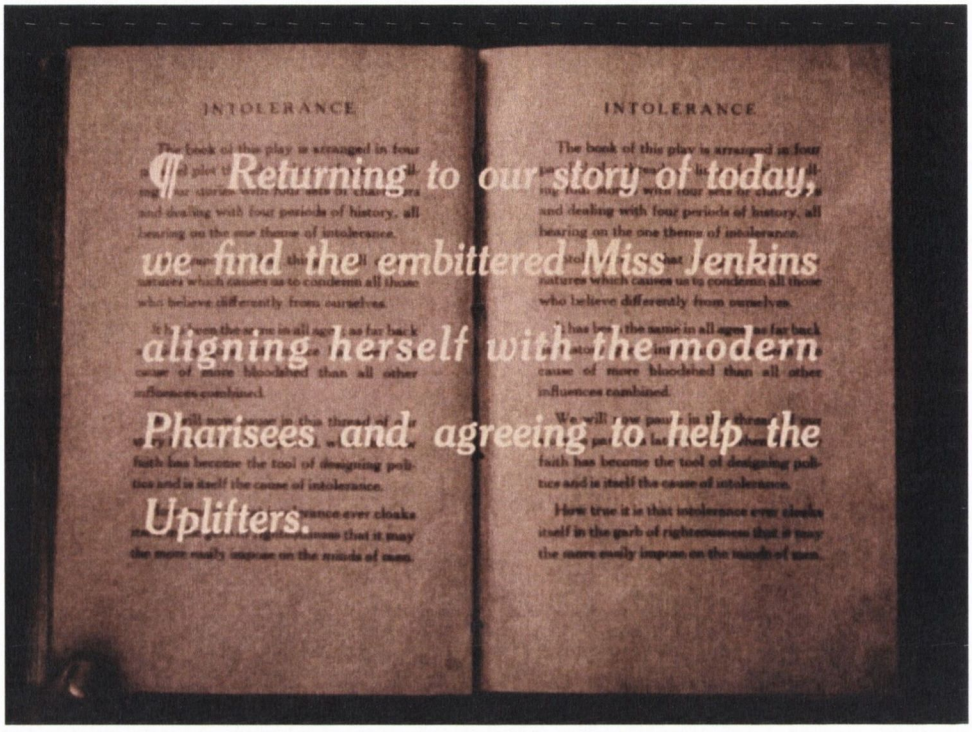

Figure 3.20: The modern Pharisees. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 14min 29sec.

Both scenes are parallelled in action as the Pharisees and the factory owners walk away from the open doors where the celebrations are taking place. In the same scene, Mr. Jenkins is shown to display cold avarice in his seeming preference for a found coin over the affections of a young woman (see Fig. 3.22 on page 138).[81] Griffith's characterisation has assumed several dimensions at this point—Jewishness is equated to greed, emotional frigidity and hypocrisy.

As the modern narrative progresses, Griffith uses a superimposition to indicate a multiplication of 'meddlers' as increased funding leads to increased power. The scene ends with a reminder of the hypocritical nature of the meddlers, by linking to the Pharisees in the following scene.

[81] Hansen interprets it: 'Jenkins arrives at the scene and casts an ominous shadow on the workers' amusement by rejecting an erotic exchange of looks in favor of a dime on the pavement.' (Hansen, 1994, p.196)

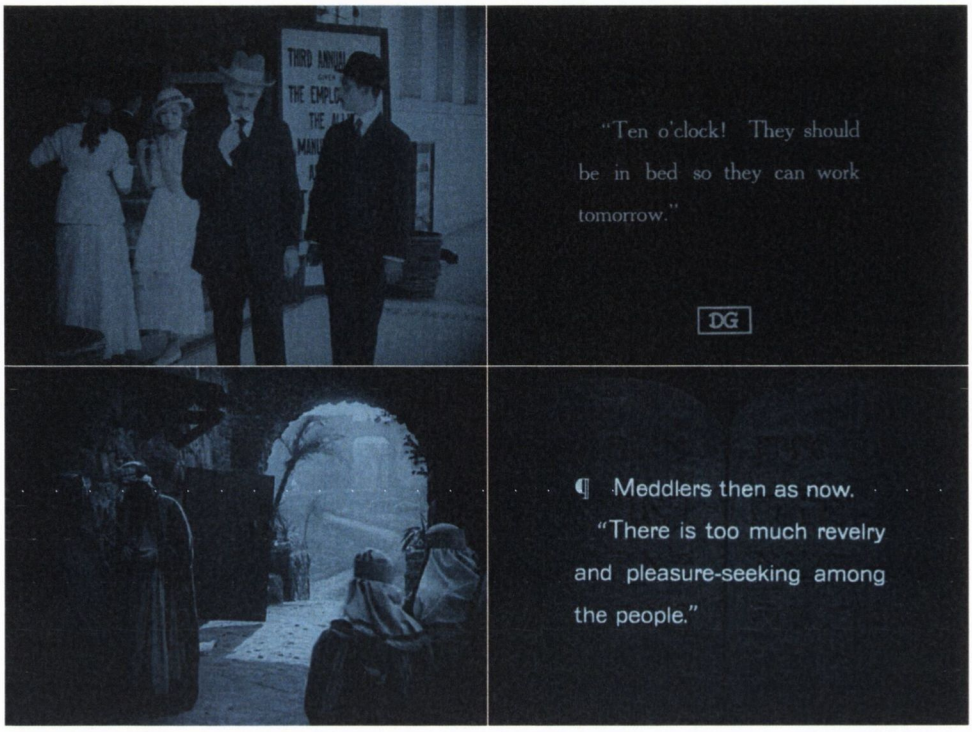

Figure 3.21: Parallel Story. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 17min 16sec. & 52min 44sec.

The nature and effect of this superimposition is worth noting, it is essentially the same technique that Strick uses to introduce Rudy in the 'Circe' episode; that is, it is essentially supernatural.

If Griffith's intent was to communicate a passage of time, he fails. If this was the intention then he could have chosen to portray an overlap of cross-dissolves that indicate first a few individuals, then more, and so on until the space is full. Or, in a style more prevalent at the time, he might have faded out and then back in to a full space. Or, a second shot might portray an explicit or dramatic change in the physical mise-en-scène due to time passing—more desks might appear, plants might grow.

Figure 3.22: Avarice. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 16min 42sec. - 17min 5sec.

In contrast, the superimposition moves from an uninhabited space directly to an unchanged but fully inhabited one. No interim state is discernible or described. The effect falls outside Griffith's predominately realistic style and draws attention to the scene and the cinematic apparatus in an interrupting manner. The 'uplifters', then, are introduced in an unnatural and disquieting manner, in the context of the increased power ascribed to them in the intertitle, their arrival indicates an uncanny and unwelcome presence (see Fig. 3.23 on the next page). Griffith's effect is a parallel to Rudy's spectral appearance, in this case the effect communicates the uncanny manifestation of meddling uplifters.

In his use of superimposition, Griffith reinforces his Christian message with free floating iconography. As he portrays the parable of Jesus turning water into wine, the silhouette of a

Figure 3.23: Meddlers. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 59min 53sec. - 60min 28sec.

cross appears in the frame over the figure of Jesus (see Fig. 3.24 below). Again there is a spectral quality to the composition, the cross casts a shadow across Christ, and while Griffith's obvious intent is to communicate the 'first miracle'—an intertitle announces this—the imagery and text create an overdetermined space of ideological religosity. Griffith's ideological use of cinema in support of Christian theology is overt, but this message carries a much subtler anti-Semitic subtext—this subtlety may be lost in this description, but the Pharisees' appearances are brief in the overall narrative—at every point in the modern narrative, the modern uplifters are unfavourably equated with the hypocritical Pharisees. These superimpositions, and the Pharisees' frozen moment, qualify as abstract forms and interruptions to an otherwise formative example of classical narrative construction.

Figure 3.24: The Superimposed Cross. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 59min 53sec.

Hansen reads the narrative recurrence of the narratives in *Intolerance* in a Benjaminian framework as revealing the failed utopian desires of Griffith, this insight, again while engaged elsewhere, reveals another major contradiction in Griffith's film. Just as Griffith's story cannot synthesise a progressive modern narrative with an apocalyptic vision, so also his message of tolerance is undermined by his anti-Semitic representations and Christian iconography. These representations also reveal an irreconcilable antinomy:

> Mapping the nineteenth-century myths of modernity, Walter Benjamin has remarked upon the complementary relationship between the doctrine of eternal recurrence and the ideology of progress, identifying them as the irreducible antinomies of mythical thought. Each tendency in its way eclipses the historicity of time which, for Benjamin, meant the reality of catastrophe—"that things 'just go on' is the catastrophe." Because catastrophe happens to be a key figure in the textual make-up of *Intolerance* [...], the film could be said to reveal these antinomies for what they are. In such moments of contradiction, myth congeals into allegory (in the Benjaminian sense) and becomes readable, against its manifest ideology, as an emblem of a failed utopian desire, pointing to "the small fissure in the ongoing catastrophe."[82]

For Hansen the catastrophes of the narratives—the Crucifixion, the Huguenot massacre, the fall of Babylon—all reveal the ongoing catastrophe, they encode a Benjaminian sense of eternal catastrophic return. Hansen goes on to suggest that the difference of the modern narrative, whereby the catastrophe of a wrongful execution is averted, is narratively overwhelmed by the competing narratives and that 'the Boy's execution can no longer be stayed within the mo-

[82] Hansen, 1994, p.170.

tivational framework of a realistic narrative. The rescue can be accomplished—and experienced by the viewer—only as an act of divine mercy, a miracle.'[83]

Hansen is arguing that the exception of the modern narrative proves the rule and undermines the very point Griffith is trying to advance. She is asserting that Griffith fails in his claim that modernity, and by proxy American cinema, has achieved a historical moment of unparallelled ideological and progressive success. It is an attractive contention, not least because the argument itself opens a 'fissure' in Griffith's closed, didactic and proselytising film.

Hansen's argument rests on interpretation of the climax of the film, and it is here that Griffith's use of cross-dissolve, superimposition and abstract and surreal content also reaches its climax. After the four narratives draw to a close, Griffith introduces a new fifth diegesis—to call it a narrative would be inaccurate—that includes what Hansen describes as 'posthistorical, apocalyptic images.'[84]

While the epilogue begins with apocalyptic war images, it is more accurate to describe the end result as utopian fantasy. The astonishing hubris of the sequence is matched in the extravagance of the mise-en-scène, the hallucinatory content and the rapid montage. Over 2 minutes and 15 seconds, Griffith uses twenty-three shots to describe a complex vision, including a battlefield with superimposed lightning; a superimposed explosion over an aerial shot of a city; superimposed celestial angels surveying the warfare; a prison population baying for release, who escape when the prison walls are faded out; closeups of hand to hand combat; an almost completely abstract pattern of angels; a flying spectral (cross-faded) ship that bombs flowers on the battlefield; a prison building completely cross-fading with a field of flowers; the battlefield and soldiers replaced by an agrarian commune; cannons sprouting flowers; children playing,

[83] Hansen, 1994, p.171.

[84] Ibid., p.171.

hugging and kissing; and finally soldiers hugging as superimposed angels watch and a white cross is faded over the shot (see Fig. 3.25 below). Intertitles interspersed in the sequence spell out: 'When cannon and prison bars wrought in the fires of intolerance—and perfect love shall bring peace forevermore. Instead of prison walls—Bloom flowery fields.'

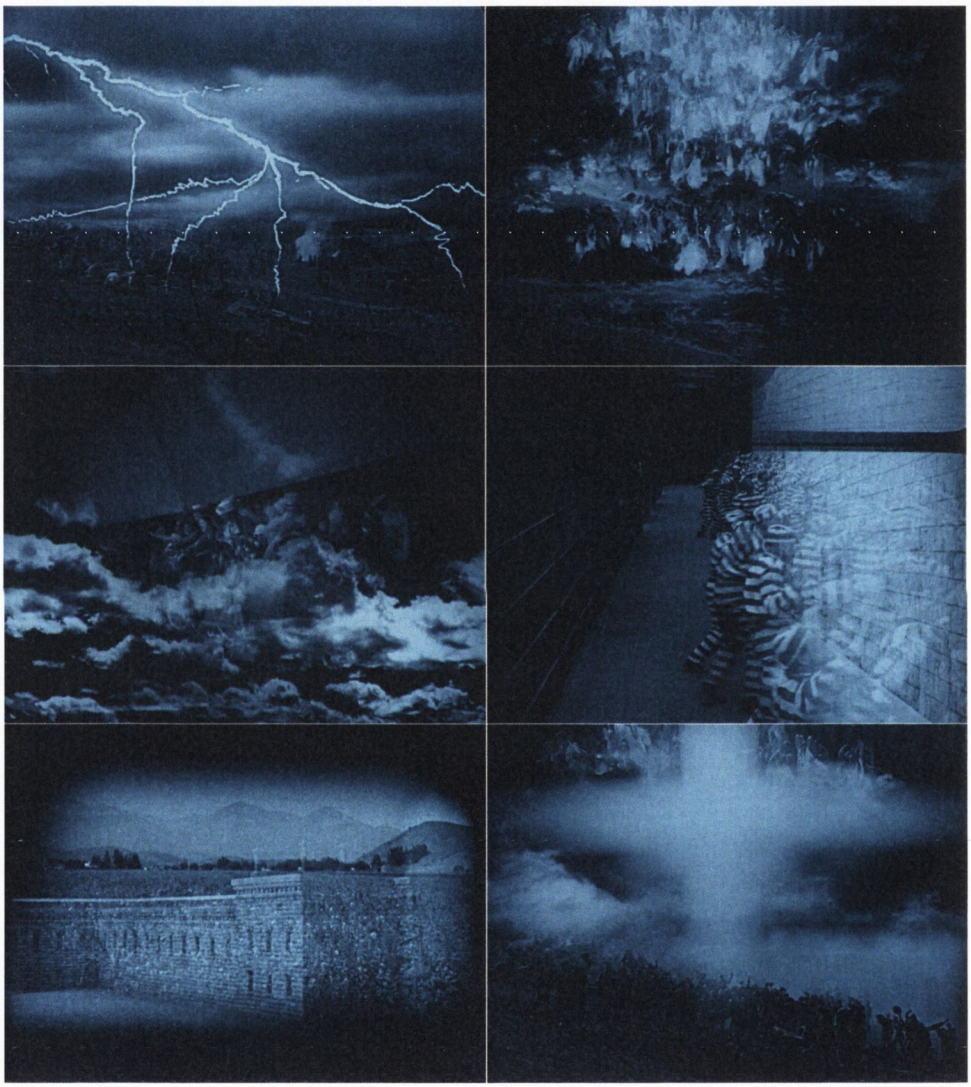

Figure 3.25: Utopia. *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916, US) 166in 45sec. - 168min 5sec.

This sequence is overdetermined in Christian signification and abstract expression. The final shot of the sequence—featuring the superimposed Christian cross—is remarkably similar to the closing shot of *Birth of a Nation* (1914, US), a fact that points to Griffith's rebuttal of the criticism that had come to follow that film's reception. *Intolerance*, then, threads the same ideological ground of *Birth of a Nation*, in representing unrepentant all-consuming Christian values, ironically itself the Jewish faith through its hypocritical Pharisee and his thinly disguised modern counterparts—'the uplifter' and the 'meddler'.

To fully engage with the Benjaminian methodology of fragmentary research, a final film image provides a further sublation to fully describe the pervasive anti-Semitism of the early 20th century. Taken from the Oscar-winning *Three Little Pigs* (Burt Gillett, US), a Disney release of 1933, this Jewish peddler was a disguised wolf and came complete with Yiddish accent (see Fig. 3.26 on the following page). The character was replaced by the wolf in subsequent versions but was included on a VHS release of classic Disney cartoons at least as late as 1997. Rosina Lippi-Green compares the depiction to the Nazi propaganda film *The Eternal Jew*, and the similarities to Joyce's description are equally relevant:

> The similarities between the Disney version of the Big Bad Wolf as Jewish peddler and the Nazi propaganda are more than simply striking. Both images have large hook noses, straggly beards and wear side locks; both wear long black coats and a dark hat similar to those worn by some Orthodox Jews; both hold out a palm full of coins, a common way to invoke the stereotype of Jews as unscrupulous and greedy moneylenders.[85]

[85] Lippi-Green, 2012, p.105–106. Lippi-Green describes the reception of the film and its reappearance in 1997, whereby the original *Three Little Pigs* cartoon had such cultural currency with audiences that it was appropriated by the National Film Board of Canada to promote the sale of war bonds during World War II. Edited and re-released as *Walt Disney's The Thrifty Pig* in 1941, the altered version uses newly added Canadian imagery like the maple

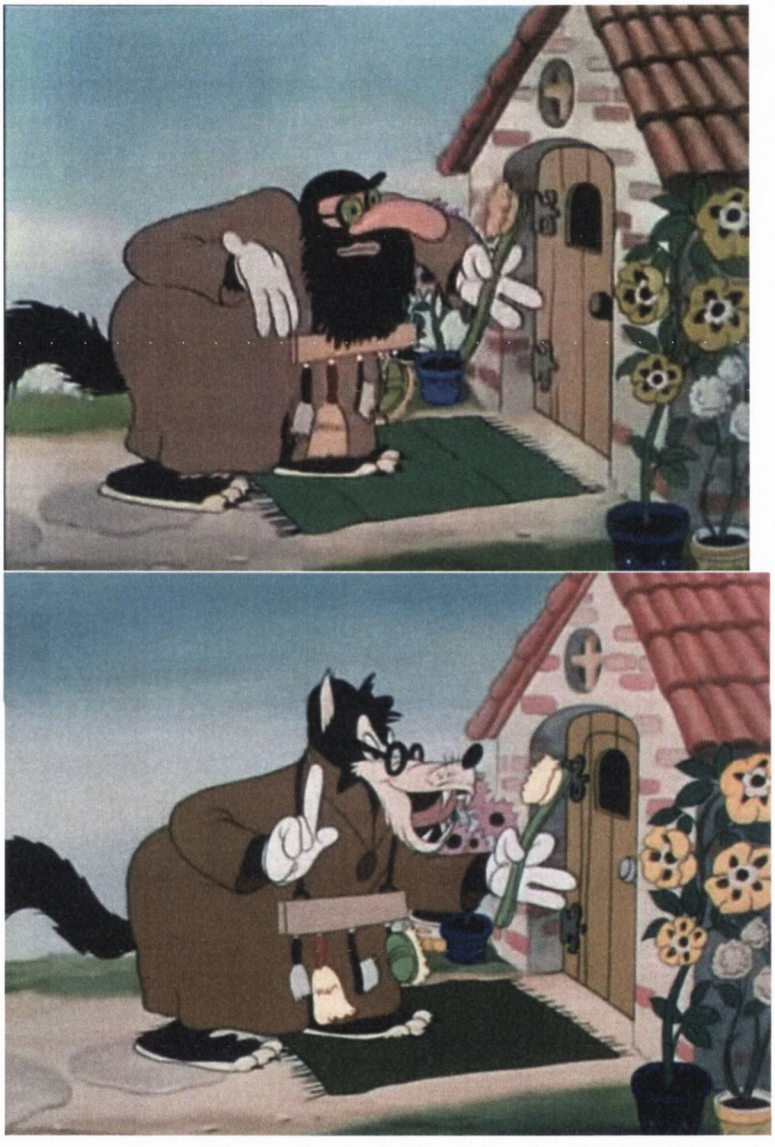

Figure 3.26: The original wolf, the altered wolf. *Three Little Pigs* (Burt Gillett, 1933, US)

This chapter has attempted to examine the films above in relation to the concept of the Wandering Jew as a dialectical image that reveals a pervasive, international anti-Semitism in the early decades of the 20th century. The question of whether the concept of the dialectical image is useful is shown, I hope, in a number of ways. My analysis of Benjamin's method suggests that the reading of film history through moments of exceptional montage might provide a unique perspective on not just particular films, but also their wider cultural and political significance. That critical moments of revelation can be identified in Strick and Griffith's films through their expressive, experimental montage seems to endorse Benjamin's description of dangerous abstraction and its 'explosive' power. In constructing his dialectical images from the detritus, the overlooked and the minutiae of history Benjamin heavily influenced the Frankfurt school and critical theory in general. However, Benjamin supports these methods with his theory of flashing up montage and his insistence on a 'now-time' outside temporal constraints from which we can recognise second nature. Adding to this his concept of the power of heartening film to act as a vehicle for reaching mass audiences we are provided with a very concrete and material framework from which his theory can be tested. In this chapter the method reveals the anti-Semitic Griffith and his hypocritical Pharisee, the Disney wolf and the Eternal Jew all set in contrast Strick's heroic 'Greekjew' the most human and fallible Leopold Bloom, representative of the great democratic and religious traditions, the very sources of all western civilisation.

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leaf and the Union Jack and features a swastika-sporting Big Bad Wolf. The anti-Nazi NFB version carries a touch of irony because Disney's original version of *Three Little Pigs* had the Wolf pose as a Yiddish-sounding 'Jewish Peddler' character—a scene which has been subsequently re-touched and re-voiced or otherwise omitted altogether. Lippi-Green states: 'In 1997, I bought a VHS tape of three classic Disney cartoons from an official Disney store, however, and found, to my surprise and disquiet, that the original animation of the Wolf with a yarmulke and side locks, large nose and peddler's pack was intact. How—and why—this release of the cartoon came to include this particular redacted scene is unclear.'

Chapter 4

Desk Murder

Monads · Fragments · Innervation · Paroxysmic Montage · Surrealism · Awakening · Profane Illumination · Courtly Love · Eisenstein · Abel Gance.

> How strangely the great declarations, of Eisenstein, of Gance, ring today; we put them to one side like declarations worthy of a museum, all the hopes put into cinema, art of the masses and new thought...We can always say that cinema has drowned in the nullity of its productions. What becomes of Hitchcock's suspense, Eisenstein's shock and Gance's sublimity when they are taken up by mediocre authors?. Giles Deleuze, 1985.[1]

The dialectical image of desk murder is related in this chapter primarily through scenes that depict the signing of death warrants in Gance's *Napoléon vu par Abel Gance* (Abel Gance, 1927, France, hereafter *Napoléon*) and Eisenstein's *October: Ten Days That Shook The*

[1] Deleuze, 1989, p.164.

World (1927, USSR, hereafter *October*). These scenes fall within the category of screens or masks which point to the Real violence of these revolutionary films. Through the sublation of these images by a love story in Gance's *Napoléon*, the Real horror of revolutionary terror is indicated, and the second nature of state sanctioned execution is revealed.

In this chapter the heartening story is Gance's *Napoléon* and Eisenstein's *October* is the avant-garde or experimental example. Gance's film is shown to employ extremely experimental forms of montage. However these effects can can be described as 'flashing up' within a film which otherwise follows classical rules of continuity.

To continue an exploration of the manner in which the dialectical image formally manifests in heartening film, this chapter expands on the use of the previous chapter's formal elements—variations of rapid editing and superimposition—and discusses Benjaminian theory in relation to Gance's and Eisenstein's montage. I begin by examining the frenetic montage of Eisenstein in *October* and note how, while his writing expresses dialectical theories, his montage is overdetermined symbolically and thereby shown to be of limited political usefulness. Correspondences with Benjamin in terms of a monadological, or factual, shot structure, bodily innervation and literary correspondence provide an opportunity to discuss these theories.

Eisenstein's theories of intellectual montage are compared to Gance's avant-garde–influenced theories and the innervating potential of what he terms his 'paroxysmic montage'. Correspondences linking Gance to the birth of avant-garde and surreal film practice in France are detailed to establish the influence of surrealism on his filmmaking.

This avant-garde sensibility links Gance to Benjamin's extensive engagement with surrealism. Benjamin's formative 1929 surrealist text, 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia', is examined. In this essay, I describe the manner in which the theory of profane

illumination springs from André Breton's love story *Nadja*. This is linked to Benjamin's, Jacques Lacan's and Slavoj Žižek's writing on courtly love. A correspondence is established whereby the love story, in synthesising opposites rather than two antitheses, brings dialectics to a standstill. In this standstill, and also in the manner that courtly love screens a Real violent, military chastity, the heartening love story is thereby viewed as a path to the revelation of second nature. Benjamin's later formulation of the profane illumination as a surreal element in dream awakening is noted.

Turning to Gance's film, the chapter examines a brief segment from *Napoléon* that imbricates word and image in an ironic juxtaposition of revolutionary terror and a declaration of human rights. An essay by Ewa Lajer-Burcharth is used to describe a post-revolutionary distancing from representations of male violence and a reconfiguration of representation with images of the allegorical feminine figures of Grace and Beauty.

Examples of the sublation of violence through rapid montage are shown to demonstrate Gance's indirect address of the revolutionary terror, in particular his depiction of a 'victims' ball'. Examples of the sublation of violence by profane love include depictions of Josephine superimposed on globes and maps, images which implicate profane love with global warfare. Contradictions in the representations of Napoléon as alternately Christ-like and lovesick are examined and corresponded with writing by Hal Foster. Foster suggests that in surrealist art, an activity of 'aesthetic displacement' that intuitively rejects the uncanny and embraces contradiction is in operation, an emphasis that he links to Benjamin's profane illumination.

An analysis of the scenes relating to desk murder in both *October* and *Napoléon* compares their similarities and differences. In particular the allegorical complexity of Gance's mise-en-scène is compared favourably to Eisenstein's extra-diegetic symbolism. Finally, in *Napoléon*

during a scene that depicts a real historical moment of resistance, an image of bureaucratic violence that flashes up in abstraction is described as an exemplary dialectical image.

Both films feature scenes of what could be termed bureaucratic violence, or more accurately desk murder.[2] In both of these films, the bureaucratic apparatus of the desk murderer points to and masks the Real of horrific state violence. I develop this dialectical image of desk murder in relation to Michael Jennings's formulation whereby: '...the "dialectical image," the most important concept of Benjamin's late historiography, articulates how the critic's juxtaposition of images from widely varied historical eras could have a revolutionary effect upon consciousness.'[3] While relevant to cultural memories of the Holocaust, there is no opportunity here to draw out the implications or correspondences in the the film's representations of desk murder. *October* should also be considered in the context of the subsequent bureaucratic exterminations under Stalin in the USSR. Siegfried Kracauer's 1947 *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of Germany* is the best known investigation of the potential prophetic powers of cinema in relation to National Socialism. So, while I do not attempt to draw prophetic conclusions from these films, I would emphasise the manner in which the term 'desk murder' reinforces the image of a bureaucrat at work. In the manner that the dialectical image reveals a false second nature, this chapter shows how Gance's film instead shows the sadist at work.

The single greatest difficulty faced when analysing Eisenstein's *October* is the aspect in which his film, even today, is an all-out assault on the senses. The shot time is not only generally consistently short, but the exceptions to this rule of brevity are still relatively short compared to what we have come to call Hollywood classicism. In the end, Eisenstein's rapid montage effect

[2]From Simon Wiesenthal's description of Adolf Eichmann: 'The world now understands the concept of "desk murderer". We know that one doesn't need to be fanatical, sadistic, or mentally ill to murder millions; that it is enough to be a loyal follower eager to do one's duty.' (Levy, 2002, p.157–158)

[3]Jennings, 1987, p.35–36.

can overwhelm the senses to such an extent that any individual shot or series of shots struggles to make an impression.

The effect of highlighting so much through the brevity of the shot, by underlining so much through flashing images, means that everything reaches a level of equivalence and therefore, in some way similar to a textbook over-highlighted in neon marker, *nothing* stands out. The syntax of *October* is so powerful that the semantics are overwhelmed. The punctum bell is so repetitively and stylistically rung, it is easy to see why Eisenstein was condemned as a formalist. This effect does resonate with the sense of innervation that is a precursor to Benjamin's dialectical moment, but one cannot help feel that this could be exactly the film he had in mind when he opined that 'too much abstraction can be a dangerous thing.'

Of course, it is exactly this avant-garde quality in form, coupled with his unprecedented theoretical writing, that make Eisenstein's films unavoidable in any discussion of montage, historical materialism or the 'political usefulness' of film. That said, I will argue that the dialectical image as Benjamin conceived of it cannot be simply or directly associated with the concept of Eisenstein's 'montage of attractions'. Jean-Luc Godard goes so far as to label Eisensteinian montage as 'pre-montage' when discussing the famous 'waking lion' sequence from *Battleship Potemkin* (1925, USSR):

> You put three angle shots of a lion and you have a lion getting up, because of the angles, not because of montage—montage has nothing to say about the lion, it's just a lion—but you have an idea of something getting up, that's where there's a pre-idea of montage.[4,5]

[4]Godard and Ishaghpour, 2005, p.17.

[5]In 1989, when Godard had completed the first two episodes of his monumental *Histoire(s) du Cinéma*, he gave a lecture on montage at the French National Film School (the FEMIS) that Michael Temple and James

This observation is equally true of the opening sequence of *October*, where the fall of the Tsars is symbolically portrayed by the tearing down of a royal statue. The sequence includes a similar use of angles to achieve its effect; coupled with the actual toppling of the statue and ominous lighting, Eisenstein gets his narrative point across. The only counterpoint in the sequence is the shots of scythes held aloft to indicate the revolutionary workers. In this sequence, while it has a powerful visual impact, it is difficult to identify any particular revelation at the level of content or form which speaks to Benjamin's concept of heartening stories taken up by abstraction (see Fig. 4.1 on the next page).

The effect, in this classic example, does not seem to measure up to Eisenstein's own writing on effective montage, a method which he famously compared to writing with Japanese ideograms:

> The point is that the copulation (perhaps we had better say, the 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. [...] For example: the picture for water and the picture of an eye signifies "to weep"; the picture of an ear near the drawing of a door = "to listen"; a dog + a mouth = "to bark"; a mouth + a child = "to scream"; a mouth + a bird = "to sing"; a knife + a heart = "sorrow," and so on. But this is—montage![6]

S. Williams cite as the definitive description of Godard's ambitions for montage and the *Histoire(s)*. Godard addresses both Griffith and Eisenstein: 'Cinema as it was originally conceived is going to disappear quite quickly, within a lifetime, and something else will take its place. But what made it original, and what will never really have existed, like a plant that has never really left the ground, is montage. The silent movie world felt it very strongly and talked about it a lot. No-one found it. Griffith was looking for something like montage, he discovered the close-up. Eisenstein naturally thought that he had found montage...But by montage I mean something much more vast[...] To return to what I said at the beginning: the idea of cinema as art or the technique of montage.' (Temple and Williams, 2000, p.36)

[6]Eisenstein, 1957, p.30–31.

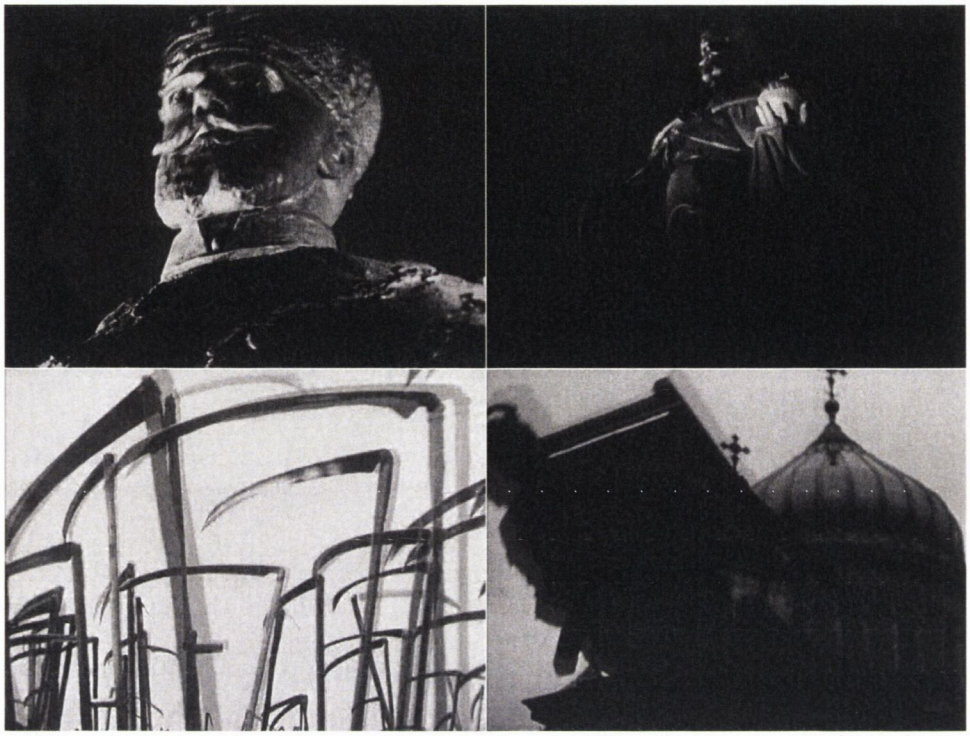

Figure 4.1: Falling statue montage. *October* (Eisenstein, 1927, USSR) 2min 40sec - 2min 59sec.

While the sequence described may not live up to Eisenstein's writing, and while Godard's criticism may ring true for significant portions of Eisenstein's oeuvre, this theoretical writing speaks directly to a Hegelian dialectical thesis/antithesis/synthesis movement, and the language Eisenstein uses to describe the ideograms, 'facts' and 'objects', echoes some of Benjamin's earliest writings. Siegfried Kracauer,[7] in his review of Benjamin's dissertation thesis *Origin of the German Tragic Drama*, explains how Benjamin describes his own philosophical system as *monadological*.[8] From Leibniz, the *monad* is an indivisible object forming the world. In Benjamin's use they are ideas, which as Kracauer describes 'manifest themselves in the murky

[7] Kracauer, a foundational film scholar, was also a friend to Theodor Adorno, whom he tutored in Hegelian philosophy as a child.

[8] trans. *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Benjamin, 2003e).

medium of history. The tragic drama, for instance, is an idea.'[9,10] This is a manifestation of the dialectical image in an early incarnation, and the philosophical term continues to appear throughout Benjamin's writing. The monad, as an idea, has the ability to initiate a spiral of correspondences. The tragic drama, as an example of an idea, becomes for Benjamin representative of an allegorical turn in post-reformation thinking and of a new secular apocalyptic vision. It therefore represents, in common with the arcades, an idea of a seismic shift in ideological relations. Very crudely, the arcades describe an industrial shift, the tragic drama a secular shift.

William Jennings relates the monadological approach to Benjamin's comprehension of historical fragments: '...by 1927 the concentration on the seemingly inconsequential detail or fragment had long been one of the most important elements in Benjamin's theory of literary criticism.' Jennings catalogues readings of German Idealism as Benjamin's theoretical basis: 'Leibniz's monad, Goethe's *Urphänomen*, Schlegel's aesthetic fragment, and finally Alois Riegl's application of Hegel's concrete universal to art history all play a role here. The immediate result was Benjamin's concept of a "truth content" that lies buried in fragmentary form in the literary work.'[11] Inherent in the concept of this 'truth content' is the status of the fragment as 'inconsequential'. Unexamined fragments are believed to retain truth by virtue of its having escaped the totalising narrative of history, that is 'they have been ignored in the larger process whereby the dominant class ascribes truth value to its ideologically inspired version of history.'[12]

[9]Kracauer, 2005, p.1.

[10]There is a spiritual, in Benjamin's writing mystical and talmudic, aspect to this concept. Nicholas Jolley interprets the spiritual basis of Leibniz's use of the word: 'It is possible that Leibniz's adoption of the word "monad" in the late 1690s is due to the influence of van Helmont. But the word was also used by Henry More (1614–87) in some of his Cabbalistic writings that were known to Leibniz. Anne Conway (1631–79) whose *Principia Philosophise* was edited and published by van Helmont, also belongs to this group of Christian Cabbalists. [...] Although the word "monadology" was concocted later by an editor and is not a word Leibniz himself used, he may be seen as belonging to a tradition of monadological writing. Leibniz often writes as if he believed in emanation, a process whereby the world results from an outpouring of the divine nature.' (Jolley, 1995, p.59–60).

[11]Jennings, 1987, p.25.

[12]Ibid., p.25.

This description of the monad representing or encapsulating a much larger structure in its atomistic form has two particular relevances for this research. Firstly it describes the effect and power of the dialectical image to convey deep and wide meaning in a single thought image. This effect corresponds to the description given in chapter two whereby the dialectical image is drawn from the structure that it critiques. Secondly this early inspiration for the dialectical image further supports the use of singular moments of montage from within films that can be used to form an overall critique or general understanding of the film. This concept relates to the idea of an insight that brings dialectics to a standstill. Max Pensky describes how this 'standstill' is a frozen monadic moment. This is an insight which I would relate to the effect of Griffith's 'freeze frame' effect in the previous chapter:'...the dialectical image springs forth as a "stop" or a freeze, as the monadic crystallization of the supposedly implacable progression of historical time.'[13] Pensky describes just how powerful Benjamin believes the monadological form to be:

> The image produced will, monadically, compact the entire span of historical time within it: the represented commodity, the "object of history" itself, contains in monadic form both the mythic history of capitalism and the tradition of the oppressed that hides beneath it.[14]

In this sense, I argue that moments of montage from *October* and *Napoléon* become Benjaminian *ideas* which can contribute to the formation of a dialectical image. In this formulation, the montage images examined below compact a vast history of oppression and 'second nature.' That is, these moments of montage are not simply images but are monadological theses from which the thesis/antithesis/sublation movement arises.

[13]Pensky, 2004, p.188.

[14]Ibid., p.193.

The anchoring of this monadological and fragmentary form in the 'literary work' has a correspondence to Eisenstein's method. In describing an assignment for his students we can see how Eisenstein visualises Emile Zola's novels in terms of montage, how he reduces literary prose to rudimentary 'factual' shots in one of Zola's novels and runs them against each other. He describes the setting of one of Zola's love scenes: 'In *La Terre* it occurs in conditions of harvesting: in the terrible heat, in the tempo of people reaping, machines, animals and dust.'[15] The assignment is, as he explains, a formal exercise in materialist analysis, the categorisation of distinct elements in crucial literary scenes. Eisenstein can therefore clearly conceptualise film form in relation to translation of literary form, and describes essential elements as I examined in Chapter 3 in relation to Benjamin's 'Task of the Translator. He continues: 'A page by Zola could easily be broken down and numbered as a montage list and its sections distributed to the various production departments.'[16]

A final correspondence between Benjamin and Eisenstein is apparent in their shared belief in the effect of the physical experience of film spectatorship. In the 1929 essay, 'Methods of Montage', where he details different 'types' of montage in terms of rhythm and tone, Eisenstein describes how 'Intellectual Montage'—one of the five methods he describes—stimulates the audience at a level of both 'agitation' and 'thought':

> The gradational quality is here determined by the fact that there is no difference in principle between the motion of a man rocking under the influence of elementary metric montage and the intellectual process within it, for the intellectual process is the same agitation, but in the dominion of the higher nerve-centers. And if, in the cited instance, under the influence of 'jazz montage," one's hands and knees

[15] Eisenstein, 1995, p.21.

[16] Ibid., p.27.

> rhythmically tremble, in the second case such a trembling, under the influence of a different degree of intellectual appeal, occurs in identically the same way through the tissues of the higher nerve systems of the thought apparatus.[17]

This description of the innervating potential of the cinematic experience is similar to Benjamin's. Miriam Hansen briefly acknowledges this correspondence in *Cinema and Experience*. Hansen describes how the term 'innervation' springs from Freud's writings on the repression of trauma, whereby he theorises how the successful transmission of neural information may become blocked—for example, there develops a barrier to innervation. This, in turn, relates to Benjamin's understanding of the anaesthetising effects of modernity, novelty and violence—and therefore the *need* for new methods of innervation. The difference between Freud and Benjamin, as Hansen sees it, is the potential in Benjamin's innervation for the rehabilitation or recovery of the senses from physical shock and external motor stimulation rather than a talking cure or mental cogitation. Hansen summarises:

> Without going into detail here, what seems important regarding Benjamin's concept of innervation and its implications for film theory is the notion of a physiologically 'contagious' or 'infectious' movement that would trigger emotional effects in the viewer, a form of mimetic identification based on the phenomenon then known as Carpenter's Effect.[18]

As Hansen points out, Eisenstein uses the term innervation repeatedly in his essays, 'Montage of Attractions' and 'Montage of Film Attractions.' To summarise Eisenstein's correspond-

[17] Eisenstein, 1957, p.82.

[18] Hansen, 2012, p.137. Carpenter's Effect refers to the ideomotor effect, after William Benjamin Carpenter, whereby the body produces unconscious bodily reactions, for example, crying.

ences with Benjamin: there is a belief in montage as an effective form of dialectical expression, the concept of shots as monadological 'facts' is shared, and there is a belief in the possibility of an innervating physiological impact. There are, then, significant shared theoretical interests in Eisenstein's and Benjamin's writings which reinforce the already established framework in which we can identify the dialectical image, and, as we can see from Hansen's writing, these shared interests are well established. However, there are also significant differences that require clarification if Benjamin's dialectical image is to be understood as possessing a distinct actuality from Eisensteinian montage.

In 'Methods of Montage', where Eisenstein distinguishes intellectual montage as a method 'higher' than others, he outlines the 'gods' sequence from *October* (see Fig. 4.2 on page 160) that illustrates the method:

> An example of this can be found in the sequence of the 'gods' in October, where all the conditions for their comparison are made dependent on an exclusively class-intellectual sound of each piece in its relation to God. I say class, for though the emotional principle is universally human, the intellectual principle is profoundly tinged by class. These pieces were assembled in accordance with a descending intellectual scale—pulling back the concept of God to its origins, forcing the spectator to perceive this 'progress' intellectually.[19]

In his 1929 essay, 'The Dramaturgy of Film Form', Eisenstein again uses the sequence as an example of 'The emancipation of closed action from its conditioning by time and space.'

[19]Eisenstein, 1957, p.82.

But this grandiloquent description disguises what is in fact a non-problematised description of symbolic equivalence, a criticism of symbolism *through* symbolism.[20,21]

Eisenstein's aim, the unmasking of 'progress', is similar to Benjamin's. Both seek to reveal the unnatural construction of a 'second nature.' However, Eisenstein's example is strikingly didactic and linear. His montage moves from the figure of Christ to a Hindu figure to Buddha to primitive icons and totems, effectively collapsing meaning and indicating equivalence. There is no thesis/antithesis/synthesis possible in this movement because there is no difference or opposition suggested. The sequence is followed by images of military and royal epaulettes and the statue from the opening sequence restored to its plinth. Again this juxtaposition is a description of equivalence rather than opposition, Eisenstein is collapsing religious and political 'false gods' into one. There is meaning, certainly—Eisenstein makes a definite point, he builds his argument—however, it is difficult to see any tension in the montage. This is not a sequence which takes up, sublates, reveals or reconfigures a previous image. This is a fundamental difference to Benjamin's sublating concept of the dialectic. The problem of this montage of equivalence is exacerbated in relation to the observation in my opening comments on the difficulty of reading *October*—nothing is distinguished when everything is highlighted.[22]

[20] Eisenstein, Taylor and Glenny, 1988, p.180.

[21] Eisenstein's description: 'A number of images of the divine were shown in succession. From a magnificent Baroque Christ to an Eskimo idol. Here a conflict arises between the concept "God" and its symbolisation. Whereas idea and image are completely synonymous in the first Baroque image, they grow further apart with each subsequent image. We retain the description "God" and show idols that in no way correspond with our own image of this concept. From this we are to draw anti-religious conclusions as to what the divine as such really is.' (ibid., p.180)

[22] The differences to Benjamin's dialectic understanding are perhaps even more apparent in Eisenstein's introduction to this section where he describes a procession of facts or monads, here we see how his montage may become overdetermined, in contrast to Benjamin's method of reduction and condensation within a monad. He quotes Lenin's interpretation of Hegel: 'I recall Lenin's synopsis of the fundamental elements of Hegelian dialectics: "These elements may be presented in a more detailed way thus: ... 10) an endless process of revealing new aspects, relationships, etc. 11) an endless process of deepening human perception of things, appearances, processes and so on, from appearance to essence and from the less profound to the more profound essence. 12) from co-existence to causality and from one form of connection and interdependence to another, deeper, more general. 13) recurrence,

Figure 4.2: *October* 'Gods' sequence. Reproduced from *Film Form Essays in Film Theory and the Film Sense*.

These issues are identified by Siegfried Kracauer, as far back as 1960, in *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. He identifies the *symbolic* basis of Eisenstein's montage, a form which fails to engage the viewer in the production of meaning, and which loses its significance in history, a fact which empties this film of the possibility of relevance when viewed from a 'now-time'. Given the quality of his analysis and his relationship to Benjamin, a lengthy extract is warranted:

> There is, in *Ten Days*, a sequence picturing the deities of various peoples; it ranges from a baroque Christ whom we accept unquestioningly down to an exotic Eskimo idol. And what is the sequence intended to signify? This chain of images, says Eisenstein himself, 'attempted to achieve a purely intellectual resolution, resulting from a conflict between a preconception and a gradual discrediting of it in purposeful steps."
>
> In other words, he is confident that the sight of the primitive idol at the end of the descending series will alienate the audience from the Christ at its beginning. Yet the odds are that, at least in democratic countries, the purpose of the sequence eludes the grasp of the spectator; it impresses him as an aimless assemblage of religious images rather than an attack on religion. Eisenstein overestimates the signifying power of images and accordingly goes the limit in overlaying their intrinsic meanings with those he sees fit to confer upon them. Pudovkin also indulged in symbolism. In the Russia of the period, revolutionary reality did not seem real unless it could be interpreted as an outgrowth of the Marxist doctrine. Hence the inclination of the Russian film directors to misuse the visuals as references to the

on the highest level, of known traits, attributes, etc. of the lowest, and 14) return, so to say, to the old (negation of the negation)."' (Eisenstein, 1957, p.82)

> ruling ideology. Small wonder, for the rest, that it is precisely the symbolic shots and scenes in the Eisenstein films which have least withstood the passing of time. They now affect us as the artifices they are—rebuses which, once solved, lose all their magic.[23]

Kracauer's point is bolstered by the fact that, as Eisenstein explains, the 'gods' sequence is motivated by the anti-Bolshevik march on Petrograd by Kornilov (a counter-revolutionary) under the banner 'In the name of God and the Fatherland', a historic detail available to only the closest reader. Yuri Tsivian also identifies *October* as a film deeply indebted to a literary history of Russian symbolism and, as he points out, there has developed a split in the reception of Eisenstein. On the one hand, he is considered a constructivist and analysis of this side centres around textual analysis, on the other hand, and 'As Susan Sontag has written: "Eisenstein, who saw himself in the tradition of Wagner and the Gesamtkunstwerk and in his writings quotes copiously from the French Symbolists, was the greatest exponent of Symbolist aesthetics in cinema." ' The question is then whether he was an avant-garde constructivist filmmaker or a symbolic traditionalist. For Tsivian and, he argues, Petrov, a disjuncture exists in *October* resulting from Eisenstein's use of traditional symbols to depict revolutionary ideals. Thus, for example in the gods sequence, atheism is asserted by symbols of religiosity. As Tsivian notes, 'Eisenstein was not a Symbolist as far as his message was concerned, but he used Symbolist vocabulary to formulate his message. His films are largely defined by the discrepancy between their vocabulary and their message.'[24] Thus for Tsivian, while Eisenstein's writing expresses an avant-garde sentiment, his films remain traditionally symbolic. This symbolism, as we see below, is fundamentally at odds with Benjamin's dialectical image.

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[23]Kracauer, 1960, p.208.

[24]Tsivian, 1993, p.99.

Benjamin's objections to symbolism, specifically its romantic form, were outlined in the introduction—he sees a redundancy in the signification of an already signified. This double articulation creates a 'symbolic other that is free from all real conflicts'[25] and thereby disguises history—it creates a conflict free second nature, where one period of history is interchangeable with another, where ideological power shifts are disguised in the idea of repeating cycles of history. In this sort of history, ideas of resistance or revolution become undermined or futile. Benjamin's preference for allegory as a revelatory literary device, present in both Baroque drama and Baudelaire's poetry, is not in agreement with Eisenstein's style. Eisenstein's relentless, and therefore 'dangerous', abstract avant-garde montage coupled with his literary symbolism is deeply in conflict with some basic tenets of the dialectical image.

This symbolic form also speaks to a difficulty in relating 'usefulness', in the Benjaminian political sense, to Eisenstein's film. Films in which different narratives are interwoven symbolically—like Griffith's *Intolerance*—can produce unintelligible meanings. In 1927, in his short article 'On the Present Situation of Russian Film', Benjamin writes:

> The mode of mental perception of the peasant is basically different from that of the urban masses. It has become clear, for example, that the rural audience is incapable of following two simultaneous narrative strands of the kind seen countless times in film. They can follow only a single series of images that must unfold chronologically, like the verses of a street ballad.[26]

[25] Cowan, 2005, p.58.

[26] Benjamin, 1999e, p.14.

Benjamin's distinction between urban and rural 'mental perception' is weak. However, the argument that single narrative diegesises that do not require symbolic decoding are likely to reach a wider audience is well made.

In his 2008 biography and analysis of Eisenstein's major works, Mike O'Mahony addresses this problem of formalism in *October*, a film whose construction alienated the audience that it was made for. O'Mahony quotes contemporary viewers who 'reported "a loud sound of snoring" at a workers' club during a screening of *October*' and who found the film too 'difficult for a broad-based audience to understand.' He goes on to note how these views 'largely reflected those expressed at the 1928 Party Conference' and how the film patently failed in its fundamental objective of communicating with the common people.[27]

A general preference for more heartening films is evident from contemporary audience surveys: 'Audience surveys showed that Soviet filmgoers enjoyed Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin more than "tractor and factory films" '[28] As Denise Youngblood explains in her 1993 book *Movies for the Masses: Popular Cinema and Soviet Society in the 1920s* American films were more popular than Soviet ones regardless of their genre. As Youngblood explains, the idea of the 'happy ending was so popular, and also so alien to Soviet culture, that instead of being translated to Russian it was transliterated to 'kheppi end.'[29]

Godard's criticisms can be supported in the limited examples discussed here; the problem of the waking lions, the dethroned statue and the false gods are centred around the repetitive sameness of their montage, and the lack of tension in symbolic representation is mirrored at the macro level of the film. Likewise, Eisenstein's narrative does not correspond with Benjamin's

[27] O'Mahony, 2008, p.101–102.

[28] Ezra, 2004, p.49.

[29] Youngblood, 1999, p.55.

formulation of a heartening story taken up by abstraction. Its relentless avant-garde form alienates the audience. Finally, and as I will develop below, the identification of an encounter with the Real, as opposed to a 'second nature', is necessary to complete the equation of a dialectical image. So, despite the shared interest in monads, innervation and exploding 'second nature', we need to turn elsewhere in Eisenstein's montage to identify a Benjaminian dialectical image.

To attempt this, I develop an image of revolutionary terror—the Real—alluded to in Eisenstein's *October* and fully developed in Gance's *Napoléon*. In their respective narratives, both of these films describe moments of revolutionary uprising in different historical eras. The term is manifested in these films to varying degrees, and I find a great deal more to talk about in the montage of Gance than of Eisenstein, a fact which I believe speaks not only to his politicised working environment but also to the nature of his montage, as discussed above.

Gance's usefulness in this regard is increased by the fact of his particularly *artistic* approach to film form. This French cinematic tradition is in contrast to Eisenstein's political historical materialism but at the same time complementary via its avant-garde tendency. Gance therefore provides an opportunity to expand an understanding of Benjamin's dialectical image in relation to its surrealist correspondence. The apparent contradictions of Benjamin's wide inspirations and sources presents one of the greatest challenges in reconciling his theories to a general actuality and applicability in film studies. The reconciliation of the surreal tradition—in particular the relation of the concept of profane illumination to profane love—to Benjamin's political theory is of particular importance.

Gance's formal experimentation merits special attention in our consideration of montage effects of the 1920s. In 1968, Kevin Brownlow, film historian, director and Gance's most ardent supporter, published his first interview with Gance and established what he saw as a major

difference between Gance and his contemporaries.[30] His eloquent, even impassioned, description provides a number of correspondences to the manner in which this research describes montage that 'flashes up'. The effect that Brownlow describes is the innervating effect of cinema, of importance to both Benjamin and Eisenstein:

> *La Roue's* most important innovation was its introduction of rapid cutting. Rapid cutting is a complex editing process, which has nothing but brevity in common with the fast cutting already used by Griffith in *Intolerance* and by Gance himself in *J'accuse*. Rapid cutting is an art in itself. Basically, the style takes the form of sustained sequences in which strong images are intercut rhythmically at great speed. The impact is intensely dramatic and since rapid-cut shots range from two feet to one frame, the impact is also physical. For the flashing light from the screen activates the optic nerve and excites the brain. If the images are strong enough, if the rhythm is powerful enough, it is almost impossible to resist the effect of such cutting. Today, the style is out of fashion, partly because few can remember it (and even fewer can actually do it), and partly because rapid cutting is a technique impressionistic, almost abstract, and essentially of the silent screen.[31]

The manner in which Brownlow describes it as a lost art resonates with Godard's claim that montage 'Cinema as it was originally conceived is going to disappear quite quickly'[32] In his 2010 *Unraveling French Cinema*, T. Jefferson Kline acknowledges the unusual nature of some

[30]Besides an ongoing, lifelong restoration project of Gance's *Napoléon*, Brownlow has published copious articles and volumes on Gance's career, including the rediscovered 'final' *Napoléon* script published by Faber in 1990 and quoted herein.

[31]Brownlow, 1968, p.46.

[32]Temple and Williams, 2000, p.36. See discussion above.

of Gance's methods and confirms Hollywood's rejection of methods which reveal the apparatus of production. Describing the inherently discontinuous nature of cinema, he states:

> This discontinuity was 'tested' by the early poets of the cinema, such as Abel Gance, who shortened some of their segments down to two to four frames, segments that were 'visible' but perceived primarily as highly discontinuous moments. Although almost never exploited by the classical Hollywood cinema, this discontinuity is nevertheless a feature of the cinema.[33]

Between these two quotes, Brownlow's description of the excitation of the brain and the 'activation' of the optic nerve and Kline's perception of barely visible highly discontinuous moments, we return to the sense of the innervating potential of the cinema. Gance's films are, however, motivated by a poetic and impressionistic artistic impetus, rather than the political framework which Eisenstein worked within. The resulting montage in *Napoléon* is materially different not just in content but also in the effect Gance tries to achieve, something he describes in his own missive to the film's 1927 spectators 'To the spectators of *Napoléon*' (the full text is reproduced in Appendix B on page 404):

> In certain paroxysmic sequences, I created for the first time a new technique, based on the strength of rhythm, dominating the subject and violating our visual habits. I speculated on the simultaneous perception of images, not only of a second's duration but sometimes of an eighth of a second, so that the clash of my images against one another would cause a surge of abstract flashes, touching the soul rather than the eyes. Then, an invisible beauty is created which is not impressed

[33] Kline, 2010, p.119.

> upon the film and which is as difficult to explain as the perfume of a rose or the music of a symphony.[34]

In attempting to 'touch the soul', Gance is implicating a metaphysical, prelogical potential in his cinema, and he acknowledges the 'abstract flashes' in language reminiscent of Benjamin. Mark Cousins places Gance within an intellectual and creative milieu that was steeped in impressionistic, surreal and avant-garde sensibilities:

> Influenced by the impressionist painting of Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro and the writings of Charles Baudelaire, filmmakers such as Germaine Dulac, Abel Gance, Jean Epstein and Marcel L'Herbier tried to capture the complexity of people's perception of the real world and the way in which mental images repeat and flash before our eyes.[35]

The inclusion of Gance in this group reveals his relation to surrealism most fully. Antonin Artaud, who plays the character of Jean-Paul Marat in *Napoléon*, wrote the screenplay for Dulac's 1928 *La Coquille et le clergyman* (*The Seashell and the Clergyman*, France), a film which, as Gilles Deleuze notes, 'Artaud would constantly point out' was the first surrealist film.[36] Cousins acknowledges Dulac's foundational role in the avant-garde cinema:

> Dulac was an intellectual like Vidor. Born into a rich family, she became involved in films such as *Les Soeurs enemies/The Enemy Sisters* (1916, France) and met her collaborator, the film theorist Louis Delluc in 1917. Together they evolved one

[34] Gance and Ballard, 1990, p.xxii.

