DAVID LYNCH – THE ART OF THE REAL

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

— THOMAS BECKER —

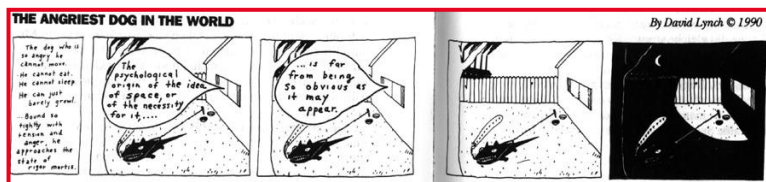# UNDERGROUND GOES HOLLYWOOD: OSCILLOGRAPHY OF A SCHIZOGAZE..

Fig. 1: The Angriest Dog in the World

Le cinéma n'est pas encore inventé.
André Bazin

I. THE SAME BUT NOT THE EQUAL CHRONOTOPES

From 1983 to 1992, David Lynch produced the cartoon *The Angriest Dog in the World* [*Fig.1*], which appeared mainly in underground magazines. Over these nine years the cartoon repeated the same four minimalist panels: Three presenting a scene by day, the last by night. In each dog growled in the garden and factory chimneys smoked in the distance. The directors of the French Nouvelle Vague were also comic enthusiasts, in particular Alain Resnais who republished the original American version of *Dick Tracy* in France in the sixties. However, no director of the Nouvelle Vague created an original comic or a cartoon.

The formal structure of the cartoon appears at first to conform to the normalized genre of the humoristic cartoon: It is composed of four panels, as seen, for example, in the famous *Peanuts* of George Schulz. Even the first humoristic manga in the early 20th century used the four-panel standard. The arrangement of Lynch's cartoon thus appears to be conventional and quickly reproduced. Yet these strips were not the relaxing foreplay of an underground artist before turning to film. The strip began long after *Eraserhead* and was still running in 1990, even as he won the Golden Palm at Cannes for *Wild at Heart*.

Moreover, some of the strips are not only humorous, but deal with the understanding of space, sound and time. In two speech balloons of this strip [*Fig.1*], we read: "The psychological origin of the idea of space, or

of the necessity of it,... [second panel:] is far from being so obvious as it may appear." Then we see the last two panels without any representation of sound but with the clear hint of the progression of time: The final panel shows the same garden at night. In the first three panels, the representation of space is uniform, whereas the panels differ in the representation of time. The last two panels differentiate by time and space, but without any representation of sound. The representation of sound by the balloons in the first two panels thus suggests for the reader a procession of time. The abstraction of space of the final panel – in which only a small part of the garden is illuminated by the light of the house – suggests the idea of a wider space no longer limited by the fence or factory. The abstraction of the representation produces a paradoxical sense of an endless space within the frame of a picture, like we shall see more explicitly, some shots of *E r a s e r h e a d*. [*Fig. 2*]

Fig. 2: *Eraserhead*

Fig. 3: *Eraserhead*

Fig. 4: *Eraserhead*

U N D E R G R O U N D G O E S H O L L Y W O O D : O S C I L L O G R A P H Y O F A S H I Z O G A Z E .

T H O M A S B E C K E R

Each strip repeated the same introductory blocktext implying the reader's task to see dead or living pictures: "The dog who is so angry he cannot move. He cannot eat. He cannot sleep. He can just barely growl... Bound so tightly with tension and anger, he approaches the state of rigor mortis." The motive of the paradox of a living being that is more than dead also appears in many of Lynch's underground films: the fried chicken in *E r a s e r h e a d* that starts to move and to produce bodily fluids on the plate when the protagonist Henry tries to cut the chicken [Fig. 3]; or the grandmother who cannot move and speak any longer but at least smoke [Fig. 4]. Even in his Hollywood film Blue Velvet there is the corrupt policeman at the end of the film who is almost dead and still standing upright at the same time [Fig. 5], while in *T w i n P e a k s* special agent Cooper is shut down and at the same time talking with the clerk of the hotel about a glass of milk. This trope is a key to the relation between stillness and motion. But furthermore it is not only the motive of the threshold-experience between life and dead. On the one hand, it is a metaphor for the threshold-experience of postmodern art

Fig. 5: *Blue Velvet*

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production under the condition of a new intermediality where the distinction between author and reader remains unclear. On the other, it is a metaphor for the capitalistic structure triggering permanent thresholds between destruction and production of new social spaces by new media of communication, as we shall see.

Moving pictures in the cartoon can be produced only by the projection of a living reader. In *The Angriest Dog in the World* nothing can move but the dog can become even more than dead in the state of rigor mortis: The more we see the cartoon as a moving film with a linear sequence of four panels, the more the dog passes into the stiffness of rigor mortis. The dog remains a static image, contrasting with the representation of temporal progression by the speech balloons in the first two panels . Thus, the first two panels suggest not only the simple contrast of time and a timeless space, but a contrast of different time-spaces, in the words of Mikhail Bakhtin, different chrontopes. Whereas diachronic time is implied by the speech balloons of human voices, the unmodified visual iteration of the dog suggests a synchronic and linear