[35] Cousins, 2006, p.90.

[36] Deleuze, 1989, p.310 n18.

> of the first self-consciously innovative cinematic movements in the world, the first movie avant-garde.[37,38]

Much as Gance was influenced, the surrealist movement exerted a profound influence on Benjamin's writing. Theorising how this influence relates to the cinematic dialectical image requires an explication of the terms 'profane illumination' and 'optical unconscious'.[39] Margaret Cohen fully traces the development of these influences in her 1993 book, *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution*, and describes Benjamin's attempts to politicise the essentially aesthetic theories of the movement to his own ends. Cohen highlights the depth of his engagement with surrealism by quoting the 1928 letter written to Gershom Scholem expressing his fear that the *Arcades* had become *too* embroiled in the 'surrealist movement': 'An all too ostentatious proximity to the surrealist movement might become fatal to the project, as understandable and as well-founded as this proximity might be.'[40,41] Benjamin would later qualify the value of the dreamlike and 'intoxicating' elements of surrealism by subordinating it to the moment of flashing awakening. This, as Cohen quotes Benjamin, is an attempt to sublate surrealism in his own project: 'The work represents both the philosophical

[37] Cousins, 2006, p.90–91.

[38] As early as 1918, Louis Delluc, Dulac's collaborator, husband and also a filmmaker, commented on Gance's experimental montage of *La dixieme symphonie* (1918, France): 'Here and there, with flashes of power. *La dixieme symphonie* asserts the same qualities of visual conception. Perhaps it would have been better if its obvious literary flavor *were* the result of passing glances rather than being the essential motor [of the film]. Yet nothing prevents us from thinking that some day Gance will be able to reestablish a proper equilibrium of relations.' (Abel, 1993, p.160)

[39] Miriam Hansen describes the 'Aura's epistemic structure, secularised and modernised (qua 'profane illumination,' Weimar flânerie, "mimetic faculty," and "optical unconscious")' (Hansen, 2012, p.105)

[40] Benjamin, Scholem and Adorno, 1994, p.342.

[41] Cohen also lists Adorno, Ernst Bloch, Susan Buck-Morss and Richard Wolin, amongst others, who have written on the contribution surrealism made to Benjamin's theory. (Cohen, 1993, p.6)

utilization of surrealism—and with that its sublation—as well as the attempt to seize the image of history in the most insignificant fixations of existence, in its refuse as it were.'[42]

The configuration of the relationship between the dialectical image, profane illumination and optical unconscious can be usefully oversimplified as that of the cause, effect and medium. Where the profane illumination is the secular equivalent of a theological auratic ecstasy—revealed through the dialectical image—the optical unconscious is that aspect of the unconscious driven by the visual. This operation of the optical unconscious, the currency in which it operates, is revealed through photographic effects like slow motion, close-up and montage. In the application of these concepts to film, the optical unconscious works through form, while the profane illumination operates through revelations of dialectical content—the profane illumination is the subject's encounter with the Real, encoded in a film's dialectical images in flashing awakening images and transmitted via the optical unconscious.

Benjamin makes a definitive statement on the operation of the optical unconscious in his 1931 essay 'Little History of Photography'. The comparison to psychoanalysis is useful in the sense of communicating the revelatory ability of photography, as is the monadological aspect of the 'smallest things':

> It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis. Details of structure, cellular tissue, with which technology and medicine are normally concerned—all this is, in its origins, more native to the camera than the atmospheric landscape or the soulful portrait. Yet at the same time, photography reveals in this material physiognomic aspects, image worlds, which dwell in the

[42]Cohen, 1993, p.8.

> smallest things—meaningful yet covert enough to find a hiding place in waking dreams, but which, enlarged and capable of formulation, make the difference between technology and magic visible as a thoroughly historical variable.[43]

Benjamin introduces the concept of profane illumination in the 1929 essay 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia'.[44] In his definitive statement, he warns that the understanding of 'Surrealist experiences' is mistakenly associated with religious ecstasy and narcotic experiment, he counters:

> But the true, creative overcoming of religious illumination certainly does not lie in narcotics. It resides in a profane illumination, a materialistic, anthropological inspiration, to which hashish, opium, or whatever else can give an introductory lesson. (But a dangerous one; and the religious lesson is stricter.)[45]

This quote describes the manner in which Benjamin turns the surreal materialist. The profane illumination is received through contemplation of material things—iron structures, architecture, popular literature. The essay primarily uses Andre Breton's *Nadja* (1928) and makes reference to Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (1926), two novels which used evocative photographic reproductions in place of descriptive text and facsimiles of advertisements and menus (in *Paris*

[43]Benjamin, 1999c, p.511–512.

[44]Both Margaret Cohen and Rosalind Krauss acknowledge the importance of this essay to an understanding of the surrealist movement, Cohen states: ' "Profane illumination" was how Walter Benjamin formulated the kernel of surrealist Marxism in an essay that remains arguably the most important assessment of the political and theoretical objectives of the movement to date[...]' (Cohen, 1993, p.3) Krauss: 'Thus in one of the most central articulations of the surrealist experience of the 1930s. Photography continued, as Benjamin said, to "intervene." ' (Krauss, 2003, p.115) The Edmund Jephcott translation of the 'Surrealism' essay that appears in the *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings volume II* (Benjamin, 1999f) is dated from 1929, Krauss footnotes the same Jephcott translation from a 1978 anthology, *Reflections* which may explain the discrepency in Krauss's '1930s'. (Benjamin, 1978)

[45]Benjamin, 1999g, p.209. Benjamin is drawing the distinction here, in part, in relation to his own hashish experiments, these are discussed in chapter 6.

Peasant) to fashion a new type of literary experience. Within *Nadja*, Benjamin argues, banal experience of the everyday (photography of city streets for example), becomes charged with a new intensity through the profane illumination of its love story.[46] Benjamin describes how a mythological sensibility informs this process:

> Moreover, one need only take love seriously to recognize in it, too—as *Nadja* also indicates—a 'profane illumination'. 'At just that time' (i.e. when he knew Nadja), the author tells us, 'I took a great interest in the epoch of Louis VII, because it was the time of the "courts of love", and I tried to picture with great intensity how people saw life then.'[47]

This intensity is not a sensuous experience, however, as Benjamin quotes Erich Auerbach on the poets of the age of courtly love who 'possess a mystical beloved, they all have approximately the same very curious experience of love; to them all Amor bestows or withholds gifts that resemble an illumination more than sensual pleasure.'[48]

The profane illumination of love is therefore bound up in chastity as much as it is in passion, and it is this, not love, that Benjamin claims binds Breton to the titular Nadja (a character based on a real relationship from Breton's life). This is the dialectic sublation that Benjamin identifies in the novel, the profane illumination of this 'courtly love' and therefore also 'chastity' transports us into 'a world that borders not only on tombs of the Sacred Heart or altars to the Virgin, but also on the morning before a battle or after a victory.' In this Foucouldian insight, whereby

[46] 'It makes the streets, gates, squares of the city into illustrations of a trashy novel, draws off the banal obviousness of this ancient architecture to inject it with the most pristine intensity toward the events described, to which, as in old chambermaids' books, word-for-word quotations with page numbers refer.' (Benjamin, 1999f, p.211)

[47] Benjamin, 1999g, p.209–210.

[48] Ibid., p.210.

a discourse around romanticism propagates ideas of warfare and the nation state, Benjamin bundles the dialectic of this profane illumination of love with a concomitant violence. The Real, we might say, intervenes.

Benjamin's profane illumination is reached, then, in this formative explanation, through a love story. Benjamin's brief aside to courtly love provides a rich correspondence with the experience of the Real. Lacan, as Ellie Ragland points out in her article 'Psychoanalysis and Courtly Love', referred to courtly love in seminars dating from 1959 to 1974. Lacan explains how are modern concept of love *is* courtly love. In this fact, Lacan makes an observation which concurs with the idea of the dialectical image, via profane illumination, bringing dialectics to a standstill. This is based on the recognition of the impossibility of love in its representation of a synthesis of opposites rather than a thesis and antithesis. [49] The profundity of love therefore lies in the continued survival of this impossible idea in popular culture, Ragland describes this:

> Even the magic of love, then, cannot make One out of two who are structured in an asymmetry. And courtly love was, in Lacan's view of it, the greatest admission in the history of Western love practices of the non-rapport at the heart of sexual relations. Yet, in admitting the impasse between the sexes, this practice, paradoxically, did not give up on love, or on desire.[50]

In regard to the manner in which courtly love describes a synthesis of opposites, this is not based on a male/female difference, rather it resides in concepts of the prostration of the suitor

[49] Ragland's explanation of Lacan's Hegelian model rests on the idea that a true dialectics is based on two antitheses producing a synthesis: 'That is, opposites do not merge into a synthesis' and whereby: 'true dialectics is to be found, rather, in the paradoxical impasses of the real where two antitheses, for example, give rise to this synthesis: It is appearance that envelopes the truth of the 'real.' And such a structure is precisely that of courtly love which Lacan described as a meteor...[which] has remained enigmatic. (Ragland, 1995, p.2–4)

[50] Ibid., p.2.

in front of his, or her, ideal. In a quote that corresponds to both the humiliations of Bloom in Chapter 3 and the female automaton of Chaplin's *A King in New York* (1957, UK) in Chapter 5, Slavoj Žižek describes how the framework of the courtly love story Others the object of desire. It is a lengthy quote; however, besides these correspondences, it also describes the exceptional nature of courtly love as a heartening story and a correspondence to the Real:

> The knight's relationship to the Lady is thus the relationship of the subject-bondsman, the vassal, to his feudal Master-Sovereign who subjects him to senseless, outrageous, impossible, arbitrary, capricious ordeals. It is precisely in order to emphasize the non-spiritual nature of these ordeals that Lacan quotes a poem about a Lady who demanded that her servant literally lick her arse: the poem consists of the poet's complaints about the bad smells that await him down there (one know the sad state of personal hygiene in the Middle Ages), about the imminent danger that, as he is fulfilling his duty, the Lady will urinate on his head...The Lady is thus as far as possible from any kind of purified spirituality: she functions as an inhuman partner in the sense of a radical Otherness which is wholly incommensurable with our needs and desires; as such, she is simultaneously a kind of automaton, a machine which utters meaningless demands at random.
>
> The coincidence of absolute, inscrutable Otherness and pure machine is what confers on the Lady her uncanny, monstrous character—the Lady is the Other which is not our 'fellow creature'; that is to say, she is someone with whom no relationship of empathy is possible. This traumatic Otherness is what Lacan designates by

> means of the Freudian term *das Ding*, the Thing—the Real that 'always returns to its place', the hard kernel that resists symbolization.[51]

However, under the impossible conditions and humiliations of courtly love, despite the frightening Real Otherness that the Lady represents, the possibility of synthesis is still imminent. The Knight and his Lady still fall in love. This is the exceptional nature of the heartening, against-the-odds story. Logic is suspended, not in a spirtual, metaphysical manner, but in an earthly profane way. In this surreal environment the subject can dream the impossible, become illuminated and therefore also perceive the constructed second nature of modernity.

It is ultimately a political potential that Benjamin sees in surrealism, and while his essay is also concerned with warning off the more esoteric experiments of the movement, he continues to use the surreal method of profane illumination throughout his career. Returning to 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia' and writing about Breton and Aragon, in a paragraph that reveals the debt of the *Arcades* to their writing, Benjamin turns poetic. In another lengthy but profound paragraph he signposts the dialectical images that invoke the profane illumiation of *Nadja*, and inspire his not-yet-begun *Arcades*. It is a formative statement of the genesis of the *Arcades*:

> What are these things? Nothing could reveal more about Surrealism than their canon. Where shall I begin? He can boast an extraordinary discovery. He was the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the 'outmoded', in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the

[51] Zizek, 1994, p.90. Žižek goes on to describe how: 'Deprived of every real substance, the Lady functions as a mirror on to which the subject projects his narcissistic ideal.' And how 'the Lady appears 'not as she is, but as she fills his dream'. These descriptions are very apt to the projections and dreams that Napoléon produces imagines below.

> objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them. The relation of these things to revolution—no one can have a more exact concept of it than these authors. No one before these visionaries and augurs perceived how destitution—not only social but architectonic, the poverty of interiors, enslaved and enslaving objects—can be suddenly transformed into revolutionary nihilism. Leaving aside Aragon's *Passage de l'Opera*, Breton and Nadja are the lovers who convert everything that we have experienced on mournful railway journeys (railways are beginning to age), on Godforsaken Sunday afternoons in the proletarian quarters of the great cities, in the first glance through the rain-blurred window of a new apartment, into revolutionary experience, if not action. They bring the immense forces of 'atmosphere' concealed in these things to the point of explosion. What form do you suppose a life would take that was determined at a decisive moment precisely by the street song last on everyone's lips?

This is Benjamin's most direct identification of the content and method of detritus shifting which inspired his *Arcades*, and the potential explosion he identifies is exactly that of the heartening story that is tipped to political usefulness—it is a love story that inspires it.

There is, as we see in the violent abstinence of courtly poetry, and in the exploding passions of *Nadja*, a destructive cost to the profane illumination, Beatrice Hanssen writes of how the 'profane illumination aims at destroying the world'[52], and this is echoed when Benjamin quotes Gance in the Artwork essay:

[52]Hanssen, 2006b, p.196.

> The social significance of film, even—and especially—in its most positive form, is inconceivable without its destructive, cathartic side: the liquidation of the value of tradition in the cultural heritage. This phenomenon is most apparent in the great historical films. It is assimilating ever more advanced positions in its spread. When Abel Gance fervently proclaimed in 1927, "Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Beethoven will make films ... All legends, all mythologies, and all myths, all the founders of religions, indeed, all religions, ... await their celluloid resurrection, and the heroes are pressing at the gates," he was inviting the reader, no doubt unawares, to witness a comprehensive liquidation.[53,54]

In Gance's proclamation of a near supernatural authorship, Benjamin sees the opportunity for the destruction of the second nature that mythology and religion propagate, this is the intended objective of his politicisation of surrealism and, indeed, cinema: 'To win the energies of intoxication for the revolution—this is the project about which Surrealism circles in all its books and enterprises.'[55] He sees surrealism circling rather than addressing the revolution, and as his essay articulates he is not satisfied that the movement can surmount its nihilism and more esoteric practises. While the actuality of surrealism's profane illumination remains a constant in his conception of the dialectical image, in the *Arcades* he comes to formulate a graceful conception of its place as a dialectical element in a moment of 'awakening' that maintains the surrealist insight in a sublated synthesis:

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[53]Benjamin, 2003f, p.254–255.

[54]The reference that Benjamin provides for the quote co-credits Germaine Dulac: 'Abel Gance, "Le Temps de l'image est venue!" (It Is Time for the Image!), in Leon Pierre-Quint, Germaine Dulac, Lionel Landry, and Abel Gance, *L'Art Cinematographique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1927).'

[55]Benjamin, 1999g, p.215.

> Is awakening perhaps the synthesis of dream consciousness (as thesis) and waking consciousness (as antithesis)? Then the moment of awakening would be identical with the 'now of recognizability," in which things put on their true—surrealist—face.[56]

These, then, are terms in which I wish to approach Gance's *Napoléon* and to show how it constructs as dialectical image of revolutionary history and how it differs from and corresponds with *October*. To the list of formal qualifiers or signals we identified in the introduction—flashing montage, jump cuts, superimposition—we add montage that innervates on a physiological level, the close-up and hidden detail of the optical unconscious, we add facts or monads, and a profane illumination that contains within it a dialectic oscillation between a profound ecstasy and a destructive Real.

Deleuze's characterisation of Gance as a sublime filmmaker in my opening quote is apt, given that the word shares the same etymological root as sublate and references the same transformative chemical implications contained in Hegel's original formulation. A sequence from *Napoléon* that sublimely encapsulates the thesis I wish to build centres around the intersection of word and image while describing a dialectic fact at the heart of revolutionary action.[57] In a scene depicting the violent mob rule that followed the storming of the Bastille, Napoléon observes the crowd outside his window. The mob parades a decapitated head on a pike and uses the balustrade of Napoléon's window as a makeshift gallows for another victim. The camera pans from a poster detailing the universal rights of man, which Napoléon has pasted on his wall,

[56]Benjamin, 1999h, N3a,3.

[57]I have, in the main, used a bootleg of the 1983 Kevin Brownlow reconstruction of *Napoléon*, as screened on Channel 4 (UK) for this analysis. Due to legal dispute, Brownlow's version is not otherwise available. Where I discuss the triptych scenes I have used Francis Ford Coppola's Zoetrope /Studio Canal release as they are not recreated in Brownlow. With Brownlow's version running to 5 hours and 13 minutes and Coppola's version to 3 hours and 42 minutes, Brownlow's is considered the more complete.

to the window. In close-up we see the bloody hand of the hangman, and the shot cuts to the kicking legs of his victim (see Fig. 4.3 on the following page).[58]

The ironic juxtaposition of word and image provokes laughter in Napoléon, but his expression quickly turns to disgust as the horror of the scene sinks in. It is an exceedingly grotesque sequence that descends into the paroxysmic montage that Gance promised in his written introduction (See B on page 404).

Within this sequence, Gance integrates text and image, without recourse to intertitles, and establishes the Real horror of the French Revolution. While the ostensible subject of *Napoléon* is Bonaparte himself, Gance only managed to tell his story up to the time of his Italian campaign in 1796; as such, the film traces his childhood, his early military career, the revolution and his appointment as the head of the army. Napoléon's most profound achievements and failures from his coronation as emperor of France to his ill-fated invasion of Russia do not feature. The film therefore focuses most centrally on a historic period of extreme violence and upheaval—the Revolution and the Reign of Terror.

Historian J.M. Roberts, in a phrase which encapsulates the elements of violence, technology and novelty with which we are concerned, describes how 'a new instrument for humane execution, the guillotine (a characteristic product of pre-revolutionary enlightenment, combining as it did technical efficiency and benevolence in the swift, sure death it afforded its victims)

[58] Elaine Miller, referencing Julia Kristeva, describes a Lacanian implication applicable to this image: 'Julia Kristeva's arresting aesthetic image or figure for addressing, unmasking, or combating a "new malady of the soul" that affects modernity, namely, depression, is the decapitated head. Kristeva links the figure of decapitation to the "decisive moment in our individuation: when the child gets free of the mother...it loses her in order to be able to conceive of her." As she describes it in the catalogue for *Visions capitales* (*The Severed Head*), the 1998 Louvre exhibit she organized that consisted entirely of artistic representations of severed heads from antiquity through the present, decapitation refers to the separation of the infant from the mother in weaning, a separation, that is, from the one who has heretofore given it warmth and food and who has seen to its every need.' (Miller, 2014, ebook, introduction, paragraph 3)

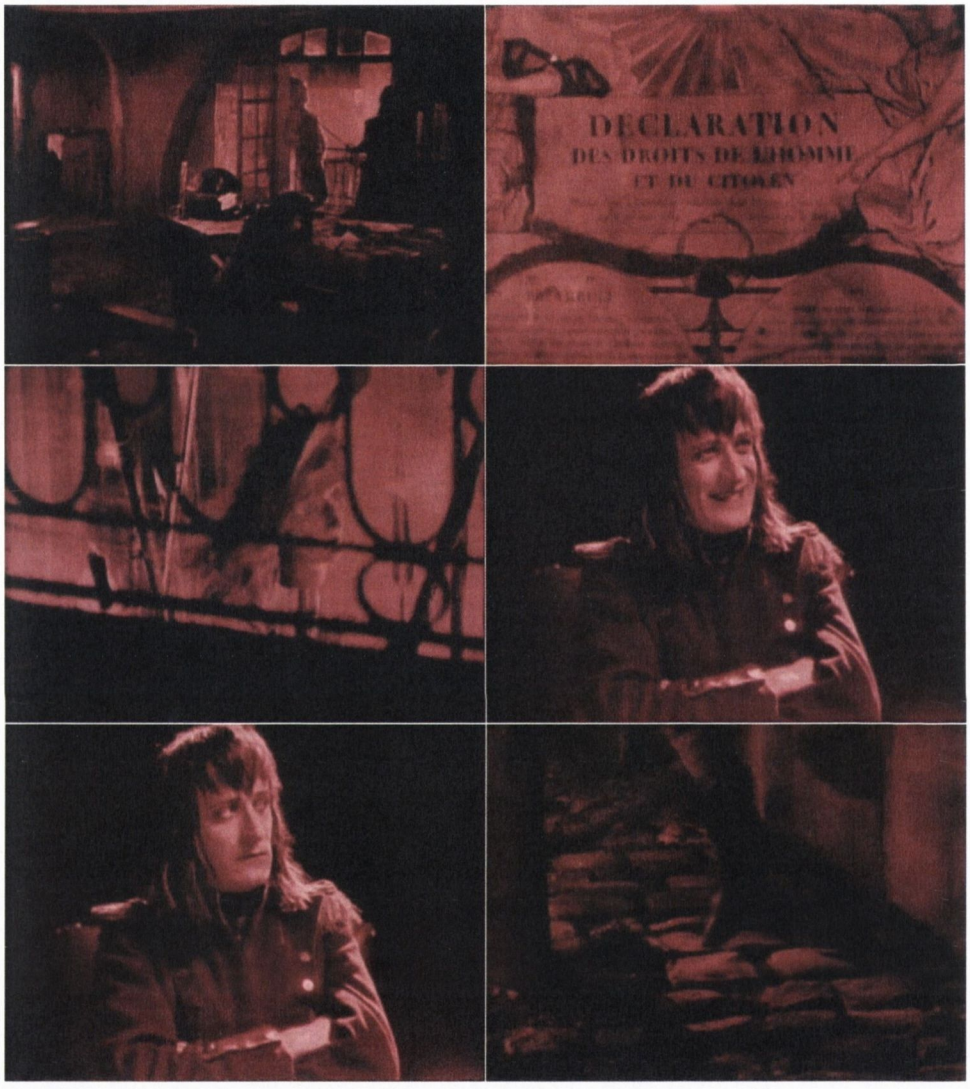

Figure 4.3: Universal Human Rights. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 47min 16sec - 47min 54sec.

became the symbol of the Terror.'[59] Roberts estimates that more than 35,000 executions and killings took place during the eighteen-month Reign of Terror.

In analysing the effect of this terror on aesthetic production, Ewa Lajer-Burcharth considers oil paintings, pen-and-ink drawings and engravings of the period to argue that the 'rupture and fragmentation of the republican space and body could be understood in psychoanalytic-semiotic terms as abjection.'[60] Lajer-Burcharth reproduces an etching by Louis Lafitte which illustrates what she describes as an attempt to distance and 'other' those elements of the revolution that signify the grotesque and the barbarous (see Fig. 4.4 on the following page). Conversely, in the upper half of the etching, there appears an allegory for the Thermidor (the post-revolutionary period) as a return to grace and justice. Lajer-Burcharth asks 'What exactly happened, on the level of signification, when such alternative, if not mutually exclusive, sets of corporeal metaphors were made to co-exist within the space of the same image?'[61]

A similar case of conflicting signification exists in *Napoléon*. Illustrated above in the scene of the improvised lynching, but developed throughout by Gance, there is some recognition of a terrible violence and inhumanity at the heart of the revolution. At the same time, the film depicts an epic love affair, which I relate to the profane illumination of *Nadja*, through its depiction of Napoléon and Josephine's passionate love affair.

Lajer-Burcharth argues that Louis Lafitte's representations of the collapse of established codes of male identity wrought by the violent upheaval of the revolution and the Terror—specifically the Thermidor period which saw revolutionary leaders like Robespierre themselves executed—implies a castrative male lack in this world that becomes reconfigured by the female

[59] Roberts, 2004, p.734.

[60] Lajer-Burcharth, 1994, p.223.

[61] Ibid., p.222.

37 Normand after Louis Lafitte, *The Ascerbic Forms*, etching, 1795

Figure 4.4: Normand after Louis Lafitte, *The Ascerbic Forms*, etching 1795.

allegories. In a similar movement, I suggest below, Gance sublates the violence of the Terror and the destruction of the pre-revolutionary codes into a vision of the world that is reconfigured through notions of Romantic beauty.

The dialectic image I identify in this sublation therefore centres on the violence of the Terror and scenes which describe the industrial apparatus and bureaucracy that supported it. As discussed above, this image, when viewed from our 'now-time' and our post-Holocaust perspective, is intended to provide an awakening moment of recognition in relation to the

violent reality of the French Revolution, as opposed to those handed to us by second nature documents like Gance's film.

These sublations can be supported by both Gance's paroxysmic montage sequence and his use of cross-dissolve and jump cut. The first example I would like to use is the image of a bloody handprint that appears as a sign of the horror of the prison for the condemned, and the Terror in general, flashed on the screen for one second. A further connotation is discernible when the print is read as a signature of its owner and it becomes a mark of the executed, silenced individual. Along with the decapitated head, this grotesque symbol is one of very few representations of the abject in the film (see Fig. 4.5 on the next page). This image is repeated and jump cut later in the diegesis as an introduction to the 'Victims' Ball', a scene which dramatises the celebrations which took place across Paris in the Thermidor period. These balls are described in intertitles: 'In this feverish reaction of life against death, a thirst for joy seized the whole of France. Six hundred and forty-four balls took place in the space of a few days over the tombs of the victims of the Terror' and the qualifications for entry as: 'To be admitted to the Victims' Ball it was necessary to have been imprisoned, or to prove the death of a father, a brother or a husband.'

The handprint, in its repetition, contributes to a curious ruse by Gance. In the film's script, Gance describes how the sequence was intended to misdirect the audience into thinking that the projectionist had made an error in the reel order of the projection. That is, that while the narrative had moved on (and as indicated in the intertitles), from the Terror to the Thermidor, Gance constructs the scene to mirror an earlier prison scene where the warder—Fleuri—calls a roll of those condemned to the guillotine. The script's line reads: 'One might almost think there has been a mistake and that this is a repeat of a previous scene.'[62,63] Gance describes 'the

[62]Gance and Ballard, 1990, p.152.

[63]The full sequence in the script reads: 'Roll-call of the victims of the terror - same tableau as before. The same despair, the same tragedy in the faces.

Figure 4.5: Bloody handprint as depicted at the prison and the Victims' Ball. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 181min 12sec and 226min 17sec.

same tableau as before' in the script, but while the elements of the mise-en-scène are similar, their presentation and arrangement are different, the only literal 'sameness' is the handprint which in this instance is jump cut to present a close-up with each shot lasting one second. Gance further enhances the momentary sense of a return to the Terror by depicting what appears to be another shot of a decapitated head, reminiscent of the scene on Napoléon's balcony; with the hindsight of the scene's development, this is understood to be fancy dress (see Fig. 4.6 below). In some sense, Gance wanted the audience to relieve the Terror in sympathy with the characters who themselves were reliving the Terror in their own perverse reenactment. Without dwelling on the postmodern and meta-textual implications of this ploy, I would highlight the manner in which this action somehow, in the manner of the Terror balls themselves, obviates the horror of the Terror and the previously loaded signification of the handprint and piked head are emptied out.

Figure 4.6: Fancy dress decapitation. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 226min 22sec.

The same Fleuri wearing his same warder's uniform. He calls out names, but whereas before his voice was choked, now it is terrifying.

Condemned prisoners being dragged along.

Fleuri. His expression is very fierce. One might almost think there has been a mistake and that this is a repeat of a previous scene.' (Gance and Ballard, 1990, p.152)

In a final parody of the Terror, the action of the guillotine is replayed in the form of a grotesque mannequin, dressed as the recently beheaded Robespierre, whose head explodes to the delight of female onlookers (see Fig. 4.7 on the next page). The sequence resonates with the tradition of the *tricoteuse de Robespierre*, a term which Lajer-Burcharth identifies as 'actually a code word for a phobic phantasm of femininity associated with the terror: it denoted lower class women who supposedly assisted the daily executions sitting by the guillotine, knitting and taking pleasure in the blood spectacle.'[64] Lajer-Burcharth notes how this term was a retroactive construct and associates this term with the 'more explicitly castrative *fury of the Guillotine*' and with use as a positioning concept by male political moderates in relation to post-revolutionary radical female activism.

This scene gains heightened relevance in the overall development of the film's narrative as it is also in this episode that Napoléon finally formally meets Josephine. Up to this point, their encounters have been brief, marked by chance and with a premonitionary quality. To signify the importance of the meeting Gance uses a sequence of his paroxysmic rapid montage, flashing back to their two previous meetings with twenty-two shots over a five-second period. As argued above, the love story becomes a profane illumination in *Napoléon*, and this is communicated in this rapid montage as Josephine and Napoléon return each other's gaze, and Josephine's face is repeatedly shown in close-up. A bouquet of flowers dropped by Josephine and retrieved by Napoléon becomes a fetishised object of desire.[65] As Napoléon remembers all this, his rushing

[64] Lajer-Burcharth, 1994, p.235.

[65] There is an interesting correspondence between Lacan's objet petit *a* and Benjamin's concept of the dialectic image producing an interruption that renders 'dialectics at a standstill.' In his 1963 lecture, 'Introduction to the Names-of-the-Father Seminar', Lacan makes what seems to be a definitive statement on Hegelian dialectics: 'The entirety of Hegelian dialectic is made to stop that gap and show, in a prestigious act of transmutation, how the universal, by way of the scansion of the *Aufhebung*, can come to be particularized. Whatever the prestige of Hegelian dialectic, whatever the effects, seen by Marx, through which it entered into the world, thus completing that whose meaning Hegel was, namely: the subversion of a political order founded on the Ecclesia, the Church, and on that score, whatever its success, whatever the value of what it sustains in the political incidences of its

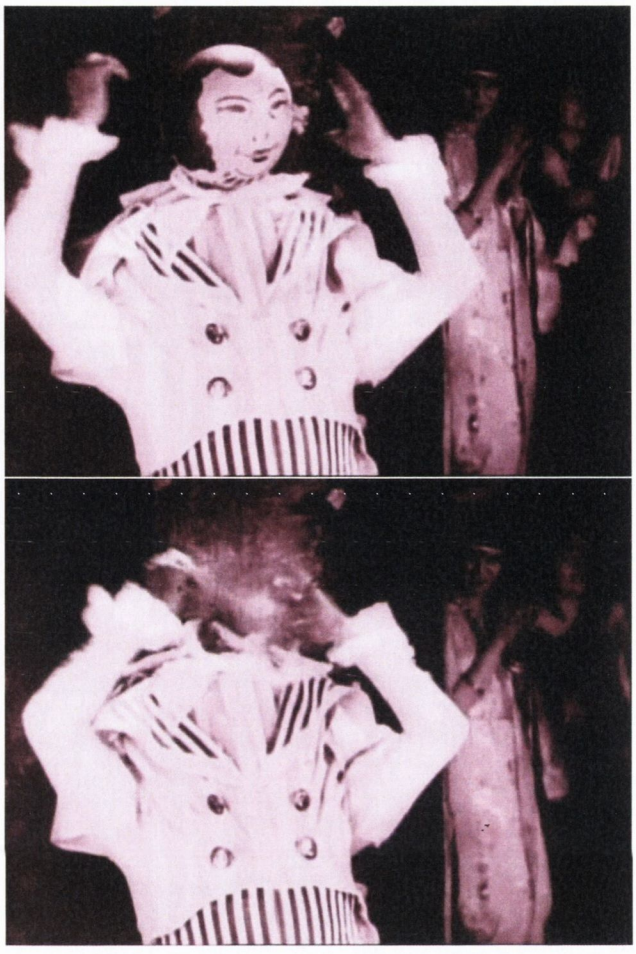

Figure 4.7: Robespierre loses his head. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 228min 34sec.

memory assumes the form of a Proustian involuntary memory, his expression communicating the experience of a profound awakening (see Fig. 4.8 on the following page).

There is, however, an important difference, as discussed above, between Benjamin's and Breton's use of profane illumination. Benjamin insists the insights of the experience can lead

actualization, Hegelian dialectic is false and contradicted as much by the testimony of the natural sciences as by the historical progress of the fundamental science, mathematics.' (Lacan and Mehlman, 1987, p.84) Tom Eyers, in his book *Lacan and the Concept of the 'Real'*, discusses in detail how Lacan's argument is based on understanding of the object of psychoanalytic anxiety—objet petit *a*—in its dual role as also the object of desire and also therefore of anxiety, as 'nondialectisable'. (Eyers, 2012, p.31).

Figure 4.8: Napoléon's involuntary memory. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 230min 37sec - 230min 43sec.

to materialist understanding, and he derides Breton's *Nadja* for including the *voyante* (fortune teller, tarot reader) character of Madame Sacco:

> Now I concede that the breakneck career of Surrealism over rooftops, lightning conductors, gutters, verandas, weathercocks, stucco work—all ornaments are grist to the cat burglar's mill—may have taken it also into the humid backroom of spiritualism. But I am not pleased to hear it cautiously tapping on the windowpanes to inquire about its future.[66]

And this is how Gance's rapid flashbacks portray Josephine, their meeting has a weight of fate attached, their chance encounters culminating in a metaphysical intervention. The spiritual aspect of their relationship becomes most apparent in Gance's sublation of Josephine in image superimposition. In representing Napoléon's subsequent obsession with Josephine, Napoléon sees Josephine in a globe and kisses lips that he visualises as centred on Paris, this image and variations of her face superimposed on maps appear repeatedly in the film from this point (see Fig. 4.9 on the next page). This ambiguous relationship to reality undercuts Napoléon's status as a sensibly functioning leader of men. Similarly, in his courtship of Josephine, Gance portrays Napoléon in a blindfold as she deceives him with another lover. Compare these depictions to other images from the film where Napoléon is cross-dissolved with an eagle and where he assumes the Christ-like appearance promised in Gance's written introduction to the film (see Fig. 4.10 on page 191).[67]

[66] Benjamin, 1999g, p.209.

[67] Richard Abel acknowledges this appearance of 'incoherency' in Gance's portrayal, and acknowledges Jean Mitry and others reading of the film as such, as he notes 'Napoleon's blindness here takes on disturbingly grand proportions.' (Abel, 1982, p.7). Abel argues that this multifaceted aspect of the representation—both in the characterisation and in the formal experimentation—can be read as syntactically consistent with the many trials and tribulations that Napoléon faces in the narrative. My reading is in agreement with Abel insomuch as I read it as inconsistent for reasons of material intent rather than stylistic confusion.

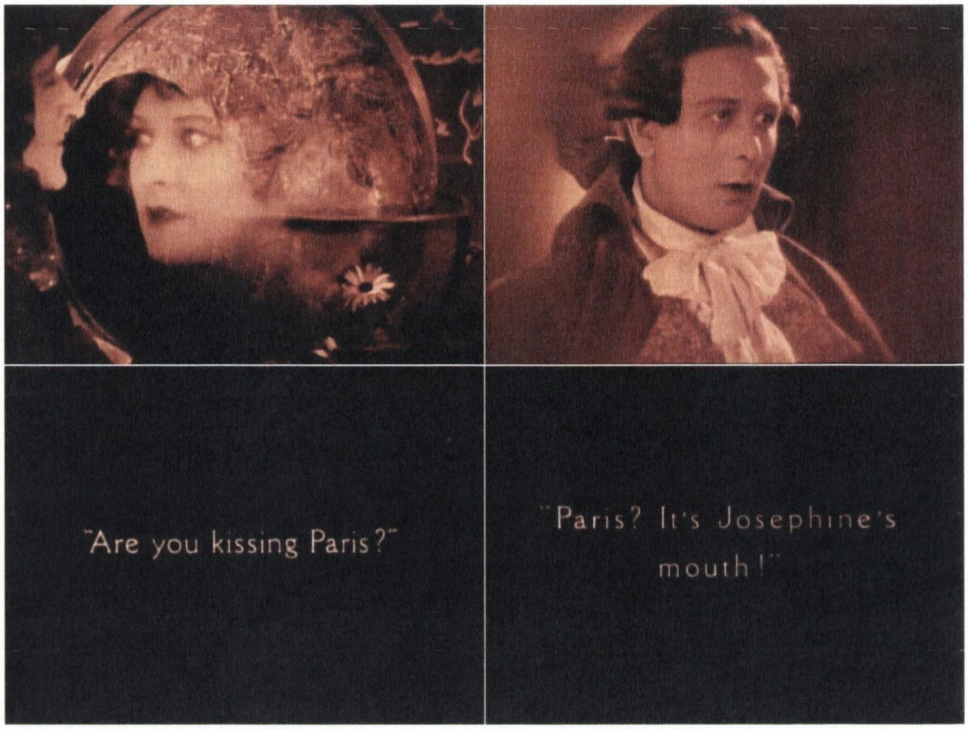

Figure 4.9: Josephine objectified as Napoléon's world. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 247min 40sec.

How then can this metaphysical impetus in Gance's montage be reconciled with a profane illumination that is useful in Benjamin's materialistic formulation?

Hal Foster's 1993 book, *Compulsive Beauty*, named as a variation on the final line of Breton's *Nadja*, offers a compelling mediation between the poles of Breton's metaphysical excesses and Benjamin's materialist ambition.[68] In the return of the bloody handprint and the decapitated

[68] Breton's final line reads 'Beauty will be CONVULSIVE or it will not be at all' (Breton, 1999, p.160. Caps in original). The title plays on the Freudian concept of the compulsive desire to return to the repressed infantile stage before maternal separation, a desire Foster links to Breton's call for 'convulsive beauty'. Foster argues that this relationship with return constitutes a particular concern with the *uncanny* in surrealism : 'I believe this concept to be the uncanny, that is to say, a concern with events in which repressed material returns in ways that disrupt unitary identity, aesthetic norms, and social order. In my argument the surrealists not only are drawn to the return of the repressed but also seek to redirect this return to critical ends. Thus I will claim that the uncanny is crucial to particular surrealist oeuvres as well as to general surrealist notions (e.g., the marvelous, convulsive beauty, and objective chance)' (Foster, 1993, p.xvii).

Figure 4.10: Napoléon blinded by Josephine compared to depictions as an eagle and Christ. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 253min 45sec, 246min 44sec, 279min 37sec.

heads, and particularly in the manner in which the return is undercut in joyous and humorous representation, we can see a correspondence with Foster's observation that 'if the experience of the uncanny is not foreign to the surrealists, the concept of the uncanny is not familiar. When they do intuit it, they often resist it, as its ramifications run counter to the surrealist faith in love and liberation.'[69]

In resisting this return, Gance also favours a narrative of 'love and liberation', and in this action the narrative becomes subject to 'aesthetic displacement', a term Foster uses in a relation to surrealist collage in a section which references Aragon, Breton, Benjamin and the profane illumination:

> However, the primary purpose of the surrealist marvelous is clear: the 'negation' of the real, or at least of its philosophical equation with the rational. If 'reality," Aragon writes in 1924, 'is the apparent absence of contradiction," a construct that effaces conflict, then 'the marvelous is the eruption of contradiction in the real,' an eruption that exposes this construct as such. Like Breton throughout his life, Aragon refers the marvelous to love. However, six years later in 'La Peinture au defi' he is more expressly political: the marvelous is a 'dialectical urgency' in which one 'bourgeois' reality is subverted, and another revolutionary world advanced. Here the marvelous appears responsive to historical contradiction, which, Aragon implies, might be evoked through aesthetic 'displacement." This intuition underwrites his support of surrealist collage; it also resonates with the Benjaminian emphasis on 'profane illumination' in surrealism, its 'materialistic, anthropological inspiration.'[70]

[69] Foster, 1993, p.xviii.

[70] Ibid., p.20.

In this configuration, Aragon develops his theory around a more materialist profane illumination, and we can see how the extreme passion of Napoléon's love can be read as a displacement and that this displacement is in fact a dialectical necessity in a process which reveals 'historical contradiction'. That is, the artist who wishes to create a new paradigm cannot approach his project with the same framework as the established rational paradigm, rather he subverts it through contradiction and a rejection of logic. In this case we can return to Gance's contradictory representations, the lovesick and the Christ-like, and read them as a dialectical element in a sublation of historical moment. In this I return to Benjamin, when he argues that the courtly poems of love are as much engaged with ideas of war and violence as they are desire. The most literal depiction of this occurs in Gance's highly experimental and visionary 'triptych', when Josephine's face appears variously flanking and superimposed with images of troops, battles and maps (see Fig. 4.11 on the next page).[71]

This is the major difference between Eisenstein's revolution and Gance's, without the profane illumination of—for instance—the heartening love story, the constructed aspect of second nature in cinema is never negated, never sublated or revealed. In this case, film reflects an ideological construct of a whole, rational, logical universe, without fissure it becomes metaphysical, the opposite of earthly or profane. A film which reflects a perfect understanding suggests a perfect understanding can be reached, even that it has been reached. Revolutionary ideals have

[71] In these sequences, Gance employed three projectors to create a widescreen—an accomplishment that has been widely accepted as the earliest precursor to polyvision—and uses his enlarged projection space to present three images side by side. His script for these sequences, which describe Napoléon's conquest of Italy, depicts: 'Panoramic triptych of the plain stretching away at his feet. His dream armies flood past in fluid superimposition, while his legendary shadow falls over the entire width of the triptych. He stops for a while in the middle of the central screen to watch a charge of centaurs sweeping across the plain, then he continues on to the right. Now the haunting face of Josephine lights up on the right screen, only to flit over on to the left screen. The battles continue to unfold in fluid superimposition; then, to right and to left, the map of Italy and Josephine's face alternate in rapid succession in a relentless chase, seductive rivals within Bonaparte's soul. His shadow now appears on the central screen, in the middle of a transparent globe of the earth rotating round him.' (Gance and Ballard, 1990, p.199)

Figure 4.11: The sublation of War. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 219min 24sec - 220min 4sec.

no place in such a universe. To examine these differences in representation I now return to Eisenstein to compare a depiction of 'desk murder' in the film *October* to one in *Napoléon*.

Concerned with the October Revolution of 1917, Eisenstein's film depicts the leader of the Provisional government—Alexander Kerensky—as an appeaser of the bourgeoisie and the Tsar. Having secured power after the February revolution, Kerensky is considered a failed revolutionary who did not secure the emancipation promised by the Bolsheviks, particularly in his continued engagement in World War I. This leads to the second and victorious October Revolution of 1917, where he himself is swept aside and the Bolsheviks seize power. His

representation in the film, along with the 'gods' sequence, has become one of the predominant examples of Eisensteinian 'Intellectual Montage'.

To contextualise the scene with which we are concerned, a synopsis of the characterisation of Kerensky is useful. Kerensky is first shown ascending a staircase of the Winter Palace to assume power from the Tsar. In a repetitive sequence of shots, Kerensky's ascent is intercut with a series of intertitles which denigrate and satirise him—'Dictator', 'Supreme Commanders', 'Army and Navy', 'Prime Minister', 'Etcetera, Etcetera, Etcetera', 'The hope of the country and the revolution', 'A.F. Kerensky'.[72] As he reaches the summit of the steps the intercutting of a classical statue culminates in a rapid montage between Kerensky's ominously lit face and the statue that implies the crowning of Kerensky as emperor (see Fig. 4.12 on the following page).

Kerensky's characterisation is deftly handled, and Eisenstein's cutting of the ascent of the grand staircase, the intertitles and the 'crowning' communicate a highly effective mixture of power, hubris and ambition. After a number of reaction shots from stock types—the bourgeoisie, military and civil representatives—Kerensky approaches the Tsar's chamber, and Eisenstein employs another sequence of rapid montage that has been heavily cited. To communicate Kerensky's heightened sense of vanity and self-importance, Eisenstein cuts various shots of a mechanical peacock from differing angles, some jump cuts and close-ups. Again, if read in this context, this adds very effectively to the characterisation of Kerensky as a deeply arrogant

[72]In 'The Dramaturgy of Film Form', Eisenstein describes his intent in the sequence: 'Kerensky's rise to (untrammelled) power and dictatorship after July 1917. The effect is achieved by *intercutting titles* denoting ever higher rank ('Dictator', 'Generalissimo', 'Minister of the Navy and the Army', etc.) with five or six sequences of the staircase in the Winter Palace with Kerensky ascending the *same* flight each time. Here the conflict between the kitsch of the ascending staircase and Kerensky treading the same ground produces an intellectual resultant: the satirical degradation of these titles in relation to Kerensky's nonentity. Here we have a counterpoint between a verbally expressed, conventional idea and a pictorial representation of an individual who is unequal to the idea. The incongruity between the two produces a purely *intellectual* resolution at the expense of this individual. Intellectual dynamisation.' (Eisenstein, Taylor and Glenny, 1988, p.179. Italics in original)

Figure 4.12: Kerensky crowned. *October* (Eisenstein, 1928, USSR) 23min 45sec.

individual.[73] Eisenstein cuts after brief images of a lock closing, indicating a closure or finality in Kerensky's collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

[73]This interpretation appears in nearly all discussions, including Kracauer, who compares it to the 'ludicrous' 'pictorial symbolism' of Griffith in *Intolerance* (Kracauer, 1960, p.208). Tsivian, utilising Noël Burch, develops a more imaginative but compelling reading that posits the peacock as representative of the Tsarist power structure and that, when the peacock turns its back on the camera and Kerensky enters the Tsar's chambers, 'Eisenstein was hoping to achieve the effect of Kerensky entering the peacock's arsehole.' This reading does account for an implied mechanical relationship between the door of the chamber and the peacock in the scene—indicating a diegetic relationship on the level of an 'imaginary space'. (Tsivian, 1993, p.93)

After a brief sequence depicting the proletariat expressing dismay at the failed objectives of the February revolution and a number of shots depicting Lenin living in a derelict shanty, Kerensky is shown to be now residing in the richly decorated Winter Palace. Kerensky is again introduced by intertitle, but this time feminised through the relation of his first names to those of its previous royal resident—'In Alexandra Fyodorovna's apartment' 'Alexander Fyodorovich'. The mise-en-scène between these intertitles depicts fragile porcelain, chandeliers, leather jodhpurs and an extravagantly draped and decorated bed; Kerensky, in the context of this narrative, has clearly become counter-revolutionary. Eisenstein cuts to his second close-up of Kerensky, as ominous as the first, and two shots that jump cut on Kerensky seated between two monstrous tusks.

In a sequence that I will compare to *Napoléon*, Kerensky approaches a desk in the foreground, examines an order to reinstitute the army's death penalty for deserting or disobedient troops—which had been rescinded in Russia after the February revolution—and subsequently signs it. Kerensky is shown to pensively pace his quarters before Eisenstein cuts to a military stock character. The sequence lasts 50 seconds and is highly notable as the *longest* uninterrupted narrative sequence in the film's 115-minute running time (see Fig. 4.13 on the next page).[74] It is further notable that this scene, along with the earlier described scene and minor later appearances, despite its brevity and *lack* of characterisation, nonetheless constructs Kerensky as the most complexly defined character in the entire film. This is in keeping with Eisenstein's well-known foregrounding of the collective over the individual. Finally, it is this action—the signing of the death penalty—which is shown as the catalyst that motivates the action of the rest of the film.[75]

[74]I am calculating this based on a definition of a sequence of shots which does not cut to an extra diegetic pictorial symbol or different geographic mise-en-scène.

[75]Obviously, the historical truth is far more complex. Sheila Fitzpatrick, in her short but highly respected history of the Revolution, does not mention the signing of this order, presumably not seeing it as a definitive

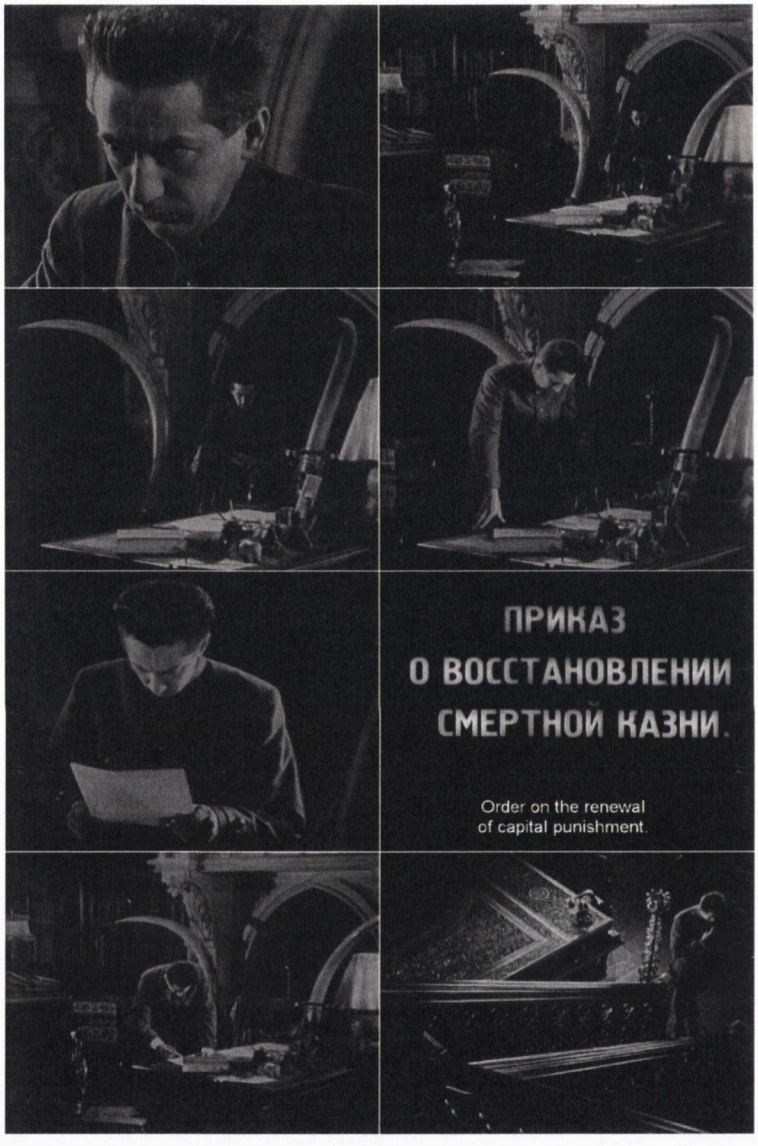

Figure 4.13: Kerensky's fatal act. *October* (Eisenstein, 1928, USSR) 28min 48sec - 29min 38sec.

In this reading, then, as a 'classical' dialectic complement to abstraction, this sequence occupies the space where Benjamin would, at the centre of the film, position the heartening story. Eisenstein's most explicit and straightforward narrative construct is thrown into heightened relief in the context of the overall overwhelming nature of his 'intellectual montage'. It would be tempting to draw a neat conclusion that this moment of contextually unusual montage corresponds to the moment of awakening in the dialectical image. There is compelling coincidence both in this shift of formal register and in the literal turn the moment signifies in the narrative. Given the importance of montage to Benjamin's theory, I take this as the moment, as we shall see in support of Gance's scenes, to provoke the dialectical image of desk murder in the 20th century. However, Eisenstein's film fails to fulfil several other criteria.

The sense of innervation, of bodily shock, lies everywhere else in *October*. There is no profane illumination, an idea founded in ideas of convulsive beauty, intoxication and optical unconscious. This reversal of the heartening story has the opposite effect. Most critically, Eisenstein's literal and symbolic use of pictorial representation removes the opportunity for the audience to experience their own insight and revelation.[76] As we have seen, Kerensky's character is so singularly one-dimensional, no dialectical opportunity—no complexity—can be read in this film with one character.

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moment in the revolution (Fitzpatrick, 2001). In Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution,* where he remarkably speaks in the third person, he describes a confrontation with Kerensky at the Democratic Convention in September of 1917, one month before the Revolution. After being condemned from the floor for reintroducing the death penalty, Kerensky claims that although he signed it he will never use it. Trotsky recounts his response:' "If the death penalty was necessary," asked Trotsky in his speech, "then how does he, Kerensky, dare say that he will not make use of it? And if he considers it possible to give his promise to the democracy not to apply the death penalty, then...its restoration becomes an act of light-mindedness transcending the limits of criminality." ' (Trotsky, 2008, p.599–600)

[76]This is intentional as this film was fundamentally conceived for propaganda purposes. The result is therefore purposefully didactic and polemical.

We can see how profoundly true this is in the next sequence when, in finally damning him, Eisenstein equates Kerensky with Napoléon (see Fig. 4.14 on the following page).[77] The question can be asked, given that Gance produced *Napoléon* at the same time as *October* and with the same historical distance, which Napoléon is this? Gance oscillates between a Christ figure, a lovelorn suitor, an eagle and a blind man. Gance allows the audience to construct their own sense of history, he allows an opportunity for the recognition of a second nature.[78]

Returning to *Napoléon* to compare his depiction of desk murder requires the analysis of two scenes. Within these scenes I will highlight the effect of the heartening story juxtaposed with brief, affective and allegorical montage. Gance's narrative develops a subplot of a humane redemption within the terror of the guillotine's apparatus—a microcosm of the profane love that Napoléon feels for Josephine in the midst of warfare.

In the first of these scenes we are reintroduced to three notorious architects of the Terror—Robespierre, Saint-Just and Couthon—in a scene where they are shown to nominate the victims of the Terror. In a complicated mise-en-scène, the three are shown with a hurdy-gurdy player and a black servant in a stately room (see Fig. 4.15 on page 203). Using intertitles, medium shots and close-ups of each of the three, Gance establishes basic character traits of each indi-

[77] David Bordwell chooses this as an example of a one-dimensional characterisation: 'Nonetheless, psychological singularity remains quite rare. Sometimes, as in *October*, the more psychologically motivated the character (e.g., Kerensky, with his Napoleonic lust for power), the surer the character is to be denigrated as a bourgeois.' (Bordwell, 1985, p.236)

[78] Andrey Tarkovsky uses Eisenstein's portrayal of Kerensky to reject the 'word-for-word' literalness of his cinema: 'I reject the principles of 'montage cinema' because they do not allow the film to continue beyond the edges of the screen: they do not allow the audience to bring personal experience to bear on what is in front of them on film. "Montage cinema" presents the audience with puzzles and riddles, makes them decipher symbols, wonder at allegories, appealing all the time to their intellectual experience. Each of these riddles, however, has its own word-for-word solution; so I feel that Eisenstein prevents the audience from letting their feelings be influenced by their own reaction to what they see. When in *October* he juxtaposes a balalaika with Kerensky, his method has become his aim, in the way that Valery meant. The construction of the image becomes an end in itself, and the author proceeds to make a total onslaught on the audience, imposing upon them his own attitude to what is happening.' (Tarkovsky, 1987, p.118)

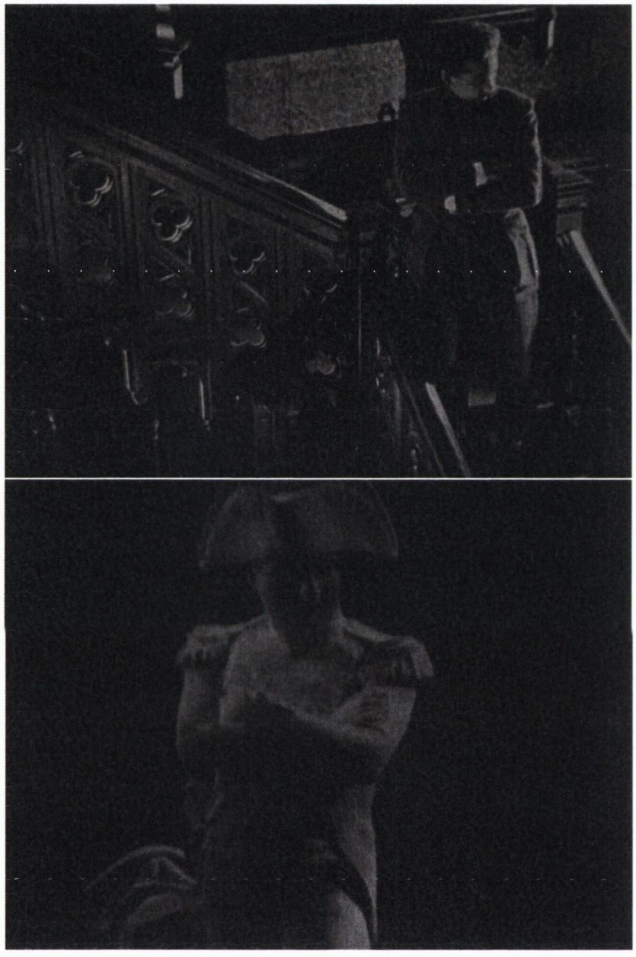

Figure 4.14: Kerensky as Napoléon. *October* (Eisenstein, 1928, USSR) 30min 02sec - 30min 05sec.

vidual: Robespierre is seated, working and serious, Saint-Just is a vain dandy smelling a rose and Couthon appears insane as he plays with a rabbit. Worth noting is Gance's appearance as Saint-Just, announced in the intertitles as 'The most awe-inspiring figure of the Terror: Saint-Just (played by Abel Gance)'. Saint-Just's rose is an interesting correspondence to the profane love of Josephine, in that she came to be known as 'The Rose of Martinique'. Couthon's intertitle reads 'Couthon was, with Saint-Just, one of the most influential members of the committee of Public Safety'. The action of the scene establishes, just as it does in *October*, the signing of a document, in this case a death sentence for Lucile Desmoulins marked with the initials M.R. for Maximilien de Robespierre.

The scene, in its basic character portraits, is not wholly dissimilar to Eisenstein's. In the complications of the interaction of the intertitles and the mise-en-scène, however, some major differences can be established. Where *October* uses animal tusks to alienate the viewer from the mise-en-scène of Kerensky's chamber, I would argue that the presence of ethnically foreign characters in this scene, the only such appearance in the film, performs a similar alienating function. The effect, however, is radically different—the intrusion of the servants on the mise-en-scène (two servants break the frame by entering and leaving) evokes and humanises a discourse of dominance, suppression, master and slave. In this action Gance manages to imbricate the ideals of the French Revolution—liberty, fraternity, equality—in a visual comment on its national colonial projects. Where Kerensky's tusks simply alienate, the objectification of the human being through slavery calls into question the basis of the egalitarian utopia that the Revolution promised.

While Kerensky is portrayed in a singularly psychological caricature, Gance's visual representation of Saint-Just and Couthon is at odds with the intertitles that describe them. Recalling the use of image and text in surrealist practice, Gance juxtaposes the flower-twirling Saint-Just

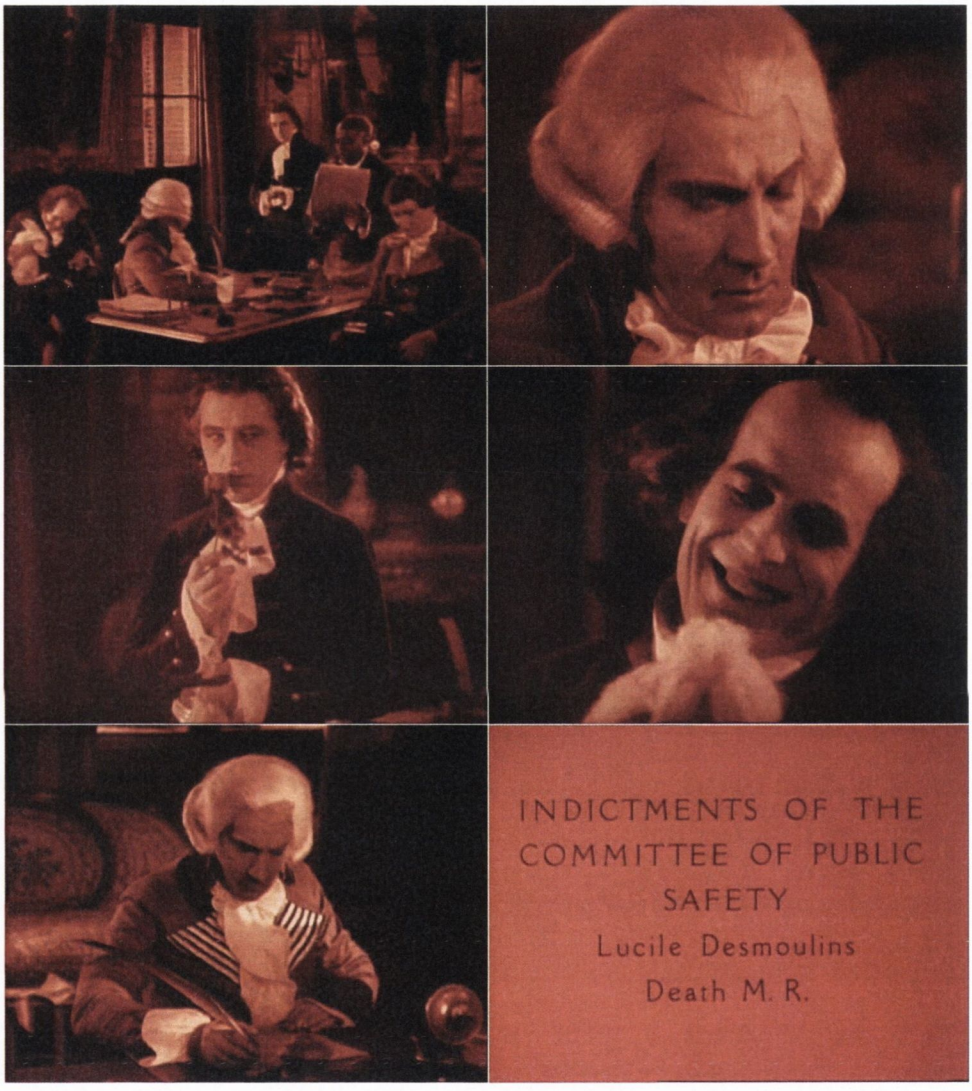

Figure 4.15: The architects of the Terror. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 173min 22sec - 174min 26sec

with his description as an 'awe-inspiring figure of the Terror'. Similarly, Couthon's description as 'influential' is undercut by the rabbit he inanely plays with. Their decisions are shown to be arbitrary and malicious, Josephine is condemned because 'She would seduce the most virtuous', and Napoléon because he will not accept military command under their leadership. The actions and affectations of these faintly ridiculous characters, kept amused by the hurdy-gurdy player as they flippantly pass death sentences, perfectly recalls and premeditates 'the banality of evil.'

Gance returns to this mise-en-scène in a sequence which provides a useful comparison to Eisenstein's Bonaparte/Kerensky symbolism and which again implicates desk bureaucracy with the Real of the guillotine. Rather than resort to extra diegetic symbols, Gance constructs a compelling and allegorical symbolic exchange through the use of light and shadow in a representation of the guillotine—the largely repressed symbol of the Real in *Napoléon*. On Robespierre's desk, an inkwell, napkin and ornament cast a shadow on a book titled *Cromwell* (see Fig. 4.16 on the following page).

By invoking Cromwell, Gance signals the instability of historical legacy—the fact that a celebrated national patriot can nonetheless be viewed as a mass murderer—and comments on Robespierre's own legacy. In comparison with Eisenstein's equivalence of Kerensky to Napoléon, this prompts the viewer to construct meaning—nondefinitive meaning which is open to interpretation—which equates to an experience. This is in stark contrast to the rigid lesson Eisenstein seeks to impart. An experience, an awakening, is also shown to take place in the narrative as Robespierre violently reacts to the shadows and sweeps the objects from his desk, he experiences his own shocking illumination. Again, the action takes place at his desk, and image and text intervene at the centre of the Terror's bureaucracy.

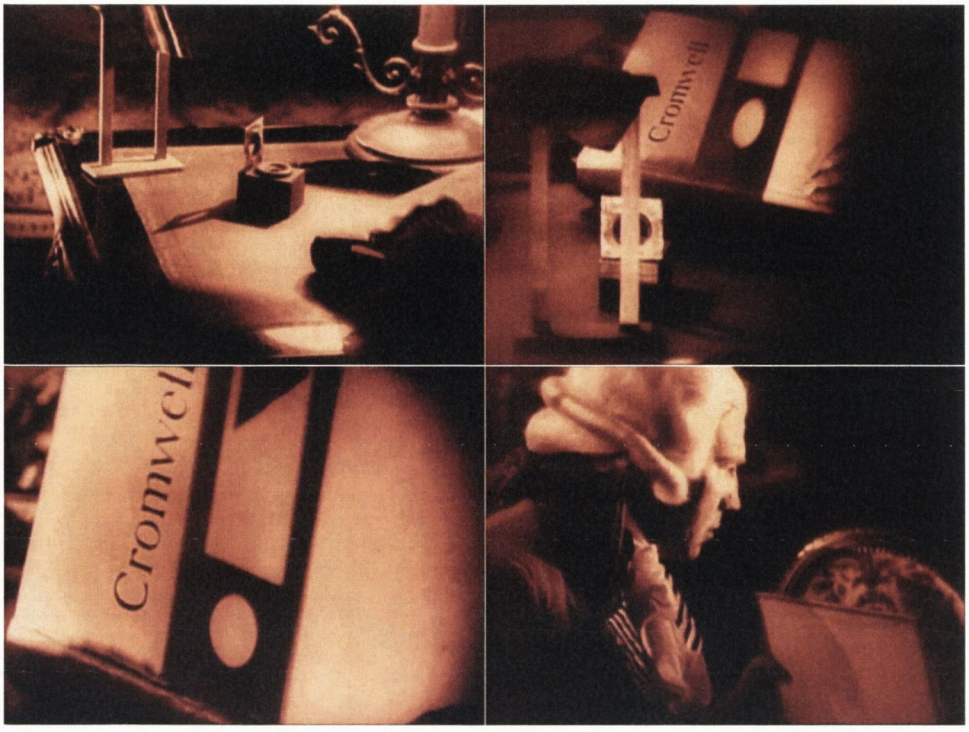

Figure 4.16: A foreshadowed legacy. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 176min 02sec.

The negation of the Real, the heartening story that is taken up in the horror of these desk murderers, takes place in the prison that is later reimagined at the Victims' Ball. An intertitle announces 'The "thermometer" of the guillotine' as the clerical horror of the apparatus of the Terror is again highlighted in an opening shot that pans horizontally down an improbably tall filing cabinet. Divided into sections, the cabinet contains four shelves for the appropriate filing of prisoner records. The shelves are labelled according to the following texts, from left to right: 'Beheaded', 'Next Batch', 'On Trial', 'Innocent' (see Fig. 4.17 on the next page).

First in close-up and subsequently in long shot, the pulse of the 'thermometer' indicates that the 'beheaded' far outnumber the 'next batch', that those 'awaiting judgement' have no chance of ending up in the empty 'innocent' shelf. The chief bureaucrat is shown to delegate

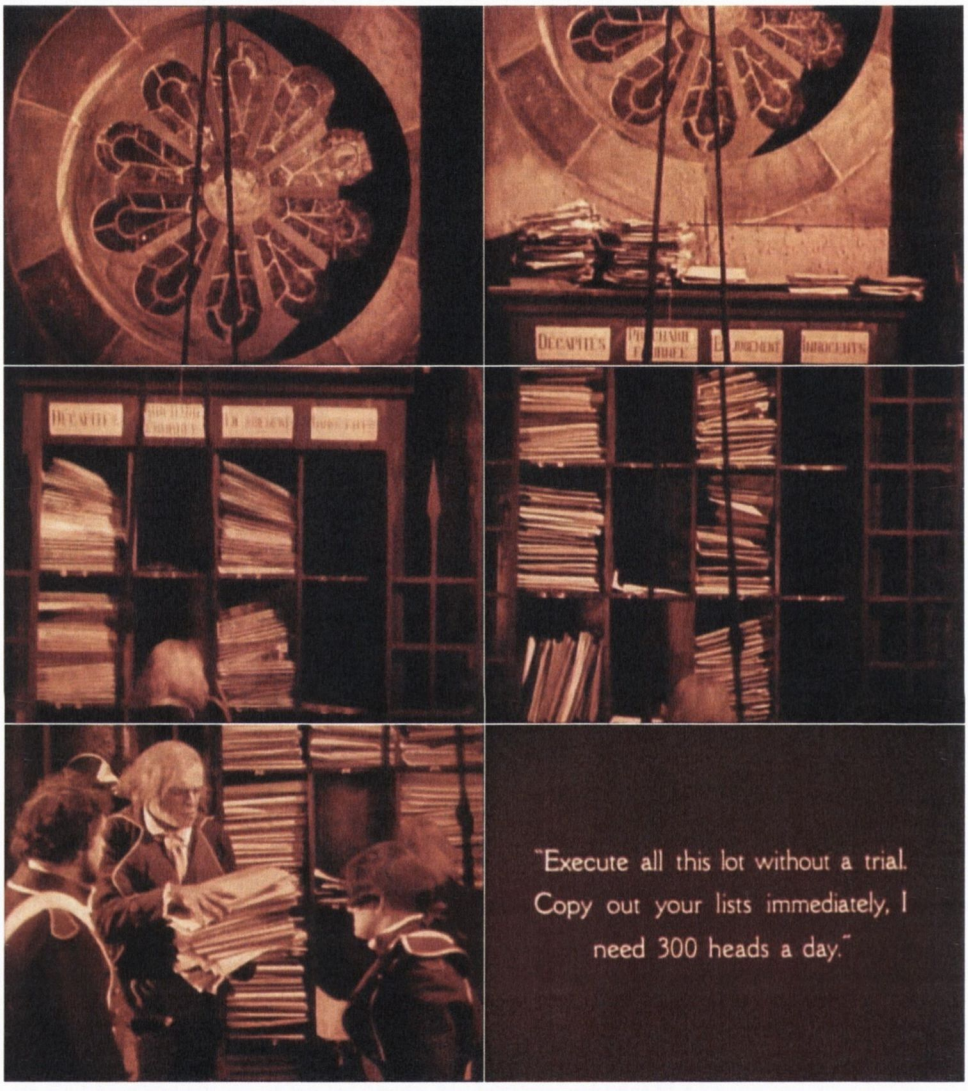

Figure 4.17: The 'thermometer' of the guillotine. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 185min 39sec.

executions and the requisite paperwork and, as the camera dollies backwards, we are shown an overflowing workspace and a representation of Robespierre's desk murder transferred to an industrial scale.

Gance now focuses on two of the workers in close-up at their desk. Fleuri, a charming comic character who appears repeatedly and zelig-like throughout the film, and La Bussière, a historically based character, are at their desks and according to the script are expressing 'terror, submission, denoucement'.[79] Despite this, and also because of it, the two are shown to engage in profoundly subversive and dangerous behaviour. Taking Josephine and Napoléon's files, their death sentences, the two proceed to destroy them. La Bussière eats Josephine's file while Fleuri, unable to digest Napoléon's, rips it to shreds and secretes it down his shirt (see Fig. 4.18 on the following page).

The scene ends with Saint-Just visiting the prison. After reaction shots showing the terrified and cowering bureaucrats, Gance cuts on a shot of the apparatus of the Terror, isolated and abstracted. As the subject of Saint-Just's sinister gaze we see the filing cabinet not as a symbol of the guillotine but as an allegorical comment on how the guillotine represents technological, modernised killing. The same distancing and repression of the Real that masks Napoléon's violence through his object of desire—Josephine—is in operation in Saint-Just's admiring contemplation of the apparatus. However, this is not the pleasure of the lover or the bureaucrat,

[79]Gance and Ballard, 1990, p.123.

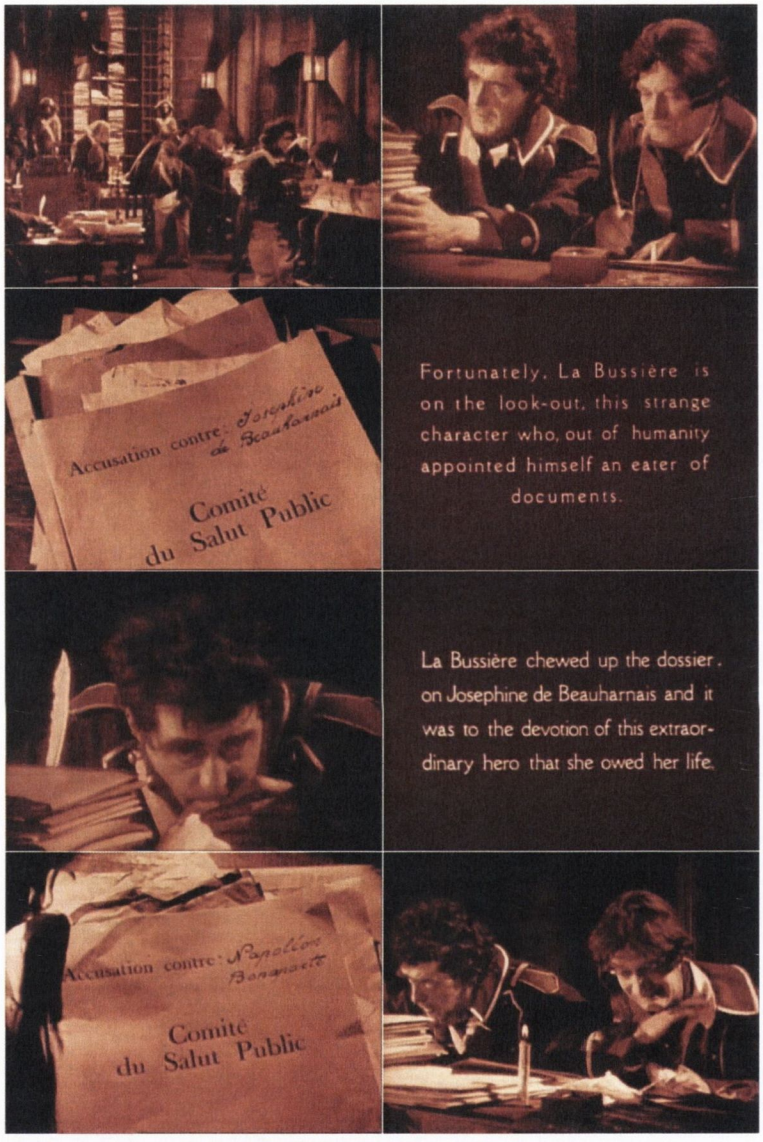

Figure 4.18: Fragmenting death sentences. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 187min 22sec.

rather it is the pleasure of the sadist in his tools of torture (see Fig. 4.19 on the next page).[80] The desk does not hide the technology of murder, but rather the sadist who operates it.

To conclude, I take this moment, the heartening story of resistance taken up by a terrifying intrusion of the abstracted Real, as an exemplary example of the dialectical image. The comic turn of Fleuri and La Bussière has the aspect of kitsch attraction to it, a mass appeal that affirms a faith in humanity that is almost too good to be true. It is however based on a real character who, although he may never have chewed Josephine's records, did pursue this peculiar but effective method of resistance.[81]

A correspondence with Jewish resistance in Nazi-occupied Belgium in 1942 provides a final point in the constellation. In the 2014 book, *Jewish Resistance Against the Nazis*, editor Patrick Henry writes of how 'the myth' of Jewish passivity during World War II has been thoroughly

[80]Given the fact that Gance (playing Saint-Just) is shown here gazing upon his own sadistic creation, and given that George Bataille, the rebel surrealist, was Benjamin's close friend, a further pertinent implication in this extraordinary image is worth considering. In Hal Foster's account of Bataille's writing, he references a concept of 'altération', as distinct from, for instance, distanciation or repression, this leads to the formulation of a theory of a sadistic impulse in the production of art: 'Bataille develops a reading of representation at odds with realist, rationalist, and instrumentalist accounts. In its beginnings, Bataille argues, representation is driven not by an imperative of resemblance (this is first fortuitous and only later encoded) but by a play of *altération*—by which he means that the formation of an image is its deformation, or the deformation of its model. For Bataille, then, representation is less about formal sublimation than about instinctual release, and this position leads him to an extraordinary formulation: "Art...proceeds in this way by successive destructions. To the extent that it liberates libidinal instincts, these instincts are sadistic." ' (Foster, 1993, p.113)

[81]A note from from Gance and Ballard's script reads: 'There is no proof that La Bussière did actually eat Josephine's file but he did boast of having done so and Josephine believed him, for on 5 April 1803 she was present with the First Consul at the Theatre Porte-Saint-Martin for a special benefit performance for La Bussière and she paid 100 pistoles for her box.' (Gance and Ballard, 1990, p.124) Andrea Stuart's biography of Josephine supports the story (as mentioned Josephine is known as 'The Rose of Martinique'): 'It is not clear how Rose escaped Alexandre's fate, but, according to the biographer Ernest Knapton, the evidence points to the name of Delperch de la Bussière. A bit-part actor who was employed during the Revolution by the Committee of Public Safety, he is said to have been responsible for the disappearance of more than a thousand documents regarding prisoners, including Rose, which led to the postponement of their trials. His method was literally to eat each page of the incriminating files. That Rose felt herself in his debt was obvious when, at an 1803 benefit performance for the actor at a Parisian theatre, she sent him a purse of *one thousand francs*, with the words "in grateful remembrance".' (Stuart, 2011, p.141)

Figure 4.19: The object of the gaze. *Napoléon* (Gance, 1927, France) 191min 34sec.

discredited, but nonetheless remains in popular currency.[82] Among the many examples, Suzanne Vromen's essay 'Unique Aspects of Jewish Armed Resistance and Rescue in Belgium' describes a corollary to Fleuri's action:

> On July 25, 1942, four armed men stormed into the new offices of the Association des Juifs en Belgique (AJB}. Two of the men herded the employees into a room

[82] Henry, 2014, p. xii.

> and castigated them about working for this organization, established by the Nazis to transmit and execute their orders within the Jewish community. In an adjoining room, the two other men quickly set fire to AJB files containing the names and addresses of all Jews to be called up for so-called labor In the East. This occurred two days before the opening of the Malines (Mechelen) transit camp, from which the assembled Jews were to depart.[83]

Fleuri's story, in both the overall narrative of Gance's film and in the context of the impact of the French Revolution in western culture, fully embodies the Benjaminian senses of the fragment and the fact. In this, I identify a profane illumination, not just at the surreal level of convulsive beauty, but also of hope, subversion, and the power of individual agency in the face of tyrannical injustice, ideas which, as the 1930s approached, became increasingly urgent to Benjamin's philosophy. The dialectical image of desk murder, in which technological and bureaucratic apparatuses—hallmarks of modernity's second nature—distance and disguise the Real in *Napoléon* continues my correspondence with Holocaust memory. This begins a technological correspondence which is continued in the next chapter.

[83]Vromen, 2014, p.121.

Chapter 5

The Melancholic Automaton

Allegory · Melancholia · Technology · Television · Experience · The Uncanny · Constructed Femininity · James Joyce · Marshall McLuhan · Mary Ellen Bute · Charles Chaplin

To describe the dialectical image of the melancholic automaton this chapter examines Charles Chaplin's *A King in New York* (1957, UK) along with Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936, US) as heartening films. Mary Ellen Bute's adaptation of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, titled *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (1965, US, hereafter *Passages*) provides the avant-garde framework with which I explore moments of sublation in Chaplin's films.

The melancholic automaton describes a state of alienation brought about by technological and industrial advance. Inspired by Marshall McLuhan's *Mechanical Bride*, this chapter describes a dialectical tension between the celebration and the fear of the advances of the industrial age. In this sense the chapter addresses the sorts of technological advances that have brought about

massive advances in telecommunications but have also created weapons, and tyrannies, of unimaginable destructive power.

In respect to Benjaminian methods, the melancholic automaton is conceived as an allegorical construct. As such, the elements that make up this chapter describe this sense of alienation allegorically. First I discuss the idea of the automaton in Lacan's writing as indicative of a screen of the Real, that is it masks the Real. I describe how newspapers, as examples of technological media, prefigure television in their de-contextualising of stories, events and news; how these media do not offer their audiences experiences that can be usefully integrated into their conscious minds.

This, I argue is indicative of the Lacanian screen of the Real and indicative of technology in general. In comparison, I discuss Benjamin's concept of allegory as a medium which promotes deeper conscious integration. Throughout the chapter, in reference to McLuhan's *Mechanical Bride*, I give examples of different representations of 'constructed' or second nature femininity.[1] I show how these constructed femininities are invariably created through the effect and use of technological media and especially through the advertising that accompanies broadcasts. I show how both Chaplin and Bute humorously comment on this in their respective films. I show how these same themes are integrated in the surreal artwork of Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* (1915). Duchamp's work demonstrates the same sublation through profane love that Benjamin espouses in the surrealist essay.

[1] This discussion does not lead to a discussion of the gendered nature of Benjamin's theories. Neither does it consider how the overall gendering of film history might affect the analysis of these films in the context of the dialectical image. As stated in the introduction, my major ambition for the reseaerch is the sketching of a model for how we might consider the dialectical image in film. As such, I have attempted to reamin within the boundaries of Benjamin's own writing, which offers little in the way of gender theory. That said, and as pointed out by Dr. Ruth Barton in correspondence with me, a feminist reading of *Metropolis* could provide a very interesting addition to the concept of the melancholic automaton.

Chaplin's films are shown to express a deep mistrust of technological advances. In contrast to Bute's film, which expresses a certain ambivalence towards, or perhaps even an embrace of, technology, Chaplin expresses melancholy. I trace Benjamin's engagement with technology and describe his belief in the potential political power of the melancholic state.

Ultimately this constellation is designed to demonstrate how the dialectic of the melancholic and the automatic is eminently visible in the 20th century. Chaplin demonstrates how the turn to melancholia seems natural, of the first order, when we leave the past behind. When we view the ruin of the past century it seems even more so. The embrace of technology in the 20th century is alternately viewed as both the cause of, and the solution to, our sorrow. Where previous chapters have concentrated, in the main, on the formal cinematic signifiers of the dialectical image, this chapter examines it predominantly in cinematic allegorical form through the dialectical image of the melancholic automaton. I conceive of the image of the melancholic automaton as exemplified in televisual representations. I begin by returning to the Lacanian Real and demonstrating Lacan's concept of the automaton as a screen, both a projection and a mask, of the Real, and describing how, as a dream projection, it fashions consciousness.

Noting Marshall MacLuhan's original association of Joyce's Leopold Bloom with Chaplin's Tramp, this chapter returns to the strategy of translating essential elements of Joyce's writing. McLuhan's theory of television media as the fulfilment of *typographic* form provides an opportunity to discuss Benjamin's theory of the possibly alienating, but also effective, power of the newspaper form.

Benjamin's Freudian inspired theory is important to a full understanding of the innervating effect of film form and relates to the already explored effects of superimposition and flashing montage. For Benjamin, the multiple, isolated and decontextualised stories in a newspaper

page deny—and resist—the effective integration of these stories into true consciousness, that is, experience. This is in comparison to literary forms which try to evoke experience in the subject. In their overstimulating and flashing form, they pass to the subconscious and become integrated in a repressed Freudian sense, and in this way they contribute to a second nature. An example of how this translates to film is given.

To contextualise the importance of Mary Ellen Bute's *Passages*, a brief review of the limited information available on her formative technological and avant-garde cinema is undertaken. Bute's connections to Joyce via the playwrights Mary Manning and Samuel Beckett is established. Bute's foregrounding of the technological and, specifically, the televisual—in correspondence with her avant-garde practice—in *Passages* is noted as an essential part of her translation. The centrality of the televisual in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* is established through elements of the structure and content of the novel. I examine moments in Bute's film which describe alienating, but also humorous, televisual encounters. Specifically, images of constructed femininity and advertising are highlighted.

I return to Benjamin to establish the importance of melancholia in his philosophy. Identifying as a melancholic, and relating to Baudelaire's allegorical amd melancholic poetry, Benjamin nonetheless recognises the stupefying effect it is indicative of. Attacking petty-bourgeois melancholic affectations, he also condemns the Baroque allegorists' turn to metaphysical reassurance. Instead, Benjamin sees an opportunity to harness the type of melancholy that is felt in the view of the ruins of the past—a view that reveals the collapse of an old order. In this conceptual movement melancholia becomes a political tool to indicate a breakdown of historic continuity, therefore the possibility of change.

Turning to Chaplin, the melancholic aspect of the Tramp is discussed, along with Chaplin's conception of the protagonists of *Modern Times* as living in a world of automatons. In answering the question of how Benjamin conceives of the Tramp as politically useful—against Theodor Adorno's protests—we return to the Artwork essay and the heartening story. Benjamin writes, 'Chaplin appeals both to the most international and the most revolutionary emotion of the masses: their laughter.'[2] As an allegorical filmmaker, Chaplin films are conceived by Benjamin to use melancholia and comedy as a Trojan horse for political change.

As stated above, to relate the idea of constructed femininity to automatism I use Robert Hughes's analysis of Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even*. As the precursor to extensive surrealist engagement with the automaton and the mannequin, Duchamp's artwork is described by Hughes as an allegory for profane love and is linked to Taylorism, the scientific theory of worker management. It is the most poetic and allegorical representation of the idea of the melancholic automaton in the chapter. The work is seen by Hughes to indicate Duchamp's transvestitism, and this leads back to representations of constructed femininity.

The definitive psychoanalytic text on the automaton—E.T.A. Hoffmann's short story, *The Sandman*—and Freud's writing on it are discussed. The conception of the automaton as indicative of an uncanny denial of real experience is briefly related to Benjamin's theory of the same effect in second nature.

McLuhan's 1955 essay *The Mechanical Bride* provides the final theoretical correspondence, and his statement, 'Anybody who takes the time to study the techniques of pictoral montage in the popular press and magazines will easily find a dominant pattern composed of sex and technology,'[3] returns to Benjamin's writing on the effective, second nature-forming power of the

[2]Benjamin, 1999a, p.223–224.

[3]McLuhan, 2011, p.98.

press media. The profound correspondence between Benjamin and McLuhan in their shared conception of the medium as the primary force in the formation of experience is examined.

An analysis of scenes from Chaplin's *A King in New York* relevant to the aforementioned theories closes the chapter. Chaplin's allegorical retelling of his own biographical experience bitterly portrays the McCarthy investigations of the 1950s. Scenes which correspond with Bute's humorous depictions of advertising and constructed femininity are shown to denounce the televisual medium as the source of modernity's melancholia in Chaplin's film. Finally, a flashing image from *Modern Times* forms a fragmentary correspondence with the man in the machine and Benjamin's archaeological method of sifting debris.

As indicated, this chapter approaches the dialectical image as an allegorical construct, in the Benjaminian sense described in the introduction, of an unresolved and unresolvable narrative. The allegorical emphasis on ambiguity reflects a dialectical structure in the sense that a Hegelian thesis contains, within it, its own negation, in the continuous unfolding that is best known by Hegel's famous phrase 'the negation of the negation.' In this allegorical structure the arrest of the dialectic image prompts reflection, however, in the sense of dialectics at a standstill any conclusion is deferred. To this end I have coined the term 'The Melancholic Automaton' as descriptive of the man in the machine and to suggest the subject's relationship to modernity. In its allegorical sense, this construct is intended to prompt the question: is man melancholic because he is in the machine, or is he in the machine because he is melancholic? This question then frames technology and the automaton as either a solution to melancholia or its cause. In relation to Benjamin's writing, this allegorical construct relates to a sense of alienation caused by the loss of aura in modernity and Benjamin's concomitant belief that technology can innervate the sensorium in a mitigation of this alienation.

While this chapter does not directly discuss the Shoah, a correspondence exists between the melancholic automaton and the application of industrial methods of killing in the attempted genocide of the European Jews. The conceptualisation of the two world wars defined by increasingly technologised weaponry described in such terms as 'war machines' and 'the Nazi death machine' is descriptive of the 20th century's brutal technological turn. Max Silverman invokes a useful correspondence to the industrial nature of the extermination in a passage describing Alain Resnais's shot development in *Night and Fog* (1955, France). In a formulation which corresponds to a sense of the barbaric becoming second nature through technology, Silverman maps a mechanistic journey which ends at the death camp: 'Hence, the following shots which develop the theme of the "machine" of the concentratory universe (the drawing up of plans for the construction of the camps, the styles employed in their design, the round-up and transportation in cattle-trucks of those who will populate this universe and eventually perish there) continue to trace multiple connections between the world of the camp and "everyday life." '[4] Beyond this flag, there is only a brief engagement with Holocaust memory in the discussion of Chaplin's identification as a Jew and his film *The Great Dictator* (1940, US). However, if the gravity of the catastrophe of the Holocaust is communicated in its disintegration of the logocentric models of enlightenment philosophy, then the memory of the Holocaust can be described as the primary source of an inconsolable grief and melancholia.

As shown in the first two chapters, Lacanian theory has proven useful in situating the dialectical image in cinema. This is demonstrated first in the function of the dialectical as a process of revealing Real history and then in the manner that Lacan and Žižek describe love stories bringing dialectics to a standstill in the impossible Real encounter.

[4]Silverman, 2011, p.203.

To continue to relate the Lacanian Real in relation to the dialectical image we can consider the relationship, and the significance, of the *automaton* to *the encounter with the real.* In Lacan's seminar 'Tuché and Automaton'—where Lacan translates tuché as '*the encounter with the real*'—Lacan asks 'Where do we meet this real?':

> The real is beyond the *automaton*, the return, the coming-back, the insistence of the signs, by which we see ourselves governed by the pleasure principle. The real is that which always lies behind the automaton, and it is quite obvious, throughout Freud's research, that it is this that is the object of his concern.[5]

The automaton then stands in front of the Real, in some way it stands in or masks the encounter, it is a screen. The automaton—which in this seminar is simply the object in subject/object relations—offers a mediated opportunity to return to a primal event, without the shock of the encounter of the Real. Lacan uses the example of the manner in which the interruption of a dream by an external event—a branch tapping on a window is the recurring interruption in the dream of *Finnegans Wake*,[6] Lacan describes a knock on his bedroom door—becomes integrated into the dream. In this moment of awakening, but still dreaming, Lacan must ask himself 'what I am':

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[5]Lacan, 1981, p.53–54. Italics in original.

[6]Campbell and Robinson, 1976, p.41. Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson's 1944 *A Skeleton to Finnegans Wake* remains an essential text in *Wake* studies. Campbell cites *Finnegans Wake* as the source of the term 'monomyth' in his seminal *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), a book which George Lucas credits in his development of the *Star Wars* trilogy. Campbell, in interview with Bill Moyers, for the 1988 PBS production *The Power of Myth*, describes the function of myth not, as traditionally conceived, as contributing to the search for meaning, but rather as contributing to the *experience* of meaning. This insight corresponds strongly with Benjamin's insistence on the importance of experiential insight and arrest.

> When the knocking occurs, not in my perception, but in my consciousness, it is because my consciousness reconstitutes itself around this representation—that I know that I am waking up, that I am *knocked up*.
>
> But here I must question myself as to what I am at that moment—at the moment, so immediately before and so separate, which is that in which I began to dream under the effect of the knocking which is, to all appearances, what woke me.[7]

This experience is indicative of the common experience whereby external events can become integrated into the dream state and, in fact, *temporally rearranged* to explain their presence after the fact. In this formulation we see how the dream state actively works to keep the dreamer dreaming. Lacan continues:

> If the function of the dream is to prolong sleep, if the dream, after all, may come so near to the reality that causes it, can we not say that it might correspond to this reality without emerging from sleep? After all, there is such a thing as somnambulistic activity. The question that arises, and which indeed all Freud's previous indications allow us here to produce, is—*What is it that wakes the sleeper*? Is it not, in the dream, another reality?[8]

Here Lacan comes very close to the same conception as Benjamin's formulation of the surrealist profane illumination to the awakening moment that produces the 'now of recognizability', as discussed in the last chapter:[9]

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[7] Lacan, 1981, p.56. Italics in original.

[8] Ibid., p.57–58. Italics in original.

[9] Again, from the *Arcades*: 'Is awakening perhaps the synthesis of dream consciousness (as thesis) and waking consciousness (as antithesis)? Then the moment of awakening would be identical with the "now of recognizability," in which things put on their true—surrealist—face.[N3a,3]' (Benjamin, 1999h)

> How can we fail to see that awakening works in two directions—and that the awakening that re-situates us in a constituted and represented reality carries out two tasks? The real has to be sought beyond the dream—in what the dream has enveloped, hidden from us, behind the lack of representation of which there is only one representative. This is the real that governs our activities more than any other and it is psychoanalysis that designates it for us.[10]

With this formulation in mind—the automaton as path to, but screen of the Real, and therefore the automaton as a taking up or sublation of both the horror or primal nature of the Real and the dream—this chapter considers how manifestations of technology actively reflect the Benjaminian dream state and how the films in question act out, respond to and sublate the Real through a dialectic of melancholy and comedy.

As an introductory visualisation of the man trapped in the machine, we could do worse than consider an anecdote whereby, according to SS officer Reinhard Spitzy, Hitler wasn't a killjoy. In a darkly surreal fantasy he imagines that the image from *The Great Dictator* (1940, US) that would have prompted laughter from the Führer is the malfunctioning barber's chair, a technological failure that renders both Hitler and Mussolini as powerless marionettes (see Fig. 5.1 on the following page).[11]

[10]Lacan, 1981, p.60.

[11] In the 2002 documentary *The Tramp and the Dictator* (Kevin Brownlow and Michael Kloft, 2002, UK), Spitzy is described as 'a member of Hitler's inner circle'. Spitzy fantasises: 'It was obvious to me that Hitler had it shown to him, and would have laughed at it. You know, Hitler wasn't dull. I can imagine Hitler laughing heartily at the scene where he and Mussolini are sitting at the barber's and their seats go up in the air. Hitler wasn't a killjoy and, within the inner circle, he could definitely laugh at jokes like these.' Supporting evidence for Hitler's enjoyment of the film is offered in the same film by screenwriter and novelist Budd Schulberg: 'At the end of the war I was in Berlin. I was in charge of gathering photographic evidence for the war-crime trial being prepared in Nuremberg. But in the course of it I looked up the file on what films Hitler had ordered to run. And this is the truth. True. He ordered "The Great Dictator", and then he ordered it a day or so after again.'

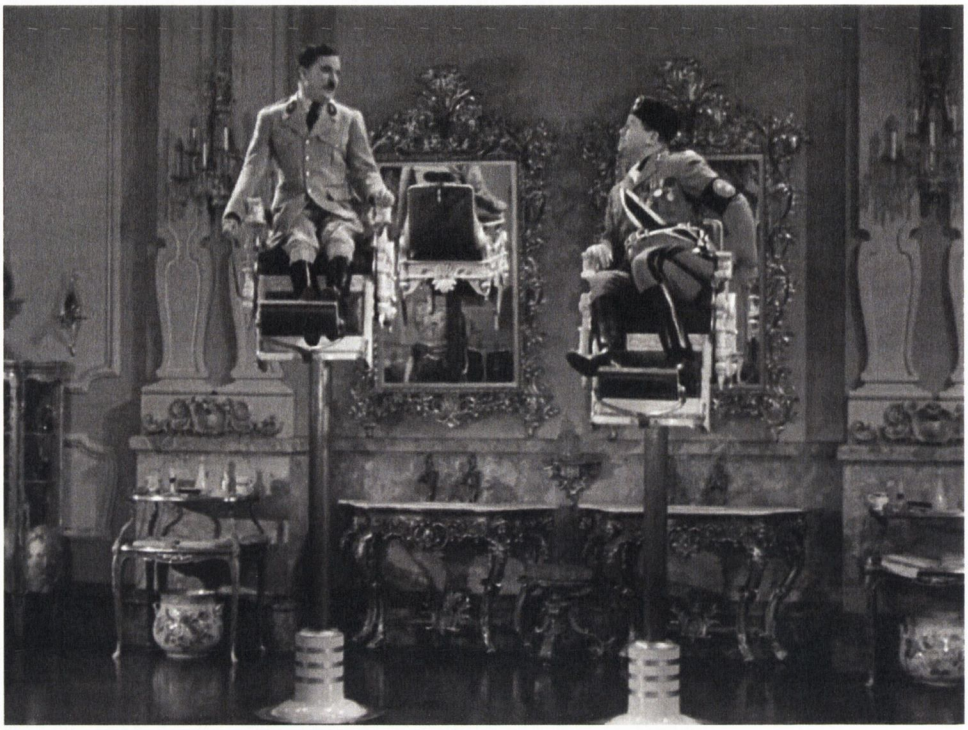

Figure 5.1: Dictators and Machines. *The Great Dictator* (Charles Chaplin, 1940, US) 99min 17sec.

As one of the few actors or directors directly addressed in Benjamin's writings, Charlie Chaplin's wide influence and success necessitates his consideration in a study of the political usefulness of film. Further, the constellation of associations that spirals from Chaplin's life and work are so compelling—in their imbrication in the violence and politics of the 20th century—they seem to invite Benjamin's theories of correspondence. Briefly, Chaplin and Hitler were born four days apart to impoverished mothers and alcoholic fathers.[12] André Bazin claimed Hitler 'stole' Chaplin's moustache. Chaplin's first 'talkie', *The Great Dictator*, ridiculed and satirised Hitler and his regime before the US entered the war and just two years after Hitler

[12]Potter, 2013, p.81–82.

was named *Time* magazine's 'Man of the Year'. Chaplin would later be effectively exiled from the US for alleged communist sympathies.[13]

Chaplin's Tramp can be related to the flâneur and also to the Wandering Jew stereotype, and Chaplin was profiled in the *The Eternal Jew* (Fritz Hippler, 1940, Germany), mentioned in Chapter 3, with the lines: 'The Jew Chaplin was enthusiastically welcomed on his first visit to Berlin. One part of the German people unsuspectingly applauded the foreign Jews who had come to Germany, the deadly foes of their race.' The misidentification of Chaplin as a Jew was not uncommon; in another piece of Nazi propaganda from circa 1936, Johann Von Leers's picture book, *Juden Sehen Dich An* (*Jews look you in the face*), Chaplin is described as a 'disgusting Jewish acrobat'. In Kevin Brownlow and Michael Kloft's *The Tramp and The Dictator*, Chaplin's friend Ivor Montagu, who sent Chaplin a copy of the book, recalls in 1980 how he suspects the book may have resolved Chaplin to make *The Great Dictator*.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, extensive affinities have been suggested between Joyce's Bloom and Chaplin's Tramp. In 1971, Donald Theall attributes this discourse to Marshall McLuhan. Quoting McLuhan's *Understanding Media*, Theall explains how McLuhan distinguishes between TV and film by describing film as the *final* 'fullfillment of the great potential of typographic fragmentation'. Theall continues, 'Chaplin naturally became central, for the "clown reminds us of our fragmented state by tackling acrobatic or special jobs in the spirit of the whole or integral man." ' Film, printed celluloid, differs radically then from the broadcast image in its break from the history of printing. Theall expands 'McLuhan carries this so far that he compares

[13]For the most concise expansion of these correspondences see the documentary *The Tramp and the Dictator* (Kevin Brownlow and Michael Kloft, 2002, UK)

Joyce's Bloom to Chaplin, which influenced the writing of a whole study built around Bloom as Chaplin.'[14]

This reference to Chaplin reminds us of the innervating potential that Benjamin conceives in the reception of the film image, and there is a further correspondence in *Understanding Media*, when McLuhan writes:

> The printed book had encouraged artists to reduce all forms of expression as much as possible to the single descriptive and narrative plane of the printed word. The advent of electric media released art from this strait jacket at once, creating the world of Paul Klee, Picasso, Braque, Eisenstein, the Marx Brothers, and James Joyce.[15]

Again, Joyce, a writer, escapes the limits of the printed word, and is listed among a group of visual artists. As we shall see, McLuhan considers his writing as more akin to the construction of a machine. But this denigration of the textual is shared, at least in certain contexts, by Benjamin.

[14] Articles tracing the correspondences between Bloom and Chaplin include 'Chaplin's Charlie and Joyce's Bloom' (Briggs, 1996) and 'Chaplin and Joyce: A Mutual Understanding of Gesture' (McKnight, 2008). Joycean scholar Thomas Burkdall suggests this association has been taken too far: 'A few years later Mary Parr demonstrates how interdisciplinary work can go awry in her eccentric study, *James Joyce: The Poetry of Conscience*. Parr boldly claims that Leopold Bloom "is modelled on the supreme clown of them all: Charlie Chaplin". With an acceptance of "Chaplin in Bloom," as she subsequently terms this synthetic persona, "Joyce is released from captivity in the academic world to live among those men and women of all ages who seek a life line to the times in which they live". Although Joyce might have lauded this populist goal, the limitation of his character and aesthetic to one film maker, no matter how influential Chaplin and the "Little Tramp" may have been in the world at large, is excessively reductive. In the second part of her study, Parr examines Joyce's employment of "an 'intellectual cinema' technique in Ulysses"—that is, she briefly summarizes Eisenstein's theories of montage as delineated in "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram" and swiftly returns to her discovery of the Bloom/Chaplin synthesis.' (Burkdall, 2001, p.9)

[15] McLuhan, 1994, p.54.

In some of his latest writing, *On Some Motifs in Baudelaire* (1940), Benjamin addresses the technology of the printed press in its production of newspapers and its effect, in modernity, on lived experience. Benjamin explains how Baudelaire's poetry transcends his contemporaries by arguing for the importance of personal experience in establishing useful historical representation, and this argument rests on the identification of two different types of memory formation. Proust's *mémoire involontaire* (those memories evoked by the Madeleine cake, after Henri Bergson's 'Pure' memory), is both a private and public affair, and it is crucially a memory evoked from lived experience. For Benjamin, Baudelaire's poetry evokes the spirit of lived experience, and is thus successfully communicative. Benjamin distinguishes between the effect of written forms that attempt to *evoke* this type of memory—literary prose, poetry—and those that attempt to *isolate* us from it—newspapers, advertising flyers. That is, newspapers form memories that are more akin to a rote learning memory, superficial and second nature.

Benjamin uses the example of newspapers to illustrate the continued process of structural change which he sees as indicative of modernity. Newspapers are part of a tradition of representational forms, whose structures, Benjamin says, can be seen to embody an 'increasing atrophy of experience.'[16] That is, a newspaper's form—non-integrated articles, aims of brevity and accuracy, of informational and factual value—is crucially not constructed to be reflective of the lived experience of the audience nor intended to be integrated into the audience's experience. This is in contrast to a novel or a story, which 'does not intend to convey an event per se, which is the purpose of information; rather it embeds the event in the life of the storyteller in order to pass it on as experience to those listening.'[17] So, distinctly different to the allegorical form and the heartening story. Nonetheless, newspapers have a montage form that reflects the experience of modernity, so they can be useful in their flashing factual form. Again, Benjamin's conception

[16] Benjamin, 2003a, p.316.

[17] Ibid., p.316.

embraces an ambivalence that indicates his recognition of the form's power, to progressive or reactionary ends, dependent on content and context.

Benjamin believes those forms which attempt to isolate us from experience gain an advantage in their use of technological form. Benjamin turns to Freud's conception of the human consciousness as being primarily a site of sorting and subsequent rejection of unnecessary stimuli: 'In Freud's view, consciousness as such receives no memory traces whatever, but has another important function: protection against stimuli.'[18] A form, that is, a structure through which we receive information like a newspaper or television news report, by isolating us from experience through an avoidance of evoking lived experience, is therefore working hand in glove with our psychic drive for isolation from stimuli. In the Freudian model, the occurrence of fright 'gains "significance" in proportion to the "absence of any preparedness for anxiety." '[19]

In this case we have two related forms of experience to consider. A literary, heartening experience that evokes lived experience and is integrated in consciousness, and a shocking experience that passes directly to the subconscious and is thereby integrated at a very basic level. These shock experiences are closely related to the concept whereby film has an innervating potential.

If we consider how this might operate in cinema, we can think of a narrative being suddenly interrupted by a moment of montage showing flashing newspaper headlines announcing 'War Declared!' In this moment our experience of the film is switched from a literary mode to an abstract mode that does not attempt to evoke the experience of, for instance, the first skirmish or the breakdown of a peace accord. In the reception of the shocking interruption, the isolated headline, by virtue of its overstimulation, is passed over by the conscious mind and passed to

[18]Benjamin, 2003a, p.317.

[19]Ibid., p.317.

the unconscious. It is not that it is not seen, rather it is processed in its shocking form and filed away. In this acceptance into the unconscious the shocking image becomes integrated in a trace form and effects conscious thinking. In its negative form a second nature of false experience and consciousness is created. In the real world, as it were, this can be an insidious process that creates a second nature representation of society, history or identity when, for example, used in advertising or propaganda. In our analysis of films it becomes a trace which can be can used to analyse moments that construct this second nature. However, in Benjamin's positive conception of the film's potential to innervate us, the film provides a medium that can be used for the representation of progressive material in a form that can pass directly to the unconscious. This can also trains us to cope with the shocking effect of the overstimulating, second nature creating, modern environment. Benjamin cites Freud's conception of mechanisms for retroactive processing of stimuli which shocked the system and whereby 'The reception of shocks is facilitated by training in coping with stimuli; if need be, dreams as well as recollection may be enlisted'[20,21]

These invocations of dreams and fright are important points, and a flashing appearance of a newspaper in Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936, US) will be used at the end of this chapter to fully explicate the convergence of technology and the Real in the dialectical image of the

[20] Benjamin, 2003a, p.318.

[21] While this is a simplified reading, Michael Jennings offers a similar summary and notes the (as it is often argued) laboured route that Benjamin takes: 'The essay is primarily known for the very explicit formulation of the theory of experience with which it commences. Benjamin discriminates in a formulation now given very wide currency—between long experience (Erfahrung) and isolated experience (Erlebnis). Long experience is presented as a coherent body of knowledge and wisdom that is not merely retainable in human memory but transmissible from generation to generation. The essay "The Storyteller," with its rather nostalgic evocation of a precapitalist era, adduces oral literature as the privileged form of such transmission. Isolated experience, on the other hand, emerges in "On Some Motifs" as a form of experience bound to the shocks experienced by the stroller in the urban mass; isolated experience, far from being retainable or transmissible, is in fact parried by consciousness and leaves a trace in the unconscious. This somewhat labored interweaving of ideas from Freud, Theodor Reik, and, much to Adorno's dismay, Georg Simmel, is generally taken to be the consummate expression of Benjamin's long-developed theory of experience.' (Jennings, 2003, p.93–94)

'melancholic automaton'. McLuhan, much like Benjamin's belief in film, sees a positive potential in the televisual medium but also recognises its alienating effect, and his 1951 *Mechanical Bride* explores these potentials. Before examining the uncanny image of the automaton and its relationship to television, I want to briefly establish a correspondence with Mary Ellen Bute's experimental cinema and her adaptation *Passages From Finnegans Wake*.

In 1995, in the conference publication for 'Articulated Light: The Emergence of Abstract Film in America', Cecile Starr writes that: 'In the mid 1930s, Mary Ellen Bute (1906–1983) was the first American to make abstract motion pictures, and in the early 1950s along with Norman McLaren and Hy Hirsh was among the first to explore electronic imagery in film.'[22] Despite this, in 2008, the *New York Times* reported 'Bute, an overlooked independent animator of the 1930s, '40s and '50s, seems to have been working in the same vein as her better-known colleagues Len Lye and Oskar Fischinger',[23] and as recently as 2010 the *Wall Street Journal* began an article: 'Though her name may not ring a bell with most cineastes, Mary Ellen Bute's contemporaries and collaborators recall the New York-based filmmaker vividly.'[24,25]

Bute, who trained as a painter, is quoted in the same conference publication, describing how a visit to the Taj Mahal, where she saw the world around her reflected in the jewels of the building, inspired her to develop her concept of a kinetic temporal art.[26] Having gained an apprenticeship with the inventor Leon Theremin to learn sound composition, Bute recounts how Theremin became involved in her first film:

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[22] Starr, 1995, p.8.

[23] Kehr, 2008.

[24] Bennett, 2010.

[25] These articles indicate the belated recognition that Bute is now receiving, recent shows include the first gallery retrospective of her work in 2008 at *Sketch*, London, UK.

[26] Bute, 1995, p.8.

> He became interested in my determination to develop a kinetic visual art form, (and helped me with experiments). We submerged tiny mirrors in tubes of oil, connected to an oscillator, and drew where these points of light were flying. The effect was thrilling for us—it was so pure. But it wasn't enough. Finally we got a Bolex camera, and started analyzing, to make my first film, *Rhythm in Light* (1934). It was mostly three-dimensional animation. Pyramids, and ping pong balls, and all interrelated by light patterns—and I wasn't happy unless it all entered and exited exactly as I had planned.[27]

So, as Benjamin was writing the *Arcades*, Bute was making the highly abstract, aesthetic and formalistic *Synchromy No. 4: Escape* (Mary Ellen Bute, 1937–38, US). In this film, animated optical effects and music are synchronised to interact with each other in a manner that emulates musical composition. As instruments rise, fall and have conversations (correspondences) with each other in Bach's orchestral 'Toccata from Toccata and fugue in D minor', Bute's visuals perform a synchronised dance.

In their 2002 *Hollywood Quarterly: Film Culture in Postwar America, 1945–1957*, Eric Smoodin and Ann Martin describe how, by 1935, economic conditions were so poor in the US that practically all experimental film practice was abandoned in favour of documentary. They note the continuity provided by Bute and her husband Ted Nemeth:

> One team continued to make pictures under the old credo but with the addition of sound—Mary Ellen Bute, designer, and Ted Nemeth, cameraman. These two welded light, color, movement, and music into abstract films which they called

[27] Bute, 1995, p.8.

> 'visual symphonies." Their aim was to 'bring to the eyes a combination of visual forms unfolding along with the thematic development and rhythmic cadences of music.'[28]

Bute's early films are undoubtedly part of a tradition that Benjamin would identify as belonging to a revolution in form rather than social change. This formal practice does, however, evolve from the Dada tradition that, as I briefly explored in the introduction, inspired Richter, Heartfield, and Moholy-Nagy, artists with whom Benjamin identifies and who contribute to his framework of montage and sublation. While it may be impossible to identify dialectical image in Bute's purely formal experiments, we can see in her explanation below how this sensibility contributed to her more traditional filmmaking:

> I am often asked how I moved from abstract films to *Finnegans Wake*? It's plausible...Joyce's premise: "One great part of every human existence is passed in a state which cannot be rendered sensible by the use of wide-awake language, cut-and-dry grammar and go-ahead plot" is, like abstract films, about our 'inner' landscape. Joyce, like Whitman, and much Art, is about the essence of our Being; so, we're traveling on the same terrain.[29]

Bute fully utilised her abstract practice in her adaptation of Joyce, as Lillian Schiff's 1984 article describes it:

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[28] Smoodin and Martin, 2002, p.26.

[29] Gancie, 1965, Quoted in this online transcript of a 1965 television interview but credited to her *New York Film Academy* Biography.

> *Passages* is a trove of superimpositions, flashbacks, varied angles, slow motion, intercutting, rapid motion, stop action, negative images, documentary footage, and finally sub-titles...It brings in television, the H-bomb, the twist, interplanetary rockets. Bute believed that Joyce would have accepted the modern elements in a film based on his 1939 novel, and she even quoted a line from *Finnegans Wake* that mentions television.[30]

Schiff's account is accurate in the breadth of its references, Bute uses all the abstractions that are the hallmarks of avant-garde practice and which Benjamin conceives as revealing the optical unconscious. The sublation of text and image is fundamental to surreal expression. These are the methods which, I have argued, cultivate the 'flashing up' of the dialectical image. However, I would argue that there is a symptomatic slip in the repetition of Schiff's 'It brings in television' and 'she even quoted a line from *Finnegans Wake* that mentions television.' This seems contradictory, bringing something in suggests an integrated adoption whereas, the quoting of a line suggests a rudimentary citation. In fact, if anything, Bute overemphasises the role of the televisual in *Passages*, and I read this overdetermined presence in the mode of translation that Benjamin writes about in 'The Task of the Translator'—as essential. Bute, via the theatrical adaption by Mary Manning, situates the televisual in *Passages* as an essential and central element.[31] Before examining the televisual in Bute's *Passages*, the manner in which this technology is central to *Finnegans Wake* provides support for my reading of television as an

[30]Gancie, 1965, Quoted in this online transcript of a 1965 television interview but credited to Lillian Schiff, (1984) 'The Education of Mary Ellen Bute' in *Film Library Quarterly* 17:2.

[31]Bute's film is adapted from a 1955 stage play by Mary Manning, *The Voice of Shem: Passages from Finnegans Wake*, and Manning shares a screenwriting credit with Bute. Manning was a lifelong friend of Samuel Beckett and was caricatured in Beckett's *Dreams of Fair to Middling Women*. Manning's biographical note in *Collected Letters of Samuel Beckett, 1929–1940* states that she claimed to have had an affair with Beckett in 1936 (Beckett, 2009, p.705). Considering Beckett's employment as Joyce's fact checker and transcriber for parts of *Finnegans Wake* and also his involvement in the expose *Finnegans Wake: A Symposium—Exagmination Round His Incamination of Work in Progress*, Manning's and Bute's work can be considered to possess admirable provenance.

exemplary automaton, a representation of the man in the machine and therefore a Lacanian screen.

In the introduction to Mary Manning's published theatrical adaptation of *Finnegans Wake*, Denis Johnston acknowledges this reading:

> The tome has both literary and historical aspects. It is an autobiographical document as well as an architectural and local Blue Guide to Ireland. It has profound religious significance, never yet fully analyzed, as well as being one of the dirtiest books in print. To some, it is an attack on De Valera, while to others its conclusion amounts to a plea for color television.[32]

In the manner that the 'cuckoo' interrupts Bloom's thoughts at the literal centre of *Ulysses*, the most sustained discourse on television in *Finnegans Wake* is located in the book's centre. In Clive Hart's classic text, *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake*, he flags this structural importance: 'Among other major contexts in which the cross-correspondence idea operates is the television show, whose central position (337–55) and fertile symbolic content clearly proclaim it one of the most important miniature replicas of *Finnegans Wake* as a whole.'[33]

The importance of this position can be explained by the conceptual structure that Joyce has employed in his dream novel. With reference to the philosopher Giambattista Vico, Joyce adopts a model that conceives of history as taking place over four distinct ages. Hart describes these ages as simply as possible:

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[32]Manning, 1957, p.viii.

[33]Hart, 1962, p.158. In an apt coincidence, this description occurs in Chapter Six of Hart's book, titled 'Correspondences' after the poem by Baudelaire, and introduced with the first verse from the poem. Hart begins with 'There can be little need to insist on the importance of correspondences in *Finnegans Wake*; the whole book is a jungle of double entendre dependent on them.'

> Vico saw the history of the Gentiles as proceeding painfully onward, and to some extent upward, in broad spirals of social and cultural development. Each complete historical cycle consisted of an uninterrupted succession of three great 'Ages'—the Divine, the Heroic, and the Human—followed by a very brief fourth Age which brought that cycle to an end and ushered in the next.[34]

However, based on his use of Vidic philosophy, and for its appropriateness to his needs, Joyce develops an extra part, 'for whereas Vico's theories are based on a tripartite formula, with a short interconnecting link between cycles, nearly every Indian system uses a primarily four-part cycle, with or without a short additional fifth Age.'[35] Book IV then, which was the brief fourth age, is expanded by Joyce until 'the ricorso, which in Vico is little more than a transitional flux, is given as much prominence as the other Ages and is even elevated to the supreme moment of the cycle.'[36] This simple explanation does not do justice to the complexity and importance of the novel's structure. As Hart continues after detailing its complex mathematical basis: 'With Einstein and Minkowski at his back Joyce was able to surpass even the ancient mystics in complexity and tortuousness...the great cycle of *Finnegans Wake* cannot be properly understood unless the distance between 'events' is measured in terms of both space and time.'[37]

In his 2013 essay—'JJ, JD, TV'—Louis Armand traces the televisual references in *Finnegans Wake* and relates them to the writing of another Joycean scholar, Jacques Derrida. As Armand explains, Joyce saw in television 'not future instruments of negation but rather of invention and of the *possible* per se.'[38] In this Armand is recognising the printing press, film, television in

[34]Hart, 1962, p.47.

[35]Ibid., p.50.

[36]Ibid., p.50.

[37]Ibid., p.50.

[38]Armand, 2013, p.215.

fact *all technology* as extensions of man of the same order as language, and intimately bound up in the philosophical term 'technē' with its implications of both high art and folk craft. Armand references Derrida's brilliant essay on *Ulysses*—'Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce'—which 'discusses a fundamental ambivalence in Joyce's texts toward the received orality/literacy dichotomy'.[39] Derrida's essay describes the idea of *presence*, Armand writes,

> as always already a type of *telepresence* or, as he later suggested, *telepathy*, whereby the significative event is put into a particular kind of remote communication with its phenomenal (phono-graphic) counterpart—its sense implying that the underwriting principle of any system of sign operations is not that of a transitively intending, self-evident, self-verifying agency, but rather a "technē" of mediality and distanciation.[40]

That is, all significant presence is in some way signed or mediated by technology. In Derrida's essay this is exemplified in *Ulysses* by Joycean wordplay around affirmative 'yes, yes' of the telephone call, whereby the listening party, however distant, confirms their attentive presence.

To close his essay Armand, using Theall via McLuhan, analyses the most sustained piece of televisual correspondence in the wake from pages 349–350. He catalogues a list of allusions (the full text of this fragment is reproduced in Appendix C on page 408):

> ...allusions—including references to transmissional 'parasites," antennae, base-frequency transformations, receivers, Soviet animation, rates and ratios of television transmissions, optics, and Michael Faraday's experiments with vacuum dis-

[39] Armand, 2013, p.217.

[40] Ibid., p.217. Italics in original.

> charge tubes ('Fairynelly's vacuum')—their possible *avant-textes* in the technical literature Joyce read around 1935 and appear with highest frequency (but not at all exclusively) in the five so-called 'Butt and Taff' broadcasts in the *Wake*—principally in the bracketed, italicized text beginning on page 349—including references to fades and optical transformations, Philo Famsworth's groundbreaking sixty-line image transmission, Karl Ferdinand Braun's CRT oscilloscope, and the 'electron guns' and 'scanning beams' of Vladimir Zworykin's (1923) cathode tube kinescope and imaging iconoscope.[41]

Bute's late experimental films, in some ways, the films she had been striving to create her whole career, were predicated on the same technologies. Gregory Zinman, in his essay 'Analog Circuit Palettes, Cathode Ray Canvases: Digital's Analog, Experimental Past', one of the most detailed descriptions of Bute's experiments, describes 'Mary Ellen Bute's experiments with cathode-ray oscilloscopes in the 1940s and 1950s' (see Fig. 5.2 on the following page) and how:

> The oscilloscope thus represented the means of drawing with light Bute had been looking for since her experiments with Theremin. At last, it allowed her to realize her desire to paint with light, and opened the cultural space for computer-assisted, and eventually, generated, film. Bute used the oscilloscope to make two films, *Abstronic* (1952) and *Mood Contrasts* (1953).[42]

So, within the centre of Joyce's novel, what Hart calls the 'television show' takes place. In his table titled 'A Plan of *Finnegans Wake*', Hart ascribes the following characteristics to the

[41] Armand, 2013, p.222.

[42] Zinman, 2012, p.136–141.

Figure 5.2: Mary Ellen Bute. Credited to the Center for Visual Music in *Film History* 24, no. 2 (June 2012).

chapter—Chapter II.3, pages 309 to 382—in question: 'Major Symbols: TV Screen', 'Art: Public Communications', 'Technique: Radio Broadcast'.[43] Hart describes how the chapter brings to a climax the tensions between the two 'sons'—Shem and Shaun—of the central protagonist H.C.E. (Earwicker), he draws a parallel with 'Circe', the most cinematic chapter of *Ulysses*:

> ...the really cataclysmic conflict does not arise until II.3. This, the longest chapter in *Finnegans Wake*, is the most important of all, the nodal point of the major themes, a clearing-house and focus for motifs. Only Book IV and the opening

[43] Hart, 1962, p.17.

> pages, preparing the way for a new cycle, can compare with II.3 in this respect. In many respects this chapter forms a parallel with the 'Circe' chapter of Ulysses. They both develop a strong situation which is phantasmagoric, horrific, and bestial in nature; each ends with a riotous exodus late at night; each leads to a vision of lost youth. The crucial visions in Circe's glass have their equivalent in the images on the Earwickers' television-screen...[44]

Manning, in attempting to represent *Finnegans Wake* in miniature and in recognition of the centrality of the television show, opens her play with 'a series of bangs and clashes of cymbals' representing the dawn of a new technological Age, has a chorus replay the famous opening line ('riverrun past Eve and Adam's...') and then moves straight to the technique of the 'Radio Broadcast' by introducing the first character as 'RADIO ANNOUNCER.'[45,46] This restructuring, not dissimilar to Strick's temporal flash forwards and in correspondence with Lacan's description of those dream mechanics that attempt to keep the dreamer asleep, has the effect of a literary frame that situates the entire play within the form of a broadcast. To clarify, Manning does not open with the announcer from Joyce's Chapter II.3, rather she moves the announcer to describe the content of Chapter I. In this movement, broadcast mechanics become the framework of the play.

In her cinematic adaptation of Manning, Bute goes a step further. Bute, consistent with the symbol of the 'TV Screen', replaces the radio announcer with a television presenter. Bute also opens with 'riverrun' and uses languid cross-dissolves of Dublin Bay, the River Liffey and H.C.E.

[44]Hart, 1962, p.131.

[45]From Marshall McLuhan: 'There are ten thunders in the Wake. Each is a cryptogram or codified explanation of the thundering and reverberating consequences of the major technological changes in all human history. When a tribal man hears thunder, he says, "What did he say that time?", as automatically as we say, "Gesundheit."' (McLuhan, 1968, p.5)

[46]Manning, 1957, p.1.

Figure 5.3: The Fall. *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (Mary Ellen Bute, 1965, US) 3min 3sec. - 3min 21sec.

asleep in bed with his wife (who becomes an incarnation of the dream's main female character, A.L.P—Anna Livia Plurabelle—and of H.C.E.'s soul). The dawn of the technological age is indicated by H.C.E. falling from his bed in slow motion—The Fall—and then rapid cut images mixing animated cut-outs of H.C.E. falling through space, a humpty-dumpty figure, an egg, H.C.E. in his coffin, buildings collapsing, negative exposures, storm clouds and lightning, an animation of H.C.E.'s sons emanating from his body and numerous other images (see Fig. 5.3 on the previous page). While not at the same extreme pace as Gance's paroxysms, Bute's montage is firmly consistent with her experimental practice. These montage effects are a consistent feature across the length of her film. However, unlike Eisenstein, for instance, Bute goes on to mix this style with recitations of Joyce's printed words in a 'classical' style that also speaks directly to Manning's stage play. In contrast to Manning's stage adaptation, Bute initially establishes the mise-en-scène of the wake—H.C.E.'s dream of his corpse in a coffin surrounded by family and friends.

Within this environment, Shem and Shaun turn on a television, and in a brilliant use of Joyce's correspondences, communicate with their counterparts from a different primitive Age, and with the events of Chapter II.3 (see Fig. 5.5 on page 241). When these primitives—'Jutes' as Joyce calls them—turn to the blows described by Hart above, Bute switches to the television presenter. In an echo of 'the ineluctable modality of the visual'—an expression of the power of visual representation—the presenter holds a severed telephone line and delivers the line to camera 'Television kills telephony in brather's broil' (see Fig. 5.4 on the next page).

The presenter is interrupted by an image of A.L.P. in a medium close shot looking over her shoulder at the camera, when the camera returns to the presenter he announces 'Sponsor program'. The advertising parody that follows is of primary interest. I will relate this sequence to similar sequences in *A King in New York*. In the first instance, the fact of shared subject

Figure 5.4: Television presenter. *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (Mary Ellen Bute, 1965, US) 11min 29sec.

matter—parodies of television advertising—is worth examining. In correspondence with Marshall McLuhan's analysis below, these sequences revolve around sex, violence and technology. I conceive of the technological aspect of these sequences as not simply orbiting the idea of television as representative of automatonism, or of the movements and presentation of human form within the screen as indicative of the automaton, although both these aspects are important. Rather, I want to underline the sense of the human and the machine working in concert. As expanded below, in television advertising we see human and machine working at their most harmonious and effective. This aspect of the melancholic automaton is visible in the manner in which, when Chaplin is sucked into the machine in *Modern Times*, *he continues working* (see Fig. 5.6 on page 242).

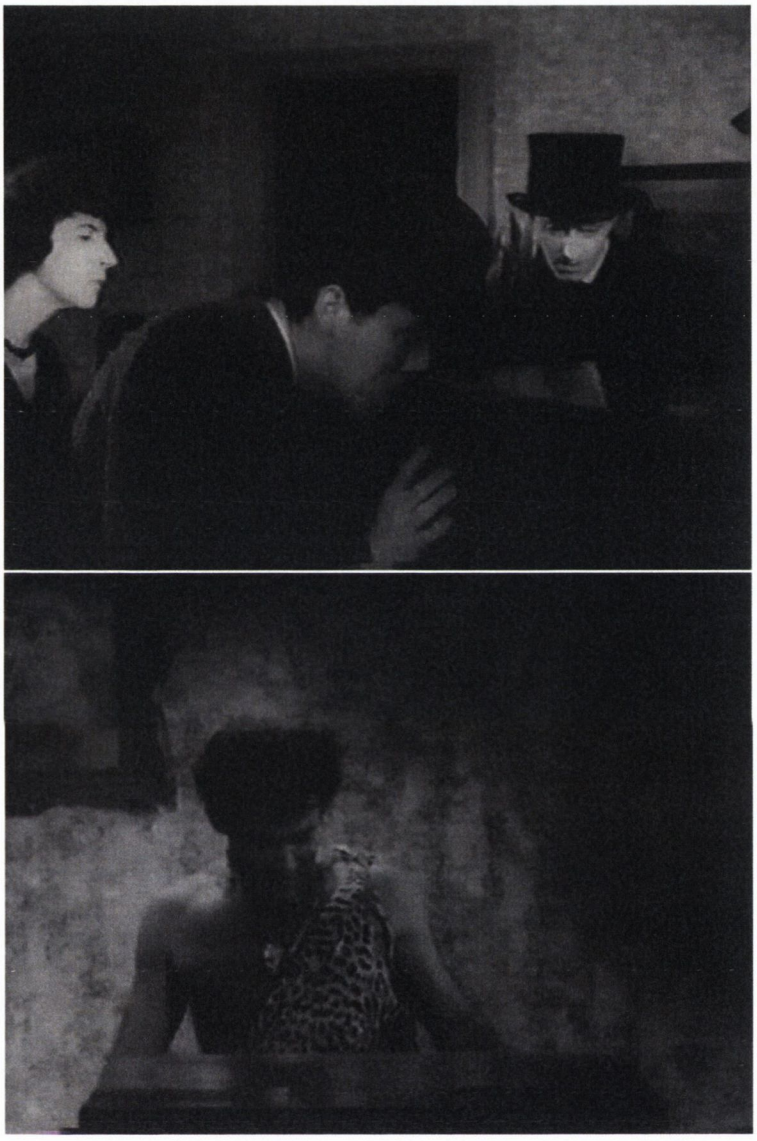

Figure 5.5: Television through the Ages. *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (Mary Ellen Bute, 1965, US) 10min 16sec. & 10min 42sec.

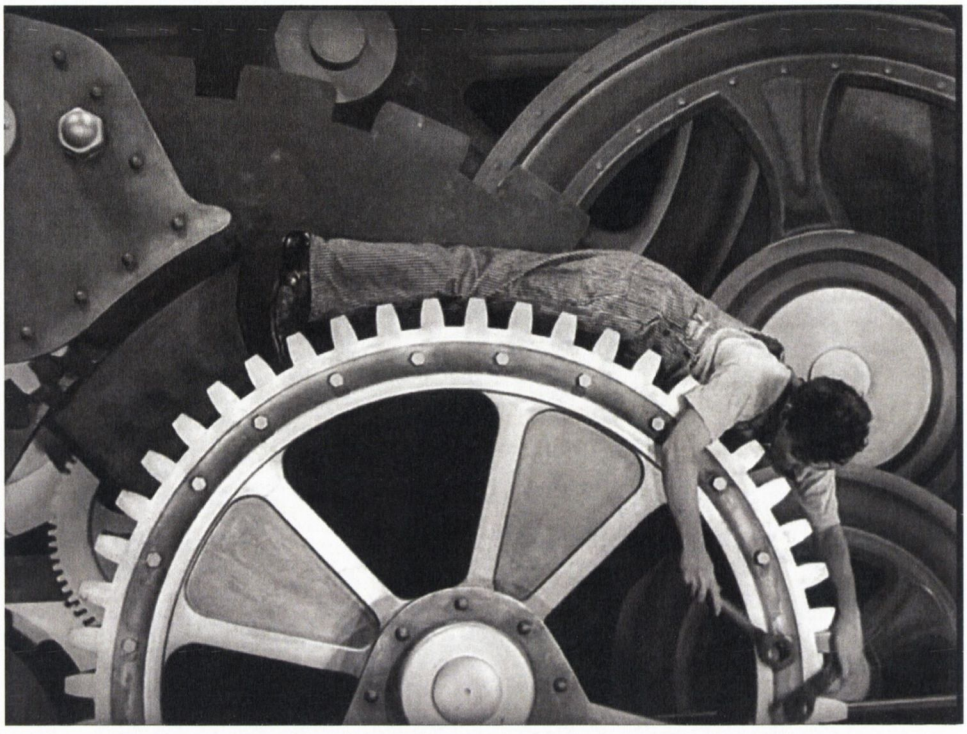

Figure 5.6: The Melancholic Automaton. *Modern Times* (Chaplin, 1936, US) 14min 55sec.

A.L.P. is shown in an expanding peephole, which moves upwards over her naked back and settles on a medium close-up as she draws on a theatrically long cigarette. The rigidity of movement in A.L.P.'s body and face, in an exaggerated delight in smelling of the perfume 'Eulogia' and the manner in which her limbs are extended and retracted, all speak to a sense of the body fragmented and in service to consumer needs. A profane joke—'Eulogia' is Joyce's incarnation of the Catholic Eucharist, as A.L.P. 'sells' it as a cosmetic she holds up a bottle of whiskey—tethers this sequence to overall themes of the fall and original sin. Within this sequence, the over-the-shoulder contortions of A.L.P.'s camera gaze are mechanistic and contrived. They are of the order of a second nature—a manufactured femininity. We see a variation on the conception of Chaplin's clipped walk and gait in this parody and which Benjamin sees as the essential comedic element of the Tramp's appearance (see Fig. 5.7 on the next page). I take

from A.L.P.'s mechanistic frozen smile and cliché performance a correspondence to Chaplin's trapped worker in the machine.

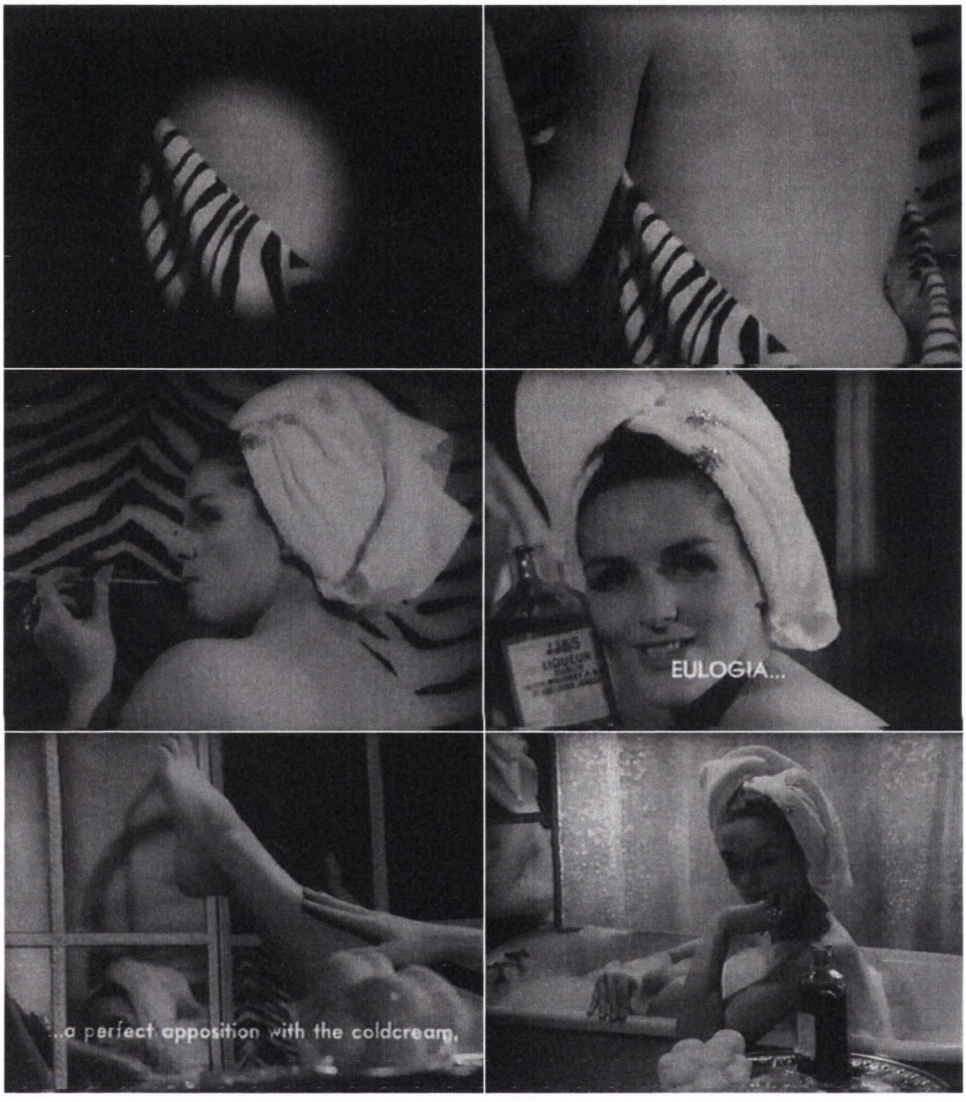

Figure 5.7: Advertising the Eucharist. *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (Mary Ellen Bute, 1965, US) 11min 38sec. - 12min 23sec.

Before we can examine the correspondence between the televisual in *Passages* and *A King in New York*, we need to establish a correspondence with the automaton and melancholy.

To outline the importance of the concept of melancholy to Benjamin's concept of history and political actuality, I begin with quotes from Susan Buck-Morss and Susan Sontag that situates melancholy at the heart of the allegorical representation and therefore the dialectical image:

> When Benjamin conceived of the Arcades project, there is no doubt that he was self-consciously reviving allegorical techniques. Dialectical images are a modern form of emblematics. But whereas the Baroque dramas were melancholy reflections on the inevitability of decay and disintegration, in the *Passagen-Werk* the devaluation of (new) nature and its status as ruin becomes instructive politically.[47]

Susan Sontag, in her introduction to a 1979 selection of his writings, observes: 'His major projects, the book published in 1928 on the German baroque drama (the *Trauerspiel*; literally, sorrow-play) and his never completed *Paris, Capital if the Nineteenth Century*, cannot be fully understood unless one grasps how much they rely on a theory of melancholy.'[48]

Benjamin believes that the sense of melancholy that is concomitant with views of the past can be harnessed to a conception of the 'now-time' that reveals the transitory nature of present politics. Buck-Morss distinguishes between Benjamin's conception of allegory and symbol as based on relations of temporality, stressing a Benjaminian preference for allegorical models which, unlike symbolism, do not effect an air of natural order: 'In allegory, history appears as nature in decay or ruins and the temporal mode is one of retrospective contemplation; but time enters the symbol as an instanteous present—"the mystical *Nu*"—in which the empirical

[47] Buck-Morss, 1989, p.170.

[48] Benjamin, Jephcott and Shorter, 1979, p.8.

and the transcendent appear momentarily fused within a fleeting, natural form'.[49] The symbol suggests a present whereas the allegory engages with the past. Specifically, the allegory evokes a melancholic contemplation with a conception of the past as ruin. The adoption of allegory in the Baroque period is linked by Benjamin to an 18th-century fascination with Egyptian heiroglyphics, not as symbols but rather as allegories. That is, they were understood: 'to be God's writing in natural images rather than a phonetic language [...] Such a language of images implied there was nothing arbitrary in the connection between sign and referent.'[50] Arguing that theorists, in their attempts to establish film as a new art, attached mythic qualities to the medium, that is, to reestablish an auratic air around it, Benjamin quotes Abel Gance in the Artwork essay:

> Hence the obtuse and hyperbolic character of early film theory. Abel Gance, for instance, compares film to hieroglyphs: 'By a remarkable regression, we are transported back to the expressive level of the Egyptians .... Pictorial language has not matured, because our eyes are not yet adapted to it. There is not yet enough respect, not enough *cult*, for what it expresses." Or, in the words of Severin-Mars: 'What other art has been granted a dream ... at once more poetic and more real? Seen in this light, film might represent an incomparable means of expression, and only the noblest minds should move within its atmosphere, in the most perfect and mysterious moments of their lives.'[51]

There remains, however, from Benjamin's early *Trauerspiel* writings, shown by Buck-Morss and in the Artwork essay, an interest in form which does not rely on simple relations of sign

[49] Buck-Morss, 1989, p.172.

[50] Ibid., p.172.

[51] Benjamin, 2003f, p.258–259, italics in original.

and signified—the allegorical hieroglyphic understood as God's word—and a belief that film can perform the same allegorical, *always* melancholic, turn to the past without recourse to symbolism, cult or myth.

Benjamin ultimately negatively critiques Baroque allegorists for their attempts to resolve this melancholy through a theological framework. Instead, Benjamin sees the melancholic turn that these ruins evoke—the arcades, nostalgia for trains journeys, and so on—as political points of fracture where the 'now-time' can be identified as a future ruin, a second nature that is transitory, and therefore vulnerable.[52]

Briefly, due to limited space, but nonetheless significantly, Baudelaire's allegorical and melancholic poetry, exemplified by the 'Spleen et Idéal' cycle of *Les fleurs du Mal*, is another major point of this constellation, as is the relation of Baudelaire's ragpicker to Chaplin's Tramp.[53]

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[52]The allegorical form reaches its apotheosis in its representation of the Talmudic separation of the father story. In the genesis of creation and Judeo-Christian narrative of the fall in the garden of Eden, this foundational story, itself an allegory of older narratives, is a melancholic rumination on the originary nature of the ruin of civilisation. In his fascinating essay, 'On Some Jewish Motifs in Benjamin', Irving Wohlfarth writes: 'The Fall, according to Benjamin, is first and foremost the fall of language.[...]As it falls from its original state of being into having, language becomes synonymous with "abstraction", "judgement" and "meaning". A language that is not a "pure" language of "knowing", but rather is a language of signs is the punishment for eating from the tree of knowledge, "The fall is the degeneration of the *proper* name into the *arbitrary* sign." ' (Wohlfarth, 2004, p.162–163)

[53]Benjamin's identification of the ragpicker, and the significance of the ragpickings, as another site of dialectical insight has a complex lineage in Benjamin's writing, and it continues in the *Arcades*. The ragpicker is significant both in the etymology of the theory of the dialectical image and as a dialectical image in its own right. As with several of Benjamin's dialectical images, a foundational source is Charles Baudelaire, in this case his poem 'Le Vin de chiffonniers' ('The Wine of the Rag-Pickers') in *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857). Baudelaire's poem includes verses which in turn describe the ragpicker as a poet, a dreamer, an informer, a lawmaker, a reformer and an angelic fool:

> a ragpicker stumbles past, wagging his head
> and bumping into walls with a poet's grace,
> pouring out his heartfelt schemes to one
> and all, including spies of the police.
>
> He swears to wonders, lays down noble laws,
> reforms the wicked, raises up their prey,
> and under the lowering canopy of heaven
> intoxicates himself on his own boasts. (Baudelaire, 1983, p.114)

In the exposes of 1936 and 1939, written by way of an explanation of the *Arcades*, Benjamin writes that 'Baudelaire's genius, which feeds on melancholy, is an allegorical genius' and that in the title " 'Spleen and Ideal'[...] For Baudelaire, there is no contradiction between the two concepts." That is, the melancholic (an obsolete meaning of spleen) expression of an ideal modernity viewed as a future ruin is a profoundly allegorical insight. This simple reading is expanded in Convolute J of the *Arcades*, dedicated to Baudelaire.

This is not to say that political action replaces melancholy, but rather that melancholy provides, as Julia Kristeva points out in her remarkably beautiful treatise on melancholia and depression, a 'tension':

> According to Walter Benjamin, it is allegory, which was powerfully handled in Baroque art, particularly in the *Trauerspiel* (literally, mourning play, playing with

In Convolute J of the *Arcades*, titled for Baudelaire, the figure appears as a possible everyman, through a trade that is open to all, and one which facilitates and necessitates an intimate familiarity with all levels of urban existence. Benjamin quotes H.A. Fregier: 'The expansion achieved by industry in Paris during the past thirty years has given a certain importance to the trade of ragpicker, which occupies the lowest level on the industrial scale. Men, women, and children can all easily devote themselves to the practice of this trade, which requires no apprenticeship and calls for tools that are as simple as its methods—a basket, a hook, and a lantern comprising the ragpicker's only equipment.' (Benjamin, 1999h, p.703, a3,2)

The egalitarian, almost anti-consumerist, nature of the ragpicker's trade, in combination with its correspondence to the industrial development of Paris as metropolis, is immediately evocative of a dialectical tension, of a structuring element which contains within it its own antithesis. This is a role that Benjamin equates with both the poet Baudelaire and with his own philosophical method: 'With the aid of methods more akin—above all, in their dependence on chance—to the methods of the nineteenth-century collector of antiquities and curiosities, or indeed to the methods of the nineteenth-century ragpicker, than to those of the modem historian. Not conceptual analysis but something like dream interpretation was the model.' (ibid., p.ix)

> mourning; actually, it refers to the tragic drama of the Baroque period), that best achieves melancholy tension.[54,55]

In 1931, Benjamin published a short essay in the left-wing journal *Die Gesellschaft* titled 'Left Wing Melancholy'. The essay can be characterised as a vicious attack on broader petty-bourgeois moral hand-wringing in general and on the poet Erich Kästner in particular. Benjamin mocks Kästner's poetry for wallowing in the despair of class inequality, for aestheticising suffering through indulgent melancholy. Benjamin argues that his poems are by the petty-bourgeois for the petty-bourgeois, that:

> Kästner's poems are for people in the higher income bracket, those mournful, melancholy dummies who trample anything and anyone in their path. With the rigidity of their armor, the slowness of their advance, the blindness of their action, they are the rendezvous that tank and bedbug have made in people. These poems teem with them like a city cafe after the stock exchange closes.

In vulgar terms, Benjamin accuses Kästner of navel gazing, and his critique is a hatchet job. If sentimentality is unearned emotion, then Kästner has pillaged working class experience for

[54]Kristeva, 1989, p.101–103. Kristeva's book is conceived in part as a theraputic discourse, as such words and literary constructs are employed in search of resolution for the depressive spirit—not necessarily a personal spirit, but the melancholic spirit that is considered emblematic of modernity as a whole. In this chapter, 'Beauty: The Depressive's Other Realm', Kristeva comes to see allegory as another dead end for the melancholic: 'The imaginative capability of Western man, which is fulfilled within Christianity, is the ability to transfer meaning to the very place where it was lost in death and/or nonmeaning. This is a survival of idealization—the imaginary constitutes a miracle, but it is at the same time its shattering: a self-illusion, nothing but dreams and words, words, words...It affirms the almightiness of temporary subjectivity—the one that knows enough to speak until death comes.'

[55]In the same manner, Benjamin sees Baudelaire as carefully navigating a dangerously path 'The antithesis between allegory and myth has to be clearly developed. It was owing to the genius of allegory that Baudelaire did not succumb to the abyss of myth that gaped beneath his feet at every step.' (Benjamin, 1999h, J22,5, p.268)

bourgeois enjoyment.[56] Kästner is expressing false emotion, a sentimentality for an experience he has not had and cannot truthfully relate to. In this sense his expressions, his poetry, is dangerous insomuch as it creates a second nature and therefore a false history. Sentimentality is therefore a weak impersonation of melancholia. However, melancholy is not politically useful in and of itself that would be art for art's sake,[57] Benjamin finally turns excremental in his condemnation:

> Constipation and melancholy have always gone together. But since the juices began to dry up in the body social, stuffiness meets us at every turn. Kästner's poems do not improve the atmosphere.

If Kästner's melancholy marks him as 'full of it', then we can identify a deep tension in Benjamin's conception of the significance of melancholy: without appropriate political application, melancholy is a bourgeois affectation.

In his 1993 book, *Melancholy Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning*, Max Pensky recounts how Benjamin described himself as " 'born under the sign of Saturn', that is, that he was born a melancholic."[58] Pensky relates Benjamin's reading of Kästner's melancholy to

[56]The phrase 'sentimentality is unearned emotion' is widely credited to James Joyce but the earliest attribution I can find is in *Jubilee: A Magazine of the Church & Her People* from 1956 (Duncan, 1956, p.107)

[57]Uwe Steiner quotes Benjamin in *Ursprung*, where he argues that 'it is the object of philosophical criticism "to show that the function of artistic form is as follows: to make historical content, such as provides the basis of every important work of art, into a philosophical truth." ' (Steiner, 2010, p.65)

[58]Within this it is possible to conceive of Benjamin himself as a melancholic automaton, that is a 'memory machine' driven by Gutenberg's typographic form. The relationship to Saturn is explained in one of the most famous books on melancholy, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* by Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl. In a passage appropriate to Benjamin, Klibansky et al. write: 'The melancholic's capricious memory, however, was the effect of another peculiarity derived from his vehemence, which was to prepare the way for the conception of the melancholic as a man of genius.' This 'constant' memory that was associated melancholics became, astrologically, associated with the constancy of the planet Saturn, and the ' "constant" Saturn became patron of melancholics'. (Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl, 1979, p.35)

his reading of a 1922 essay by Panofsky and Saxl, 'Dürer's Melancholia I' from 1922, whereby the melancholic is so alienated from the external world that all external objects lose their value and are reduced to a state of contemplation (see Fig. 5.8 on the following page). Benjamin writes of the allegorical figure in this woodcut staring mourfully at the most straightforward objects, as if they are symbols of 'some enigmatic wisdom'.[59] In this context, melancholy is defined by its arrest of action or engagement, Pensky writes: 'Melancholy infects any political cause that it seeks to support, for the melancholic's support (of anything) is always tinged with the atmosphere of meaninglessness. Politically, meaninglessness translates into resignation, the precise negation of decisiveness.'[60] The Benjaminian response to this, as Pensky describes it, requires that the artist dispenses with any air of political detachment, art must be understood as political:

> Benjamin thus argues that contemporary melancholy writing must necessarily lose the appearance of political detachment. Like other forms of high art, it becomes political by the elimination of the cultural milieu in which the act of writing can maintain its remoteness from its status as a productive force.[61,62]

[59]The Panofsky and Saxl essay is based on this 16th-century woodcut by Albrecht Dürer, Benjamin writes: 'The deadening of the emotions, and the ebbing away of the waves of life which are the source of the emotions in the body, can increase the distance between the self and the surrounding world to the point of alienation from the body. As soon as this symptom of depersonalization was seen as an intense degree of mournfulness, the concept of the pathological state, in which the most simple object appears to be a symbol of some enigmatic wisdom because it lacks any natural, creative relationship to us, was set in an incomparably productive context. It accords with this that in the proximity of Albrecht Dürer's figure, *Melancholia*, the utensils of active life are lying around unused on the floor, as objects of contemplation. This engraving anticipates the baroque in many respects.' (Benjamin, 2003e, p.140)

[60]Pensky, 1993, p.11.

[61]Ibid., p.11.

[62]Jacky Bowring comments on Benjamin's essay and links it to Dürer's woodcut: 'In literary form, "Left Melancholy" underlies works in the vein of Günter Grass's *From the Diary of a Snail*, which explicitly uses the emblem of Dürer's *Melancholia I* to evoke the certain brooding quality of this detachment. Grass delivered a lecture in 1971 where he described melancholy as a "substitute for action", and this stagnation is amplified in the summation that, "What is dangerous about the gaze of the melancholic is that it causes life (time) to flow out of

Figure 5.8: *Melancholia I* Albrecht Dürer, 16th century.

Benjamin's relationship to melancholia, then, has a complex structure, he identifies with it, he sees it as usefully harnessed in the conception of the present as a ruin of the future, however he also sees it as a political posture that must be resisted. Pensky develops a theory of melancholy as a defining aspect of Benjamin's philosophy that is key to exploring the ambiguity and seeming contradictions of his writing—the contrast of the concreteness of his dialectical images in their materiality as compared to their metaphysical constellations. For Pensky, as for Scholem and many more before him, Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*—the mournful angel surveying the

objects—it petrifies them...one of the forgotten symbols of melancholy Walter Benjamin...reminds us, is stone." ' (Bowring, 2008, p.83)

destruction of history—is the emblematic image of this idea. Just as Kristeva invokes melancholy to overcome it, so does Benjamin: 'Produced from melancholy, a melancholy writing could only transcend itself through the exercise of its own characteristic forms of cognition.'[63]

To relate this to Chaplin's films, a short quote from Kevin Brownlow is informative:

> My mother took me to see *The Goldrush* at the Everyman cinema in Hampstead just after the war. She described it as a comedy but I thought it very sad; I remember weeping my heart out when no one came to Charlie's party. Years later I introduced my six-year-old daughter to Chaplin with *The Kid*. When the welfare men came to take Jackie Coogan away she burst into tears. "Didn't you like the funny bits?" I asked. "What funny bits?" she replied.[64]

The inter-generational sadness described in Brownlow's account recalls other tragic moments in Chaplin's films. Perhaps best known and celebrated is the ending of *City Lights* (1931, US) with its paean to impossible, profane love. Chaplin encapsulates the tragedy of the washed up Calvero in *Limelight* (1952, US) through a short cross-fade, an image that seems to me, in its graphic denuding of the happy clown, to perform a melancholic stripping of second nature (see Fig. 5.9 on the next page).

Chaplin's *Shoulder Arms* (1918, US) employs a remarkably avant-garde split screen effect to depict his enlisted soldier staring mournfully at the city he is estranged from (see Fig. 5.10 on page 254). This image echoes Dürer's woodcut, first formally in the manner in which the subjects 'look back' and then in the symbolic meaning that the city is imbued with in the

[63] Pensky, 1993, p.19.

[64] Sight & Sound, 2003, p.32.

Figure 5.9: Chaplin the clown. *Limelight* (Charles Chaplin, 1952, US) 21min 8–13sec.

eyes of the homesick, melancholic soldier. In a celebrated Benjaminian quote, which Miriam Hansen describes as an 'image or a lapse dissolve',[65] a similar experience of the Great War is communicated:

> A generation that had gone to school in horse-drawn streeetcars now stood in the open air, amid a landscape in which nothing was the same except the clouds, and, at its center, in a force field of destructive torrents and explosions, the tiny, fragile human body.[66]

[65]Hansen, 2012, p.171.

[66]Benjamin, 1999b, p.732.

Figure 5.10: A longing for elsewhere. *Shoulder Arms* (Charles Chaplin, 1918, US) 8min 1sec.

In David Robinson's *Chaplin: His Life and Art*, quoting an interview, also from 1931, we see a *spirtual* recourse comparable perhaps to that which Benjamin criticises in the Baroque allegorists. A lengthy quote but one which returns us to modernity as a world of automatons:

> A remarkable and revealing note by Chaplin on the characterization in *Modern Times* shows that he did not intend the Tramp and the Waif—'the Gamin' as she was consistently called, though in later years Chaplin was inclined to correct this to 'Gamine'—as either rebels or victims. They were rather spiritual escapees from a world in which he saw no other hope: 'The only two live spirits in a world of automatons. They really live. Both have an eternal spirit of youth and are absolutely unmoral. Alive because we are children with no sense of responsibility,

> whereas the rest of humanity is weighted down with duty. We are spiritually free. There is no romance in the relationship, really two playmates—partners in crime, comrades, babes in the woods. We beg, borrow or steal for a living. Two joyous spirits living by their wits.'[67]

This encounter with the 'world of automatons' is a reference to the Tramp's experience of modernity, when he is first sucked into the factory machinery and subjected to the feeding machine (see Fig. 5.11 on the next page). It is this alienating experience, the scenes where he himself becomes a cog in the machine which causes a psychic break that lands him in hospital, that is the motivating action of the film's narrative. Despite Chaplin's description of 'Two joyous spirits', there is certainly melancholic expression in *Modern Times*. There is a deep unfulfilled longing in their desire for a 'proper' home; their attempts to mimic middle-class domesticity in a dockside hovel are full of pathos. In the end, the Tramp and the Gamine, while they have each escaped incarceration, turn their backs on modernity and the camera, they literally walk away from the gaze, and this movement and mise-en-scène expresses a final declaration of profane love. An undeniable aspect of Chaplin's work until at least 1931 is its mass appeal, an aspect that chimes well with Benjamin's requirements for politically useful film. His films, in their resolutions and heartening diegesies, can be broadly termed both spiritually uplifting—as Chaplin signals in his quote above—and melancholic. How does Chaplin express this spirituality, sentimentality and melancholy while maintaining a political usefulness?

The answer is, of course, comedy, and the fact that Chaplin's is not a detached melancholic. Despite Chaplin's spiritual claims, he does not fall into the same spiritual category as the Baroque allegorists, and his melancholy is not overwhelming or even primary, rather it in-

[67] Robinson, 2001, p.487–488.

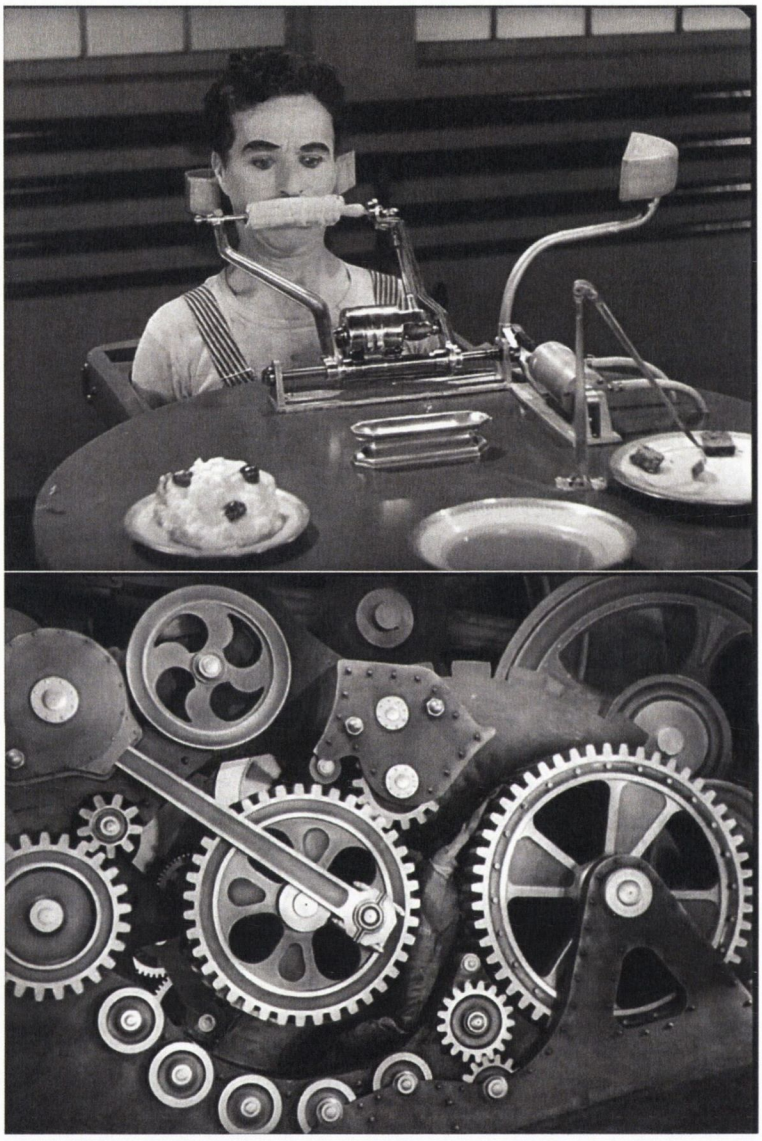

Figure 5.11: Machine Man. *Modern Times* (Charles Chaplin, 1936, US) 10min 44sec. & 14min 52sec.

forms his comedy and his politics. Chaplin's life story claims a certain melancholic authenticity, and his resulting films use melancholic expression in the development of heartening stories. As noted above in relation to lived experience and Benjamin's interpretation of the effect of Freudian shock in the formation of memory, *Long Experience* (Erfahrung) is privileged.[68] So Chaplin's melancholy, like Baudelaire's, is in service to his narratives, rather than being their subject. Before returning to the automaton, and further correspondences that describe the melancholic automaton, we need to acknowledge comedy—the major element of *Modern Times* that Chaplin, above, has left from his description of the film—as forming a long acknowledged dialectic relationship with melancholy.

In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce evokes the same mix of gaiety and sadness in Chaplin's films when he describes an incarnation of the main female protagonist of the novel (Issy) reading about 'It' girl Clara Bow and then alternately crying and spitting biscuits: 'When she is not sitting on all the free benches avidously reading about "it" but ovidently on the look out for "him" or so "thrilled" about the best dressed dolly pram and beautiful elbow competition or at the movies swallowing sobs and blowing bixed mixcuits over "childe" chaplain's "latest." '[69] While 'childe' can be happily interpreted as a invocation of the innocent nature of the Tramp, it is also noted in Roland McHugh's annotations to *Finnegans Wake* as a reference to an association of Joyce's

[68] As Chaplin's autobiographical writing—*My Trip Abroad* (1922), *My Autobiography* (1964)—and Robinson's biography have documented, Chaplin's childhood experience of poverty provides a very real perspective on melancholic insight that, according to Benjamin, the bourgeoisie Kästner could have no experience of. Robinson describes the early institutionalisation of Charles and his brother Sydney and their separation from their mother Hannah: 'Only eight months after Sydney's discharge from Norwood Schools, both Chaplin boys were to experience in earnest life in charity institutions. Hannah was again taken into the Infirmary, and Sydney and Charlie, now eleven and seven, were admitted to the workhouse, "owing to the absence of their father and the destitution and illness of their mother." ' (Robinson, 2001, p.20) In his autobiography Chaplin recalls how, for his mother 'There was no alternative: she was burdened with two children, and in poor health; and so she decided that the three of us should enter the Lambeth workhouse.' (Chaplin, 1964, p.18) When the Chaplin brothers are eventually placed under the care of their father and his morose companion, Louise, Chaplin recounts 'I was not yet eight years old, but those were the longest and saddest of my life.' (ibid., p.29)

[69] Joyce, 2002, p.166.

writing with 'the child cult' by Wyndham Lewis. Without contradiction, I would suggest that it also refers to Henry Langdon Childe who, as described by Kevin and Emer Rockett, was associated with innovating a design that enabled cross-dissolve and superimposition in magic lantern design[70,71]

The dialectic of comedy/melancholy is acknowledged in Jacky Bowring's 2008 *A Field Guide to Melancholy*, whereby: 'Clowns, too, are potent exemplars of melancholy's contradictory nature. The happy face of the clown, the court jester, or the mime artist, is a means of overlaying a type of detachment, sadness even, with a self-mocking mask.'[72] Bowring quotes Marcel Marceau, who explains 'I try to be deep in my art form, to bring laughters [sic], melancholy.' Marceau, Bowring writes, 'had a connection with Charlie Chaplin, sharing the manner of exaggerated actions and stylised gestures that conveyed ideas without words'. Bowring quotes a 2003 television interview with Marceau, 'Marceau saw in Chaplin "a sort of *tristesse*, a melancholy" which epitomises the undercurrent of sadness within the role of the clown, in miming, and in slapstick.'[73,74]

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[70]Rockett and Rockett, 2011, p.42.

[71]The 'Finnegans Wake Exstensible Elucidation Treasury' (www.fweet.org) makes the connection: 'Charlie Chaplin's film *The Pawnshop* (1916), Chaplin sobs and blows biscuit crumbs upon hearing a destitute client's sad story'. Among other film references, notably several to *Birth of a Nation*, the site lists the following Chaplin films as referenced in the *Finnegans Wake*: *Shanghaied* (1915), *The Pawnshop* (1916), *The Floor Walker* (1916), *Shoulder Arms* (1918), *Chase Me Charlie* (1918, compilation).

[72]Bowring, 2008, p.62.

[73]Ibid., p.63.

[74]In correspondence with a consideration of encounters with the Real in the form of the uncanny below, it is worth noting Bowring's reference to an erasure of ego as the distinguishing feature of the melancholic's experience in Freud's writing: 'Freud's landmark essay was *Mourning and Melancholia* in which he distinguished a sense of normal grief as mourning from abnormal grief as the pathological condition of melancholia. In mourning, or grieving, the self (or "ego") "gets over" whatever is lost but, with melancholia, "the wound is kept open". The consequences of this are that, while mourners move on to reclaim their lives, melancholics refract the pain back onto themselves: "In mourning the world has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego that has become so."' (ibid., p.79–80)

Benjamin, in his 1929 article 'Chaplin in Retrospect', lavishes praise on Chaplin and describes laughter as 'the most international and the most revolutionary emotion of the masses':

> In Russia, people wept when they saw *The Pilgrim*; in Germany, people are interested in the theoretical implications of his comedies; in England, they like his sense of humor. It is no wonder that Chaplin himself is puzzled and fascinated by these differences. Nothing points so unmistakably to the fact that the film will have immense significance as that it neither did nor could occur to anyone that there exists any judge superior to the actual audience. In his films, Chaplin appeals both to the most international and the most revolutionary emotion of the masses: their laughter.[75]

Miriam Hansen references this line in *Cinema and Experience*: 'Chaplin joins Kafka and other figures in which Benjamin discerned a return of the allegorical mode in modernity—except that Chaplin's appeal combines melancholy with the force of involuntary collective laughter.'[76]

From an earlier draft of Benjamin's Chaplin article is a line referring to *The Circus* (Chaplin, 1929, US) in which Benjamin says that an audience will never smile when looking at one of his films, rather they will 'either double up laughing, or be very sad.'[77] In the Artwork essay (third version) we see the argument from the fragment 'On the Political Significance of Film', where Benjamin rejects a connection between a revolution in form (Picasso), and a heartening art

[75] Benjamin, 1999a, p.223–224.

[76] Hansen, 2012, p.47–48.

[77] Benjamin, 1999a, p.199.

which can affect the masses. Now, in the Artwork essay, the construct explicitly invokes the most heartening, kitsch artist of his time, Chaplin:

> *The technological reproducibility of the artwork changes the relation of the masses to art. The extremely backward attitude toward a Picasso painting changes into a highly progressive reaction to a Chaplin film.* The progressive reaction is characterized by an immediate, intimate fusion of pleasure—pleasure in seeing and experiencing—with an attitude of expert appraisal. Such a fusion is an important social index. As is clearly seen in the case of painting, the more reduced the social impact of an art form, the more widely criticism and enjoyment of it diverge in the public. The conventional is uncritically enjoyed, while the truly new is criticized with aversion. With regard to the cinema, the critical and uncritical attitudes of the public coincide. The decisive reason for this is that nowhere more than in the cinema are the reactions of individuals, which together make up the massive reaction of the audience, determined by the imminent concentration of reactions into a mass.[78]

These kitsch mass experiences, doubling up or sadness, are progressive by the very nature of the shared experience, whereas so-called high art is divisive. The specifics of film analysis, textual analysis or close reading are not of interest to Benjamin, here it is simply the progressive potential of the cinema that he is highlighting. This is a good example of the kernel of Adorno's major areas of disagreement with Benjamin. As George Potter describes it, Adorno writes to Benjamin in response to a draft of the Artwork essay:

[78] Benjamin, 2003f, p.264.

> The idea that a reactionary individual can be transformed into a member of the avant-garde through an intimate acquaintance with the films of Chaplin, strikes me as simple romanticization; for I cannot count Kracauer's favourite film director, even after *Modern Times*, as an avant-garde artist...and I cannot believe that the valuable elements in this piece of work will attract the slightest attention anyway. You need only have heard the laughter of the audience at the screening of this film to realize what is going on.[79]

But it is exactly this heartening laughter that Benjamin sees—in common with its inverse melancholia—as a Trojan horse for political expression. That said, it is hard not to sympathise with Adorno's point of view. As I write below, it is tempting to read the image of Chaplin in the machine in the tradition of symbolism, a construct which, as Bainard Cowan describes it, causes the viewer 'to be fascinated by the image of a symbolic other that is free from all real conflicts, to be fixated by the "beauty" of this image'.[80] Of course, a symbolic that is free from conflict is not a true representation of the symbolic other—it is another manifestation of 'second' nature. In this sense the Chaplin image is all too familiar. When we talk about the uncanny we talk about that which upsets the familiar and to reinvest this image with the tension required of the dialectical image I will now discuss the automaton and those aspects which make it a powerful vehicle of the uncanny.

When Adorno says he has difficulty recognising Kracauer's categorisation of Chaplin as avant-garde we must acknowledge that Kracauer was not isolated in his opinion. Chaplin was celebrated by the French avant-garde, first the impressionists and then the surrealists. In 1921 Louis Delluc, associate of Abel Gance, published *Charlot*, an appreciation of Chaplin that

[79]Potter, 2013, p.74–75.

[80]Cowan, 2005, p.58.

compares him to Jesus and Napoléon and, as described by David Robinson, it 'was a work of propaganda as well as of loving appreciation. Chaplin and his works were the ideal example to prove Delluc's theory of cinema as an autonomous art.'[81]

To return to the automaton, a connection to the surrealist correspondence in the last chapter is useful and will also return us to the idea of a constructed femininity in Bute's film. Before the Surrealists adopted the mannequin and the automaton as emblematic uncanny constructs, Marcel Duchamp created in 1915 what Robert Hughes calls 'The definitive mechano-sexual metaphor'. *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even*, also known as *Large Glass*, is an assemblage of wire and oil between sheets of glass, constructed in two halves. The upper half, where the 'Bride' resides, is separated from the lower, where the 'Bachelors'—the bride's suitors—toil on mechanistic, industrial apparatus in an effort to woo her (see Fig. 5.12 on the following page). As Hughes describes the scene from Duchamp's notes:

> The Bachelors are mere uniforms, like marionettes. According to Duchamp's notes, they try to indicate their desire to the Bride by concertedly making the Chocolate Grinder turn, so that it grinds out an imaginary milky stuff like semen. This squirts up through the rings, but cannot get into the Bride's half of the *Glass* because of the prophylactic bar that separates the panes. And so the Bride is condemned always to tease, while the Bachelors' fate is endless masturbation.[82]

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[81] Robinson, 1983, p.41. Delluc is excessive in his praise: 'To the creative artist of the cinema, the mask of Charlie Chaplin has just the same importance as the traditional mask of Beethoven has to the musical composer. I hope that this pronouncement will automatically eliminate all superfluous readers, and that we shall only be concerned with people who are capable of understanding each other.'

[82] Hughes, 1991, p.55.

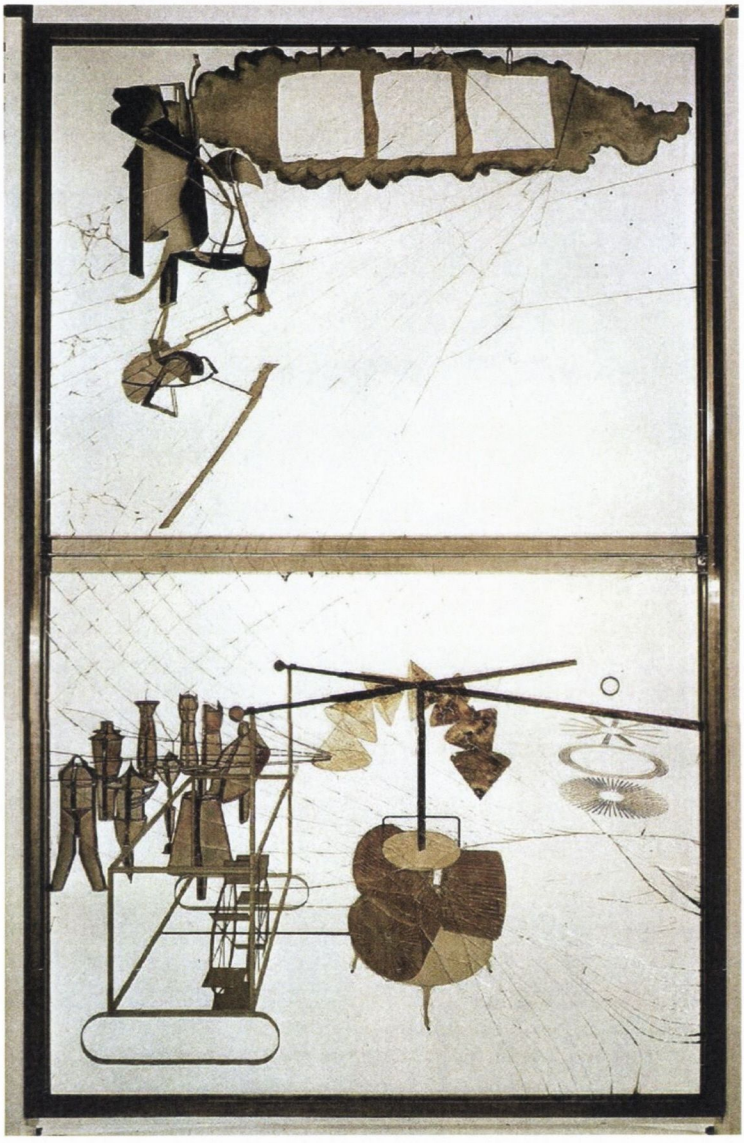


Figure 5.12: Marcel Duchamp. *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even* (*Large Glass*), 1915.

The basic industrial process is represented here in the 'Grinder', a machine that evokes an industrial treadmill and the apparatus that Charlie services, and gets caught inside, in *Modern Times*. Hughes writes how Duchamp 'talked about the machine in the Glass running on a mythical fuel of his own invention called "Love Gasoline," which passed through "filters" into "feeble cylinders" and activated a "desire motor"—none of which would have made much sense to Henry Ford.' This invocation of Fordism is appropriate, Ford's success in refining industrial/human relations in commercial pursuits, along with its successor Taylorism, Fordism contributed to the establishment of a new field of labour management termed 'scientific management':

> The assembly line enabled Ford to produce affordable cars for a mass market. It also forced workers to do highly specialized, repetitive tasks requiring little skill at a pace set by their supervisors. Around the same time, Frederick W. Taylor developed the principles of scientific management. After analyzing the movements of workers as they did their jobs, Taylor trained them to eliminate unnecessary actions and greatly improve their efficiency. Workers became cogs in a giant machine known as the modern factory.[83]

This quote is an obvious interpretation of Chaplin's interaction with the machine in *Modern Times*. That Charlie is in fact not harmed by the machine is important, he continues to work on it as he is moved through its various parts—Charlie become integrated with the machine. Taylor's classic 1911 text, *Principles of Scientific Management,* identifies, but dismisses, the innervating potential that appears in both Benjamin's and Chaplin's work:

[83]Brym, 2007, p.375. This college textbook explanation uses an image of *Modern Times* to drive home its point.

> Now, when through all of this teaching and this minute instruction the work is apparently made so smooth and easy for the workman, the first impression is that this all tends to make him a mere automaton, a wooden man. As the workmen frequently say when they first come under this system, 'Why, I am not allowed to think or move without some one interfering or doing it for me!" The same criticism and objection, however, can be raised against all other modern subdivision of labor.[84]

Taylor does not protest that the hypothetical worker is wrong, rather that this is an inevitable result of modernity. In Taylor's highly influential and ideological treatise, the worker is in fact an automaton, a cog in the machine—indeed, the organisation of workers to this end is the objective and the point of Taylor's book.

Now, this is familiar territory in the reception of *Modern Times*, I would only draw specific reference to Charlie's continued labour in the 'belly of the beast', his integration and the embrace of the worker as automaton in Taylor's treatise.[85]

Hughes makes a very Benjaminian observation: 'In fact, the *Large Glass* is an allegory of Profane Love—which, Marcel Duchamp presciently saw, would be the only sort left in the twentieth century.'[86] And this is the sublation in Duchamp's piece—for all the mechanistic frustration of the bachelors, desire and *jouissance* remain irrepressible. Hughes quotes Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* whereby 'The imposing mechanism of the male sexual apparatus lends

[84]Taylor, 1913, p.125.

[85]Worth noting is the fact that Charlie is only ever in physical danger when he is *outside* the machine; when he returns to the factory in the second half of the film a toolbox gets caught in the cogs and fires tools at himself and his supervisor. Concomitantly, in terms of traditional symbolism, Charlie is never a *wrench* in the machine, he does not harm the apparatus.

[86]Hughes, 1991, p.55.

itself to symbolization by every sort of indescribably complicated machinery.' However, he enigmatically signals how, in this piece, this is not the case: 'But to Duchamp, who had reason to know, the male mechanism of the *Large Glass* is not a bit imposing.'

Hughes is obliquely referring to Duchamp's transvestite alter-ego Rrose Sélavy (sometimes Rose Sélavy) and is also implicating his opaque sexual identity. Jerrold E. Seigel, in his book, *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp*, attempts to unravel the mystery of Duchamp's private life. He proposes that Duchamp may have been impotent or that he was bisexual or homosexual. He hypothesises that 'This suggestion might find support in his assumed identity as Rrose Sélavy and the occasions it afforded him to dress and be photographed in female clothing. At a surrealist exhibition in Paris in 1938 where each of the exhibitors was represented by a mannequin, Duchamp chose to place his own jacket and shirt on a female figure naked from the belly down.'[87] Despite the fact that this proposition conflates sexual identity with transvestism, the example of the mannequin does indicate a level of feminine self-identification by Duchamp which went beyond posturing or simple 'dress-up'. Indeed, Duchamp signed several of his works, including his film *Anemic Cinema* (1926), as Rrose Sélavy, and he was photographed by Man Ray in various incarnations and over several years (see Fig. 5.13 on the next page). To add to this hypothesis, I would note that when we think of the simplest signification of gender, we think of the horizontal (the negative, the lack) and the vertical (the phallus) as the feminine and the masculine, respectively. If we view *Melancholia I* and Chaplin's soldier from *Shoulder Arms* in these terms, we can see a vertical emphasis in composition—the figures in both mise-en-scènes, the ladder in Dürer, the split screen in Chaplin. If we compare this to *Large Glass*, we see a vertical, cut and negated by a horizontal split, creating a horizontal emphasis.

[87] Seigel, 1995, p.198.

Figure 5.13: Man Ray, *Rrose Sélavy*, 1921

We can accurately conceive of Duchamp's constructed femininity in terms of a number of liberating, political and destabilising artistic functions. However, for the purposes of this research, I want to briefly correspond his performative gender play to the Freudian category of the uncanny before a discussion of images of automatised femininity, via Marshall McLuhan's *Mechanical Bride*, in *A King in New York*.

Freud writes, 'the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar.'[88] This description seems contradictory, one would assume that the familiar cannot be described as *unheimlich*, the uncanny. But this is the horror of the uncanny. In the brilliant 1991 essay ' "I Shall Be with You on Your Wedding-Night": Lacan and the Uncanny', Mladen Dolar explains the paradoxical meaning of the German *unheimlich*. Where *heimleich* means 'familiar, cozy, intimate' it also directly implies a level of privacy and therefore secrecy and the hidden. Its supposed negation, *unheimlich*, hence doubles back on itself and, as Dolar put it, 'There is a point where the two meanings directly coincide and become undistinguishable, and the negation does not count—as indeed it does not count in the unconscious.'[89]

To explore the idea of the uncanny, Freud uses E.T.A. Hoffmann's short story, *The Sandman*. In what has become a foundational story for psychoanalysis, Hoffmann describes the repercussions of a young man—Nathaniel—falling in love with an automaton—Olympia—that he thinks is a real woman. In explicating the relation of the stories complicated narrative to psychic phenomena, Freud's essay comes to implicate a broad range of psychoanalytic condi-

[88] Freud, 1955, p.220.

[89] **dolar_"i_1991**.

tions and observations.[90] Dolar describes how the essay becomes the 'pivotal point' from which psychoanalytic theory evolves:

> In dealing with the different instances, Freud is gradually forced to use the entire panoply of psychoanalytic concepts: castration complex, Oedipus, (primary) narcissism, compulsion to repeat, death drive, repression, anxiety, psychosis, etc. They all seem to converge on "the uncanny." One could simply say that it is the pivotal point around which psychoanalytic concepts revolve, the point that Lacan calls object small *a* and which he himself considered his most important contribution to psychoanalysis.[91]

As Dolar explains, while Olympia is otherwise convincing as a real woman, her language is stifled and disconcerting. She sings, 'but in a very mechanical way, keeping her beat too accurately. Her vocabulary is rather limited; she only exclaims "Oh! oh!" from time to time and says "Good night, love!" at the end of long conversations in which he is the only speaker. Her eyes gaze into emptiness for hours on end.' These clichéd speech patterns, the empty staring, are revealing of Olympia's automatism, they are reminiscent of the camera stare of A.L.P. in *Passages*. Olympia becomes, for Freud, a screen on which Nathaniel has projected his own lack, and the uncanny Olympia is representative of a castrative anxiety. Dolar summarises

[90]David Ellison describes how this essay has become, for some a symptomatic reading of psychoanalytic theory. The implications of this understanding of the place of literature in philosophy speak to the manner in which, for Benjamin, literary criticism becomes the end point of philosophical thinking: 'Rather than merely comment on Freud's arguments for the importance of the uncanny as a concept within psychoanalytic theory, the newer interpreters concentrated on the significant hesitations, contradictions, and impasses that seemed to vitiate Freud's efforts to control his own text. "Das Unheimliche" came to be read as a self-deconstructing work in which uncanniness as such was equated with the essence of the literary; and the literary was considered to be that destabilizing force which doomed to failure all "reductionist" psychoanalytical attempts to understand the uncanny.' (Ellison, 2001, p.52)

[91]**dolar_"i_1991**.

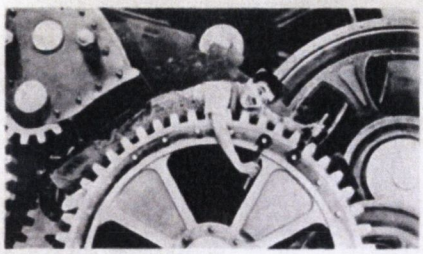
'She is his "better half," the missing half that could make him whole, but which turns out to be the materialized, emancipated death drive. She presents the point where the narcissistic complement turns lethal, where the imaginary stumbles on the real.'[92] We return here to the Lacanian framework, in my opening comments, of the automaton as an uncanny reminder, a frightening path, to the Real.[93] However, if we consider Žižek's conception of the Imaginary Real as not necessarily being so different from the Real, we can consider Olympia as a screen not only of castration anxiety, but also of an alienating industrial modernity, castrative in another sense, then Olympia's technologised form becomes far more materially relevant to the revelation of a constructed second nature.

With this brief sketch of correspondences between performative femininity and the uncanny manner—the manner in which the automaton cannot interact in a real sense with her lover—we might recall Dürer's melancholic subject, and Chaplin's soldier, both alienated from the objects of their desire. With this we return to the dialectical image of melancholic automaton and my relation of it to McLuhan's *Mechanical Bride*.

To establish a correspondence with Marshall McLuhan's mature territory of interest we would do well to look above the opening paragraph of his 1968 *War and Peace in the Global Village; an Inventory of Some of the Current Spastic Situations That Could Be Eliminated by More*

[92] **dolar_"i_1991**.

[93] It must be noted that in his article—in contrast to Ernst Jentsch, the psychologist who wrote the article to which he is responding—Freud locates the uncanny most comprehensively in the stories 'Sand-man' who steals children's eyes. This concurs with Freud's theory of castration complex, and the Sand-man thereby becomes representative of a figure who takes what is most valuable. However, and as said, this essay is now considered useful as a symptomatic reading of psychoanalytic theory, and this castration argument could be read as indicative of Freud's attempts to fit the story to the orientations of his own research. Whether this is the case or not, Freud does not deny the uncanny effects of the automaton, rather he privileges those of the Sand-man: 'But I cannot think ... that the theme of the doll Olympia, who is to all appearances a living being, is by any means the only, or indeed the most important, element that must be held responsible for the quite unparalleled atmosphere of uncanniness evoked by the story... The main theme of the story is, on the contrary ... the theme of the "Sand-Man" who tears out children's eyes.' (Freud, 1955, p.227)



The frequent marginal quotes from *Finnegans Wake* serve a variety of functions. James Joyce's book is about the electrical retribalization of the West and the West's effect on the East:

> The west shall shake the east awake....
> while ye have the night for morn...

Joyce's title refers directly to the Orientalization of the West by electric technology and to the meeting of East and West. The *Wake* has many meanings, among them

Years, a lifelong friend of Joyce's. Cranly lived all his mature life at the address of Leopold Bloom: 7 Eccles Street, Dublin. He spent his mature life in devising a cryptograph that would confer "the gift of perfect security upon the communications of all nations and all men." Kahn reports: "It required nothing more than a cigar box and a few bits of string and odds and ends for its operation." On page 135 of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce describes his own verbal method, which is an exact parallel of Byrne's: "...can be built with glue and clippings, scrawled or voided on a buttress; the night express sings his story, the song of sparrownotes on his stave of wires;...". For anyone discouraged by Joyce's method, let him consider that it is no more than the habit of penetrating the mosaic forms of every environment, linguistic or geographic.

A propos our current struggle against the "Rising Tide of Communism":

The mechanizing process that began in the eighteenth century and led to the development of new service environments—the press, the highway, the postal routes—was soon augmented by steam and rail. By the middle of the nineteenth century the extent of environmental serv-

Figure 5.14: Opening paragraph, *War and Peace in the Global Village*, Marshall McLuhan, 1968

Feedforward, where he reproduces the famous image from *Modern Times* (see Fig. 5.14 below). McLuhan doesn't reference the image until the end of the book when he writes: 'Literate men dread the repetitive servitude of factory life (Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*-style) without realizing that it was their own literacy that created this factory and that print technology is the archetype of all industrial life.'[94]

In lieu of any reference to Chaplin, McLuhan's introduction opens by discussing *Finnegans Wake*, and the following line appears to contextualise the image: 'Joyce was probably the only man ever to discover that all social changes are the effect of new technologies (self-amputations of our own being) on the order of our sensory lives.'[95] Laying aside a certain amount of hyperbole, we can see again an affinity between Joyce and Benjamin. McLuhan's mission, in common with Benjamin, is communicating the *need* for a change in social relations.[96] Like Benjamin, he sees

[94]McLuhan, 1968, p.180.

[95]Ibid., p.5.

[96]Worth noting is the—repressively bracketed—castration anxiety of 'self-amputations'.

the same potential for social change in the very mediums of technology that have so disrupted our 'sensory lives'. If we return to Bainard Cowan's essay on Benjamin's theory of allegory, we can discern a constellation that implicates both the fall of *Finnegans Wake* and McLuhan's axiom 'the medium is the message':

> The affirmation of the existence of truth, then, is the first precondition for allegory; the second is the recognition of its absence. Allegory could not exist if truth were accessible: as a mode of expression it arises in perpetual response to the human condition of being exiled from the truth that it would embrace. The existence-in-absence of truth is a condition that has been explained in various origin-myths of fall, rupture, or exile; it can be understood, however, only by examining the way in which it exists in representation. Truth does not consist of a content to be possessed after digesting away the linguistic form of a philosophical inquiry; rather, as Benjamin insists, the truth *is* the form.[97]

And this is why, as Cowan writes: 'Benjamin effectively ceases to read philosophy according to its modern Western development as a trans-linguistic generation of principles and reads it instead as literature—in fact, as allegory.' McLuhan, coming from a very different positivist tradition, also comes to present his theories in a nontraditional philosophic form—*The Mechanical Bride*, *The Medium is the Message* and *The Medium is the Massage* all use juxtapositions of text and image in their presentation.

If, as both McLuhan and Benjamin conclude, truth is the form, and if medium is the message, we can ask how, when the medium is television, is the representation of man affected?

[97] Cowan, 2005, p.60, italics in original.

In sympathy with Chaplin we can conclude that man, and equally woman *is in the machine*. This is the literal experience of the representation of television, as differentiated from film, where the image is separated from projection apparatus—in television man appears inside the apparatus. As Cowan summarises Benjaminian allegory: 'The activity of representation is the dwelling-place of truth, the only "place" where truth is truly present.'[98] If, as Chaplin shows below and McLuhan argues above, woman is *working* in the machine, in television, as we shall see, this manifests in advertising. When Lacan asks, in my opening paragraphs above, 'Where do we meet the real?' we can also conceive of the interruption, the waking knock on the door, as the moment of the broadcast advertisement, the sponsors message, interrupting the dream state of television. The inseparable fact of television advertising—corresponding to the effect of decontextualisation that it performs in Benjamin's newspapers—is satirised by Joyce, foregrounded in *Passages* by Bute via Mary Manning's stage play, and in Chaplin's *A King in New York* it forms a complex matrix of comedy, dehumanisation, breakdown of communication and a final expression of melancholic alienation.

'All glamour photos of standing figures are tiptoe, because this not only creates the effect of a longer limb but also the muscular rigidity which is so necessary in making one "belong" in a world of machines.'[99] This line from Marshall McLuhan from an essay called 'Corset Success Curve'—illustrated by a full-page diet subscription advertisement with before and after photos—perfectly epitomises the tone and feuilleton style of *The Mechanical Bride*. This book, which established McLuhan as an authoritative structuralist theorist, was subtitled with the Panofsky correspondence 'Folklore of Industrial Man' and concentrated almost exclusively on

[98] Cowan, 2005, p.60.

[99] McLuhan, 2011, p.154.

contemporary advertising.[100] In close correspondence with Benjamin, the collection's first essay ruminates on a reproduction of a 1950 front page of the *New York Times* and asks five questions:

> 'What's the score here? Why is a page of news a problem in orchestration? How does the jazzy, ragtime discontinuity of press items link up with other modern art forms? To achieve coverage from China to Peru, and also simultaneity of focus, can you imagine anything more effective than this front page cubism?' You never thought of a page of news as a symbolist landscape?'[101]

While McLuhan's techno-positivism is at odds with Benjamin's evolving pessimism, the recognition of the newspaper as an expressly *formal* medium is shared.

In his titular essay—'The Mechanical Bride'—McLuhan's opening salvo is definitive: 'Anybody who takes the time to study the techniques of pictoral montage in the popular press and magazines will easily find a dominant pattern composed of sex and technology.'[102] McLuhan continues by recognising the manner in which parts of women's bodies are used in advertising as 'objects like the grill work on a car.' This corresponds to Bute's advertising parody and its fragmented displays of limbs. McLuhan references Budd Schulberg's 1941 novel *What Makes Sammy Run?* to introduce a discussion on Freudian concepts of the death drive, whereby violence 'is a mere substitute for sex in those who have acquired the rigidities of a mechanized

[100] In a style that established a path for theorists like Umberto Eco and Roland Barthes, each essay in the collection reproduced glossy advertising for the purpose of structural analysis.

[101] McLuhan, 2011, p.3.

[102] Ibid., p.98.

environment.'[103] 'The Hiroshima bomb', McLuhan notes, 'was named "Gilda" in honor of Rita Hayworth'.[104]

McLuhan develops his thesis, however, by quoting D.H. Lawrence, 'But the machine-manipulating body works just the same: digests, chews gum, admires Boticelli[sic], and aches with amorous love' and asking 'Was it not the mistake of D.H. Lawrence to overlook the comedy in a situation of this type?' He describes Duchamp's mechanistic *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912)—a precursor to *Large Glass*—as 'a cleansing bit of fun intended to free the human robot from his dreamlike fetters', and *Finnegans Wake* as being 'a great intellectual effort aimed at rinsing the Augean stables of speech and society with geysers of laughter'.[105] In Lawrence's profane love and the comedy of Duchamp and *Finnegans Wake*, we return to the territory of sublation whereby 'dreamlike fetters' are sublated in profane illumination of love and awakening laughter.

McLuhan proposes that a modern fascination with the juxtaposition of grotesque and sexual imagery, in *Life* magazine for instance, might indicate 'A metaphysical hunger to experience everything sexually, to pluck out the heart of the mystery for a super-thrill.'[106,107] He closes his

[103] This is the same Budd Schulberg who, quoted in my introduction, recounts discovering records of Hitler's viewings of *The Great Dictator*. In *Goldwyn: A Biography of the Man Behind the Myth*, Arthur Marx recounts how Samuel Goldwyn offered Schulberg $300,000 to suppress the publication of his novel. Marx describes how its unflattering portrait of both the movie industry and, via the central character Sammy, Jews. 'As any writer would,' Marx writes, 'Schulberg defended his position by saying his book mirrored Hollywood life as it actually was, that he knew many "Sammys," and that people like that ought to be exposed whether they be Jew or Gentile.' A few months after it became a bestseller, 'Edward R. Murrow, while interviewing Adolf Hitler in his office, asked him if he didn't think his persecution of the Jews was unfair. Hitler smiled and said, "You think I'm the only one who doesn't like them. Here's a Jewish writer who feels the same way about his people. And he took a copy of *What Makes Sammy Run* from his desk and held it up for Murrow to see.' (Marx, 1976, p.286–287)

[104] McLuhan, 2011, p.99.

[105] Ibid., p.100–101.

[106] Ibid., p.100–101.

[107] In her 1986 book *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Rosalind Krauss links the title and extensive notes that are part of the artwork *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* with an

essay by discussing Chaplin's remarkably dark black comedy *Monsieur Verdoux* (US, 1947). As he notes, reaction to the Tramp's transformation into a murderous dandy elicited something of a backlash. McLuhan argues, however, that there is no significant difference between 'giant killer' and 'lady killer' in the public's eyes, that 'womb, tomb and comfort have always been interchangeable symbols' and that:

> In other words, his is a popular dream art which works trance-like inside a situation that is never grasped or seen. And this trance seems to be what perpetuates the widely occurring cluster image of sex, technology, and death which constitutes the mystery of the mechanical bride.[108]

McLuhan's constellation and style of correspondence is groundbreaking and fascinating, the dreams and trances that he perceives as part of the experience of modernity are remarkably consistent with Benjamin's conception of modernity as phantasmagoria. His description of laughter as a method of 'rinsing' and thereby diminishing fears of mechanisation—akin to revealing 'second' nature'—is a great strategic insight. Nonetheless, the communication of the mechanisation of the human form through the popular media of modernity remains McLuhan's thesis. With that in mind I turn now to Chaplin's most autobiographical and, considering bitterness as a form of twisted sadness, melancholic film.

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observation made by Benjamin regarding captioning of photographs: 'At the same time, illustrated magazines begin to put up signposts for him whether these are right or wrong is irrelevant. For the first time, captions become obligatory. And it is clear that they have a character altogether different from the titles of paintings. The directives given by captions to those looking at images in illustrated magazines soon become even more precise and commanding in films, where the way each single image is understood appears prescribed by the sequence of all the preceding images.' (Benjamin, 2003f, p.258)

[108] McLuhan, 2011, p.101.

David Robinson details the British reviews for *A King In New York*—the fact that it was not shown in the United States until 1972 can be taken as a measure of its political tone—and quotes John Osborne of the *Evening Standard*:

'In some ways *A King in New York* must be his most bitter film. It is certainly the most openly personal. It is a calculated, passionate rage clenched uncomfortably into the kindness of an astonishing comic personality. Like the king in his film, he has shaken the dust of the United States from his feet, and now he has turned round to kick it carefully and deliberately in their faces. Some of it is well aimed—some is not.'[109]

Briefly, the plot of *A King in New York* is centred around King Shahdov, a deposed king of an imaginary European state who relocates to New York to escape the baying revolutionary mob. The McGuffin in the film is a set of atomic energy plans which the impoverished Shahdov hopes to sell to American energy firms. When this plan proves unsuccessful, Shahdov is obliged to appear in various television adverts to promote 'Royal' products. Through a series of misadventures, Shahdov befriends Rupert (notably played by Chaplin's son, Michael Chaplin) a precocious young boy whose parents are under investigation by the 'Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities'. Through this association Shahdov finds himself under investigation and is called to testify. Rupert's parents are jailed for refusing to cooperate, but Rupert is persuaded to name his parents' associates, thereby securing their release. Shahdov, found innocent, relocates to Paris after a tearful goodbye with Rupert.

The thinly veiled autobiographical nature of this film distinguishes it within Chaplin's oeuvre. Kenneth Tynan of *The Observer*, again quoted by Robinson from an otherwise largely negative review, points out the remarkable transparency of the film:

[109]Robinson, 1983, p.159–160.

'The result, in the fullest sense of the phrase, is "free cinema", in which anything, within the limits of censorship can happen. In every shot Chaplin speaks his mind. It is not a very subtle mind; but his naked outspokenness is something rare, if not unique in the English-speaking cinema. A crude free film is preferable, any day, to a smoothly fettered one.'

This naked attack on McCarthyism in *A King in New York* has informed copious writing on Charlie Chaplin. Beyond this, the atomic McGuffin and the autobiographical grandeur of the fallen King would provide interesting points of departure for discussing this film. As I am limited to the appearances of the television as emblem of automatism, my comments on other points must be brief, but it should be understood that my analysis is predicated on this political autobiographical foundation.

As outlined above, Bute's adaptation of *Finnegans Wake* gives a privileged space to the televisual, and I want to turn now to a scene from *A King in New York* which mirrors Bute's 'Eulogia' sequence.

The first appearance of the television screen in the film occurs when Shahdov is taking a bath for a social engagement. Initially reluctant to attend a party, he has changed his mind after being artfully seduced by a television presenter who has rented a connecting hotel suite with the express purpose of tricking Shahdov into appearing on her television show. After viewing her fragmented body through the keyhole and responding to her fake pleas for help, Shahdov learns she will be at the party and so agrees to attend. In a short sequence, which continues the theme of female seduction, a television advert duplicitously uses feminine charm to sell beer. Notable, in the sense of mechanistic reach, is a window wiper that wipes back and forth over the screen (see Fig. 5.15 on the next page). The voiceover reads:

Hello, honey. Are you nervous, bothered and upset? Take off your clothes. Relax. With a bottle of Whitbread's beer. It'll give you pep and give you cheer. Remember, Whitbread's beer.

Figure 5.15: Selling Whitbread beer. *A King in New York* (Chaplin, 1957, UK) 11min 38sec - 12min 23sec

The introduction of the bottled beer coincides with the final line of the advert and provides a phallic complement to the undressed 'pep'. Without rehearsing the same arguments above we should note that this collision of sex and technology is channelled through the same televisual medium as Bute's and employs a similar mise-en-scène of bodily fragmentation, nakedness, phallicism, mechanistic poses and advertising clichés. In a further correspondence between this imbrication of automatising with advertising in *A King in New York* and *Passages*, we must note another image from Bute's *Passages* which employs Joyce's play on the advertising slogan 'Guinness is good for you'. Again, speaking direct to camera, A.L.P. delivers the line as she raises a glass with Shem and Shaun over H.C.E.'s coffin (see Fig. 5.16 below).

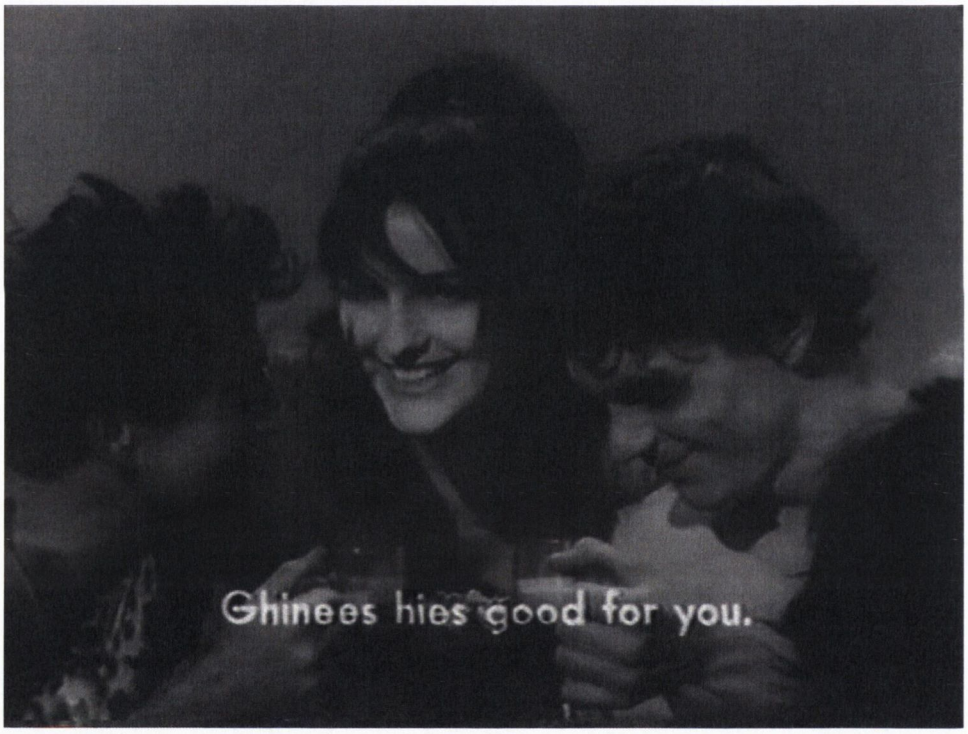

Figure 5.16: Guinness at the wake. *Passages from Finnegans Wake* (Mary Ellen Bute, 1965, US) 14min 08sec.

I want to turn now to develop the manner in which the effects of working in television, that is working in the machine, take on an increasingly sinister aspect in *A King in New York*. As mentioned above, Shahdov is convinced to attend a party. Unbeknown to him, a secret camera is being used to broadcast the proceedings. Shahdov is besotted with his seductress, Ann Kay (Dawn Addams), and does his best to charm her. Advertising, however, again intervenes. As part of the broadcast Ann must covertly integrate advertising messages into her conversation, and Shadov is consequently confused and alienated by the start-stop of their ensuing dialogue (see Fig. 5.17 on page 283):

Shahdov: I want to see more of you.

Ann: I find it close in here.

Shahdov: Could be closer.

Ann: And the atmosphere quite stuffy.

Shahdov: It's anything but that.

Ann: How fortunate people no longer consider the problem of perspiring in stuffy rooms.

Shahdov: I beg your pardon?

Ann: Think of pretty young girls being unpopular at dances and they don't know why.

Shahdov: I don't follow you.

Ann: The answer is B.O.

Shahdov: B.O.?

Ann: But now that can be eliminated, because there is such a thing as FRESH. That wonderful, soothing, alluring deodorant. It keeps underarms dry.

> Remember, you're lovely to be near. That's why lovely women use it. Remember: Keep fresh, be fresh, with FRESH deodorant.
>
> Shahdov (to another dinner guest): Who is this young lady? I find her very odd.

As Ann delivers to camera, her posture and expression become mortified in a model pose. Shahdov can neither understand her nor attract her attention. The adverts continue, and in the familiar stifled style a television presenter announces each 'Sponsor's message'. In reference to a conception of the real function of broadcast television being advertising and capital accumulation, these sponsorship messages remind us of Shahdov's precarious financial situation and foreshadow his imminent employment in advertising. In relation to a level of uncanny automatism, despite Shahdov's inability to communicate with her, he remains besotted—Ann becomes a blank screen on which he can project his fantasies. There is a sinister quality to the hidden camera, and when Shahdov subsequently discovers its mechanistic intervention he refuses to return Ann's calls. This leads to the suspension of romance between the couple. In blocking the union of the couple, the camera—and Ann's engagement with it—is performing an uncanny role, from Dolar: 'the uncanny is precisely what bars the sexual relation; it is the dimension that prevents us from finding our Platonian missing halves and hence imaginary completion; it is the dimension that blocks the fulfilment of our subjectivity.'[110]

Facing mounting financial pressure, Shahdov agrees to lend his royal celebrity to advertising. The mechanics of broadcast television require a live performance, and again the product is alcoholic—Royal Crown Whiskey. In this case, the mechanic posturing required for the broadcast is played out for laughs in repeated rehearsals and with exaggerated, grotesque grimaces, and in the frustrated efforts of the TV advertiser to elicit 'natural' responses—a reminder

[110]Dolar, 1991, p.10.

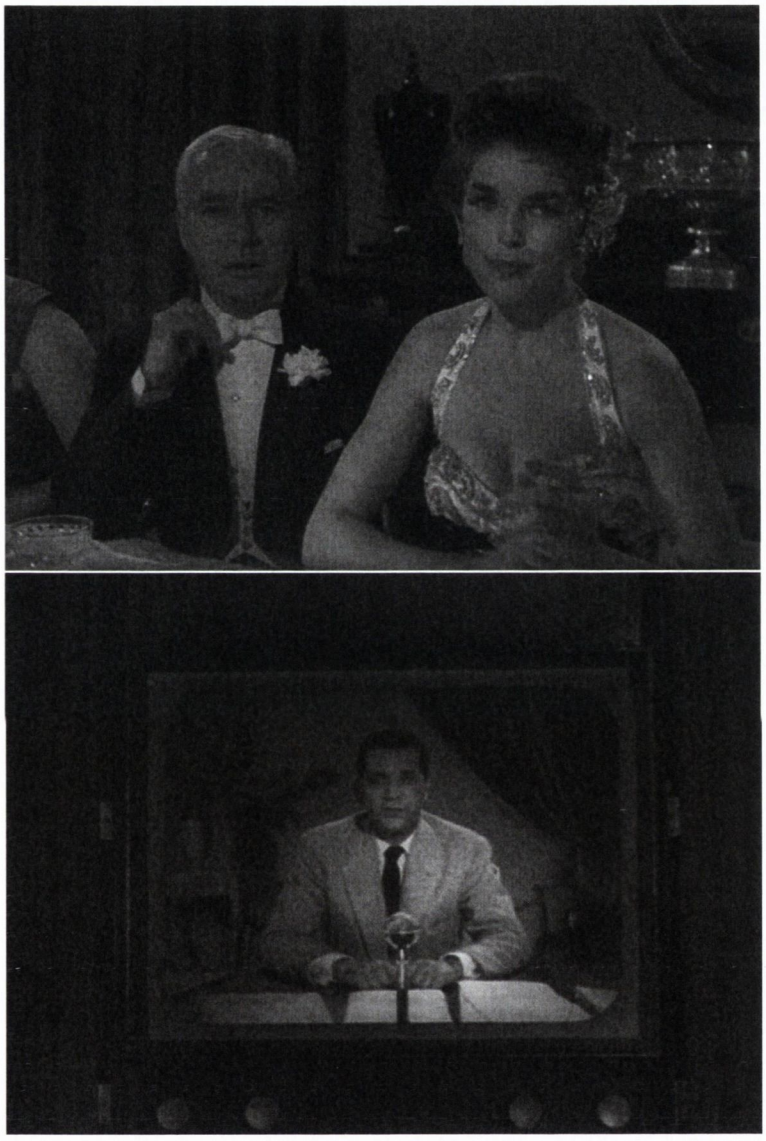

Figure 5.17: 'I want to see more of you' and Sponsor's message. *A King in New York* (Chaplin, 1957, UK) 26min 15sec & 33min 16sec

of the always second nature of the televisual. Despite these preparations, when they perform live Shahdov retches at his first taste of the whiskey. The Real, we can say, has intervened, and Shahdov's bodily rejection of the substandard consumer product signals that his distaste for advertising has reached the level of the abject. This display is heightened by both its live public broadcast and by the ad man's desperate attempt to cover the camera lens (see Fig. 5.18 on the following page).

Despite his performance, the advert is publicly well received and considered an intentional comedic success—one of several swipes at public taste in the film. A new depth in the intersection of the uncanny, the abject and the unnatural performative realm of the televisual is reached when Shahdov has plastic surgery to improve his saleability to potential advertisers. The idea is mooted by Ann in a scheme to fake before- and after-effects of taking hormones—for further advertising—again an indication of the tenuous relationship advertising has to reality. Shahdov has the surgery, and the uncanny effect is played for laughs.

While these comedic set pieces are excellent illustrations of the forces at work in televisual representation, they do not elucidate those melancholic tendencies that Benjamin and Chaplin share. Chaplin's inevitable melancholic turn occurs in the narrative of the precocious young child Rupert and his estrangement from his parents through the actions of the 'Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities'—the real target of Chaplin's opprobrium.

After a chance second encounter on the street, Shahdov realises that Rupert is fending for himself. Having taken Rupert under his wing, Shahdov is playing draughts with Rupert in the hotel suite and learns that Rupert's last name is 'Macabee'—'Macabee! A Scot! No wonder you're a non-conformist'. The camera pans to a television screen and the familiar face of the earlier TV presenter announces:

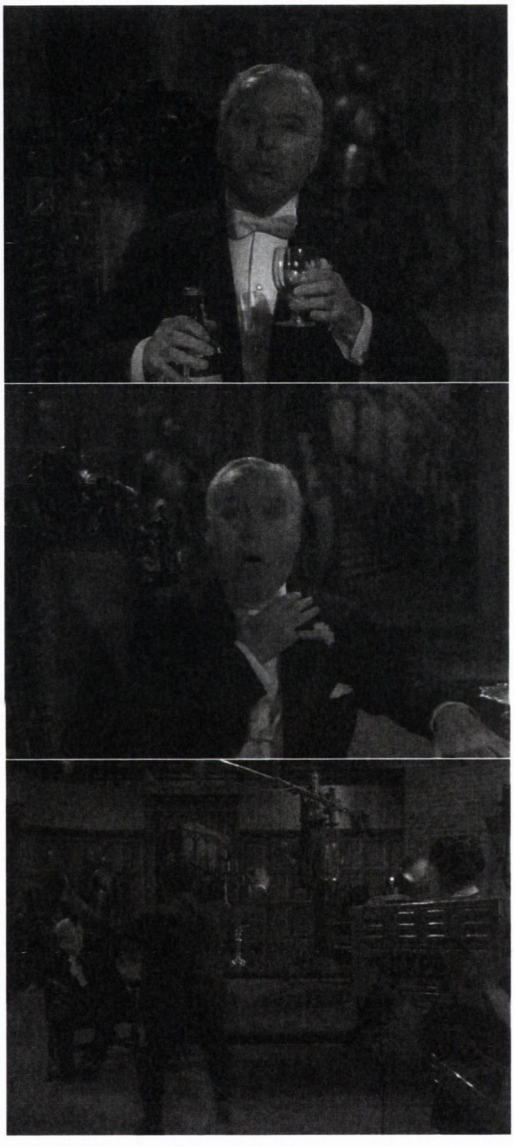

Figure 5.18: The King advertises. *A King in New York* (Chaplin, 1957, UK) 52min 37sec

> This is another televised recording of the investigation of the Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities going on in the Federal Building downtown New York City. They'll expose communism in all branches of American institutions. The Committee has already questioned scientists, educators, churchmen, writers and actors.

As the mise-en-scène switches to the inside of the courtroom, we are shown a number of establishing shots—each one features a television camera, and in one shot a camera is wheeled through the frame obscuring the judge's bench. The presenter continues 'But first a glimpse of the humorous side. The investigators indulge in a Hollywood touch, to make themselves photogenic before appearing on television.' There is a cut to a the investigator powdering his face in a mirror, he laughs and playfully dismisses the camera with a wave of his hand in a gesture that is a mixture of false embarrassment and preening. Chaplin's inference is clear—we are in what Guy Debord termed a 'Society of the Spectacle', one which is mediated by the televisual.

Under questioning, a witness testifies that the Macabees were known to him as communists, and as Mr. Macabee takes the stand two cameras are pushed intimately close to him (see Fig. 5.19 on the next page).

Mr. Macabee, who admits previous membership of the communist party, from which he has resigned, refuses to give the names of other party members. For this he is cited for contempt of Congress, and as he starts to make an impassioned speech—'I charge this committee with fomenting a cold civil war of hate'—he is physically removed from the dock. Macabee's frustrated speech can be considered a fragment of an autobiographical revenge fantasy that Chaplin is trying to live out. The TV presenter's voice is heard in voiceover with dialogue which reminds us of the Benjaminian concept of the alienating effect of mediated news: 'James Macabee now

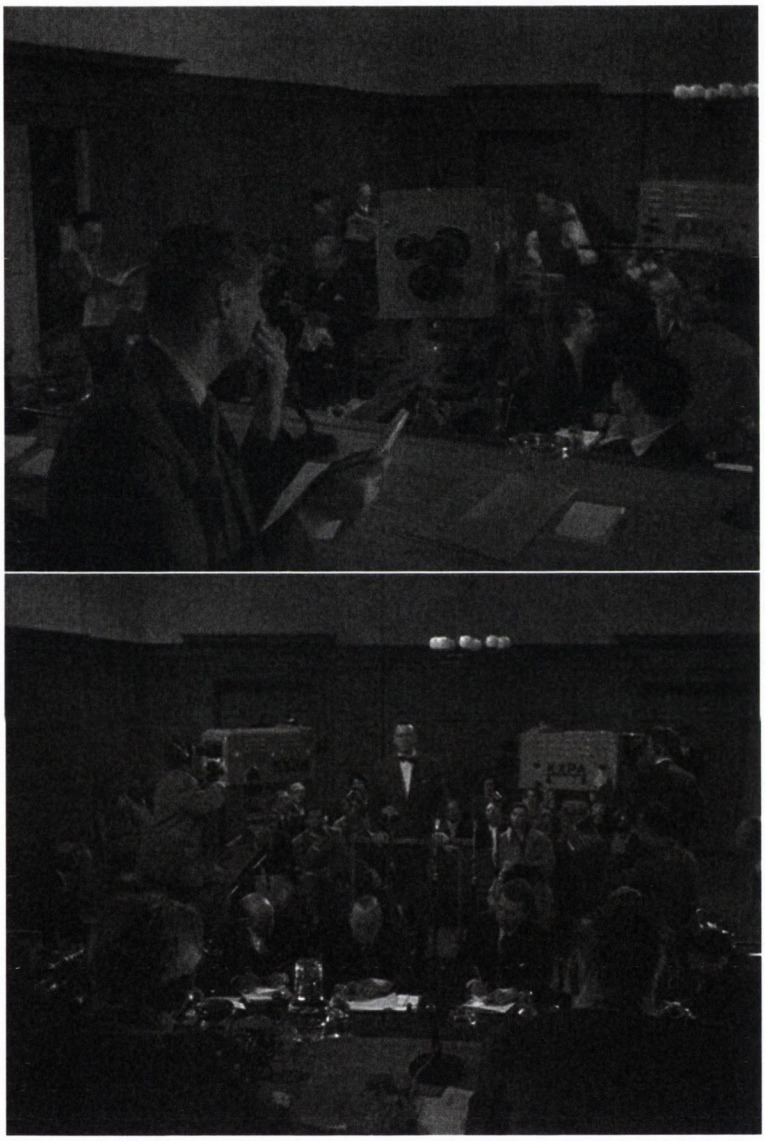

Figure 5.19: Investigator and Mr. Macabee. *A King in New York* (Chaplin, 1957, UK) 78min 04sec & 79min 02sec.

faces contempt charges. If convicted he'll receive a minimum sentence of one year per charge. KXPA now returns you to popular music from the hit parade.'

The camera cuts back to Rupert Macabee, and we are situated in the point of view of the television staring at a crying child; we, the viewers, are the subject of his accusatory stare (see Fig. 5.20 below).

In an entirely characteristic move, the melancholic image fills Chaplin's frame. The extreme sentimentality of this image is matched in the extremity of his disgust at the progress of history.

Figure 5.20: The Melancholic Child. *A King in New York* (Chaplin, 1957, UK) 79min 38sec.

I have described televisions as exemplary automatons—machines in which we see uncanny representations of ourselves and which point to, but screen, frightening encounters with the Real. The automaton is, for Benjamin and Chaplin, a melancholic construct. For Joyce, Bute

and McLuhan it is an exciting, even humorous, extension of human technē communication. What is shared is a recognition that we, as subjects, are profoundly affected by our relationship with the machine.

Finally, to fully imbue the allegorical melancholic automaton with the characteristic of the flashing moment of the dialectic image, I return to *Modern Times*, the source of the man in the machine. As discussed, Benjamin, like McLuhan, proposes that the mediation and juxtaposition inherent in the newspaper form describes modernity. This montage form has the potential for profane illumination or anaesthetising alienation. When, in *Modern Times*, the Tramp and the Gamine have found some happiness in their shack, a newspaper headline—briefly flashed on screen—announces that jobs are again available at the factory where Charlie first got caught in the machine, and he rushes to the factory and secures a job (see Fig. 5.21 on the next page). Significantly, this decision to return to work at the factory precipitates a narrowly averted incarceration, and ultimately forces them to leave their new home and take to the road.

In sifting the debris of the newspaper image in the film, we can see a short item that describes the marriage of Edward M. Weld to a Miss Merriman. The actual front page of the *Los Angeles Herald* from September 10th, 1903, has a notice for the marriage of a Miss Merriman to Harry Olmstead. Beneath the announcement is a story entitled 'Springs into a Revolving Wheel', which describes an 'unknown man' who, seeking to hide from 'two men and two women who were after him', waited for an engineer to turn his back and then 'made a sudden jump, landing in the fly wheel' (see Fig. 5.22 on page 291). The article reports that 'His right leg and arm were both torn off, the left leg and arm being broken and the back of his skull was crushed.'[111]

[111] The aspect of the man's desire to 'hide' forms a correspondence with Benjamin where he introduces his final essay, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', with a story about the chess automaton that toured Europe and famously defeated Napoléon. In despair at the Soviet peace treaty with Nazi Germany, he bitterly denounces a mythological core in dialectical materialism, comparing it to the *hidden* operator inside the automaton.

Figure 5.21: Newspaper. *Modern Times* (Chaplin, 1936, US) 59min

The comedic title is in sharp contrast to the grotesque news story. This macabre story, with its pursuit and suicidal leap, seems to fully contextualise the true first nature of a melancholic encounter with an uncanny modernity; instead of a comedic trip through the machine, the body and life of is destroyed. Adorno's complaint that laughter is not a revolutionary path is somehow both supported and denied by our consideration of this report. On the one hand, the full extent of the lie of the Tramp's encounter with the machine is graphically denuded; on the other, the fact of the effectiveness of Benjamin's directive to sift the debris, is, I feel, fully vindicated. In any case, here we have a potent warning of the potential consequences of climbing inside the machine.[112]

[112]Rudimentary attempts to establish a connection between Merriman or Olmstead and Chaplin have been fruitless. The fact of their wealth and Los Angeles residence at least make it a possibility. Chaplin's use of real-life horror as source material for *Goldrush* is mooted by Robinson: 'He claimed that the idea for the film had come

WINS AN HEIRESS FOR HIS BRIDE

Los Angeles Man Marries Wisconsin Girl

(Special to The Herald.)

MARINETTE, Wis., Sept. 9.—The marriage of Miss Bertha Merriman, daughter of A. C. Merriman, the wealthy lumberman, and Harry Olmstead of Los Angeles, Cal., occurred this evening at the palatial Merriman home on Riverside avenue. It was the most brilliant wedding in years in Marinette. The bridesmaids were the Misses Low Merriman, Charlotte Holmes and Flo Joannes of Green Bay.

SPRINGS INTO A REVOLVING WHEEL

Man Chooses Unique Way of Taking His Life

ANGELS CAMP, Sept. 9.—An unknown man went into the mill room at Melone's mine and told the engineer that two men and two women were after him, and that he was looking for a place to hide. He said he would get into the fly wheel of the air compressor, which was running at the time.

The engineer told him to go out, but the man waited until the engineer had returned to work, when he made a sudden jump, landing in the fly wheel, which was revolving at the rate of 160 revolutions per minute.

The man went round with the wheel twice before he was thrown out dead. His right leg and arm were both torn off, the left leg and arm being broken and the back of his skull was crushed. He was a stranger, about 35 years of age.

Figure 5.22: Man in the Machine. *The Los Angeles Herald*, 9th September 1903.

In this chapter, in James Joyce's and Marshall McLuhan's writing, and in Mary Ellen Bute's *Passages* we see if not an embrace, then at least a cautious engagement with the increasing automatonism of the age. Benjamin, a melancholic by his own admission, sees in melancholia a Trojan horse for political action. Chaplin the tramp comedian uses melancholia as his stock in trade, and I have used his most bitter film to illustrate the melancholic automaton. The chapter ends on this note; however, Chaplin is bitter, and his negative experience should not be the last word. Instead we should be reminded of Benjamin's belief in the innervating and thereby political usefulness of film and particularly Chaplin's film, whereby 'in his films, Chaplin appeals both to the most international and the most revolutionary emotion of the masses: their laughter.' That laughter can be a truly revolutionary power is a difficult claim to support, and Benjamin does not attempt to. And this is why Adorno rejected it so strongly, Benjamin's belief in his method of dialectic exchange is concrete at this stage, he is deep into the writing of the *Arcades*. The sublation of something as serious as class struggle or international revolution by base comedy is too much for Adorno. For Benjamin, Chaplin's comedy of class struggle produces an antithesis *in extremis* that, through its kitsch form, reaches a mass market. The mixture of serious subject and low humour fits his model neatly. In the same manner that Chaplin's gait calls attention to the discontinuous nature of film, *Modern Times* undermines the industrial processes that made its production and distribution possible. In this sense its little wonder that Benjamin championed Chaplin.

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to him one day when he was visiting Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, and saw a stereoscope slide of gold prospectors in the Chilcoot Pass. Further inspiration came from the macabre story of the Donner Party disaster of 1846, when pioneers snowbound in the Sierra Nevada were forced to feed on the corpses of their dead companions.' (Robinson, 1983, p.66)

Chapter 6

The Ship of Fools

Mise-En-Scène · Architecture · Experience · The Colportage Phenomenon of Space · Intoxication · Interruption · 19th-Century Painting · Stanley Kramer · Alfred Hitchcock · Jean-Luc Godard

> The passive attitude of the staff on the bridge is just as reprehensible, and neither the most authoritative of the Officers[...]urged the Master to tighten/speed up the turn, nor gave him information about the imminent danger[...]the Master had strongly criticized the bridge[s] decision to follow a route so close to the shore, calling it a true madness.[1]

The symbol of the Ship of Fools is succinctly described as expressing 'the idea of "sailing" as an end in itself, as opposed to the true sense of "sailing", which is transition, evolution and salvation, or safe arrival at the haven.'[2] It is 'a parallel symbol to that of the Accursed Hunter'

[1] Infrastructures and Transports, 2012, p.153. From the official report into the 2010 *Costa Concordia* disaster. Translation edited for clarity.

[2] Cirlot, 1988, p.295.

which describes a hunter, neglectful of his prayer, cursed to endlessly pursue his prey 'unending because self-delusion is a perpetual incitement to the sterile urge of the pursuit of worldly things.'[3] The ship of fools describes a journey without a destination, an existence based on material pursuit and enjoyment, an unreflective existence which does not evolve, grow or learn.

This chapter forms a constellation around a group of films that use this symbol, to varying degrees, to describe the history of the 20th and 21st centuries as descriptive of a ship of fools. Specifically, this chapter is concerned with how theories of architecture, interior decor, space, environment and related experience, as written by Benjamin, describe how the effect of mise-en-scène can be alternately intoxicating or liberating, and thereby constructs or reveals second nature. The films discussed are *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Stanley Kramer, 1961, US), *Ship Of Fools* (Stanley Kramer, 1965, US), *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France) and *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US).

These films are useful in relation to discussions of mise-en-scène because, as examples of what are known as 'limited' setting films, they provide very consistent representation in terms of setting, architecture, decor, costume, props and surroundings.[4] Benjamin writes about the intoxicating effect of mise-en-scène, of its transporting effect, therefore the effect of these limited setting films provides an opportunity to discuss mise-en-scène in its potent form. The, again varying, degree to which these films share the ship of fools symbolism provides a further correspondence, as does the literal maritime setting shared by all but *Judgment at Nuremberg*. Finally, the manner in which each of these films engages with representations of events leading

[3]Cirlot, 1988, p.154.

[4]In *Judgment at Nuremberg*, the major part of the film takes place within a courtroom, and this is the environment I discuss. The mise-en-scène of *Socialisme* is divided between two major locations, a ship and a petrol station; my concentration is limited to the mise-en-scène of the ship. I analyse the three scenes from *Ship of Fools* that are exceptional in the film in their interruption to an otherwise entirely ocean-set mise-en-scène. *Lifeboat* is a 'single' setting film, the entire film takes place on the boat.

up to, during and after the Second World War continues my discussion of cultural memory in relation to the Holocaust.

This chapter begins with correspondences to significant representations of the symbolic ship of fools by Sebastian Brant, Albrecht Dürer, Plato, Michel Foucault and Hieronymus Bosch. Particularly significant among these is the manner in which Foucault, by introducing the possibility of redemption in the ship of fools story, turns the symbolic allegorical, a redemptive possibility that is also found in Hitchcock's *Lifeboat*. From Plato, Brant, Dürer and Bosch the basic formulation of the ship of fools is described in its classical form. Specifically, how the 'worldly things' that distract from prayer described above are related to gluttony and intemperance—a notion that finds correspondence in Godard's *Socialisme*. Plato's parable includes a description of a star-gazing navigator, which I later find a corollary for in *Lifeboat*.

Turning to Benjamin's writing, I examine a short 1933 essay by Benjamin titled 'Experience and Poverty.' Benjamin's argument is relatively straightforward, whereby he argues that our urban environment, inherited from the 19th century, contributes to our experience of a second nature. He argues for new forms, exemplified in constructions of glass and iron, that can physically open up space and also frame, in a photographic sense, our experience in radically new ways. Acknowledging the poverty of historic experience that this will necessitate, and also referencing Disney cartoons as potentially dangerous intoxicating forms, he nonetheless concludes that the radically altered nature of modern experience requires a radical approach. These ideas related to glass and iron as liberating structures are later related to the mise-en-scènes from the films discussed.

In 'Experience and Poverty', Benjamin equates issues of urban experience to a sense of alienation in a crowded bourgeois apartment of the 1880s. The experience of these interiors is

most fully examined by Benjamin in his concept of 'The Colportage Phenomenon of Space', and this is examined as it is developed in an essay by Brigid Doherty. This concept relates to a broad collection of Benjaminian writings on the manner in which the constructed environment creates a second nature in the inhabitant. This colportage phenomenon is specifically descriptive of a sense of kitsch theatricality that Benjamin perceives in 19th-century bourgeois apartments. In apartments decorated by exotic objets d'art, and especially by rooms decorated from paintings of historical moments and events, Benjamin perceives a primitive form of photomontage. Various Benjaminian concepts whereby the inhabitant is interrupted, distracted, transformed, carried away or intoxicated are related to these environments. This experience creates the conditions for the experience of the dialectical image, or as Howard Eiland explains, like a form of madness, these phenomena 'do not exclude a certain profane illumination.'[5]

To describe these experiences in art, and specifically in Hitchcock's *Lifeboat*, Brigid Doherty's writing on the effect in Paul Delaroche's painting *Les Enfants d'Edouard* and the writing of Heinrich Heine are explored. Taking Doherty's description of the manner in which mise-en-scène can draw the beholder into the scene, a correspondence to the protocinematic painting *The Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault is developed. Similarly, Heine's description of the intoxicating hysteria known as Lisztmania is examined in relation to the effect of mise-en-scène on the spectator.

Taking the scale, composition and staging of Géricault's masterpiece as the major contributors to the effect of his painting, I develop a correspondence with the Scenic Art Department of Fox Studios. Headed by Fred Sersen, twice winner of Academy Awards for Special Effects, Sersen is credited with the special effects of *Lifeboat*. This is not an arbitrary connection; specifically, this constellation notes the extensive level of fine art and painting education that

[5]Eiland, 2005, p.6.

was represented in this department and the major contribution that special effects had in the creation of Hitchcock's mise-en-scène.

Turning to Stanley Kramer's films, *Judgment at Nuremberg* and *Ship Of Fools* are examined. Again, I start with the concept of the cinematic dialectical image as occurring under the conditions of a flashing abstraction within a heartening story. I develop the concept of scenic interruptions to these otherwise limited and consistent mise-en-scènes as providing these conditions. In *Judgment at Nuremberg*, the interruption of the rational legal courtroom mise-en-scène by footage of concentration camps is considered to provide a moment of real /Real illumination. In *Ship of Fools*, occasions where the ocean and ship mise-en-scènes are interrupted by land-based boardings and arrivals are considered as the Real interruptions.

Godard's *Socialisme* is discussed in relation to his intoxicating interior mise-en-scène and his rational exterior. With a clear correspondence to the intoxicating effect of the bourgeois interior, Godard's depiction of the *Costa Concordia* is direct in its use of disorientating and crowded mise-en-scène to depict the passengers as foolish and gluttonous. In contrast, wide open exteriors are beautifully composed and framed by lines of steel and glass.

Of all these films, Hitchcock's *Lifeboat* is shown to be most in correspondence with the classical symbol of the ship of fools and is also the only truly single setting film. Through a harmoniously composed mise-en-scène, Hitchcock positions the viewer aboard the lifeboat, drawing in the viewer in a similar manner to Géricault. Interruptions to this consistent mise-en-scène are shown to be indicative of the madness of the passengers or of moments of profane illumination. Finally, the chapter ends with a return to a correspondence between Fred Sersen's Scenic Art Department, a newspaper fragment and Holocaust memory.

The cultural memories that this chapter discusses under the title of 'Ship of Fools' circulate the question of the assignation of responsibility for the Holocaust beyond the leadership of the Nazi command. The question of the culpability of the German people for Nazi atrocities—in both their cooperation and their lack of resistance—is foremost in these memories. Outside Germany, the lack of response of the European powers to their neighbour's annexation of foreign soil and subjugation of the rights of ethnic and religious minorities is further implicated. Beyond Europe, the belated entry of the US into the conflict can be cited as another factor in the scale of the catastrophe.

The sense that all those exterior to the Nazi command—from the German people to the US government—did not recognise what was happening is an attractive proposition. A fool knows no better, is ignorant of facts and is thereby absolved of responsibility. Katherine Anne Porter's bestselling 1962 novel *Ship of Fools* describes the events leading up to Second World War in just such a metaphorical frame. Kramer's Academy Award-winning 1965 adaptation translates this metaphor to screen. Hitchcock's 1944 *Lifeboat* uses a corresponding syntax and semantics to the ship of fools myth for propaganda purposes.

As a dialectical image, the ship of fools framework resonates with Benjamin's formula from the 1935 exposé of the 'dialectical image as dream and wish image of the collective.'[6] The ship of fools explanation for the passivity of others in the face of Nazi atrocities, I suggest, is an example of a second nature construct which seeks to mitigate, screen and explain a historical moment which holds deeply uncomfortable psychic resonance. When this construct is analysed as a dialectical image, in its historical formation, the 'fools' of *Judgment at Nuremberg*, *Ship of Fools*, *Socialisme* and *Lifeboat* are revealed to include liars, gluttons, anti-Semites, racists and murderers.

[6]Benjamin, 1999h, p.943.

Sebastian Brant's 1494 satire *Narrenschiff — The Ship of Fools*—details more than one hundred types of fools in humorous and satirical caricatures, each illustrated by a woodcut of the fool and his foible.[7] Brant's book is cited by Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilisation*, where he claims its genesis lies in real historical practises whereby insane citizens were shipped away to exile. Another source for the allegorical tale, as Foucault acknowledges, is ancient: 'The *Narrenschiff*, of course, is a literary composition, probably borrowed from the old Argonaut cycle.'[8]

Book VI of Plato's *Republic* may have been another source which inspired Brant. In Plato's book, a parable describes a boatload of citizens, trusting of politicians, who are steered off course and, in a state of revolt, ignore the philosopher who can set a true course. Essentially a warning on the limits of democracy, Benjamin Jowett's translation reads: 'Now in vessels which are in a state of mutiny and by sailors who are mutineers, how will the true pilot be regarded? Will he not be called by them a prater, a star-gazer, a good-for-nothing?'[9] I will return to Hitchcock's use of *The Republic* for a discussion of *Lifeboat*, the full parable is reproduced in Appendix D on page 410)

In contrast to Plato's straightforward symbolism, Foucault's allegorical construct claims historical basis, he describes how: '...they did exist, these boats that conveyed their insane cargo from town to town. Madmen then led an easy wandering existence...Frequently they were handed over to boatmen.'[10] Foucault cites several historic incidents and asks why, given that hospitals and asylums were established by this time, were these unfortunates not cared for in their own communities? He speculates that perhaps they were not simply being expelled

[7] The title 'Ship of Fools' originated with the 1509 translation by Alexander Barclay

[8] Foucault, 2001, p.5.

[9] Plato, 1991, p.488.

[10] Foucault, 2001, p.6.

but rather contributed to a symbolic purging and cleansing of the wider community. The relation of this phenomenon to what Benjamin would classify as 'a change in the structure of their experience'—in this case the importance of reason in the Renaissance—is summarised by Andrew Cutrofello and relates the idea that the destinations were established as sites of pilgrimage:[11]

> In the Middle Ages, madness was still in dialogue with reason, manifesting itself as a sign of divine transcendence from the world. The first glimmers of a division only appear when the 'ship of fools' enters 'the imaginary landscape of the Renaissance'. Not yet the sign of a rigorous division, the ships upon which madmen were exiled from European cities—both in literature and in reality—had the 'symbolic' value of sending those who had lost their reason on a 'pilgrimage' to recover it.[12]

In this constellation, between the factual and imaginary, between exile and pilgrimage, the ship of fools becomes an allegorical narrative. In Foucault's use, the ship of fools is neither a satirical metaphor nor a vulgar condemnation. Instead, Foucault uses it as a meditation on redemptive possibility for the insane, the misguided, the alienated, the outsider, or indeed the fool. The idea that circulates Foucault's reading conceptualises the ship of fools as a sort of *Ur-asylum*, a precursor to the systematised incarceration of the insane. What broadly interests Foucault is the shift in power relations that this removal of the insane from the general population demonstrates, how 'othering' the insane served the purpose of controlling the public body as a national resource. This shift also indicates some sense of a prior integration of insanity within society, that is, before the ships of fools disappeared and the insane were housed in hos-

[11] Benjamin, 2003a, p.314.

[12] Cutrofello, 2005, p.71.

pitals and asylums. We can argue that the previous integration of the insane, or of a spectrum of insanity, within a society indicated a recognition or acceptance of madness as an always present, in fact natural or even productive, aspect of human existence. In Hitchcock's *Lifeboat*, as we shall see at the end of this chapter, an act of madness can be read as a path to redemption.[13]

To contribute to the understanding of mise-en-scène in relation to the ship of fools allegory, I want to briefly mention three artworks that are relevant to Brant's *Narrenschiff* and from which we can draw some broad frames of reference before considering Benjamin's relevant writings. The first again draws Albrecht Dürer into the constellation. According to Erwin Panofsky's *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, Dürer produced about one-third of the more than one hundred woodcuts that were designed to illustrate the original printing of Brant's 1494 *Narrenschiff*.[14] Working as part of a workshop team early in his career, Dürer's exact contribution is open to conjecture. Dürer is, however, widely credited with the carving of the woodcut of the title page shown in Fig. 6.1 on the following page.[15]

The title image depicts two scenes, both a cart and a boat transporting fools (the fool's cap denotes their status). The most obvious observation, especially in the case of the boat, is that both vehicles are overloaded. In the case of the boat, this places its passengers in a position of vulnerability. This vulnerability is intensified by the waves that encircle the craft. Each fool faces in a different direction, as do the secondary boats—the destination is unclear, no captain

[13]One outcome of 'othering' is the manner in which all identification or even empathy with the other is repressed. In this case we can argue that madness, confined to the asylum, denies any place for the identification of madness in the general population. Equally, whereby the state controls the definition of sane and insane, and whereby the insane are removed, the state denies even the possibility of the existence of institutional state madness. This we might take as one possible factor in the rise and success of Social Nationalism in Germany in the 1930s.

[14]Panofsky, 2005, p.29.

[15]Strieder, 1982, p.638–639. The complicated reception and provenance of the woodcuts is summarised by Peter Strieder in this review of Walter L. Strauss's *Albrecht Dürer. Woodcuts and Woodblocks*. Strieder summarises how the production of the entire corpus of woodcuts is now generally accepted to at least have been directed by Dürer, if not executed by his own hand.

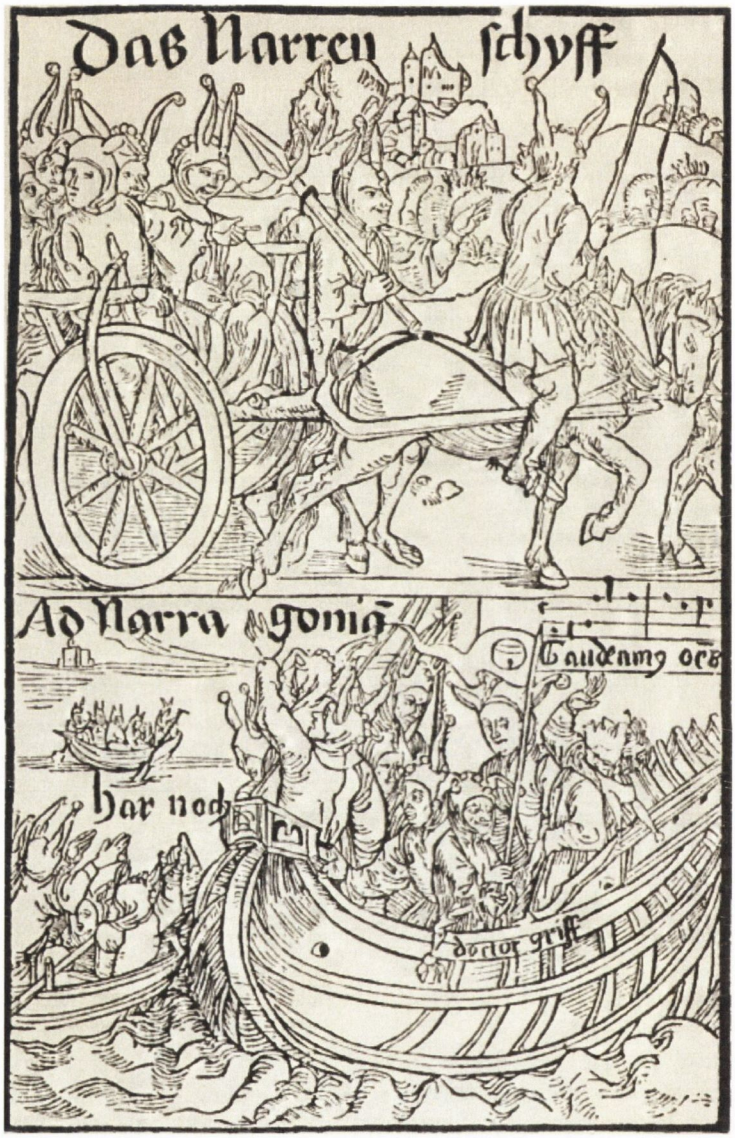

Figure 6.1: Cart of fools and boatload of fools. Title page of *Narrenschiff*, Sebastian Brant, 1494.

is discernible. The second image to consider is Hieronymus Bosch's *Ship of Fools* (c.1490–1500) (see Fig. 6.2 on the next page). Foucault suggests that this painting is possibly inspired by Brant's book: 'It has even been suggested that Bosch's painting was part of a series of pictures illustrating the principal cantos of Brant's poem.'[16]

Again, an overcrowded boat is depicted; however, at the level of characterisation, some of the foibles of the fools are discernible. Kay Rossiter's 1973 essay, 'Bosch and Brant: Images of Folly', draws connections between Brant's and Bosch's representations. Rossiter's essay draws a correspondence between Brant's book, Bosch's *Ship of Fools* and another painting by Bosch known as *Allegory of Intemperance*, held by Yale University. Rossiter describes a consensus of opinion whereby 'Most authorities have suggested that the Yale panel belongs to a program dealing with either May festivities or Gluttony.'[17]

Rossiter's insights are prescient; since her essay was published, the *Allegory of Intemperance* has been confirmed as part of a triptych whereby the painting, in fact a fragment, known as *Allegory of Intemperance* was originally joined below the *Ship of Fools* (see Fig. 6.3 on page 305).[18]

The correspondences between Brant and Bosch are, as Rossiter details, fundamentally descriptive of gluttony and folly, a fact most obvious in both the characterisation of nun and priest and in the obesity of the wine barrel rider. Rossiter unravels each of the major elements of both pictures and explains the symbolic significance of the sometimes coded, but always condemnatory, imagery. This correspondence with this excess and gluttony is developed below in relation to Godard's *Socialisme*. In correspondence with both Kramer's *Ship of Fools* and

[16] Foucault, 2001, p.15.

[17] Rossiter, 1973, p.18.

[18] Jacobs, 2012, p.190. The painting is described as a fragment on the website of the Yale University Art Gallery. Rossiter credits Lotte Brand-Philip as first identifying the piece as part of a triptych.

Figure 6.2: *Ship of Fools*. Hieronymus Bosch c.1490–1500.

Figure 6.3: *Allegory of Intemperance.* Hieronymus Bosch c.1490–1500.

Hitchcock's *Lifeboat* is Rossiter's insight that 'Like Brant, Bosch does not focus on the particular sin of a single man but rather the sin of all men as a lesson to all.' This is significant, given the narratives of the films that follow—there is, in both Hitchcock's and Kramer's films, a sense that culpability for the Second World War and the Holocaust does not lie solely with its authors, but also with nations that did not take action to prevent it.[19] That is, as Rossiter explains, within the work of both we are directed to recognise ourselves.

To summarise, these early depictions of the ship of fools provide some basic elements that are discernible in the descriptions of mise-en-scène that follow. Dürer and Brant are the sources of the allegory's most modern manifestation, but Plato's parable provides interesting parallels to Hitchcock's film. In the maritime films that are discussed below, we are concerned with a mise-en-scène of an overcrowded boat, of pilotless folly, of gluttony, of insane exiled passengers vulnerable on an open ocean and of universal culpability. Within this constellation there remains Foucault's possibility of redemption. Before discussing this in relation to specific mise-en-scènes I will now examine correspondences in Benjamin's writing that relate to his broad conception of the experience of environment and space, engineering, architecture and interior decor.

When Benjamin describes the Parisian arcades as an example of the phantasmagoria of the 19th century, it is not simply the commercial simulation of the city street—the exterior as interior—that fascinates him. The character of the flâneur—who is in many ways a ridiculous character, exemplified in the type who takes a tortoise for a walk—is intoxicated by his sur-

[19] Rossiter quotes Brant's verse:

Who sees his image on the page
May learn to deem himself no sage,
Nor shrink his nothingness to see
Since none who lives from fault is free. (Rossiter, 1973, p.23)

roundings, overwhelmed by sensory stimulation. This sensory intoxication is explicitly brought on by an urban experience which is stimulated by the architecture of the city. The flâneur's pace is dictated by a thought process that is arrested; he cannot think to proceed for the distraction around him.

As discussed in Chapter 1, developments in iron construction in the 19th century illustrate, for Benjamin, the manner in which the requirements of capital drive the human sensorium in its adoption of a new consumerist second nature. From the construction of pan-continental railways to the network of gaslights that illuminate the arcades in the evening, iron constructs begin to intervene. The specific aspect of how these constructs manifest, that is, which particular forms come to innervate our consciousness, then becomes an important question for Benjamin. As explained below, Benjamin believes that modernist forms that eschew superfluous decoration create a tabula rasa that allows space for thought and reflection. This is in contrast to the forms of the 19th century that looked back to classical styles for inspiration. These preferences are also broadly indicative of Benjamin's writing on the interior, again he finds the 19th-century interior distracting. However, as we shall see below, in his writing on the 'Colportage Effect of Space', he finds these interiors so intoxicating that their mise-en-scène creates a dreamlike space, and so they provide the conditions for profane illumination. This is the manner in which mise-en-scène produces the dialectical image that I now develop.

As Detlef Mertins explains in his essay, 'Walter Benjamin and the Tectonic Unconscious: Using Architecture as an Optical Instrument', Benjamin sees architecture that mimics classical forms—Greek and Roman columns rendered in iron in railway stations—as propagating mythological ideas of historical continuity and capital's 'natural' order. Mertins quotes Benjamin from the expose of the *Arcades*:

> Just as Napoleon little realised the functional nature of the State as an instrument of the rule of the bourgeois class, so the master-builders of his time equally little realised the functional nature of iron, with which the constructional principle entered upon its rule in architecture. These master-builders fashioned supports in the style of the Pompeian column, factories in the style of dwelling-houses, just as later the first railway stations were modelled on chalets.[20]

So, just as Napoléon came to replicate the very bureaucratic structure that the revolution sought to liquidate, the builders of the 19th century replicated the forms that iron could, in fact, liberate them from. The result is a form of aesthetic arrest and false continuity—while forms of both production and the reception of experience have radically changed, the fact of change is sublimated and disguised. Instead, Benjamin sees beauty and truth in modernist forms which follow function, forms without ornament, and therefore which inevitably offer a certain transparency:

> Benjamin was informed by Alfred Gotthold Meyer's prior reworking of tectonic theory in his posthumously published *Eisenbauten* (*Iron Constructions*) of 1907. Benjamin held Meyer's book in the highest esteem calling it a 'prototype of materialist historiography.'... Meyer spoke of the Eiffel Tower of 1889 in terms of a 'new beauty, the beauty of steely sharpness' and the expression of a new tempo of tectonic vitality.[21]

Mertins notes how Benjamin uses a phrase from a 1928 book by the historian and architecture critic Sigfried Giedion whereby he describes development in construction as revealing the

[20] Mertins, 1999, p.199.

[21] Ibid., p.202.

"subconscious of the nineteenth-century".[22] Mertins is quoting Benjamin's essay 'Experience and Poverty' from 1933, where he describes the new glass buildings as having no aura and thereby offering a tabula rasa for expression. Benjamin compares this to the effect of interior decor of the previous century, whereby the style of the aesthete was to collect and display curiosities and possessions in an ornamental tableaux:

> If you enter a bourgeois room of the 1880s, for all the coziness it radiates, the strongest impression you receive may well be, 'You've got no business here.' And in fact you have no business in that room, for there is no spot on which the owner has not left his mark—the ornaments on the mantlepiece, the antimacassars on the armchairs, the transparencies in the windows, the screen in front of the fire.[23]

These interiors have an alienating effect, again like the sensory overload of the city, the experience is alienating and 'the *intérieur* forces the inhabitant to adopt the greatest possible number of habits—habits that do more justice to the interior he is living in than to himself.'[24] The subject therefore adapts to his surroundings rather than adapting the environment to his needs—the mise-en-scène dominates experience.

In this essay, Benjamin is proposing a radical change in construction and urban planning. This necessity of starting over, which is fundamentally influenced by the devastating European experience of the Great War, is also necessarily a position of poverty and exists in a dialectic tension with experience—it follows that historic knowledge is surrendered in the process. Benjamin demands that it is necessary to embrace this poverty because the inheritance of the

[22] Mertins, 1999, p.202.

[23] Benjamin, 1999b, p.734.

[24] Ibid., p.734.

19th century is 'horrific mishmash of styles and ideologies' and that this fact is so clear 'it a matter of honesty to declare our bankruptcy.'[25]

The tabula rasa that this approach creates, Benjamin argues, will create an environment that will demand fresh thinking and original work. He quotes Adolf Loos as 'the forerunner of modern architecture': 'I write only for people who possess a modern sensibility...I do not write for people consumed by nostalgia for the Renaissance or the Rococo.'[26] Modern thinkers, he suggests, should reject the idea of a mankind of solemn nobility and instead concieve of 'naked man of the contemporary world who lies screaming like a newborn babe in the dirty diapers of the present.' This image demands a decisive break with the past and, as a practical example, Benjamin praises architects that use glass. Glass, as he describes, is not easy to disguise or besmirch, 'It is no coincidence that glass is such a hard, smooth material to which nothing can be fixed,' and, like modern art forms, 'Objects made of glass have no "aura." '[27] These forms then, as Benjamin goes on to explain, provide the opposite experience of the cozy rooms of the 18th-century interior.[28]

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[25]Benjamin, 1999b, p.732.

[26]Ibid., p.733.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Before closing the essay, Benjamin goes on to make a noteworthy correspondence to Disney. Benjamin describes how modernity brings about an exhaustion of experience and how this provokes the desire to dream. In what appears to be a lyrical non-sequitur, Benjamin is in fact praising the manner in which Disney cartoons describe an embrace and mastery of technology. Animation enables a progressive imagining of an environment where we need not be afraid of new forms or radical change. As ever, though, the dream is a dangerous form and must be awoken from before it overstimulates: 'The existence of Mickey Mouse is such a dream for contemporary man. His life is full of miracles—miracles that not only surpass the wonders of technology, but make fun of them...And to people who have grown weary of the endless complications of everyday living and to whom the purpose of existence seems to have been reduced to the most distant vanishing point on an endless horizon, it must come as a tremendous relief to find a way of life in which everything is solved in the simplest and most comfortable way, in which a car is no heavier than a straw hat and the fruit on the tree becomes round as quickly as a hot-air balloon. And now we need to step back and keep our distance.' (ibid., p.734–735)

This starting over and embrace of new form, exemplified in the architecture of the Eiffel Tower and in Disney cartoons, is consistent with Benjamin's avant-garde, surreal tendencies. Mertins describes how these architectural theorists—Meyer and Giedion—'both eschewed bourgeois aesthetic categories, and instead treated these new spatial experiences as the structural conditions of the emerging era,' of how:

> For them, technology's transformation of buildings into fleshless open bodies of skeletal transparency, like its transformation of the nature of vision with microscopes, telescopes, aerial photography and X-rays, marked the emergence of new modes of perception, cognition and experience specific to the emerging era.[29]

In this language, reminiscent of Mary Ellen Bute's experimental filmmaking, the lingua franca of science and technology describes the experience of the media/medium. This is a version of a technological positivism that has more to do with McLuhan than it does Adorno. This version of the awakening dialectical image can exist in either a Disney dream space or the view from an industrial crane in a Marseille shipyard:

> Benjamin focused, not on images of the great iron structures themselves, but on the unprecedented views of the city that they afforded. Among Giedion's photographs, only the ones singled out by Benjamin treated the view as mediated, and only in them was the unacknowledged misery of working-class life both revealed and simultaneously transformed into the site of revelation, just as they had been in Moholy-Nagy's constructivist film *Marseille, Vieux Port* of 1929.[30]

[29] Mertins, 1999, p.211.

[30] Ibid., p.212.

So this appreciation of radical construction was not one-dimensional, while Benjamin 'referred to the Eiffel Tower as the first instance of montage' he also 'focused on their role as viewing instruments. Their web-like structures provided opportunities to crop, cut, reframe and abstract the familiar.'[31] In reframing experience through architecture, the possibility of the abstracting moment—crucial to the dialectical image—comes into focus. However, and as ever, the dialectical tension carries a baggage whereby we are assured by an 'unsuspected field of action', the pernicious 'second nature' that this background, or mise-en-scène creates. In this quote from the Artwork essay below , Benjamin describes how film form can reveal the second nature of our everyday mise-en-scène through the optical unconscious. The pernicious aspect of second nature is communicated in the manner that the entire city seems to 'close around us', where we exist only in a 'prison-world':

> On the one hand, film furthers insight into the necessities governing our lives by its use of close-ups, by its accentuation of hidden details in familiar objects, and by its exploration of commonplace milieux through the ingenious guidance of the camera; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of a vast and unsuspected field of action (Spielraum). Our bars and city streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories seemed to close relentlessly around us. Then came film and exploded this prison-world with the dynamite of the split second, so that now we can set off calmly on journeys of adventure among its far-flung debris.[32]

[31] Mertins, 1999, p.212.

[32] Benjamin, 2003f, p.265.

Finally, in regard to exterior space, in an essay that has a correspondence with the detective plot in Godard's *Socialisme*, Tom Gunning's 'The Exterior as Intérieur: Benjamin's Optical Detective' describes Benjamin's fundamental understanding of the relationship between the interior and the exterior: 'The arcade Benjamin frequently reminds us, is an exterior space conceived as an *intérieur*.'[33] That is, the arcades are designed to emulate the 'horrific mishmash' of the bourgeois interior that forces the inhabitant to adopt alien habits. The very conception of the Parisian arcades is therefore also inherently theatrical and dependent on successful mise-en-scène, in its particular representation it is ultimately alienating. The idea of the arcade as a theatrical set has a particular resonance with modes of cinematic production, of simulation and of special effect. The choices involved in the 'dressing' of sets, of costuming, of lighting, of the arrangement of props, of camera positions that correspond to framing windows, or indeed the choice to affect a 'natural' (documentary) aesthetic, all contribute to mise-en-scène and could be cited in this correspondence. However, there is an inversion taking place—in cinematic mise-en-scène, effects are employed to render imaginary spaces as real; in the arcades, effects are used to render real spaces as imaginary. It is this imaginary—second nature—aspect that is alienating in Benjamin's philosophy.

Turning from the exterior to the interior below, Benjamin conceives of the interior as a potentially intoxicating environment. Again, the mise-en-scène of the 19th-century interior is the subject, but here, mostly through excerpts from Convolute I of the *Arcades*, we can see the development of moments of illumination. These insights occur in an interior that affects the viewer like a dream, in an intoxicating and transporting environment, corresponding to those flashing moments of abstraction in otherwise heartening stories. However, there are notable differences in the manner that illumination is experienced in these spaces. Where the dialectical

[33]Gunning, 2003, p.105–106.

image occurs in literature through montage alone, in the experiences below Benjamin conceives of the dialectical image under the influence of hashish—a stimulant that allows him to imagine the experience of the 19th-century inhabitant of a bourgeois apartment. Additionally, there is, as described above, a decidedly negative aspect to Benjamin's understanding of these interiors, an aspect missing from previous formulations. That said, the hashish trance that Benjamin describes can be fairly easily related to dream states, the surreal experience of 'convulsive beauty' from Breton's *Nadja* or the innervating potentials of technology, all of which are precursors to the dialectical image.

To answer the familiar question of what Benjamin means by 'literary montage', Brigid Doherty turns to certain Benjaminian texts that 'read together, situate montage within a constellation of concepts concerning experiences of intoxication (*Rausch*), embodiment, and the effects of works of art.' Doherty's 2006 essay, ' "The Colportage Phenomenon of Space" and the Place of Montage in *The Arcades Project*', as she points out, is 'hardly the first to take seriously Benjamin's promulgation of montage as the method of *The Arcades Project*.'[34] Doherty does, however, see an opportunity to illuminate 'the relationship of Benjamin's experiment in writing history to his understanding of the situation, or the fate, of the work of art in modernity.'[35] This opportunity is created, is original, in the fact that Doherty concentrates on 'the colportage phenomenon of space'—a Benjaminian construct that, as Doherty describes it, 'he connects, on the one hand, to nineteenth-century painting, and, on the other hand, to photomontage practises of the 1920s and 1930s.'[36]

[34]Doherty, 2006, p.157.

[35]Ibid., p.158.

[36]Ibid., p.158.

From intoxication and embodiment to painting and montage, this phenomenon is, as above in the cases of architecture, engineering and glass structures, about experience. Benjamin's phrase 'The colportage phenomenon of space' ('das Kolportagephänomen des Raumes') contains a reference to both popular literature and a room—the bourgeois room above, but also the room in the broader sense of space—and, in a vulgar interpretation, describes an experience whereby your surroundings can have an effect equivalent to a pulp novel or a B-movie:[37]

> The 'colportage phenomenon of space' is the flâneur's basic experience. Inasmuch as this phenomenon also—from another angle—shows itself in the mid-nineteenth-century interior, it may not be amiss to suppose that the heyday of flânerie occur in this same period. Thanks to this phenomenon, everything potentially taking place in this one single room is perceived simultaneously. The space winks at the flâneur: What do you think may have gone on here? Of course, it has yet to be explained how this phenomenon is associated with colportage.[38]

Significant from this quote is the manner in which the interior seems to interact with the beholder, it winks, an idea developed below in relation to *The Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault. The type of bourgeois space which Benjamin describes is developed in Convolute I of the *Arcades*. It is of a sort decorated in a theatrical manner designed to evoke a particular historical period or exotic locale. It might feature a dining room that evokes Persia, a living room that recalls Italy. These environments are, in fact, theatrical interpretations of paintings, and

[37] From *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*: 'Colportage: The literature of colportage comprises the miscellaneous publications hawked through town and country by colporteurs (pedlars) during the French ancien regime (i.e. pre-Revolutionary) and into the 19th c. Almanacs, broadsheets, pamphlets and the booklets of the bibliotheque bleu (qq.v.) were the usual kind of stock. Their counterparts in England were chapbooks (q.v.) hawked by chapmen.' (Cuddon and Preston, 1998, p.146)

[38] Benjamin, 1999h, M1a,3.

in the manner that historical paintings describe moments of historical importance, definitive moments, so these rooms carry a trace of these events. There is also a relationship here to a dream state, the surreal state, and as we shall see, the hashish intoxication that provides the necessary condition for waking in the sense of profane illumination and the dialectical image. That these interiors of the 19th century are decorated to evoke specific periods of history and mythic tales can correspond to a cinematographic correspondence; Benjamin describes these interiors as primitive photomontages in the manner that their historical and geographic pretences blend together—see the 'mishmash' above. There is a kitsch nature to these interiors, in a highly evocative fragment from the Convolute I, Benjamin makes this correspondence with reference to advertising:

> Hessel speaks of the 'dreamy epoch of bad taste.' Yes, this epoch was wholly adapted to the dream, was furnished in dreams. The alternation in styles—Gothic, Persian, Renaissance, and so on—signified: that over the interior of the middle-class dining room spreads a banquet room of Cesare Borgia's, or that out of the boudoir of the mistress a Gothic chapel arises, or that the master's study, in its iridescence, is transformed into the chamber of a Persian prince. The photomontage that fixes such images for us corresponds to the most primitive perceptual tendency of these generations. Only gradually have the images among which they lived detached themselves and settled on signs, labels, posters, as the figures of advertising.[39]

Doherty's essay on the colportage phenomenon of space quotes an extensive fragment from Convolute I of the *Arcades* that provides the definitive statement of this negative and intoxicating effect. It is a lengthy but important fragment:

[39]Benjamin, 1999h, pp. I1 ,6.

> Nineteenth-century domestic interior. The space disguises itself—puts on, like an alluring creature, the costumes of moods. The self-satisfied burgher should know something of the feeling that the next room might have witnessed the coronation of Charlemagne as well as the assassination of Henri IV, the signing of the Treaty of Verdun as well as the wedding of Otto and Theophano. In the end, things are merely mannequins, and even the great moments of world history are only costumes beneath which they exchange glances of complicity with nothingness, with the petty and the banal. Such nihilism is the innermost core of bourgeois coziness—a mood that in hashish intoxication concentrates to satanic contentment, satanic knowing, satanic calm, indicating precisely to what extent the nineteenth-century interior is itself a stimulus to intoxication and dream. This mood involves, furthermore, an aversion to the open air, the (so to speak) Uranian atmosphere, which throws a new light on the extravagant interior design of the period. To live in these interiors was to have woven a dense fabric about oneself, to have secluded oneself within a spider's web, in whose toils world events hang loosely suspended like so many insect bodies sucked dry. From this cavern, one does not like to stir.[40]

Benjamin, in his own induced intoxication, perceives that these spaces produced their own intoxicating effect. The costumes and moods, historical and grand occasions are all superficial mise-en-scène, designed to provoke a sense of bourgeois satisfaction. They are akin to the Lacanian screen of the mannequin/automaton and shield and disguise any Real encounter, again a second nature is constructed. The derogatory reference to a homosexual (Uranian) atmosphere in the spaces nonetheless describes a vulgar sense of camp affectation. This negative

[40] Benjamin, 1999h, I2,6. P.216.

sexual inflection is extended in the hanging bodies, sucked dry, that represent the historical events that these rooms, their decor and paintings use up as interior decor. The effect on the inhabitant is profound, they are trapped in a web, unmotivated to move, without open air, dreaming and intoxicated.

These reveries are accessed through intoxication; the dream state brought about by Benjamin's hashish experience enables the formation of an experience that Benjamin believes allows him to experience these spaces as they were in their time—as producing a nihilistic self-absorption—an intoxicating effect that the space itself produced in its 19th-century inhabitant. Doherty summarises these association with respect to the 'colportage phenomenon of space':

> Intoxication, specifically *Haschisch-Rausch*, establishes the conditions of possibility for an experience of that phenomenon, and montage emerges as a literary and pictorial medium with the potential variously to formalize and to materialize aspects of that experience and its relation to history, in particular the history of the nineteenth century and what Benjamin describes as the 'nihilism [that] is the innermost core of bourgeois coziness', a nihilism that he understands to have taken shape in exemplary fashion in the décor of the period's domestic interiors.[41]

Howard Eiland corresponds distraction with intoxication, but also notes hows its outcome can allow insight, and therefore offers a similar redemptive possibility that Foucault posits in the ship of fools: 'Being carried away—which is what distraction and intoxication have in common, and which is what links them, classically, to the concept of madness—does not necessarily exclude a certain profane illumination.'[42] Distraction is similar to interruption,

[41] Doherty, 2006, p.158.

[42] Eiland, 2005, p.6.

whereby they both interrupt the idea of a continuous natural unfolding representation of history. To describe the opportunity created by interruption as not only a 'stimulus' but also an occasion for reflection, Eiland references Bertolt Brecht's concept of epic theatre. We can again note how the experience of interruption is a trigger to illumination:

> On the stage of the epic theatre, declares Benjamin, this technological process—namely, montage—becomes a human one. The principle of interruption, which is as central to the method of montage as it is to the alienation effect, has here a pedagogic function and not just the character of a stimulus. It brings the action to a halt, occasioning surprise, and hence compels the spectator to adopt an attitude towards the situation in question, and the actor towards his or her role.[43]

In these quotes we can discern the sense of arrest occasioned by interrupting montage and, from there, the possibility of perceiving 'dialectics at a standstill'. Interruption or distraction from stimulation—we can again think here of flashing montage within an otherwise 'classical Hollywood' narrative—can therefore be thought of as crystallising the moment of illumination. Theater, montage, mise-en-scènes all stimulate in their own way—it is the interruption to this intoxicating stimulation that can produce reflective and productive insight. In the film analysis that follows I look for interruptions to otherwise consitent mise-en-scènes to the same end.

Several ideas are at play in Benjamin's descriptions of exterior and interior. Benjamin relates the modernist architecture of the 20th century to the benefits of the optical unconscious, he makes the comparison to Disney cartoons in their furnishing of dreams and renewal. Nonetheless he notes the dangers of falling into reverie, and he recognises the *general* effect of bars,

[43] Eiland, 2005, p.3.

vehicles and city streets as formative of a second nature—an exterior as much a constructed and intoxicating space as a bourgeois apartment. He is most pedagogical and poetic when discussing the bourgeois interior, it is so intoxicating as to anaesthetise the inhabitant, caught like a fly in a web. Worth noting is the way in which these interiors are so overwhelmingly effective in their mise-en-scène, how in a charming and even heartening manner the decor can transport to a different time or place, an effect that corresponds to a successful filmic mise-en-scène. The use of hashish to reveal the experience of the 19th-century interior is in correspondence with other Benjaminian pathways to the dialectical image—convulsive or profane beauty, the innervating effect of cinema, literary or cinematic montage—so too can mise-en-scène be said to bypass conscious rationalisation and, via the optical unconscious, speak directly to the sensorium. There is a genuine dialectical tension in the various theories that Benjamin relates here. On the one hand these environmental experiences are related to intoxication and overstimulation—both in the street and in the flâneur's apartment. There is a distraction that can arrest progress and can lead to anaesthetisation in second nature. Nonetheless, the sense in which these experiences are in correspondence with the dream state opens the possibility for the profane illumination that is Benjamin's objective.

I will relate these concepts to films, below, which are highly idiosyncratic in terms of their environment. That is, the environments of *Lifeboat* and *Socialisme* are highly specific and highly stylised and form the allegorical foundation for the action they support. The open expanse of water, coupled with the fundamentally open aspect of a lifeboat's structure, provide an experience whereby Hitchcock's film corresponds with the transparency and tabla rasa aspects that Benjamin admires in Giedion's architectural theory. Similarly, the overstimulated rococo interiors of Godard's cruise liner, together with his over-saturated exposure and disorientating composition make for a profoundly intoxicating and stimulating experience.

To fully contextualise the manner in which these intoxicating and transporting effects of mise-en-scène are actually achieved, it is helpful to return to Doherty's essay where she illustrates the colportage effect within Paul Delaroche's 1861 painting *Les Enfants d'Edouard* (see Fig. 6.4 on the next page).[44] Doherty quotes a contemporary response by Heinrich Heine to the painting from the 1831 Salon show in which it was exhibited:[45]

> It kept returning to my mind how I once, in a beautiful castle in dear Poland, also was before the portrait of a friend, and conversed with his sweet, lovely sister, and secretly compared her eyes to those of the friend. We also spoke of the painter of the picture, who died not long before, and how all people pass away, one after the other—Ah! The dear friend is himself dead, shot by Prague; the lovely lights of the beautiful sister are also extinguished; their castle is burned down, and I am overcome by frightful loneliness when I reflect that not only do our beloved ones vanish so quickly from the world, but that no trace remains even of the scene where we once lived with them; it is as if nothing of it had ever existed, and all was an idle dream.[46]

Doherty emphasises the complexity of Heine's reverie and the manner that it provides 'an occasion for reflection on the transience of human life, or rather the endless repetition of

[44]Doherty makes the connection that Benjamin seems to be referring to this painting in this line from the hashish protocol experiments: 'Can see everything in this room—the sons of Charles III and what you will. (Benjamin, 1999h, I2a,1. P.216)' Doherty argues that 'Charles III' is a textual error by Benjamin. Referring to the notes of Ernst Bloch, who was an an attendee at the protocols, Doherty points out that Bloch records the insight as invoking the monarch Richard III, as in 'Can see everything in this room—the sons of Richard III and what you will.' Doherty interprets this as in fact referencing the *nephews* of Richard III, sons of Edward IV of England, who are are the subject of Delaroche's well-known painting. (Doherty, 2006, p.178)

[45]As a 19th-century poet, intellectual and feuilleton writer, Heine is an important source for Benjamin. Doherty convincingly argues that Benjamin would have been familiar with the painting through its popular photographic reproduction by Gustav Schauer and through Heine's writing.

[46]Doherty, 2006, p.179–180.

Figure 6.4: *Les Enfants d'Edouard* (Paul Delaroche, 1830). Photograph by Gustav Schauer (1861)

Figure 6.5: *Le soufflet d'une dame belge* (Antoine Wiertz, 1861)

death, especially in the context of political violence.'[47] The political violence at the centre of the painting—two children, heirs to the English crown, awaiting their murder—is depicted at a notable moment. Classical painting, especially historically based painting, tends to depict the 'decisive moment' of the historical occurrence. In this case it is not the boys murder that is depicted, but rather the moment when the boys and the dog hear their murderers approach their chamber. There is a deep sense of melodramatic tension in this moment, communicated by the children's faces but also by the dog's rigid pose and the light visible through cracks in the door. Worth noting in this scene is the manner in which the painting anticipates a coming interruption. We can say that the drama in this mise-en-scène is dependent on our visual imagination and anticipation of a sublating image—their actual murder—that thereby reconfigures Delaroche's depicted moment.

As a more dynamic example of a decisive moment, Doherty reproduces a painting mentioned by Benjamin in the *Arcades*—Antoine Wiertz's *Le soufflet d'une dame belge* (*A Slap in the Face by a Belgian Lady*) (see Fig. 6.5 on the preceding page). Doherty explains the importance of Wiertz to Benjamin who 'he variously describes as an *ungeschlachter Ideenmaler* (ungainly painter of ideas) and *der Maler der Passagen* (the painter of the arcades)',[48] as she points out:

> The phrase 'Wiertz as precursor of montage (realism plus tendentiousness)' appears as one of the 'Themes of The Arcades Project' listed among the materials for the 1935 exposé 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century', and the exposé itself asserts that 'Wiertz can be characterized as the first to demand, if not actually foresee, the use of photographic montage for political agitation.'[49]

[47] Doherty, 2006, p.180.

[48] Ibid., p.158.

[49] Ibid., p.170–171.

In *Le soufflet d'une dame belge* we see the colportage, melodramatic excess that Benjamin finds useful in Wiertz and that mirrors the colporteur style of his collection of chambermaid romances. Doherty proposes that the violence enacted by the woman reflects the potential violence her body would have suffered at her attacker's hands. It is, she argues:

> ...a protocinematic exploration of the effects of a gun fired by a woman at very close range into the face of a man assaulting her from behind. If the realism of the man's destroyed face flying off in a burst of fire and smoke and a splatter of flesh and brains is protocinematic and in that more or less technical sense a precursor of montage, it is also *kolportagehaft*, or we might say B-movielike.[50]

Doherty brilliantly builds on Heine's description of his reverie and interpretation of Delaroche's *Les Enfants d'Edouard.* Where Heine describes the child's face that stares at us from the picture as sickly and pale, Doherty points out that the boy—Edward V—appears prematurely aged, that he appears as a 'virtual physiognomic anachronism, as though, with the mien of a melancholy old man.'[51] This has the effect, Doherty argues, of seeming to place the child outside the painting, of turning him into an observer of the painting itself, and thereby a model for our own melancholic gaze:[52]

> ...beholding the scene presented to us by Delaroche from a moment in time other than the one in which the painting places him, and thereby providing us with a

[50]Doherty, 2006, p.172.

[51]Ibid., p.179–180.

[52]There is a correspondence worth mentioning with the backward looking pose of the second boy—Richard of York—and Klee's *Angelus Novus* and Dürer's *Melancholia.*

> model for our own looking, the kind of looking, or rather the kind of dreaming, that Heine describes in his ekphrasis.[53]

In his commission to paint a mural for the award theatre of the École des Beaux-Arts—it is known by its architectural designation 'The Hémicycle' (a semi-circular chamber)—Delaroche created a work that oscillates between historicism and extravagant, fictional mise-en-scène. The 88.5-foot mural depicts seventy-five great artists, and controversially Delaroche ignored accepted artistic hierarchies. As 19th-century art historian Walsh Phillip describes it, 'the mural itself is an affront to the vision of the past officially endorsed by the Académie, yet it occupies the most symbolically charged space in the École, the room in which the annual awards ceremony was held.'[54] The result speaks to the power of mise-en-scène to radically alter accepted perception and thereby reimagine both history and our relationship to it, a feat accomplished by Delaroche in a highly conservative environment. Phillip concludes, 'The historical tradition he constructed was inclusive and therefore polysemic. Old hierarchies were reworked into a new relativist paradigm.'[55,56]

These three very different examples of painting speak to the power of mise-en-scène to transport the subjects and to complicate their reception of history and narrative—in Wiertz we feel the melodrama of action and violence; in *Les Enfants d'Edouard*, the subject becomes implicated in the melancholy of the child; in the epic 'The Hémicycle', historical hierarchies are

[53] Doherty, 2006, p.180.

[54] Phillip, 2002, p.90.

[55] Ibid., p.90.

[56] In 'Little History of Photography', Benjamin quotes Delaroche, notable as a painter and a contemporary of the invention of photography. Of photography, Benjamin writes 'Delaroche had already noted the "unprecedented and exquisite" general impression, "in which nothing disturbs the tranquillity of the composition." ' (Benjamin, 1999c, p.517) The phrase 'From today painting is dead' is widely attributed to Delaroche, apparently from 1839 after seeing a Daguerreotype.

demolished and reconfigured. From *Les Enfants d'Edouard* Heine speaks of the power of the mise-en-scène to transport him, in 'The Hémicycle' the body is engulfed in a phantasmagoria through architecture and image, in Wiertz we feel the full force of the decisive moment.

Heine's feuilleton writings on the musical concerts of 1840 and 1844 provide masterfully lyrical descriptions of the dramatic environments in which the musical recitals of the 19th century were held. They also provide a brilliant insight into the powerful effect of mise-en-scène, particularly in how setting and atmosphere may subtly but completely affect the reception of the work of art. O.G. Sonneck's 1922 analysis of Heine's career provides a fascinating description of the complicated and fractious relationships between journalists and journeyman musicians. His essay 'Heinrich Heine's Musical Feuilletons', for *The Musical Quarterly*, reprints choice reviews by Heine but also provides background context, such as the practice of payment by musicians to reviewers to ensure favourable reviews. In a piece on a performance by Franz Liszt during the 1840 season, Heine describes how 'It was at a *soirée* in the Chaussée d'Antin ... a radiant *soirée*, and none of the traditional ingredients of social pleasure were missing: there was enough light to illuminate one; a sufficiency of mirrors to permit one to view one's self; enough people to crowd one's self warm; and enough sugar-water and ice to cool one's self off.' And once the music had started how 'The keys seemed to bleed.' The overall effect as Heine describes it was mesmeric, and his review includes as much description of environment as it does music; Heine concludes:

> The whole room was filled with paling faces, heaving bosoms, faint breathing between the pauses and, finally, tumultuous applause. The women always act as though intoxicated when Liszt has played something for them. With madder joy

> they now abandoned themselves to the dance, these Willis of the *salon*, and it was with difficulty that I managed to make my escape into an adjoining room.[57]

The intoxication of the women is a reference to a phenomenon that became know as Lisztomania, an effect not dissimilar to the more modern Beatlemania that afflicted fans of the 1960s English pop group. However, it is the environment of the recitals, so evocatively mirrored in his writing, to which Heine ultimately attributes this mania. He is disabused of his original thesis that it was a purely Germanic response—'I explained this Lisztomania, and looked on it as a sign of the politically unfree conditions existing beyond the Rhine'—when he observes the same behaviour in Parisians. He asks 'What is the reason of this phenomenon?' and in response recounts a conversation where he asks a doctor to explain it:

> The solution of this question belongs to the domain of pathology rather than that of aesthetics. A physician, whose speciality is female diseases, and whom I asked to explain the magic our Liszt exerted upon his public, smiled in the strangest manner, and at the same time said all sorts of things about magnetism, galvanism, electricity, of the contagion of a close hall filled with countless wax lights and several hundred perfumed and perspiring human beings, of historical epilepsy, of the phenomenon of tickling, of musical cantherides, and other scabrous things, which, I believe, have reference to the mysteries of the *bona dea*. Perhaps the solution of the question is not buried in such adventurous depths, but floats on a very prosaic surface. It seems to me at times that all this sorcery may be explained

[57] Heine and Sonneck, 1922, p.158–159.

> by the fact that no one on earth knows so well how to organize his successes, or rather their *mise en scéne*, as our Franz Liszt.[58]

With reference to Liszt's mise-en-scène, we must include Heine's description of the *soirée* of the 1840 season, the effect of candlelight, close quarters, mirrors and illumination. Heine does not spell it out, but there is a further implication here, one that confirms a certain genius on Franz Liszt's organisation of mise-en-scène. Consistent with Sonneck's detailed explication of the commercial acuity of these entertainers, it is conceivable that the demonstration of mania itself was part of the performance, organised by Liszt as a complementary background mise-en-scène.

A final painting that supplies a useful correspondence between Benjamin's colportage effect of space and cinema is *The Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault (see Fig. 6.6 on the next page). Over seven metres wide and nearly five metres tall (H. 4.91 m; W. 7.16 m), this masterpiece has, not only by virtue of these dimensions, a powerful corporeal effect. Géricault famously spent extensive energies staging this work in his studio with amateur models recruited from hospitals and the streets of Paris. Based on what was a recent sinking of a frigate—*Medusa*—the story was topical, political and grotesque; the shipwrecked suffered starvation and resorted to cannibalism to survive. Michael Fried, in his study of staging and absorption, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot*, describes how this painting, in its depiction of a decisive moment—as a rescue ship is seen on the horizon—implicates the viewer in the mise-en-scène: 'the choice of moment and other aspects of the composition of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* may be seen as motivated by the desire to escape the theatricaliz-

[58] Heine and Sonneck, 1922, p.457–458.

ing consequences of the beholder's presence.'[59] Fried thereby reads the painting as depicting the survivors shamefully trying to escape the viewer's prurient gaze.

Figure 6.6: *The Raft of the Medusa*. Théodore Géricault (1819).

Géricault researched extensively, going so far as to construct a raft in his studio, interviewed survivors of the wreckage and notoriously used 'dying patients in the hospitals next door as models along with corpses in the morgue.'[60] The completed thirty-five-metre square painting went on tour to both London and Dublin. While it was a success in London, it received less attention in Dublin—a fact that Jonathan Crary attributes to the simultaneous exhibition in Dublin of a panorama entitled *The Wreck of the Medusa*, which included in its display a copy of Géricault's painting. Crary's essay, 'Géricault, the Panorama, and Sites of Reality in the Early Nineteenth Century', counts *The Raft of the Medusa* within the same field of entertainment that Gunning

[59] Fried, 1988, p.154.

[60] Virilio, 1994, p.39.

termed 'attractions', that is, he defines it as a precursor to cinema.[61] Within the protocinematic roots of Gunning's cinema of attractions we can also count the so-called Magic Lantern. In one of Benjamin's less discussed but nonetheless remarkably prescient fragments—'Moonlit Nights on the Rue La Boétie' (1928)—he lyrically describes a collection of 19th-century transparencies, recently rediscovered, that are being exhibited in Paris. Benjamin reports how they are of relatively unknown provenance, but that 'Great artists like *Gericault*, David, and Boilly are said to have been involved to a greater or lesser degree. Other experts believe that Daguerre worked on these plates before he created his famous diorama (which burned down in 1839, after seventeen years).'[62] Benjamin goes on to decry the fact that this type of medium is not properly appreciated, that 'Its place is alongside that group of arts which is reckoned inferior at the moment but will not necessarily remain so, and which ranges from early techniques of the observer right down to the electronic television of our own day.'[63] As discussed above, in the introduction to her essay Doherty situates montage within a constellation with intoxication, embodiment and the effects of works of art. In Géricault's painting we find a correspondence to questions of effect and embodiment, both in the scale—which is not dissimilar in size to a film screen—and in the point of view—the manner in which the survivors form a compositional tableau in relation to the observer. Fried describes it as a pivotal moment not just in French romantic painting but in art history:

[61] Crary describes the differences between the representations: 'Sometimes called a Peristrephic panorama, a moving panorama involved a long band of canvas on which a continuous sequence of scenes had been painted and which was unrolled before a seated audience. Colored lighting enhanced the effect of individual scenes, and often a small orchestra added drama to the whole. Thus, for roughly the same price, a consumer had the choice of seeing over 10,000 square feet of moving painted surface or about 450 square feet of motionless canvas. Moreover, one of the scenes in the moving panorama was effectively a copy of Géricault's painting, so one really didn't need to pay to see the original as well. If Géricault's painting and the Dublin panorama were rivals for patronage within an economic space around 1820, it certainly should not be seen as some opposition between elite culture and a crude popular form. Rather it was competition between two types of reality effect that each represented the same event, and the marketplace decided which was the more compelling attraction'. (Crary, 2002, p.17)

[62] Benjamin, 1999d, p.108, Italics added.

[63] Ibid., p.108.

> The presence of the beholder does not emerge as an insuperable problem for painting for some time. I think of Géricault as the first painter who found himself compelled to assume the burden of that problem in its insuperable or tragic form and of the *Raft of the Medusa* as the principal monument to that compulsion.[64]

Quite how accurate this description is can be described visually with an overlay of the 'Fibonacci spiral'—related to 'Golden Ratio'—onto Géricault's painting (see Fig. 6.7 on the following page). Very briefly, here we see how the composition of Géricault's mise-en-scène engages the spectator through very specific and *compelling* mathematical organisation. The central vertical overlaps the raft's mast in the first example and perfectly aligns with the raft corner in the second. In the first, the raft's most abject passenger is at the centre of the spiral, in the second it is the most able-bodied. Reading from left to right, the mise-en-scène describes a movement from despair to hope, an essentially heartening representation, and it does so with mathematically pleasing precision. Beyond the observations above in regard to the spectators being drawn into the mise-en-scène and the survivors recoiling from the viewers' gaze, we must acknowledge Géricault's deployment of painterly *effect* in composition of his mise-en-scène, methods developed over centuries and of which he proves himself a master. The ultimate effect on the observer of this organisation speaks to the manner in which the optical unconscious is engaged under the innervating force of visual stimulation.

This consideration of the beholder, the existence of a point of view, is fundamental to film-making. Alfred Hitchcock, most famously in *Rear Window* (1954, US), brilliantly manipulates and 'thematizes the voyeurism at the heart of filmmaking'.[65] This, as I examine at the end of the chapter, is also true of *Lifeboat*—recalling Brant's implication that we are all passengers on

[64] Fried, 1988, p.153–154.

[65] Palmer, 1986, p.5.

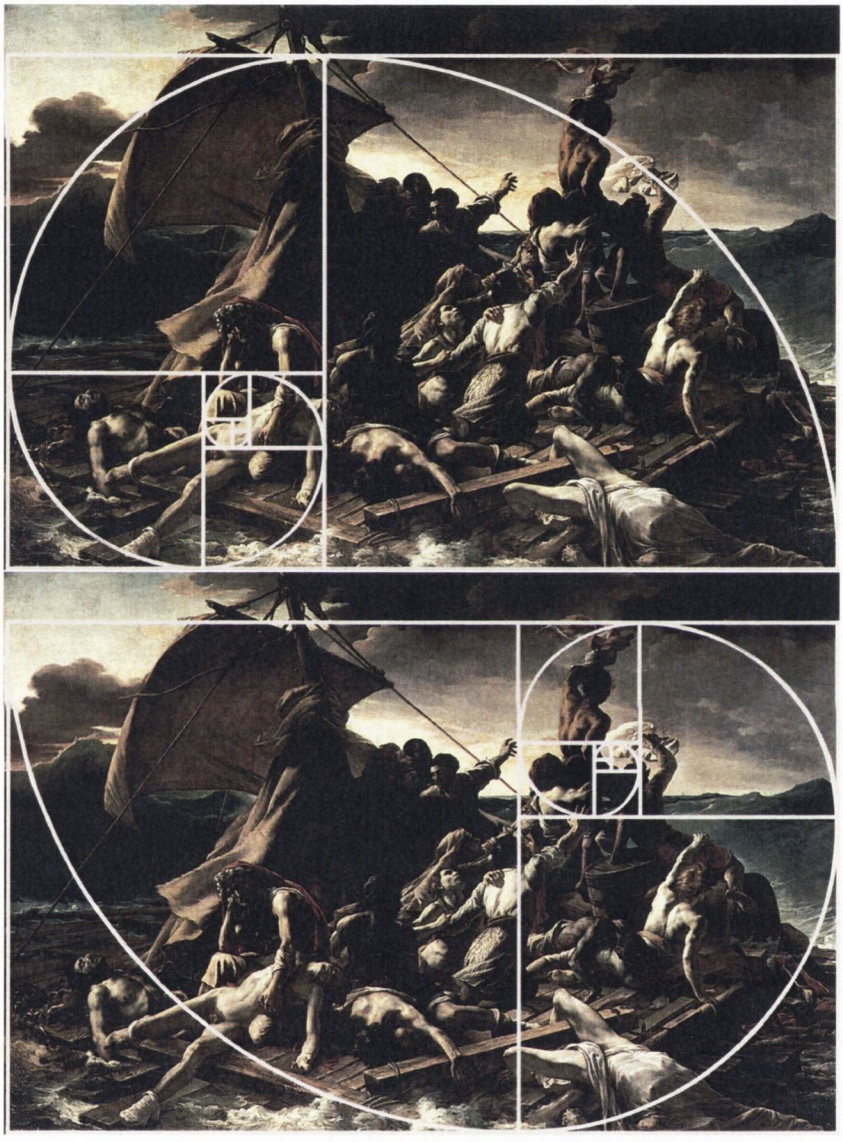

Figure 6.7: *The Raft of the Medusa* with Fibonacci spiral.

the ship of fools, Hitchcock almost exclusively positions his camera within the boat. Before we can get to Godard and Hitchcock a discussion of special effects provides insight into the influence of classical art training to the production of *Lifeboat*, and the Holocaust related Oscar winning films of Stanley Kramer are discussed in relation to thier interruped limited setting of mise-en-scènes.

Before developing these cinematic examples, I want to begin a correspondence that engages with painting, in relation to these points about Géricault's staging, scale and effect. When we speak of effect in cinema, and especially in regards to mise-en-scène, we are often talking about 'special effects' or 'visual effects'. Here the connection to fine art is made quite explicit.

The history of matte effects can be can be traced back to 1903's *The Great Train Robbery* (Edwin Porter, US) and matte *painting* has a history dating back to 1907.[66] John F.Seitz, a cameraman and inventor who worked extensively with director Rex Ingram, is credited with the invention of the matte shot as we know it today.[67] In Fig. 6.8 on page 336 is a 1938 photograph of the Scenic Art Department of 20th Century Fox depicting the traditional process of creating matte backgrounds. Matte filming effects are achieved by the filming of these paintings, at an angle, whereby a small area of the painting is left unpainted and reflects action taking place outside the camera's field of view. This reflected mise-en-scène is organised and dressed to seamlessly fit within the painting's own mise-en-scène. It is therefore true to say that such shots, or effects, are films of paintings reflecting elements outside their frame. From this we can identify the importance of fine art education in the production of these mattes.

To illustrate just how pertinent this is, an article by Joseph A. Serbaroli Jr., from a 2009 Hollywood trade magazine, *Perspectives*, provides information and an anecdote about the head

[66]Netzley, 2000, p.143.

[67]Pendergast and Pendergast, 2000, p.778.

of the Fox Scenic Art Department, Fred Sersen, who is credited with 'Special Photographic Effects' in Hitchcock's *Lifeboat*:

> He was a well-known watercolorist and an active member of the Los Angeles art community, who executed some of the paintings on the walls of the Fox commissary...According to an article in the *Los Angeles Times* on December 3, 1944, he would occasionally close the department early and take his Matte Artists on sketching trips 'to refresh their eyes and see how nature really looks." During his lengthy career, he was nominated for nine Academy Awards and won two. He served on the Board of Directors of the Painters and Sculptors Club of Los Angeles.[68]

To clarify, Sersen won two Oscars for special effects[69] for *The Rains Came* (1939, US) and *Crash Drive* (1943, US), not for art direction, which is a separate category. Arriving in the US as an immigrant from Czechoslovakia in 1907 at the age of seventeen, Sersen 'first studied at the Los Angeles School of Art and Design and continued at the Portland (OR) Art Academy and San Francisco Institute of Art.'[70] Sersen continued a fine art practice throughout his life and this training and practice was reflected in the artists who worked under him in 1938—many were practising artists who were also members of the Painters and Sculptors Club of Los Angeles.[71]

[68]Serbaroli, 2009, p.40–41.

[69]As recorded in the Oscars database at http://awardsdatabase.oscars.org/. *The Rains Came* was a co-win with E. H. Hansen. *The Rains Came* was also nominated for an Award in Art Direction for William Darling and George Dudley.

[70]Hughes, 2002, p.1006.

[71]Serbaroli's article is based on a photograph he found in a family collection belonging to his grandfather, Hector Serbaroli, an artist in Sersen's department. While Serbaroli details the backgrounds of each of the individuals that his grandfather Hector can recall in the group photo, I have extracted some details that illustrate the fine art basis of the special effects industry of 1938: 'Fitch Fulton (1879–1955) was a talented painter...he studied at the Art Students League of New York City and the Art Institute of Chicago...Ralph Hammeras (1894–1970)...he began

Figure 6.8: Fox Scenic Art Department. Serbaroli's caption to this photo reads: 'Matte painting in the Scenic Art Department in 1938. The matte in the foreground left is a movie theater marquee for *Hollywood Cavalcade* (1939). Partially hidden on the right is H.E. Serbaroli painting the statue of Queen Victoria for *The Rains Came* (1939).'

In an interesting correspondence between Sersen's art department and the Holocaust, Serbaroli describes Ray Kellogg as Sersen's second-in-command and successor. Kellogg, who worked with George Stevens in documenting the camps, and who is described as a painter, not only shot but also edited the camp footage for presentation at the Nuremberg trials (his full name is Edgar Ray Kellogg, see discussion below in relation *Judgment at Nuremberg*):

his career as a landscape painter...Emil Kosa, Sr. (1876–1955) ...was a gifted painter, mostly self-taught...Emil Kosa, Jr. (1903–1968)...sent to study art at the Prague Academy and later continued his education at the California Art Institute in Los Angeles (1927) and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris (1927–1928)...Clyde Scott (1884–1959) was a prolific landscape painter...studied at the Boston Art School...Hector Serbaroli (1881–1951) was a painter who trained at San Michele in Rome.' (Serbaroli, 2009, p.41–43)

> Ray Kellogg (1905–1976) was a Matte Painter and Sersen's right-hand man, working on well over a hundred films including *Les Miserables* (1952), *Snows of Kilimanjaro* (1952), *The King and I* (1956), and *Cleopatra* (1963). During World War II, he was a cameraman in the U.S. Army and shot most of the footage at the Nuremberg war crimes trials. Much of his early work before 1949 was uncredited. He took over as head of the Scenic Art Department in the early 1950s when Sersen retired.[72]

Stevens's contribution to the Nuremberg footage is widely recognised, and there is much speculation about the influence it had on his subsequent work. Kellogg's involvement is undeveloped. Given his potential influence on a far larger body of film productions, and especially in consideration of the importance of visual effects in cinematic representation, this topic deserves a great deal more research that I can attempt here. I will, however, return to Sersen's art department to demonstrate a fragmentary newspaper correspondence of the same type established in Chapter 5.

These points in relation to the effect and staging of special effects serve as a correspondence with Géricault's own studio staging and mathematically effective mise-en-scène. We can find a further correspondence to the scale of Géricault's work in the water tank named after Fred Sersen in 20th Century Fox's backlot. Constructed for Sersen's Oscar-winning *The Rains Came*, the tank also served as the set for *Lifeboat*. It was named Sersen Lake, as was its replacement, built in 1962 for *Cleopatra*. As seems to be the case with information relating to Fred Sersen's art department, much of the detail of this history is unwritten, however a specialist

[72]Serbaroli, 2009, p.41.

website [73] provides a wealth of information not available elsewhere. The site's author comments insightfully on *Lifeboat* whereby:

> There is some masterful miniature work here by Fred Sersen's department at 20th Century Fox. Made and set during the second World War, pretty much the entire film is a special effect with most of it shot against a rear projection process screen.[74]

The correspondence with Géricault's scale can be made in the site's article dedicated to studio water tanks. The Sersen tank 'contained about 3 million gallons of water at 36 inches deep'.[75] The monumental scale of this structure is testament to the power of effective mise-en-scène—the manner in which—with verisimilitude—scenery and dressing can intoxicate and transport, as demonstrated by Géricault in his protocinematic work.

Kramer's 1965 *Ship Of Fools* provides a useful introduction to a discussion of powerfully evocative and engulfing cinematic mise-en-scène. In its titular correspondence, it relates to the historic theme of maritime isolation and madness explored above. Most specifically, the concepts of interruption and distraction are related to moments of montage which interrupt a predominant mise-en-scène that constructs a second nature for the purposes of transporting the viewer. Briefly, the narrative of the film concerns passengers that represent national archetypes of the 1930s. The film is set in 1933 aboard an ocean liner travelling between Mexico and

[73] http://modelshipsinthecinema.com/

[74] Unknown, 2014a.

[75] The article's description of the scale of the tank also describes how the action—similar to a matte effect—is filmed in front of a painting: 'The Sersen lake, like many tanks, was trapezoid in shape. The back wall was the longest at 370 feet and also shorter in height allowing a flow of water over its edge. The water that spills over the curved top is collected in a trough and pumped back into the tank so that there is a continuous flow maintaining a constant water edged horizon.The tank was 300 feet from front to back with the front wall, where the camera is usually placed, much shorter at 198 feet wide. At the back of the tank was a giant screen much like an old drive in theatre, angled back at 14 degrees to catch the sun. This screen was 366 feet wide by 85 feet high covered with plywood panels and a layer of canvas on which would be painted a sky scene.' (Unknown, 2011)

Germany. Among the ship's passengers are a sympathetic anti-Nazi German ship's doctor, an imperious Spanish countess, a charming Jewish salesman, a young American couple, a 'washed up' American baseball player and several other loosely characterised German and Jewish passengers. While the characters each have their own complications and back stories, the wide ensemble performance introduces generic and stereotypical correspondence.[76] This is reflected in a monologue addressed direct to camera, a speech that recalls Rossiter's interpretation of Bosch and Brant whereby we are all in the same boat:

> My name is Karl Glocken, and this is a ship of fools. I'm a fool. And you'll meet more fools as we go along. This tub is packed with them. Emancipated ladies. Ballplayers. Lovers. Dog lovers. Ladies of joy. Tolerant Jews. Dwarfs. All kinds. And who knows, if you look closely enough... you may even find yourself onboard.

The plot revolves around the expression and consequences of unchallenged anti-Semitic expression, of intolerance and of cruelty. The film's subplot mirrors this main narrative of human degradation and humiliation whereby the ship stops en route to take on a cargo of humans—Spanish crop pickers who have lost their jobs in Mexico as a result of collapsing sugar-cane prices—who are carried in overcrowded steerage. The negative consequences of unfettered laissez-faire capitalism are explicitly spelled out in the film when one character describes to another how the owners of the sugar-cane farms burned their crops in the fields rather than sell them at the low market prices. Finally, within the broader narrative, a profane love affair occurs between the doctor and the countess.

[76]The narrative device of a ship of disparate individuals united in a common goal was in fact something of a wartime staple that served obvious propaganda purposes. Other examples, besides *Lifeboat*, include *In Which We Serve* (Noël Coward, 1942, UK), *Western Approaches* (Pat Jackson, 1944, UK) and *Sabotage at Sea* (Leslie S. Hiscott, 1942, UK)

This is a film rich in allegorical meaning and set in a period which corresponds to Benjamin's time. However, while I will describe interruptions to the maritime mise-en-scène below, it is also the provenance of *Ship Of Fools* that distinguishes it and provides context for its allegorical representation of both Allied and Axis societies as a ships of fools. Kramer made *Ship of Fools* four years after *Judgment at Nuremberg*, a fictionalised dramatisation of a 1947 Nuremberg war crime trial. The film's release coincided with the 1961 Adolf Eichmann trial, a timely coincidence that may have contributed to its eleven Academy Award nominations and two wins (Maximilian Schell for Best Actor and Abby Mann for Best Adapted Screenplay). The correspondence of the mise-en-scène to the real courtroom trial is clearly visible in Fig. 6.9 on the following page. In an interview in 2008, scriptwriter Abby Mann describes how the film was the first to use documentary footage of concentration camps (as courtroom evidence) and claims he stole the footage from US government archives during his research.[77]

The mise-en-scène of this three-hour film is predominantly that of the courtroom. The effect of these images of the Holocaust within what is primarily a closed courtroom mise-en-scène (legal, authoritarian, Lacanian symbolic) is thereby heightened. This sequence can properly be termed an interruption of the real/Real, first in the sense of its documentary status and second in its abject subject matter (see Fig. 6.10 on page 342). The colportage genesis of the film is revealed by its precursor in a television drama, part of the *Playhouse 90* teleplay also titled *Judgment at Nuremberg* and written by Mann. Mann, in interview, explains the somewhat compromised aspect of this now lost production, in that the producers censored the term 'gas oven'.[78] Georges Didi-Huberman, in his essay 'Opening the Camps, Closing the Eyes: Images, History, Readability', describes how 'The Nuremberg Tribunal was the first in history to use a cinema projector and large screen which would be used to place the accused in front of their

[77] Rutkowski, 2008, part 3 of 6, 6min.

[78] Ibid., The reason given is that *Playhouse 90* was sponsored by a domestic gas company.

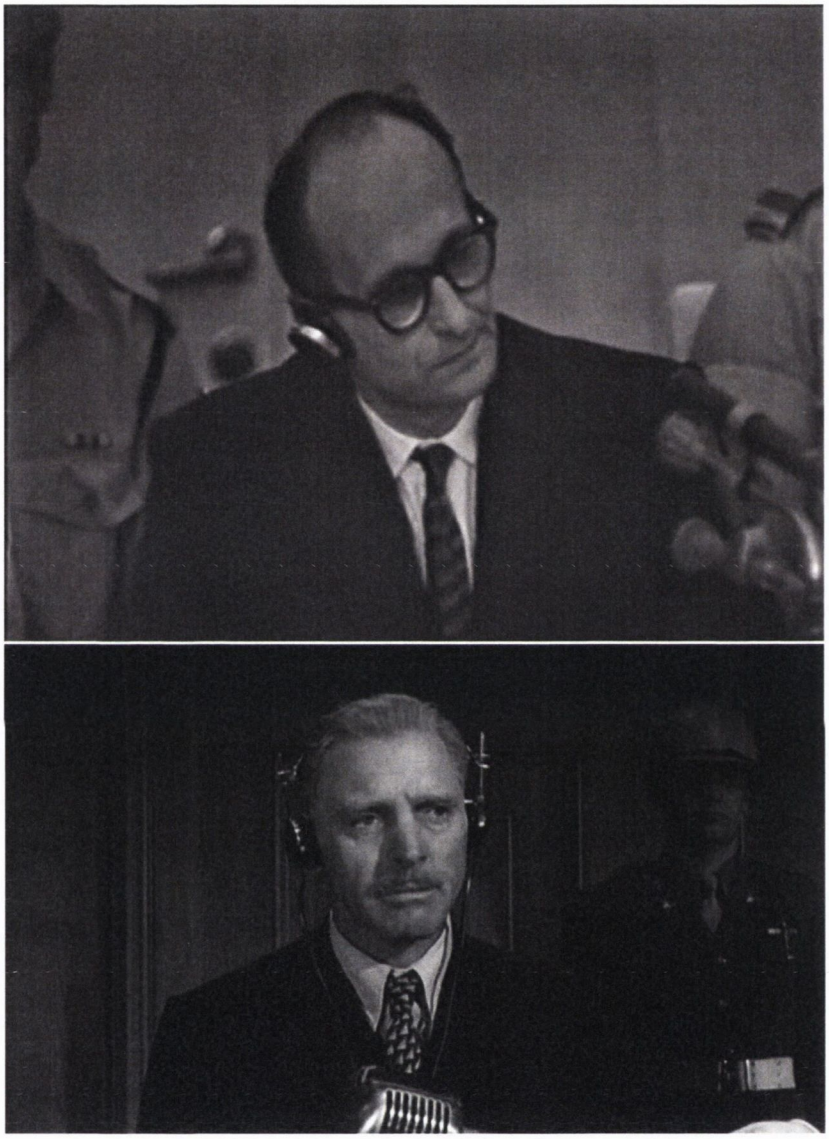

Figure 6.9: Adolf Eichmann (1961) and the accused in *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Stanley Kramer, 1961, US) 152min 28sec.

crimes.' He notes how the American films were supported by signed affidavits to attest to their authenticity 'by the director and editor of the film, George Stevens and E.R. Kellogg.'[79] *Judgment at Nuremberg* replays this strategy but, in this case, the screening of the film reaches a much wider audience in the cinema attending public, who thereby take the place of the accused in Didi-Huberman's formulation.

Figure 6.10: Ovens, skin, judges, soldier, corpses and Zyklon B. *Judgment at Nuremberg* (Stanley Kramer, 1961, US) 90min 36sec - 98min 12sec.

When this powerfully symbolic, consistent and repetitive mise-en-scène is sublated by contrasting imagery, in this case footage of the aftermath of the Holocaust, the viewer is also jolted

[79] Didi-Huberman, 2011, p.91–92. See above for Kellogg's involvement in the Fox Scenic Art Department.

from a rational point of view in the manner consistent with a Benjaminian 'flashing up'.[80] The courtroom mise-en-scène forms a dialectical relationship with the Holocaust mise-en-scène—the official order of the first is in sharp contrast to the barbarity and irrationality of the second. The brief montage that mixes concentration camp and courtroom—lasting four minutes and twenty seconds, approximately half of which is reaction shots from the courtroom—is thereby a dialectical moment within a narrative which otherwise can be read as a heartening story of justice being served.[81]

Judgment at Nuremberg asks, through its narrative and, more explicitly, through its lead character—American judge Dan Haywood (Spencer Tracy)—how individual Germans came to be complicit in the war crimes and attempted genocide of World War II. This question, the question of the culpability and agency of individuals in the context of the Nazi war machine and its legal national basis, found notorious expression in Hannah Arendt's characterisation of Eichmann's actions whereby 'He did his *duty*, as he told the police and the court over and over again; he not only obeyed *orders*, he also obeyed the *law*.'[82] Arendt, while not excusing Eichmann's actions—she supported his execution—was pointing out that his lack of imagination, independence and intelligence contributed to his willingness to commit crimes against humanity. These character traits are not dissimilar to the character flaws that Sebastian Brant caricatures in the 1494 *Ship of Fools*—hardly unique or historically original. Rather, Arendt argues, this banality of evil arises in specifically fertile ideological ground:

[80] In the 2004 documentary *Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust* (Daniel Anker, US) this footage is described as the real 'star' of the film (the film featured several well-known actors including Spencer Tracy, Burt Lancaster, Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland, Maximilian Schell and Montgomery Clift).

[81] It must be acknowledged that this heartening outcome is somewhat mitigated by the closing intertitle which reveals that all those sentenced at the Nuremberg trials (including those who received life sentences) had, by 1961, been released.

[82] Arendt, 2006, Chap. VIII, italics in original.

> Much of the horribly painstaking thoroughness in the execution of the Final Solution—a thoroughness that usually strikes the observer as typically German, or else as characteristic of the perfect bureaucrat—can be traced to the odd notion, indeed very common in Germany, that to be law-abiding means not merely to obey the laws but to act as though one were the legislator of the laws that one obeys. Hence the conviction that nothing less than going beyond the call of duty will do.[83]

While Arendt ascribes Eichmann's personal philosophical justification for his actions to an incorrect reading of Kant, here she describes a psychic predisposition to bureaucratic obeyance occurring as a national trait. The results are implicit—removal of individual agency and fertile conditions for the Holocaust. An explicit investigation of individual agency is carried out in *Judgment at Nuremberg*, when Judge Haywood questions his German housekeepers, a husband and wife, about their knowledge of the acts taking place in the nearby Dachau prison camp. The exchange is left unresolved; it implies a degree of culpability at the level of the individual citizen but also displays a level of banal stupidity, which can be read as a studied foolishness:

> Judge Haywood: What was it like for you, living under Hitler?
>
> Mrs. Halbestadt: We were not political. Mr. Halbestadt and I are not political.
>
> Judge Haywood: No, but...you must have been aware of some of the events that were going on.
>
> Mrs. Halbestadt: Many things were going on. There were parades. Hitler and Goebbels came here every year.
>
> Judge Haywood: What was it like?

[83] Arendt, 2006, Chap. VIII.

Mrs. Halbestadt: We never attended meetings. Never.

Judge Haywood: I'm not trying to put you on trial. I'm just curious. I'd like to know.

Judge Haywood: For instance, there was a place called Dachau... which was not too many miles from here. Did you ever know what was going on there?

Mrs. Halbestadt: We knew nothing about it. How can you ask if we knew anything about that?

Judge Haywood: I'm sorry.

Mrs. Halbestadt: Your Honor, we are only little people. We lost a son in the army and our daughter in the bombing. During the war we almost starved. It was terrible for us.

Judge Haywood: I'm sure it was.

Mr. Halbestadt: Hitler did some good things. I won't say he didn't do some good things. He built the Autobahn. He gave more people work. We won't say he didn't do some good things. But the other things the things they say he did to the Jews and the rest we knew nothing about that. Very few Germans did. And if we did know what could we do?

Judge Haywood: But Mrs. Halbestadt said you didn't know.

In Anker's 2004 documentary *Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust*, Steven Spielberg implicates a much wider culpability. Spielberg, speaking about *Schindler's List* (1993, US), explains that he 'did not do any camera tricks' in the film, 'except' he continues, his decision to depict the red colour of the coat worn by the young girl in an otherwise black-and-white film. Spielberg describes how, in the book *Schindler's Ark*, by Thomas Keneally, despite her

bright clothing, the young girl is ignored by the soldiers during the 'liquidisation of the ghetto'. Spielberg describes his own reading of this sequence whereby:

> My interpretation of that, was that America, and Russia and England all knew about the Holocaust when it was happening. And yet we did nothing about it. We didn't assign any of our forces to stopping the march towards death, the inexorable march towards death. It was a large bloodstain, a primary red colour on everyone's radar, yet no one did anything about it, and that's why I wanted to bring the colour red in.[84]

In Spielberg's interpretation we can see how this flash of colour sublates all around it and reconfigures historical understanding. There is a correspondence to a note Benjamin makes—what seems to be a 'note to self'—in regard to the development of Convolute I—named 'The Interior, The Trace' in the *Arcades* and, as discussed above, in relation to the colportage effect: 'Development of "The Interior" chapter: entry of the prop into film.'[85] In this sense, as I shall examine below, Spielberg's use of colour in an otherwise monochrome environment is a very obvious manipulation of environment whereby our experience in film becomes highly directed and focused by an element of mise-en-scène.[86] Further, his categorisation of the manipulation as a camera trick and its uniqueness within the film corresponds to Benjamin's interest in moments that flash up in their abstraction; in Spielberg's allegorical reading of the effect, this moment illuminates the widest possible responsibility in the events leading up to the Holocaust.

[84] *Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust*, 82mins, 2004.

[85] Benjamin, 1999h, I6,3. P.224.

[86] The choice to film in black and white is enormously affective on the resulting mise-en-scène and is shared by Kramer in both *Judgment at Nuremberg* and *Ship of Fools*. The implications of historicity and gravitas inherent in the viewer's reception in this regard cannot be teased out in the space available to me but should be kept in mind in a dialectically opposed de-historicising and cheapening of effect that can be perceived in Godard's use of relatively low resolution video formats.

As stated, the theme of blame and culpability represented in *Judgment at Nuremberg*, made four years earlier, contextualises Kramer's *Ship of Fools*. Set in 1933, soon after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, *Ship of Fools* returns to the question that Judge Haywood asks in *Judgment at Nuremberg*, that is, how could the German people have allowed the war crimes of Germany's National Socialists to happen. Just as the symbolically rational courtroom mise-en-scène of *Judgment at Nuremberg* heightens the irrational and barbaric content of the concentration camp footage, so the limited, isolated and enclosed mise-en-scène of *Ship of Fools* creates its own effect in the viewer.

The interior and exterior mise-en-scène variations that are possible in *Ship of Fools* are intrinsically limited. By virtue of the near constant ship mise-en-scène, three brief scenes that are set on the shore stand out in of their difference and thereby fulfil the criteria of interruption, sublating images and flashing up montage. The first depicts the boarding of the dispossessed sugar-cane workers who, as representatives of the common man and woman, are victims of forces beyond their control. In their mass depiction, their representation echoes the anonymous bodies seen in the camp footage (see Fig. 6.11 on the following page). This—the first mise-en-scène depicting events outside the ship—uses the human body as mass form and is both an unexpected and an evocative spectacle. The resulting overcrowding of the ship makes a correspondence to the overcrowded ships of Bosch and Dürer. The workers' dehumanisation and vulnerability is made explicit when a ship's officer tries to resist the demand of the ship's doctor that they be hosed down to mitigate the possibility of heatstroke, he protests that 'They wouldn't wash if they could. You don't know what pigs they are.' Throughout the rest of the film, in contrast to the bourgeois interior occupied by paying passengers, the workers are shown outdoors against open skies in a predominately egalitarian harmony.

Figure 6.11: Victims of market forces. *Ship of Fools* (Stanley Kramer, 1965, US) 14min 22sec.

A second shore scene is set at the ship's final destination and revolves largely around depictions of each of the ship's 'fools' disembarking and being greeted, or otherwise, in port. This sequence is interrupted by a long take showing the ship's captain overseeing the removal of a body that has been carried in storage (see Fig. 6.12 on the next page). Largely unmotivated by the plot, and given the narrative of the film, it is easy to make a correspondence with this image of receding train tracks to Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog* (Alain Resnais, 1955, France). Kramer holds the shot, with a minimal pan, for twenty seconds and with a deep focus that includes a distant shipyard cargo crane.[87] This collision of death, train tracks, machinery, vehicles, uniforms and architecture constructs a mise-en-scène that subtly but unmistakably evokes the Holocaust.

[87] We can take a correspondence here to Benjamin's interest in Sigfried Giedion's writing on Marseille's dockland architecture and its powerful signification of modernity.

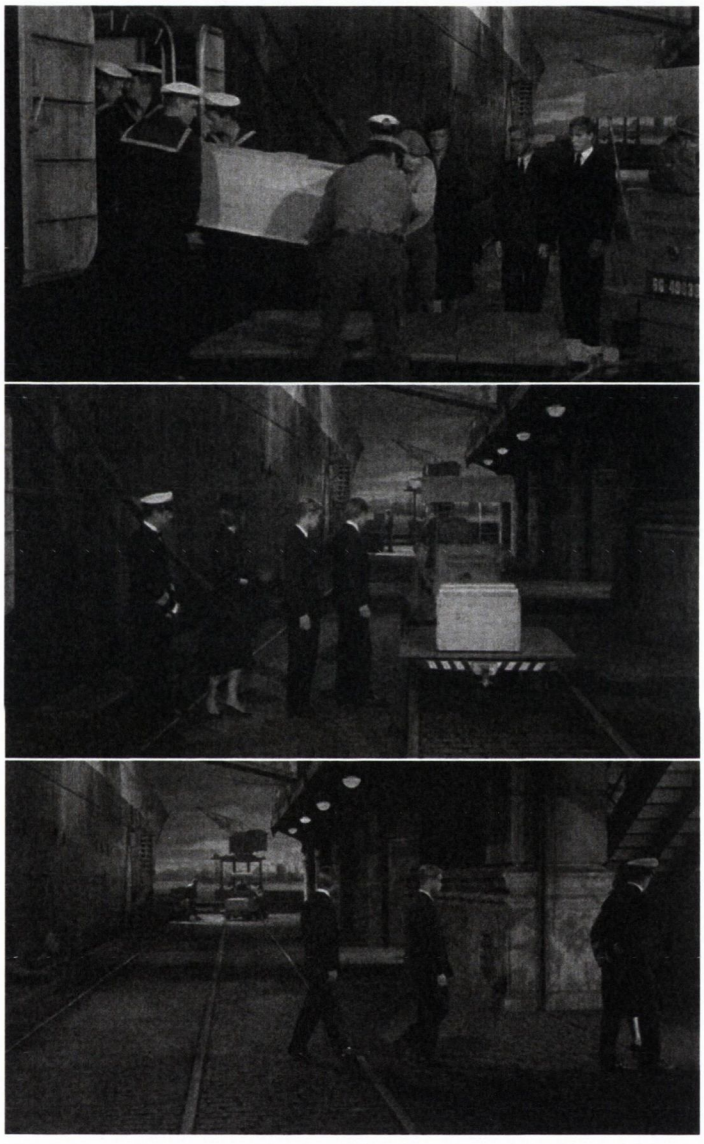

Figure 6.12: Body disposal. *Ship of Fools* (Stanley Kramer, 1965, US) 145min 31sec.

To briefly illustrate the *foolish* mentality that Kramer imbues in all the central characters, a short exchange between two German characters, the cynical and unsentimental Glocken and Löwenthal, a Jew who speaks about his pride in being German:

> Glocken: You may be the biggest fool on this whole boat.
>
> Löwenthal: Why do you say that?
>
> Glocken: Where have you been during this voyage?
>
> Löwenthal: Do you think this boat is a cross section of the German people? No! You don't know the average German the way I know him. The people that produced Goethe, Beethoven and Bach are not to be sneezed at.
>
> Glocken: Fifty percent of the people who produced Goethe, Beethoven and Bach voted for Rieber's party last week.[88]
>
> Löwenthal: Forty-four percent.
>
> Glocken: You are blind! You're absolutely blind! You can't see what's going on in front of your own face.
>
> Löwenthal: What do you mean? You mean this business about the Jews? You don't understand us. The German Jew is something special. We are Germans first and Jews second. We have done so much for Germany. Germany has done so much for us. A little patience. A little goodwill. It works itself out. Listen, there are nearly a million Jews in Germany. What are they going to do? Kill all of us?

While Herr Löwenthal is amongst the most sympathetic characters in the film, this blind expression of national pride could be considered controversial. While it is perilously close to vic-

[88] Rieber, who is an anti-Semitic fascist character, indicates this is a reference to the Nazi party.

tim blaming, worth noting is the way Kramer seeks to ascribe culpability to all nationalities and ethnicities in the film. Based on a successful and celebrated novel of the same name by Katherine Anne Porter, Kramer's adaptation in fact makes significant changes to its source material—in the novel, Löwenthal is a disgusting Jewish stereotype. As R. Barton Palmer explains in his book *Twentieth-Century American Fiction on Screen*, Porter's novel is deeply influenced by its author's troubling political beliefs and personal experiences. As Palmer notes, the novel is in fact deeply anti-Semitic, a fact which may contribute to Löwenthal's characterisation. While Foucault finds the possibility of redemption in the allegorical ship of fools, Porter sees no such possibility. Drawing from private letters that Kramer did not have access to, Palmer writes how Porter's political 'paranoia' and 'misanthropy surfaced most virulently in her private comments on blacks, Jews, and Germans. They do not bear repeating.' Palmer describes the novel's subject matter as 'Evil in all its manifestations.'[89]

The final interruption, or shock, to the 'natural' order of the *Ship of Fools* takes place inside a glass and steel port building that is contemporaneous with the architecture of the Parisian arcades. While both a casual and visceral anti-Semitism is represented in the interactions of the characters in *Ship of Fools*, political references are always somewhat abstracted, they are never explicitly represented visually. That is, until the final moments of the film when we see one of the ship's passengers—an older middle-class German woman—greeted by a uniformed young man. As the man turns to escort her from the building we are shown the Nazi swastika on his arm (see Fig. 6.13 on the following page). The moment is powerful, not only because of its loaded historical significance but also because of the generally upbeat, heartening mise-en-scène that depicts the arriving passengers. The scene features a complementary musical accompaniment that matches this mood. This flash of fascism becomes all the more effective in the casual,

[89]Palmer, 2007, p.72.

unremarkable and unnoticed manner in which it is shown—the fools of 1933 are apparently blind.

Figure 6.13: Swastika. *Ship of Fools* (Stanley Kramer, 1965, US) 148min 28sec.

While these films by Stanley Kramer are useful for describing the effect of mise-en-scène, especially of variations and difference within a limited setting mise-en-scène, the discussion above is also intended to provide a correspondence to the broader cultural history with which my writing has engaged. Kramer and Porter, both utilising the allegorical model of the ship of fools, obviously believe it holds value in discussing events leading up to World War II and the Holocaust. Controversial, perhaps, is the thread of redemptive possibility that is visible in both of Kramer's films—they are intended as entertainment, and the edges of condemnation are undoubtedly softened. At the same time, the closing 'flash' of reality in both films diminishes their heartening aspects—the films may be described as sublating the heartening stories in a reminder of the Real. It can be argued that both of the films suggest that the historic outcome was not a foregone conclusion; that is, by recognising the ship of fools for what it is, we have a chance of future redemption.

In these cases, the formation of the dialectical image is constructed when established mise-en-scène is interrupted—as in epic theatre, the interruption allows space for audience reconceptualisation of what they are witnessing. The same correspondences with allegorical heartening stories are discernible in these instances—both *Judgment at Nuremberg* and *Ship of Fools* seek to entertain with likeable central characters and love stories, respectively. However, rather than examples of effects of brief flashing montage, superimposition and rapid cutting (Strick and Gance), or allegorical storytellling (Chaplin), in the scenes described above the viewer experiences the Real in moments of changing mise-en-scène, of differing mise-en-scène. These moments are heightened by their intrusion on otherwise repetitive visual representation whereby 'second nature' mise-en-scène becomes sublated by the shock of interruption. The Real intervenes—massed vulnerable bodies, death, the swastika—and the second nature of the predominantly heartening mise-en-scène is revealed. I will now examine the maritime mise-en-scène of Hitchcock and Godard for ways in which both their films are illuminated in relation to the colportage phenomenon of space.

Where Kramer's *Ship of Fools* is useful in the dialectical opposition it displays in onshore/offshore mise-en-scènes, I turn now to Godard primarily to explore interior/exterior mise-en-scène as represented in *Socialisme*. Before exploring this aspect of his film it is first important to acknowledge the depth of correspondence that exists between Godard and Benjamin. The wide reception of Godard's as the most cinematic representations of the dialectical image is particularly engaged with his use of superimposition to create historically resonant composites.

While it would be impossible in the space available to me to fully contextualise Godard's oeuvre in relation to Benjaminian studies, a brief survey of some formative research is pertinent to contextualise the extensive recognition of his correspondence with Benjamin's writing. Most relevant is the manner in which Godard's films have evolved to utilise extensive flashing and brief

montage, superimposition and cross-disssolve. In 2002, Kaja Silverman, in 'The Dream of the Nineteenth Century', describes how 'Walter Benjamin is clearly the resident spirit of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, although he is never acknowledged as such.'[90] Silverman examines Godard's historical analysis of Hollywood as a dream factory but notes 'However, not all of *Histoire(s) du cinéma's* words and images emerge from the dream factory. Many others work to interrupt our sleep and summon us to consciousness.'[91]

While Silverman's observation that Benjamin is not acknowledged as the 'resident spirit of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*' is correct, Charles Warner provides a glimpse of Godard's major inspiration in his observation on the first broadcast of the series:

> In the initial version of chapter 1B: *Une Histoire seule* ('A Solitary History') of *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, which aired on French television in 1989, a reproduction of Klee's painting appears superimposed on a photo of Godard, in effect situating the filmmaker as Benjamin's backward-glancing angel—attendant to the catastrophic nature of history, and eager to reclaim fragments of neglected material.[92]

In an article that I will return to below, Kristin Thompson addresses 'the baffling use of language and the "Navajo" subtitles in *Socialisme*'.[93] As she notes, Godard chose to provide subtitles

[90] Silverman, 2002, p.3.

[91] Ibid., p.12.

[92] Warner, 2007, p.10.

[93] As Thompson notes, they are not in fact Navajo translations but merely designated as such by Godard. Thompson quotes an article by Samuel Bréan who 'points out that characters at various points speak Latin, Russian, German, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic, Bambara, English, and Greek. In a seemingly perverse, arbitrary gesture, Godard chose not to subtitle these stretches of dialogue in any way that could render them intelligible to someone who doesn't understand the respective languages of the characters.' It should be noted that while subsequent international releases on DVD have supplied alternative, intelligible subtitles, the original 'Navajo' translations were presented at Cannes. (Thompson, 2012)

to many of the dialogue exchanges that consisted of 'small series of words that don't add up to even the barest summary of what the characters are saying'.[94] In this we can count a correspondence to Michael Rothberg's 2009 *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. In the introduction to his book, Rothberg qoutes and praises Miriam Hansen's formulation, from an article referencing *Schindler's List*, whereby Hansen argues that the film provides a productive representation rather than a simple Hollywood mythologisation:

> 'the popular American fascination with the Holocaust may function as a "screen memory" in the Freudian sense, covering up a traumatic event—another traumatic event—that cannot be approached directly...The displaced referents...may extend to events as distant as the genocide of Native Americans or as recent as the Vietnam War.'[95]

Rothberg's inclusion of this type of correspondence in a concept of 'multidirectional memory' demonstrates his argument that representations of the Holocaust do not monopolise discourses relating to trauma but rather provide avenues and models of discussion. This formulation is suggestive of a Benjaminian model whereby Rothberg sees differing cultural memories, not in competition but, rather, residing in a constellation of correspondences. In relation to Michael Haneke's film *Caché* (France, 2005), Rothberg acknowledges the diverse readings and sometimes contradictory interpretations that the film has elicited and argues that: 'It is precisely that convoluted, sometimes historically unjustified, back-and-forth movement of seemingly distant collective memories in and out of public consciousness that I qualify as memory's multidirectionality.'[96] Godard's otherwise baffling use of 'Navajo' subtitles becomes coherent in

[94] Thompson, 2012.

[95] Hansen, 1996, p.311.

[96] Rothberg, 2009, p.17.

this reading as a reference to both broad notions of subjugation—as Thompson suggests in her observations of the ship staff: 'These servant figures have, I think, an important link to the baffling use of language and the "Navajo" subtitles'[97]—but also in his specific references to World War II and the Holocaust.

In a book which is in correspondence with Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory, Max Silverman's 2013 *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* examines the operation of cultural memory, particularly in relation to the events in Paris of 17th October 1961, through a process which foregrounds the manner in which 'now-time' and history interpenetrates:

> The 'history which returns' to shadow the present is therefore not a linear history but one that condenses different moments, and recreates each due to the connection between them, to resemble Walter Benjamin's famous 'constellation'.[98]

Silverman's term 'palimpsestic memory' is particularly evocative of visual form and references the type of superimposition that Godard uses to construct his own interpretation of the Benjamin dialectical image:

> I have chosen the term 'palimpsestic memory' to discuss this hybrid form because, of all the figures which connect disparate elements through a play of similarity and difference (analogy, metaphor, allegory, montage and so on), the palimpsest captures most completely the superimposition and productive interaction of different

[97] Thompson, 2012.

[98] Silverman, 2013, p.3.

> inscriptions and the spatialization of time central to the work of memory that I wish to highlight.[99]

In the chapter 'The Memory of the Image', Silverman discusses Godard's *Histoire(s)* in this context and details the manner in which Godard's 'montage dramatizes palimpsestic memory and proposes a politics of representation.'[100] Godard's conception of montage is, as discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to Eisenstein, of a lost art never fully realised. While this chapter is concerned with mise-en-scène, it is worthwhile examining three images from *Histoire(s)* to illustrate how Godard, through superimposition, 'dramatizes palimpsestic memory.'

Narrating Chapter 4A of the *Histoire(s)*—'Control of the Universe'—Godard calls Hitchcock the greatest creator of forms of the twentieth century and, as a succession of clips of Cary Grant, Kim Novak, James Stewart, Grace Kelly and Henry Fonda cross-dissolve, Hitchcock's voiceover explains the art of montage:

> We have a rectangular screen in a movie house, rectangular screen, and this has got to be filled with a succession of images. That's where the ideas come from, one picture after another comes up the public are not aware of what we call assembly or in other words the cutting of one image to another they go by so rapidly so that they are happy...Absorbed by the content that they look at on screen.

As Hitchcock's voice fades, Godard interjects that Hitchcock is the only one, alongside Dreyer, that has filmed a 'miracle'. On screen we are shown the miracle in question: Hitchcock's cross-dissolve of Henry Fonda's face with the face of the real murderer (the right man) in

[99]Silverman, 2013, p.4.

[100]Ibid., p.125.

Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man* (1956, US). In this version, however, Godard has superimposed Hitchcock's own face onto the frame (see Fig. 6.14 below).

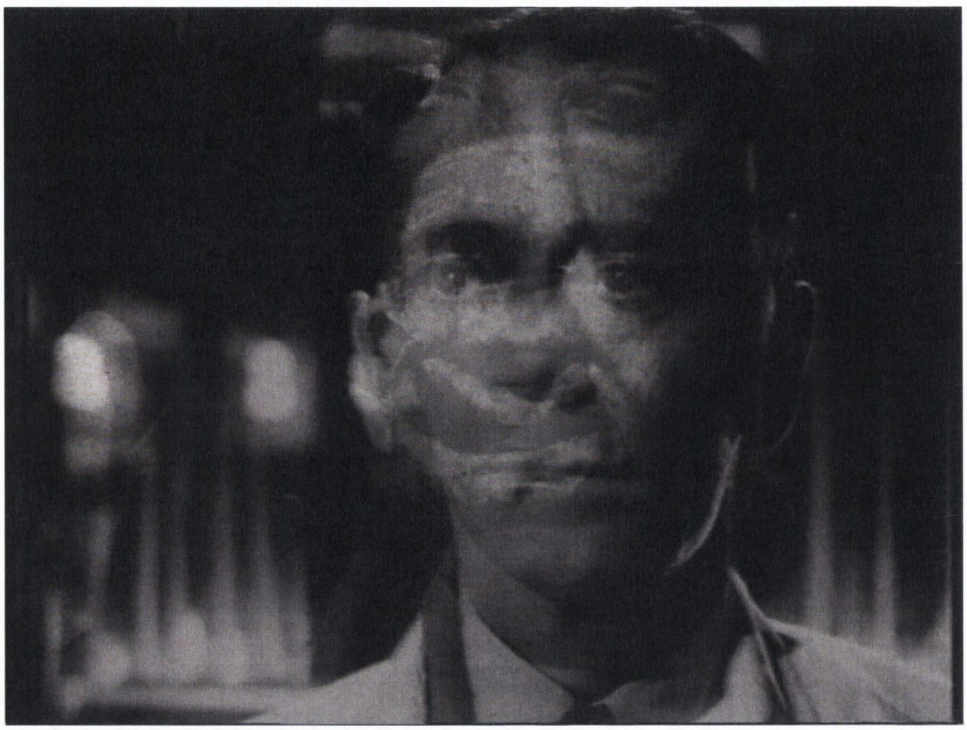

Figure 6.14: Chapter 4A. Still from *The Wrong Man* with Hitchcock superimposed. *Histoire(s) du cinema* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2008, France) 15min 2sec.

This image stands out in *Histoire(s)*, a film replete with cross-dissolves and superimpositions, as a cross-dissolved image that was not solely rendered that way by Godard himself. Godard has fashioned a collaboration with Hitchcock's own superimposition. The film is the subject of one of Godard's most famous critical essays—'The Wrong Man'— published in *Les Cahiers du Cinema* in 1957, where he had originally labelled it a miracle.[101] This moment, where Godard

[101] Godard, 1986, p.48–55. In a note on page 53, Godard describes 'two miracles happening on Fonda's face'. His description of this shot reads: 'Another close-up of Fonda looking at the picture which becomes a superimposition: behind Fonda's face appears a shot of a street with a man in a raincoat and felt hat walking towards the camera until he comes into matching close-up. His features seem about to coincide with those of Fonda, his chin to overlap Fonda's, his nose to melt into Fonda's...but no, the superimposition vanishes. And we are left with the real criminal

describes the moment of superimposition: 'The transition here is no longer a hinge articulating the story, but the mainspring of the drama whose theme it paraphrases' reveals a foundational aspect of his belief in the power of montage to condense and dramatise. Godard extrapolates on the 'miraculous' nature of the shot, stating:

> The beauty of Henry Fonda's face during this extraordinary second, which becomes interminable, is comparable to that of the young Alcibiades described by Plato in *The Banquet*. Its only criterion is the exact truth. We are watching the most fantastic of adventures because we are watching the most perfect, the most exemplary, of documentaries.[102]

To categorise this edit—this highly unnatural dissolve in a fictional film—as 'exemplary' documentary is a contentious claim, but speaks to Godard's belief in montage. The screenplay was loosely based on real events. In support of Hitchcock's interpretation Jonathan Rosenbaum suggests that 'Hitchcock's metaphysical suppositions about the meaning of the story provided a filter for his documentary rigour, thereby shaping the narrative and even, one could argue, inflecting its documentary verisimilitude.'[103] Godard is claiming, in this manner, that montage expresses truth, that 'Alfred Hitchcock proves that the cinema today is better fitted than either philosophy or the novel to convey the basic data of consciousness.'[104] Hitchcock's cross-dissolve of hero and villan articulates the film's plot in one moment and it does so with a fundamentally cinematic mise-en-scène.

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before our eyes as the camera pans with him while he attempts another hold-up. The transition here is no longer a hinge articulating the story, but the mainspring of the drama whose theme it paraphrases.

[102]Godard, 1986, p.49.

[103]Rosenbaum, 1999, p.319.

[104]Godard, 1986, p.50.

The documentary quality that Godard is claiming for *The Wrong Man* engages with the indexical aspect of the human face, its unique signification of identity. At the same time it provides an iconographic correspondence with intense ranges of emotional expression—love, desire, fear, passion, tragedy and so on. For Roland Barthes, a close-up of Greta Garbo 'belongs to that moment in cinema when capturing the human face still plunged audiences into the deepest ecstasy, when one literally lost oneself in a human image.'[105] The mise-en-scène of the close-up is all about losing oneself in cinema, being transported and intoxicated not just by the object of desire, the star, but the enjoyment of the indexical identification of the human face. Similarly, in Benjamin's formulation of the innervating effect of cinema, discussed in his *Little History of Photography*, it is the camera's ability to frame and isolate details in close-up that reveals the optical unconscious and which therefore contributes to the dismantling of second nature.[106]

Godard's brief image conveys a constellation of stories in the briefest possible montage. It is not just the miracle of Hitchcock's edit that is communicated; it also corresponds with Griffith's 'discovery' of close-up, Godard's early career and writing as a critic, the rise of auteur theory and the birth of the New Wave, Godard's lifelong dedication to montage and both his and Hitchcock's careers. Briefly, in an image that corresponds to the introduction to Chapter 4, Godard uses the same method as Hitchcock's miracle to cross-dissolve images of Chaplin and Hitler, creating a composite image that is centred on the toothbrush moustaches of the Tramp and the Dictator (see Fig. 6.15 on the following page).

All of the correspondences detailed in Chapter 5 are implicated in this image, and therefore, as we have seen, large parts of the political and cultural histories of the 20th century. Godard

[105] Barthes and Lavers, 1972, p.56.

[106] Benjamin, 1999c.

Figure 6.15: Chapter 4B. Hitler and Chaplin. *Histoire(s) du cinema* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2008, France) 15min 04sec.

is also most explicitly quoting André Bazin and his famous essay 'Limelight, or the death of Molière', where Bazin posits Chaplin as more famous than Stalin, Napoléon or Hitler. Referencing Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, he writes:

> Chaplin was sure that the myth of Charlie was more powerful and more real than that of Hitler, that their physical resemblance worked in his favour, and that Charlie would thereby drain his double of his blood, leaving only skin and bone...To unmask the dictator, Chaplin had only to remind the world of his copyright in the moustache.[107]

[107] Bazin, 1973, p.125.

If we return to Chaplin we can see his own version of this composite cross-dissolve in *The Great Dictator*. Preceding Hitchcock by some sixteen years, Chaplin's version also monadologicaly describes the film's plot whereby the lookalike—in this case a Jewish barber—stands in for the murderer (see Fig. 6.16 below).

Figure 6.16: Barber and Dictator. *The Great Dictator* (Charles Chaplin, 1940, US) 66min 48sec.

If there is one overriding and repeated message throughout *Histoire(s)*, it is of the death of cinema after its failure to address the horrors of the Holocaust. Michael Witt summarises:

> Godard suggests in *Histoire(s)* that not only is the cinema dead in the sense of having been relegated to just another distraction in the televisual/digital era, but

> that the precise moment of the start of its demise is its failure in the face of the unbearable reality of the Holocaust.[108]

Godard's claim provokes contradiction, and there is a sizable body of Holocaust-related cinema that can be cited in objection to it. Godard is not claiming that such cinema was never made but rather that, from Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog* to Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, the history of cinema has failed to document the event, primarily because it has failed to find adequate expression to describe it. Of Claude Lanzmann's nine-and-a-half-hour representational documentary, *Shoah* (1985, France), Godard says witheringly 'It showed nothing at all.'[109][110]

Godard believes his Benjaminian montage is uniquely equipped to approach the difficulty of historical representation, and that many theorists find his method in correspondence with Benjamin's own historical method has been established. Much more difficult to argue is the manner in which Godard's films may be useful in Benjamin's sense of maintaining a political and revolutionary power within a heartening story. This is not to say that this is Godard's ambition, or that he would agree with the formulation, but to point out that the creation of dialectical images does not necessarily equate to political actuality. It can be argued that there is somewhat of a similarity in Godard's montage to Eisenstein's overly stimulating symbolism, whereby the density and innervating force of his cinema overwhelms its coherency. And this also recalls the difference between the *politically useful* dialectical image—that which sublates kitsch—and the dialectic images that manifest in avant-garde cinema and other forms of philosophical discourse.

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[108] Witt, 2000, p.31.

[109] Saxton, 2008, p.46.

[110] The idea that footage of the gas chambers could provide any actual insight into the reality of the Shoah is a highly contentious claim. This question has generated vigorous debate. For one of the most cited books on the politics and ethics of Holocaust representation see Giorgio Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (Agamben, 2000)

The lack of the heartening element in Godard's most Benjaminian works results, I would argue, in an inability to have the sort of reach and actuality that Benjamin espoused.

With this brief contextualisation of Godard's established position in Benjaminian studies I turn back to mise-en-scène to examine *Socialisme* and, in particular, Godard's contrast between the interior and exterior of the ship. The first half of Godard's film is set aboard the ill-fated liner the *Costa Concordia*, which ran aground on the 17th of January 2012, less than two years after Godard released his film. Godard's ninety-seven-minute film opens with forty-four minutes set on the liner (notwithstanding Godard's now signature flashing montage interruptions), and returns to it intermittently in the last ten minutes, creating a timeline which suggests a tightly executed dialectical structure. The following analysis corresponds Godard's mise-en-scène with Benjamin's analysis of the 19th-century domestic interior and the observations made above in relation to Heinrich Heine's writing on Liszt's mise-en-scène and the transporting, intoxicating effects of both.

Kristin Thompson begins her article on *Socialisme* with the subtitle 'A floating metaphor with thirteen decks'. The metaphorical status of the *Costa Concordia* is, as this points out, perhaps the most obvious feature of Godard's film—its condemnation of frivolous consumerism is obvious. As such, we can leave aside any discussion of the thrust of Godard's message and concentrate on how the film's mise-en-scène contributes to his criticism. Godard's ship is, from the examples above, most clearly in correspondence with Bosch's ship of intemperate and gluttonous fools. The ship is populated with hordes of pleasure seekers who eat, drink and dance. While not particularly pertinent to the discussion of mise-en-scène, the ship plot does provide a correspondence to European history. Godard's plot is based on a historical event whereby in 1936 the vast majority of the gold reserves of the Bank of Spain was sent to the USSR by the Republican government in the face of the advancing nationalists; the gold was subsequently

sold to the USSR. Godard invokes this history through a fictional character, Otto Goldberg, who has access to a portion of the gold that somehow never made it to the USSR. Also on board is a detective searching for the gold and trailing Goldberg. This plot intrigue provides a link to the colportage effect of space in its pulp, comic book correspondence. Gunning describes the investigatory aspect of Benjamin's method in his essay 'The Exterior as Intérieur: Benjamin's Optical Detective', the detective is described as an emblem of surveillance, science and a new secular justice. Gunning summarises his thesis:

> As a figure of colportage, the detective enacts within a popular medium a new dramaturgy based precisely on the topologies of bourgeois space that Benjamin analyzes in his discussion of both detective fiction and the arcades: the interpenetration of public and private, interior and exterior, which exposes the antinomies of bourgeois subjectivity and experience.[111]

Socialisme opens outdoors with shots of water and an open ocean—unblemished nature—before an intertitle announces 'Des Choses' (Things), that is, material constructs. Godard follows this announcement with images of the ship's interior.

Fig. 6.17 on the following page illustrates the contrasting imagery in the first four minutes of the film and is broadly indicative of the manner in which Godard alternates between the interior and exterior throughout the film. The exterior shots are often majestic and beautiful, as is one of the images that Thompson uses to illustrate her article (see Fig. 6.18 on page 367), which she captions 'Then there is the visual side of things. How could anyone dismiss a film that has images like these?' Thompson's view recalls Meyer's description of the Eiffel Tower's 'new

[111] Gunning, 2003, p.129.

beauty, the beauty of steely sharpness' and Benjamin's descriptions of the opportunities that modernist glass and iron structures offer for framing the environment, the manner in which they trigger the optical unconscious.

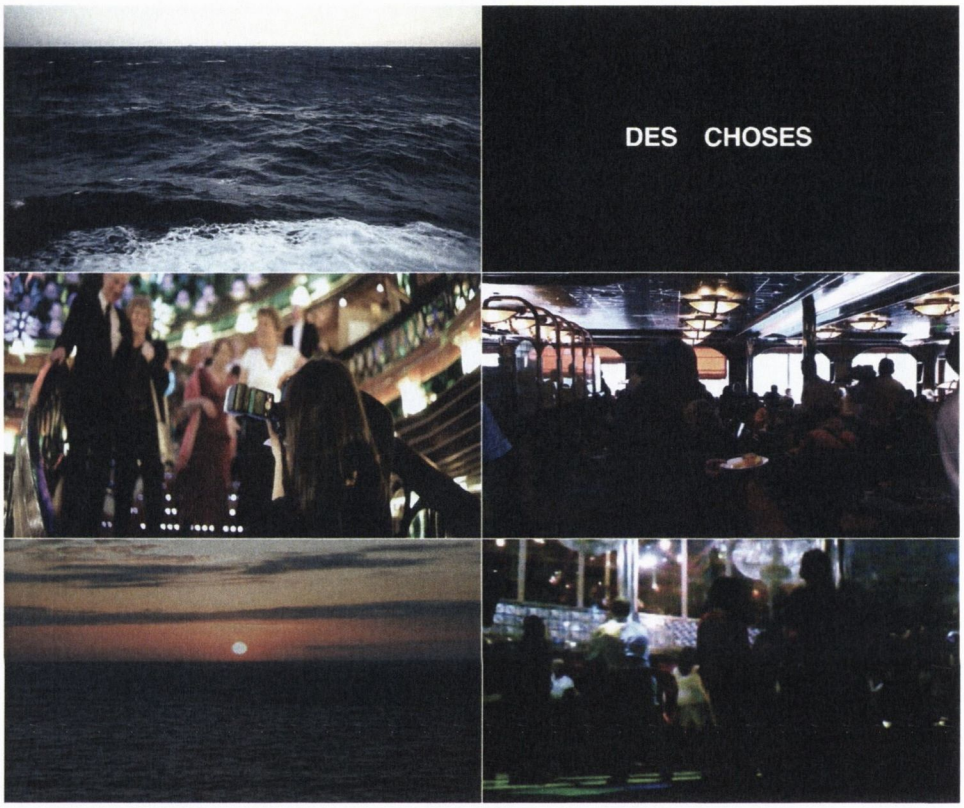

Figure 6.17: Ocean, Things, Photo, Dining Hall, Sunset, Disco. *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France) 2min 52sec. - 4min 20sec.

The interior mise-en-scène offers a stark contrast. In the first instance, Godard uses only available light for many of these shots and, as a result, the video camera compensation produces footage that is often pixelated and granular. When artificial interior light sources are inconsistent or particularly strong—as in the on-board disco—the image can alternate between granulation and oversaturation. The exterior shots never demonstrate these artifacts and are rich in colour.

Figure 6.18: Ship view from Kristin Thompson. *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France).

Godard's mise-en-scène, from the start, describes the interior as low quality and the exterior as superior (see Fig. 6.19 below).

Figure 6.19: Interior artifacts. *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France).

The framing of shots is similarly biased, as demonstrated by Thompson, the exteriors are often beautifully composed. The interior shots feature a great deal more camera movement, sometimes utilise shaking handheld effects and therefore produce arbitrary framing and composition, or Godard self-consciously chooses these angles (see Fig. 6.20 below).

Figure 6.20: Disorientating angles. *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France).

In correspondence with the discussion above of Kramer's rational courtroom mise-en-scène, Godard's exterior is a site of rational visual expression, not just in its basic compositional coherence but also in the manner in which his characters read, discuss, philosophise and communicate with each other (see Fig. 6.21 below).

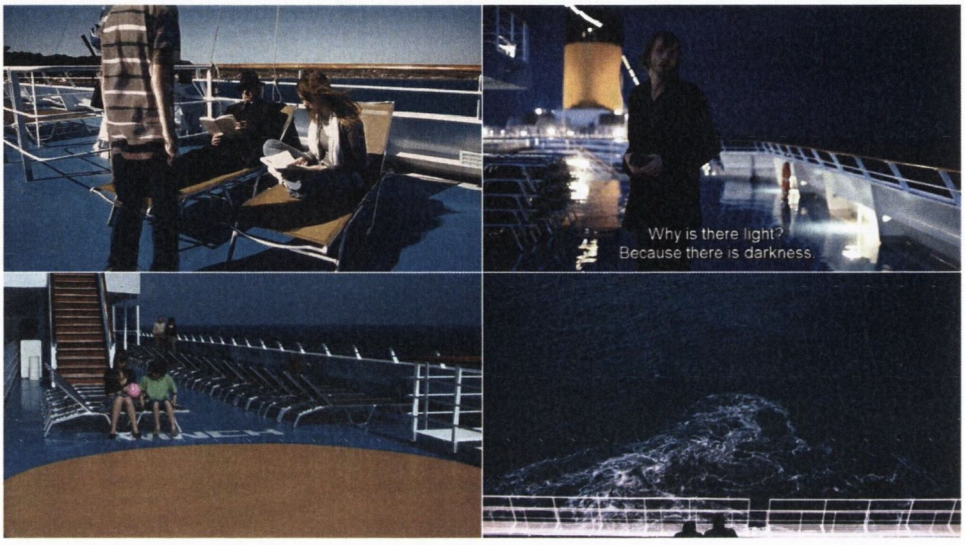

Figure 6.21: Rational environment. *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France).

The ship's interior, reminiscent of other monuments to consumer culture—the shopping mall, the casino—is a self-contained universe, offering amenities such as bars, chapels, discos and cinemas. The decor seen in Fig. 6.22 on the next page shows how the the mise-en-scène of the interior can induce an intoxication in correspondence with Heine's description of the musical performances of Liszt. Reflective and mirror surfaces multiply light sources, and might create the same 'contagion of a close hall filled with countless wax lights and several hundred perfumed and perspiring human beings'.

Godard describes a certain abject quality of this consumer palace through the constant drinking and feeding of passengers (see Fig. 6.23 on the following page). There is a sustained

Figure 6.22: Intoxicating environment. *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France).

mise-en-scène of excess in Godard's film, the passengers are designated fools by their ignorance of the beauty outside, by their existence under artificial light and by their gluttonous consumption.

Figure 6.23: Excessive consumption. *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France).

The correspondence to the concept of the *Arcades* as an exterior disguised as an interior is another obvious correspondence in the cruise liner metaphor, and an approximation of the image of the flâneur going for a walk around his 19th-century room and becoming transported by an oil painting's mise-en-scène is visible in Fig. 6.24 below) as Mr. Goldberg peruses the paintings in the ship's art gallery.

Figure 6.24: The walls of a bourgeois interior. *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France) 15min 04sec.

In a final correspondence that finds an equivalent in Hitchcock's *Lifeboat* it is, in fact, a view of the ship itself, in its breathtaking scale and iron form, framed by glass and steel, that provides the most extraordinary mise-en-scène in the film (see Fig. 6.25 on the following page).

In contrast to *Socialisme*, Hitchcock's *Lifeboat* provides a heartening story that had a well-defined political purpose, and therefore intended usefulness. Conceived to boost the war effort through 'a sharp allegory of democracy's all-but-suicidal acquiescences to Hitler's bullying in

Figure 6.25: Glass and steel frame. *Socialisme* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2010, France) 39min 38sec.

the thirties and wartime forties,'[112] an original script was written by Ernest Hemingway (though later modified and substantially altered).

Briefly, the narrative of *Lifeboat* describes a motley cast of shipwreck survivors, both passengers and crew, sunk en route from the US to England by a U-boat, which has also been sunk in the battle. Without a compass to guide them, they rely on a U-boat survivor—Willy (Walter Slezak)—whom they have taken on board to provide guidance. The plot's complications are driven by the fact that the U-boat survivor is, in fact, its captain, who secretly possesses a compass and manipulates the other passengers' discord to steer them towards a German supply ship. The sailor Kovac (John Hodiak), who is most suspicous of the German, guesses this plan, but without support from the others all he can do is sarcastically comment 'Now, we're his prisoners, and he's gauleiter of the boat, singin' German lullabies to us while he rows us to his supply ship and a concentration camp.' Eventually Willy is found out and, in an ensuing struggle, beaten

[112]Harris and Lasky, 1976, p.119.

to death and tossed overboard. The film closes with an Allied ship sinking the German supply ship and the lifeboat passengers taking on a new German prisoner. While my comments will be limited to correspondences with the effects of mise-en-scène and relations to the ship of fools, a fragmentary correspondence with Kovac's reference to a 'concentration camp' will be examined.

Lifeboat opens with the image of a ship's turret sinking in violently disturbed water, followed by a static shot of debris as it floats by. It is a remarkable sequence that briefly manages to reference timely and timeless concerns that were pertinent at the time of the film's production. The image of the American Red Cross aid from the 'U.S.A.' to 'Great Britain' establishes the Allies' shared burden, objectives and solidarity, but it also implies a benevolence, charity and duty of care on the part of the American people. The spoiled fruit carries a pathos relating to times of hardship and hunger, the chessboard references both strategic thinking and conflict, sheet music for 'Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair ' carries an indication of shared culture between the US and Britain but also a certain resilience in the face of threat, the playing cards reference chance and fate. Finally, the debris turn macabre as the body of a U-boat sailor drifts by and the camera pans up to reveal a site of total ruin. In the context of Benjaminian correspondences, the series of images provides a close approximation of a visual invitation to sift the debris of history for insights that avoid mythologising narratives. Similarly, the final shot in Fig. 6.26 on the next page can be corresponded to Benjamin's interpretation of the view that Klee's angel of history perceives—that it is looking back at the debris of history piling up. In this case it is Hitchcock's audience situated in the angel's position.

In terms of mise-en-scène, this sequence is without dialogue or action beyond these props floating in front of a camera which does not move—the sequence is aptly described as an in-shot montage—it is a moment of pure cinema in the avant-garde tradition.

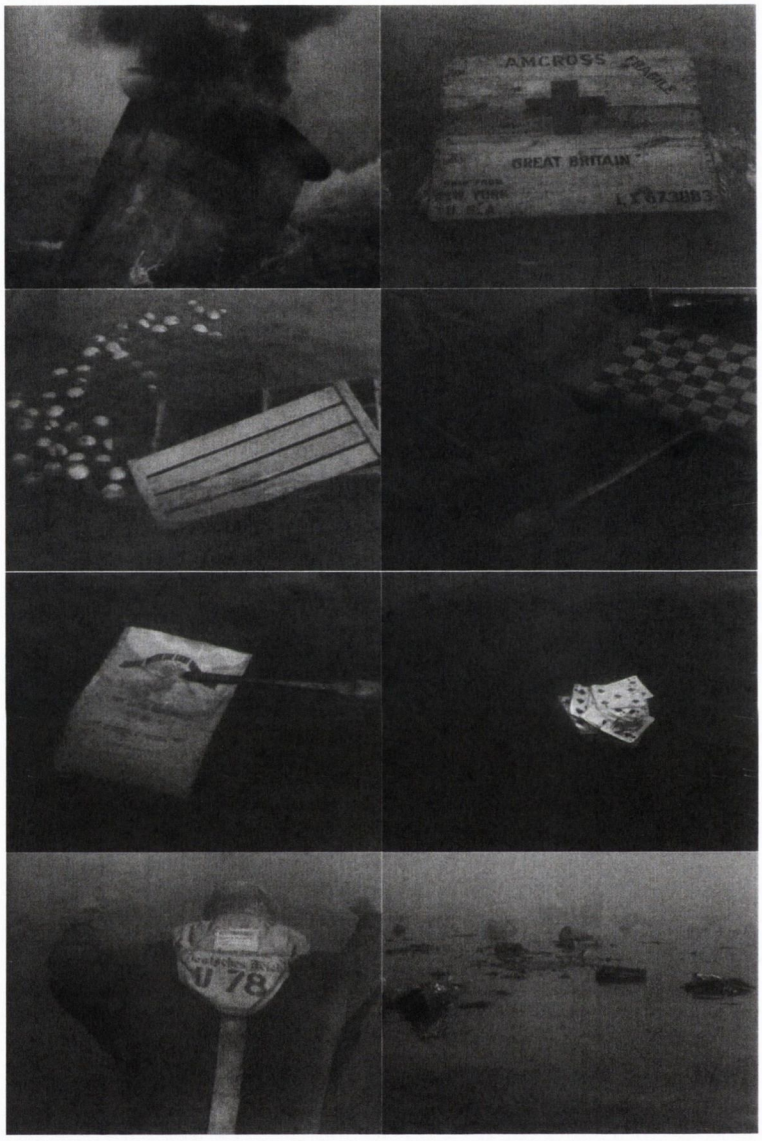

Figure 6.26: Debris of history. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US).

Figure 6.27: Composition. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US).

Figure 6.28: Uninterrupted dialogue. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US).

The consistency of camera position and mise-en-scène composition in *Lifeboat* is demonstrated in Fig. 6.27 on the preceding page. Throughout the film the camera is positioned inside the boat, with few exceptions. The actors' eyelines are also presented at a very slight angle to the camera, increasing the feeling of intimacy and engagement. Hitchcock also frequently avoids a shot /reverse shot structure, opting for longer uninterrupted shots that emphasise balanced composition and viewer immersion (see Fig. 6.28 below). Like *The Raft of the Medusa*, these choices take account of the viewer's position whereby the beholder's point of view is implicated inside the mise-en-scène—the viewer is never outside looking in but rather on board the ship of fools. And this position concurs with the stated objective of the film, described above, as a propaganda piece, whereby a viewer should strongly identify with a narrative. It also concurs with Kramer's *Ship of Fools* above and Brant's *Narrenschiff* whereby the reader is also a fool. In

correspondence with Benjamin this placement situates the audience in an equivalent position to the viewer who is carried away by the surroundings of the bourgeois apartment, or transported, like Heinrich Heine, to the mise-en-scène of Delaroche's painting. In both Fig. 6.29 below and Fig. 6.30 on the next page this sense of engagement and immersion is pushed even further with point-of-view shots that situate the viewer in the position of two of the main protagonists.

Figure 6.29: Framing. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US).

To turn now to moments that interrupt this mise-en-scène—to moments of intoxication that can nonetheless lead to illumination, as Eiland describes it—I want to briefly start with the profane love story that occurs between two of the passengers. In the most heartening moment of the film, we see Alice (Mary Anderson) reveal to Stanley (Hume Cronyn) her love affair with a married man (see Fig. 6.31 on page 379). Alice tells an emotional story of lost love, and Stanley responds sensitively and with visible concern and affection. This story of profane love leads in the narrative to their own love story—by the film's end, they have announced their engagement. Crucially, however, in this emotional state, Stanley gazes at the stars (second image in Fig. 6.31), and thereby remembers what a fellow sailor had told him about the compass positions of Venus and Mars. This is an experience of *mémoire involontaire*, a sublime moment of remembrance on which the action of the film turns—Stanley realises that Willy, the German U-boat commander,

Figure 6.30: Interrupting point of view. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US) 66min 1sec..

has been leading them off course and towards the enemy supply ship. This crucial moment hinges on this unique and interrupting point-of-view shot of the night sky. Finally, it relates to Plato's parable of the true pilot of the ship of fools as the star-gazing philosopher.

Figure 6.31: Profane love. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US) 51min 22sec.

The carefully balanced composition of the film is violently interrupted when, as the German is being accused of his subterfuge, a storm threatens to sink the boat. Here the mise-en-scène and movement is discordant and mobile and introduced by an unusual shot that does not feature the boat, showing an elemental force independent of all previous mise-en-scène. The storm is shown in isolation and exterior to the surroundings to which we have grown accustomed. In this scene, Willy displays his superior leadership abilities as the 'Allies' flounder in the water, issuing orders and ultimately rescuing them. He calls them fools:

> Willy: You fools! Stop thinking of yourselves! Think of the boat! Joe, take the sheet! Make it fast! Kovac, man the pump! The rest of you bail!
>
> Gus: What do you know? We got a Führer!

They follow the Führer's orders, and they survive. The storm cross-dissolves to a unique shot depicting the boat isolated on the ocean and then another cross-dissolve to Willy, now in full command of the boat. In the superimposition this creates, we have an image that, in the context of the above discussion, portrays a Führer in command of a ship of fools. The dialogue above makes this connection explicit; however, it is the graphic domination of the boat by Willy's body in the superimposition that communicates the grotesque implication of the narrative reversal (see Fig. 6.32 on the next page).

The next interruption to balanced mise-en-scène comes when Willy is discovered to have provoked Gus (William Bendix)—who is in a full state of madness, both hallucinating and delusional—to leave the boat and drown. The survivors turn on the German and, in an outburst of violence, savagely beat him and toss him overboard (see Fig. 6.33 on page 383). It is a remarkable display of bloodlust, and it complicates any reading of Hitchcock's film as straightforward

Figure 6.32: Führer Control. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US) 59min 28sec.

propaganda. If Hitchcock's film is meant to serve Allied propaganda purposes, the portrayal of the competent German in contrast to the disorganised and violent 'Allies' does not succeed. The German is better prepared, more cunning, stronger and more intelligent than them all, he is only defeated in an execution that undermines any idea of justice and law. We could read in the film a correspondence to a ship of fools manipulated by a malevolent leadership—the scenario proposed but also questioned by Kramer in *Judgment at Nuremberg*—but here we have a people that are, in fact, more violent than their nominal leader. In references to this mise-en-scène (shot 4 in Fig. 6.33), Francois Truffaut asks '...you show their backs huddled together from a distance. Wasn't it your intent to create a repulsive vision of them?' Hitchcock responds 'Yes, they're like a pack of dogs.'[113]

Hitchcock's narrative proposes a universal guilt and culpability, no one completely escapes blame, each of the survivors takes some part in the murder. Robin Wood see a similar subversion in all of Hitchcock's war-related thrillers, whereby male-dominated political structures are the real force of evil:[114]

> It is on this level that the bad Nazis/good Americans (etc.) dichotomy becomes thoroughly subverted: the nominal commitment to America, democracy, the free world, demanded by Hollywood, is revealed as a mere facade for a far more sweeping denunciation of masculinist politics in general.[115]

[113]Truffaut, 1984, p.156.

[114]Worth noting is the fact that a black character, Joe (Canada Lee), while he pickpockets evidence that condemns Willy, takes no part in the beating and tries to prevent Alice from taking part.

[115]Wood, 1991, p.196.

Tom Cohen, discussing *Bon Voyage*, a twenty-six-minute short made by Hitchcock for the British Ministry of Information, who ultimately rejected it, suggests that it would be naive to expect Hitchcock to make a straightforward propaganda piece:[116]

> Stop and consider. It is absurd and naive, asking Hitchcock to produce propaganda shorts, even and especially in the midst of a world war, even for an ally...Betrayal is assured, in the name of fidelity.[117]

Figure 6.33: Murder. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US) 82min 43sec.

[116]Truffaut, 1984, p.161. Hitchcock tells Francois Truffaut: 'But when it was finished, there was some disagreement about it and I believe they decided not to release it.'

[117]Cohen, 2005, p.38.

Figure 6.34: Ship of murderers, ship of fools. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US) 83min 59sec.

Once Willy has been dispatched, Hitchcock cross-dissolves from an image of a boot—used to beat Willy—to another carefully composed shot (see Fig. 6.34 on the previous page). The boot holds, for the viewer, an increased significance in that it belonged to the now dead Gus, discarded after his leg is amputated on board. This brutal signifier is thereby imbricated with the survivors in this superimposition. This time the mise-en-scène is notably different to the earlier compositions, where the characters presented a purposeful solidarity. In this instance, each character faces and looks in a different direction, a correspondence with Dürer's woodcut that depicted each passenger of the ship of fools facing a different direction. In this image, Hitchcock's survivors are expressing an inner loss and confusion and, as they realise their base inhumanity, they are depicted without any moral direction as a ship of fools (See the final shot of Fig. 6.34).

The film goes on to depict their rescue in a dramatic mise-en-scène involving a battle between an Allied war ship and the German supply ship, which is ultimately destroyed. However, as the survivors await their rescue, a young German sailor from the sunken ship is hoisted into the lifeboat. Hitchcock uses this new survivor to underline his message of universal barbarity. Charles Rittenhouse (Henry Hull), a wealthy industrialist character, protests that he should be thrown back. As Constance Porter (Tallulah Bankhead) protests that he is helpless, the German draws a gun. Before the German is quickly disarmed, Rittenhouse delivers one of the last lines of the film: 'You see, you can't treat them as human beings, you've got to exterminate them.' This final scene provides an ending that suggests a possibility of redemption in that the survivors do not kill their new captive, despite Rittenhouse's protest. This final reversal indicates some sort of illumination that has been made possible through remorse for their act of madness, like Foucault's conception of a ship of fools who *do* reach a destination, the passengers of the lifeboat have experienced some sort of deliverance from madness.

Hitchcock's film delivers an unequivocal message that did not go unnoticed at the time, a fact which Hitchcock acknowledges in interview with Truffaut: 'The famous columnist Dorothy Thompson gave the picture ten days to get out of town!'[118] Hitchcock denies that the film communicated a message that 'no one man is qualified to pass judgement on others', but rather that:

'here was a statement telling the democracies to put their differences aside temporarily and to gather their forces to concentrate on the common enemy, whose strength was precisely derived from a spirit of unity and of determination.'[119]

Nonetheless, Hitchcock acknowledges that Rittenhouse, the industrialist, 'was more or less a Fascist.'[120] Hitchcock's message is simply strategic. His film does not propose a good/bad or right/wrong comparison. Neither does he suggest that the Allies are less capable of perpetrating evil than the Nazis, in fact he suggests they are just as capable—as he says, the American businessman is a fascist. Rather that it is a common goal, a violent one, and a unity and solidarity in the pursuit of that goal, that is required for victory. What remains unsaid but shown, and what makes the film unsuccessful as a piece of propaganda, is the image of the protagonists murdering Willy. This is an image of grotesque violence which sublates—in that it takes up and relates to—the earlier images of composed solidarity. This ship of fools is shown to be a ship of murderers.

The mise-en-scène described above supports Hitchcock's message in the manner in which the Allied survivors are ideally presented in balanced compositions—solidarity is communicated in the vast majority of shots. This concomitantly reveals the manner in which the interrupting

[118]Truffaut, 1984, p.155.

[119]Ibid., p.155.

[120]Ibid., p.155.

disruptions to this ideal mise-en-scène describes crisis and danger. In the murder scene described above, the mise-en-scène changes from a state of balanced composition to frenzied confusion and back to balanced composition. Crucially, it is the threat to harmony—Willy—that motivates the interruption to this ideal mise-en-scène; equally, once he is removed, a composed ideal mise-en-scène returns. This ideal mise-en-scène is nonetheless subtly but importantly sublated by the intervening violence—every eye is averted (final shot in Fig. 6.33 on page 383).

Variations on a basic and pervasive cinematic strategy of contrasting mise-en-scène are used by Kramer, Godard and Hitchcock to create different effects. Besides the effect of the interrupting mise-en-scènes described, we can also relate the manner in which the superimpositions of both Godard and Hitchcock create 'palimpsestic images' that complicate the signification of classical mise-en-scène and formulate new historical configurations.

In a final correspondence with the Benjaminian fragmentary method, I want to briefly return to Sersen's Scenic Art Department. Within *Lifeboat* we have two flashes of newspaper in the same style as Chaplin's in *Modern Times*. The first is used to establish the identification of the viewer and also set up a sinister point of view of Willy (see Fig. 6.30 on page 378), the second is used to frame Hitchcock's traditional cameo (see Fig. 6.35 on the following page).

In the bottom left of this newspaper, an article headlined 'Earth Forces Laid To Cosmic Impulse' appears. This idiosyncratic title appears unlikely but is in fact drawn from a real headline in a 1933 issue of the *New York Times*. The article discusses a theory presented at a Washington geological conference by a Doctor Heim 'postulating the existence of mysterious cosmic impulses outside the earth, which accelerate its rotation in the manner of a grown-up giving a push to a child in a swing...' (see Fig. 6.36 on page 389). Besides the unique title of the article, there is little else to recommend it for inclusion as a dummy headline in the newspaper.

Figure 6.35: Hitchock's cameo. *Lifeboat* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1944, US) 83min 59sec.

This headline has been identified in newspaper montages in three other films—*Reefer Madness* (Louis J. Gasnier, 1936, US), *Decoy* (Jack Bernhard, 1946, US), *Miracle on 34th Street* (George Seaton, 1947, US) (see Fig. 6.37 on page 390).[121] Of these three films, Fred Sersen is credited for visual effects on *Miracle on 34th Street*, also a Fox production. *Reefer Madness* was independently produced, and *Decoy* was produced by Pathe Pictures.

The genesis and significance of this headline may be lost to history, or it may have had little actual significance beyond its unusual and faintly fantastic wording. However, its survival over at least eleven years, and across different production facilities, seems to suggest something more—this title draws attention to itself. Research of the geological subject of the article, or the

[121] Various internet commentators have noticed the headline in these three films, *Lifeboat* is a new addition. The website 'Movies and Bacon' connects the headline to these films and the *New York Times* (Unknown, 2014b).

EARTH FORCES LAID TO COSMIC IMPULSE

Dr. Heim Presents a New Theory of Mysterious Energy Acting Upon the World.

NO HERITAGE OF THE SUN

Only Thus Can Enormous Changes Be Accounted For, He Tells Geologists.

By WILLIAM L. LAURENCE.
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

WASHINGTON, July 26. — A theory postulating the existence of mysterious cosmic impulses outside the earth, which accelerate its rotation in the manner of a grown-up giving a push to a child in a swing, was proposed here today before the International Geological Congress.

The "cosmic impulse theory" was presented here for the first time by Dr. Arnold Heim, Swiss geologist and Alpine authority, a member of the Swiss Federal Council, the Swiss Academy of Sciences and other scientific societies.

Only by assuming the existence of these outside cosmic impulses which periodically furnish the earth

Figure 6.36: Earth Forces Laid To Cosmic Impulse. *New York Times*, July 27th 1933, p.19.

Figure 6.37: *Miracle on 34th Street, Decoy, Reefer Madness, Lifeboat.*

paper's author, does not turn up any useful correspondences. However, an article on page seven of the same newspaper carries the headline 'Nazi Prison Camps To Be Permanent' (see Fig. 6.38 on page 392, the full text of this article is reproduced in Appendix E on page 412). In this fragmentary correspondence from a 1933 copy of the *New York Times*, there is a description of 'Building Going On at Dachau,' of punishment cells and operating theatres. While the correspondent reports that he believed the camp served a 'pedagogic rather than punitive' function, he describes prisoners incarcerated without trial, imprisonment for political affiliation and prisoners without sentence or release dates. This is a chilling account published eight years before the US entered the war, it both validates Benjamin's methodology of foregrounding fragmentary and flashing montage and supports Steven Spielberg's admonition above: 'America, and Russia and England all knew about the Holocaust when it was happening. And yet we

did nothing about it.' From our vantage point in history we can acknowledge that 'work', 'internment' or 'concentration' camps have existed under the rule of the Spanish in Cuba, the British in South Africa and the US in the Philippines. What we must now acknowledge in the sense of our 'now-time' is subtly different; this history is not *behind* us, rather we live in a state of ongoing catastrophe where the conditions for genocide and Holocaust remain present.

NAZI PRISON CAMPS TO BE PERMANENT

Building Going On at Dachau to Convert Institution From a Revolutionary Makeshift.

VISITOR TALKS WITH MEN

They Complain That There Is Not Enough to Eat—Slip Reveals Punishment Cells.

From a Special Correspondent.
Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

DACHAU, Bavaria, July 26.—The educational concentration camps of Nazi Germany apparently are destined to become permanent institutions, designed to crush in the bud any opposition and teach the misguided the only true national religion.

Figure 6.38: Nazi Prison Camps To Be Permanent. *New York Times*, July 27th 1933, p.7.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

> There is nothing in the world that does not have its decisive moment (Il n'y a rien dans le monde qui n'ait son moment décisif') Cardinal de Retz, 1717.[1]

When Walter Benjamin took his ill fated journey from Paris to the Pyrenees he carried with him only one book, this was the *Memoirs of Cardinal de Retz*.[2] From a life filled with books, lived in libraries and from someone who bequeathed so much to the academic and literary world, there is surely something significant about this tome, if only as a final enigmatic gesture.

This piece of debris is where I would like to start my conclusions and it signals how I wish to proceed. The question I have proposed is how Benjamin's theory of the dialectical image can be said to be productive and useful in the training of perception in modernity. I have argued that the application of this theory must consider a wider body of films than it currently does

[1]Retz, 1717.

[2]Eiland and Jennings, 2014, Ebook, Paragraph 37, Chapter 11.

and I have supported this claim with Benjamin's writing on the political significance of film in its kitsch form.

The research has appropriated Benjamin's own methods in, I feel, a wide dissemination of cultural artifacts and searched for fragments of unmediated value. In the use of correspondences and constellations the research has sought revealing connections between popular culture and the catastrophe of the 20th century. In consideration of the Holocaust as a site of extreme trauma the research is grounded to Benjamin's conception of history as temporally discontinuous and experienced in relation to shock.

In consideration of the research and its application of Benjamin's techniques this conclusion is focused on what I consider the useful effect of the application. That is, Benjamin's theory of revelation through exploding montage from sifted debris must be useful and have actuality if its application to heartening film is to be considered useful.

Here I want to return to the *Memoirs of Cardinal de Retz*. Early in my research process it occurred to me that the dialectical image seemed to be in some way descriptive of a decisive moment of narrative development. This led to the recollection that a photographer had famously made a statement on a decisive moment, some simple research led me to Henri Cartier-Bresson. Bresson's 1952 book *The Decisive Moment* uses Cardinal de Retz's 17th-century philosophical system as a basis for his own photographic philosophy. Here I found the source for his own 'Decisive Moment' in the quote from Cardinal de Retz above.

In a very early chapter draft, when I was still approaching with the most basic of Benjaminian concepts, I used this quote in the same manner as above—to open the chapter. In conversation with Dr. Paula Quigley, my dissertation supervisor, she remarked that the quote was very useful but that I had not integrated it or used it sufficiently. This confirmation of the usefulness of the

quote helped me to develop the research to the point you see in front of you. The dialectical image conceived as a definitive moment allows these films to be re-conceptualised around moments of interrupting montage as decisive narrative events. This fills these interruptions with the significance they require in Benjamin's philosophy. Like most powerful ideas it seems obvious in retrospect.

While my research developed in this direction, the quote floated from draft to draft. Then, in reading the recent biography *Walter Benjamin: A Critical Life* by Eiland and Jennings, I had the sublime moment of profane illumination when I read that Retz's book was among Benjamin's last possessions 'Benjamin had with him a few toilet articles, his gas mask, and one book—the memoirs of Cardinal Retz.'[3] The insight, at the last moment, gained a new significance, and the quote found its place in a chapter.

I am not claiming this definitive moment as a further insight, the research was interested in integrating new form of cinematic representation into the Benjaminian framework. This possibility does offer a further opportunity for research and is supported, for example, by Max Silverman's reading of the decisive moment in *Caché*, discussed in Chapter 1. Rather this anecdote is offered as an illustration of how, in the sifting of debris the significance of the event or the fragment can reveal its full potential long after its historical time. In further support of the usefulness of Benjamin's method, I will briefly recount those insights which I consider significant.

What is seemingly most obvious in the dialectical image, even in discussions of counter or avant-garde cinema, is its material, concrete nature and its genesis in the object of study. My lengthy introduction was somewhat borne out of a frustration at my inability to find a clear

[3]Eiland and Jennings, 2014, Ebook, Paragraph 37, Chapter 11.

definition of the dialectical image explained in a methodological fashion. It was only through my research that this complete picture emerged. I hope this definition provides a solid basis in which other more complicated aspects of its manifestation can be investigated.

The application of Lacanian theory to each of the chapters proved very constructive. In Benjamin's basic adoption of Freudian theories of shock and given the importance of Bergson's durée in the unravelling of second nature this makes sense. The analysis of Hitchcock's films, for instance, has been engaged with these theories for many years, it seems likely that the dialectical image would prove prove useful in this context.

The manner in which even the most realist, continuity focused films examined—Chaplin's and Hitchcock's for example—form composite images in moments of cross-dissolve and fade is most in correspondence with the avant-garde expression of artists like Godard. The effective manner in which these montage effects fitted with Benjamin's own superimpositions of historical debris offers another useful avenue of research.

The repeated appearance of profane love as an expression of profane illumination was unforseen but unsurprising. This is consistent with Benjamin's reading of Breton's *Nadja* and of course the love story, the impossible contradiction of love, as it is described, is already a sublated concept that provides fertile ground for the heartening story as a mask for deeper insight.

The overall structure of identifying sometimes very discretely signalled themes within two different films—here I am thinking of the anti-Semitism of *Intolerance* compared to Strick's portrait of a hero—provided a juxtaposition of history that revealed the manner in which second nature is insidious, concretely demonstrated in the Disney film.

The methodology and applicability of the research is, I believe, very broadly reproducible and applicable within popular film studies. Despite impressive technical advances in film production, the basic language of montage has not been greatly affected. The method requires close readings and attention to cuts, rapid editing and superimpositions and these methods remain for the most part prevalent. Narratives of heartening stories and profane love are just as relevant, if not more so, in the popular imagination and Hollywood continues to supply the demand. Establishing the usefulness of the concept of the dialectical image outside popular, mass or kitsch film is more challenging. Intrinsically, Benjamin's project to sublate second nature requires a second nature to subvert. Films that are conceived as 'counter' in the first instance therefore could be considered in the context of 'negative' dialectics, whereby sublation performs a negative function, a concept developed by Adorno and Horkheimer after Benjamin's time and outside his philosophy.

In terms of the, necessarily brief, direct discussion of Holocaust history, the correspondences that were established by virtue of the overall conception did produce some interesting insight. Beyond Griffith's own intolerance, the manner in which the Holocaust is widely conceived as bureaucratic desk murder and not as catastrophic, sadistic impulse is indicative, I think, of a contemporary second nature. The same can, I think, be said of the concept of Europe as a ship of fools in the lead-up to the Second World War. The newspaper article that reveals the widely reported existence of Dachau in 1934 is, I feel, an incredible indictment of the inaction of European nations. The process whereby the dialectical image reveals these facts through Hitchcock's film is, I believe, a major recommendation for its further investigation.

Briefly, a complicated constellation that is indicative of the method and its results is the connection from the Nuremberg film of George Stevens and Ray Kellogg to Fred Sersen's Fox Art Department. The development of this chapter was initially based on the correspondence

of the opening shots of the floating debris in Hichcock's *Lifeboat* to Benjamin's debris. It was only after the maritime association of Godard's *Socialisme* with *Lifeboat* that the ship of fools image was conceived and from here that the identification of the same limited setting in Stanley Kramer's *Ship of Fools* and *Judgment at Nuremberg* was further made. In researching the screening of the camp footage at the actual Nuremberg Trial for comparison to the film, the 'E.R. Kellogg' name stood out. The connection was confirmed in the trade magazine as the same Art department employee who later took over from Fred Sersen at Fox—Ray Kellogg. So, ultimately the opening shot of *Lifeboat* was connected to the actual Nuremberg Trials via Kellogg who shot the camp footage and came to work for Sersen at the Art department where *Lifeboat* was developed. This same trade magazine revealed the full extent of the fine art practices employed in the Fox studio—and so the discussion of mise-en-scène and Benjamin's intoxicating theories. In this way, Benjamin's methodology reveals fragments of memory that reverberate in historical and cultural significance, while it has the appearance of ephemera, like children's books, this is the process that also lead to the *New York Times* article on Dachau.

If I am to offer a criticism of the applicability of the theory of the dialectical image to realist or Hollywood classicist films I would say that the above constellation somehow performs its own dialectical sublation. The loose and all encompassing manner in which correspondence and constellation performs dictates that the researcher is forced to investigate the many possible ephemeral avenues. Likewise, as Benjamin directs, with the suspension of traditional boundaries of historical time, the archaic is not only relevant but somehow present, and the present becomes similarly archaic. This leads to a vast repository of correspondences. It comes dangerously close to the manner in which Eisenstein's montage highlights everything and it is perfectly evident why the *Arcades* expanded to the extent it did. I hope I have navigated this challenge successfully.

I will leave the last word to Benjamin, who it seems, had a phrase for everything: 'It is good to give materialist investigations a truncated ending.'[4]

[4]Benjamin, 1999h, N9,a2.

Appendices

Appendix A

Intolerance Scene Timings

Table A.1: Era breakdown in *Intolerance* sorted by Act and Scene.

Story Era	Act	Scene	Start Time	Scene Length
Modern	1	1	00:00:00	00:07:00
Judean	1	2	00:07:00	00:02:48
Huguenot	1	3	00:09:48	00:04:36
Modern	1	4	00:14:24	00:03:25
Babylon	1	5	00:17:49	00:08:23
Modern	1	6	00:26:12	00:07:08
Babylon	1	7	00:33:20	00:10:29
Modern	1	8	00:43:49	00:06:58
Judean	1	9	00:50:47	00:03:33
Huguenot	1	10	00:54:20	00:01:52
Modern	1	11	00:56:12	00:04:16
Judean	1	12	01:00:28	00:02:06
Modern	1	13	01:02:34	00:07:02
Babylon	1	14	01:09:36	00:04:48
Modern	1	15	01:14:24	00:06:00
Judean	1	16	01:20:24	00:00:13
Modern	1	17	01:20:37	00:01:39
Huguenot	1	18	01:22:16	00:01:56
Babylon	1	19	01:24:12	00:14:49
Modern	2	1	01:40:09	00:01:41
Babylon	2	2	01:41:50	00:10:00
Huguenot	2	3	01:51:50	00:04:29
Babylon	2	4	01:56:19	00:04:35
Modern	2	5	02:00:54	00:08:25
Judean	2	6	02:09:19	00:00:35
Modern	2	7	02:09:54	00:02:22
Babylon	2	8	02:12:16	00:00:40
Modern	2	9	02:12:56	00:02:04
Babylon	2	10	02:15:00	00:01:00
Modern	2	11	02:16:00	00:02:29
Huguenot	2	12	02:18:29	00:01:14
Modern	2	13	02:19:43	00:01:45
Babylon	2	14	02:21:28	00:00:55
Modern	2	15	02:22:23	00:01:32
Babylon	2	16	02:23:55	00:00:22
Modern	2	17	02:24:17	00:00:31
Huguenot	2	18	02:24:48	00:00:39
Babylon	2	19	02:25:27	00:01:21
Huguenot	2	20	02:26:48	00:01:46
Judean	2	21	02:28:34	00:00:22
Babylon	2	22	02:28:56	00:00:43
Modern	2	23	02:29:39	00:00:32
Huguenot	2	24	02:30:11	00:00:41
Modern	2	25	02:30:52	00:00:42
Huguenot	2	26	02:31:34	00:01:11
Babylon	2	27	02:32:45	00:00:43
Modern	2	28	02:33:28	00:00:40
Babylon	2	29	02:34:08	00:06:34
Modern	2	30	02:40:42	00:00:45
Judean	2	31	02:41:27	00:00:19
Modern	2	32	02:41:46	00:02:21

Table A.2: Era representation in *Intolerance* sorted by scene length.

Story Era	Act	Scene	Start Time	Scene Length
Judean	1	16	01:20:24	00:00:13
Judean	2	31	02:41:27	00:00:19
Babylon	2	16	02:23:55	00:00:22
Judean	2	21	02:28:34	00:00:22
Modern	2	17	02:24:17	00:00:31
Modern	2	23	02:29:39	00:00:32
Judean	2	6	02:09:19	00:00:35
Huguenot	2	18	02:24:48	00:00:39
Babylon	2	8	02:12:16	00:00:40
Modern	2	28	02:33:28	00:00:40
Huguenot	2	24	02:30:11	00:00:41
Modern	2	25	02:30:52	00:00:42
Babylon	2	22	02:28:56	00:00:43
Babylon	2	27	02:32:45	00:00:43
Modern	2	30	02:40:42	00:00:45
Babylon	2	14	02:21:28	00:00:55
Babylon	2	10	02:15:00	00:01:00
Huguenot	2	26	02:31:34	00:01:11
Huguenot	2	12	02:18:29	00:01:14
Babylon	2	19	02:25:27	00:01:21
Modern	2	15	02:22:23	00:01:32
Modern	1	17	01:20:37	00:01:39
Modern	2	1	01:40:09	00:01:41
Modern	2	13	02:19:43	00:01:45
Huguenot	2	20	02:26:48	00:01:46
Huguenot	1	10	00:54:20	00:01:52
Huguenot	1	18	01:22:16	00:01:56
Modern	2	9	02:12:56	00:02:04
Judean	1	12	01:00:28	00:02:06
Modern	2	32	02:41:46	00:02:21
Modern	2	7	02:09:54	00:02:22
Modern	2	11	02:16:00	00:02:29
Judean	1	2	00:07:00	00:02:48
Modern	1	4	00:14:24	00:03:25
Judean	1	9	00:50:47	00:03:33
Modern	1	11	00:56:12	00:04:16
Huguenot	2	3	01:51:50	00:04:29
Babylon	2	4	01:56:19	00:04:35
Huguenot	1	3	00:09:48	00:04:36
Babylon	1	14	01:09:36	00:04:48
Modern	1	15	01:14:24	00:06:00
Babylon	2	29	02:34:08	00:06:34
Modern	1	8	00:43:49	00:06:58
Modern	1	1	00:00:00	00:07:00
Modern	1	13	01:02:34	00:07:02
Modern	1	6	00:26:12	00:07:08
Babylon	1	5	00:17:49	00:08:23
Modern	2	5	02:00:54	00:08:25
Babylon	2	2	01:41:50	00:10:00
Babylon	1	7	00:33:20	00:10:29
Babylon	1	19	01:24:12	00:14:49

Appendix B

'To the spectators of Napoléon', Abel Gance, 1927.

Ladies, gentlemen, my friends, And under the heading of 'my friends' I should like to include you all, for it is only through the secret door of sympathy that one can penetrate deeply into a work like the one you are going to have to judge

With Napoléon I have made what I believe to be a tangible effort towards a somewhat richer and more elevated form of cinema; and this has not been achieved without creating additional hostility and incomprehension towards myself. I should not like you to be mistaken on this point by forming too swift an opinion

Let yourselves go completely with the images; do not react with a preconceived point of view. See in depth; do not persist in confusing that which moves with that which trembles, discern behind the images the trace of the tears which often imbue them, or the trace of the flames of the spirit which precipitate them, violent, tumultuous, self-destructive. It is only after

this effort that you will know whether or not the journey into history that I have made you take comprises a lesson or a poem.

My aim has been to offer to all weary hearts the most wholesome, the most sustaining and the most pleasant nourishment, that bread of dreams which, to our age of harsh necessities, becomes as indispensable as the other kind, that music of light which, gradually, will transform the great cinemas into cathedrals.

I aim above all at attracting to the cinema a large section of the population which does not go there for two reasons: either because the childishness of films in general, the lack of soul in the themes, have finally disposed them against it and made them consider the cinema a cheap entertainment; or because it is ignorant of this new language of the cinema.

I did not want to serve any political party. I say simply that Napoléon Bonaparte is one of the most outstanding figures of humanity. The angle one views him from will not affect the psychological anct dramatic interest. I say simply that Napoleon was a fervent republican throughout his entire youth, and the quotation of the great historian of the French Revolution, Alphonse Aulard, is significant:

> I wish to underline that in his youth Napoleon was a man of his times, a revolutionary, a republican. What better praise could we give him?

It is not my purpose, in this film, either to judge or to prejudge Bonaparte's evolution after the Italian Campaign. It could well be that from 18 Brumaire onwards I might be among his detractors. I do not know, and what is more I do not wish to know it in this film. My Bonaparte,

up to the point at which I present him, remains in the great line of idealistic republicans, of whom Christ was the first.

From the dramatic point of view, I have made the minimum of concession to the romantic, to anecdote, and, consequently, I have had to break that elementary law of melodramatic continuity without which, it seems, the cinema cannot live. I wanted to try to prove with this version that a 'story' was not necessary in History, and I should like to believe that the thinking public will share my view.

In certain paroxysmic sequences, I created for the first time a new technique, based on the strength of rhythm, dominating the subject and violating our visual habits. I speculated on the simultaneous perception of images, not only of a second's duration but sometimes of an eighth of a second, so that the clash of my images against one another would cause a surge of abstract flashes, touching the soul rather than the eyes. Then, an invisible beauty is created which is not impressed upon the film and which is as difficult to explain as the perfume of a rose or the music of a symphony.

You must pardon my audacity in this sphere. It stems from the sincerity and ardour of my researches; and, if you do not understand entirely, do me the favour of believing that maybe your eyes do not yet have the visual education necessary for the reception of the first form of the music of light. It is the future of the cinema which is at stake. If our language does not extend these possibilities, it will remain no more than a dialect among the arts. It will become a universal language if you make the effort to try to read the new letters which, little by little, it adds to the alphabet of the eyes. Thank you.

In aiding my Napoleon Bonaparte you will aid our national film once more to take the place due to it, which should be, and soon will be, first.

Gance, A., and B. Ballard. 1990. *Napoléon*. Faber. p.xxi-xxii.

Appendix C

from *Finnegans Wake*

[*In the heliotropical noughttime following a fade of transformed Tuff and, pending its viseversion, a metenergic reglow of beaming Batt, the bairdboard bombardment screen, if tastefully taut guranium satin, tends to teleframe and step up to the charge of a light barricade. Down the photoslope in syncopanc pulses, with the bitts bugtwug their teff s, the missledhropes, glitteraglatteraglutt, borne by their carnier walve. Spraygun rakes and splits them from a double focus: grenadite, damnymite, alextronite, nichilite: and the scanning fi respot of the sgunners traverses the rutilanced illustred sunksundered lines. Shlossh! A gaspel truce leaks out over the caeseine coatings. Amid a fl uorescence of spectracular mephiticism there caoculates through the inconoscope stealdily a still, the fi gure of a fellowchap in the wohly ghast, Popey O'Donoshough, the jesuneral of the russuates. Th e idolon exhibisces the seals of his orders: the starre of the Son of Heaven, the girtel of Izodella the Calottica, the cross of Michelides Apaleogos, the latchet of Jan of Nepomuk, the puff puff and pompom of Powther and Pall, the great belt, band and bucklings of the Martyrology of Gorman. It is for the castomercies mudwake surveice. Th e victar. Pleace to notnoys speach above your dreadths, please to doughboys. Hll, smthngs gnwrng wthth sprsnwtch! He blanks his oggles because he confesses*

to all his tellavicious nieces. He blocks his nosoes because that he confesses to everywheres he was always putting up his latest faengers. He wollops his mouther with a sword of tusk in as because that he confesses how opten he used be obening her howonton he used be undering her. He boundles alltogotter his manucupes with his pedarrests in asmuch as because that he confesses before all his handcomplishies and behind all his comfoderacies. And (hereis cant came back saying he codant steal no lunger, yessis, catz come buck beques he caudant stail awake) he touched upon this tree of livings in the middenst of the garerden for inasmuch as because that he confessed to it on Hillel and down Dalem and in the places which the lepers inhabit in the place of the stones and in pontofert jusfuggading amoret now he come to think of it jolly well ruttengenerously olyovyover the ole blucky shop. Pugger old Pumpey O'Dungaschiff! Th ere will be a hen collection of him after avensung on the fi eld of Hanar. Dumble down, looties and gengstermen! Dtin, dtin, dtin, dtin!]

Joyce, James. 2002. *Finnegans Wake*. London: Faber & Faber. P.349–50.

Appendix D

from *The Republic*

Imagine then a fleet or a ship in which there is a captain who is taller and stronger than any of the crew, but he is a little deaf and has a similar infirmity in sight, and his knowledge of navigation is not much better. The sailors are quarrelling with one another about the steering — every one is of opinion that he has a right to steer, though he has never learned the art of navigation and cannot tell who taught him or when he learned, and will further assert that it cannot be taught, and they are ready to cut in pieces any one who says the contrary. They throng about the captain, begging and praying him to commit the helm to them; and if at any time they do not prevail, but others are preferred to them, they kill the others or throw them overboard, and having first chained up the noble captain's senses with drink or some narcotic drug, they mutiny and take possession of the ship and make free with the stores; thus, eating and drinking, they proceed on their voyage in such a manner as might be expected of them. Him who is their partisan and cleverly aids them in their plot for getting the ship out of the captain's hands into their own whether by force or persuasion, they compliment with the name of sailor, pilot, able seaman, and abuse the other sort of man, whom they call a good-for-nothing; but that the true

pilot must pay attention to the year and seasons and sky and stars and winds, and whatever else belongs to his art, if he intends to be really qualified for the command of a ship, and that he must and will be the steerer, whether other people like or not — the possibility of this union of authority with the steerer's art has never seriously entered into their thoughts or been made part of their calling1. Now in vessels which are in a state of mutiny and by sailors who are mutineers, how will the true pilot be regarded? Will he not be called by them a prater, a star-gazer, a good-for-nothing?

Plato. 1991. *The Republic*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Vintage Books. P.488.

Appendix E

Nazi Prison Camps To Be Permanent

NAZI PRISON CAMPS TO BE PERMANENT

Building Going On at Dachau to Convert Institution From a Revolutionary Makeshift.

VISITOR TALKS WITH MEN

They Complain That There Is Not Enough to Eat—Slip Reveals Punishment Cells.

From a Special Correspondent.
Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

DACHAU, Bavaria, July 26.—The educational concentration camps of Nazi Germany apparently are destined to become permanent institutions, designed to crush in the bud any opposition and teach the misguided the only true national religion.

This is evident at Dachau, Bavaria's big concentration camp, where considerable construction is going on that is to convert the camp from a revolutionary makeshift to an established "Nazi college."

Among the new construction work is a prisoners' hospital where everything is spic and span from the dentist's chair to the operating room, a new mess hall for the guards, who have heretofore been forced to eat in their living rooms or in the open, although the prisoners have a vast, clean dining hall and a new big swimming pool, to be used alternatively by the prisoners and the guards.

Keeping Men Busy a Problem.

According to Commander Eicke the biggest problem of the concentration camp is one common to many penal institutions, namely, to find enough work to occupy all the prisoners.

"Ordinarily only half the prisoners are employed at any one time," Herr Eicke told your correspondent, and Deputy Commander Lippert added that the average working week for the prisoners was approximately twenty hours. Both insisted that the prisoners welcomed work as a relief from monotony and said they did not remember a single case of refusal to work.

On one point both commanders were vague, namely, the problem of how they kept discipline among the prisoners, both insisting "the men keep discipline among themselves," but Herr Lippert also explained that some of the privileges granted to the other prisoners were denied to the unruly and they were forced to work beyond hours.

"The spirit of the men is satisfactory now," Commander Eicke declared. "It was not so in the beginning. Then political rivalries were still hot and there was some trouble, but not now any more."

Herr Lippert assured your correspondent that "the Communists often tell us that if they had won and had put us in concentration camps we would not have fared so well." "For instance, recently some Communists were brought in here who had attacked a transport of our men in which I participated," he added. "They badly injured some of us and one of our men lost an arm. When they arrived here they feared for their lives and did not trust the place for weeks. Now they are grateful."

Asks About Shootings.

It is necessary to point out here that the Nazi leaders have issued frequent stern warnings against the mistreatment of prisoners, which may have helped to improve the situation. But remembering notices in the press of prisoners being shot "while trying to escape" and mindful of persistent rumor in Munich that seven men have been shot at Dachau, the correspondent asked what the truth was.

"We have had two deaths here," Commander Eicke replied. "One prisoner attacked a guard with a knife and was shot down. Another, a Major who had been spying in our ranks for the reaction, killed himself in his cell here."

This revealed that besides the barracks there were disciplinary cells, which, however, were not shown to the correspondent.

The correspondent requested permission to talk with the prisoners themselves. Herr Lippert explained that ordinarily this was prohibited and that even the guards were allowed to speak to the prisoners only on matters of duty. Nevertheless he consented to call an intelligent-looking bearded man whom the correspondent picked out from a group lined up before the canteen.

The man came on the run and stood at attention. Introducing himself as a representative of an American newspaper, the correspondent asked whether he had any complaints.

Has No Complaints.

"No, I haven't any complaints," the prisoner replied. "Of course, there are two things that trouble us: we don't know how long we will be kept here and we are separated from our families. But the food and treatment are as good as can be expected and I have no complaints."

It developed that the prisoner was an electrician who up to a year ago was a member of the Hitler storm troops, had then been expelled and later had been arrested. Asked whether he knew why, he answered: "No, I don't. The warrant simply said that I was being taken in protective arrest for the sake of my health and safety."

Herr Lippert said later: "Of course, all say that they haven't done anything. But I presume that the reason that led to his expulsion also led to his arrest. As a matter of fact, 75 per cent of the men here have prison records averaging three years per prisoner."

The correspondent tried again with a group gathered around a chess table. The initial query met with a reserved silence, but finally an intellectual-looking prisoner with a Vandyke beard and glasses spoke up. "We don't get enough to eat," he said.

There was a moment of consternation, but the speaker continued doggedly:

"No, we don't get enough. If I did not get something from home, I could not stand it. And what I get from home, my family saved from its own mouth, for it cannot live on the few pfennigs that it gets for support, either."

Another prisoner spoke up:

"Yes, that is a general complaint, especially among the younger fellows who work hard," he declared.

Says Things Have Improved.

It developed that the speaker was a company leader—a peasant with a considerable flow of language that it was likely had got him in trouble. With peasant shrewdness he continued:

"But things are much improved since we got a new commander"—with an ingratiating smile at the deputy commander—"and now at least we get treatment more worthy of human beings. On hot days like today we are relieved of work, just as in the army."

The correspondent learned that Herr Eicke and Herr Lippert had been appointed to the new command recently, relieving the old commander, under whose administration Dachau had got the reputation of being one of the toughest concentration camps in Germany.

The company leader continued:

"The spirit among the men has also improved considerably. We now feel that we are comrades. Except, of course, for the criminals, whom we must keep in order.

"I am a farmer and was never a Communist, but there were so many who switched from one party to another and these were the ones who denounced us simply to put themselves in solid with the new rulers. But I do not whine about it. I served in the army, and I must say that the men there did not get along with one another as well as they do here."

The correspondent asked whether any one could add anything. One of the group replied:

"No. We can support everything our comrade said."

But a timid-looking man, probably a small artisan, came up and ventured the plea, "Please, sir, we don't know how long we must stay here and we are worried about our families."

"Yes, that's what bothers the men most," Herr Lippert put in. "It is a sort of prison psychosis and cannot be helped. On the other hand, many of the men who are due to be released beg permission to stay here because they no not know what to do outside."

Deciding to check up on the food, the correspondent asked to see the kitchen, which is a huge hall containing a double row of giant kettles laid in big brick stoves. Approximately fifty men were at work, some cooking and most peeling potatoes. From the week's menus the writer picked out a typical one for a normal day as follows:

Morning, coffee with sugar. Noon, goulash, eighty grams of mixed beef and pork, with 250 grams of white beans. Evening, 160 grams of a mixture of blood liver and bran and tea with sugar. Daily, 500 grams of bread.

Friday, however, is a fast day with the following menu:

Morning, coffee. Noon, one liter of meat soup with fifty grams of bran and two lard noodles. Evening, 110 grams of Camembert cheese and one liter of tea with sugar.

On Sundays the morning coffee is replaced with cacao.

Guards Get Same Portions.

"That is what we all eat and it is good enough and plentiful enough for me," Herr Lippert said, assuring the correspondent that both prisoners and guards get the same-sized portions. From the menu card in the kitchen the correspondent ascertained that the food was indeed virtually identical.

"Maybe being sparing of food contributes to the excellent state of health within the camp," Herr Lippert laughed.

In the hospital, in fact, the correspondent found only eight beds occupied, and both Herr Eicke and Herr Lippert assured him that the average was never above ten, or approximately ½ per cent of the total.

Talks with the two commanders convinced the correspondent that both honestly and sincerely believe that their task is pedagogic rather than punitive and that both feel sincerely sorry for the misguided non-Nazis who have not yet found the true faith.

But the final impression that the correspondent took from the camp showed that the true faith was considerably easier on those on the right side of the barbed wire. He was taken to the new swimming pool, which is the camp's prize exhibit. Here a number of Hitler guards were spending a frolicsome afternoon. And this was the only laughter that the correspondent found in this land without smiles.

Figure E.1: New York Times, July 27th 1933, p.7.

Filmography

A King in New York. Charles Chaplin. UK: 1957.

A Woman in Paris. Charles Chaplin. US: 1923.

Anemic Cinema. Marcel Duchamp. France: 1926.

Battleship Potemkin. Sergei Eisenstein. USSR: 1925.

Birth of a Nation D.W. Griffith. US: 1914.

Bloom. Sean Walsh. Ireland: 2003.

Boxing Helena. Jennifer Lynch. US: 1993.

Caché. Michael Haneke. France: 2005.

City Lights. Charles Chaplin. US: 1931.

Dr. Strangelove. Stanley Kubrick. US/UK: 1963.

Film is Rhythm: Rhythm 21. Hans Richter. Germany: 1921.

Full Metal Jacket. Stanley Kubrick. US/UK: 1987.

Hiroshima mon amour. Alain Resnais. France: 1957.

Histoire(s) du cinema. Jean-Luc Godard. France: 2008.

Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust. Daniel Anker. US: 2004.

Impressions of the old harbour of Marseille. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. France: 1929.

Intolerance. D.W. Griffith. US: 1915.

J'accuse. Abel Gance. France: 1919.

Judgement at Nuremberg. Stanley Kramer. US: 1961.

La Roue. Abel Gance. France: 1923.

Lifeboat. Alfred Hitchcock. US: 1944.

Limelight. Charles Chaplin. US: 1952.

Modern Times. Charles Chaplin. US: 1936.

Monsieur Verdoux. Charles Chaplin. US: 1947.

Napoléon vu par Abel Gance. Abel Gance. France: 1927.

Napoléon. Francis Ford Coppola.

News from Ideological Antiquity - Marx/Eisenstein/The Capital. Alexander Kluge. Germany: 2008.

Night and Fog. Alain Resnais. France: 1955.

October. Sergei Eisenstein. USSR: 1927.

Passages from Finnegans Wake. Mary Ellen Bute. US: 1965.

Paths of Glory. Stanley Kubrick. US/UK: 1957.

Rear Window. Alfred Hitchcock. US: 1954.

Ship Of Fools. Stanley Kramer. US: 1965.

Shoulder Arms. Charles Chaplin. US: 1918.

Socialisme. Jean-Luc Godard. France: 2010.

Symphonie Diagonale. Viking Eggeling. Germany: 1924.

Synchromy No. 4: Escape. Mary Ellen Bute. US: 1937–38.

The Circus. Charles Chaplin. US: 1929.

The Eternal Jew. Fritz Hippler. Germany: 1940.

The Great Dictator. Charles Chaplin. US: 1940.

The Reality of the Virtual. Ben Wright. US: 2004.

The Seashell and the Clergyman (La Coquille et le clergyman). Germaine Dulac. France: 1926.

The Tramp and the Dictator. Kevin Brownlow and Michael Kloft. UK: 2002.

The Wrong Man. Alfred Hitchcock. US: 1957.

Three Little Pigs. Burt Gillett. US: 1933.

Three Songs for Lenin. Dziga Vertov. Russia: 1934.

Train Pulling into a Station. Auguste and Louis Lumière. France: 1895.

Ulysses. Joseph Strick. US/Ireland: 1967.

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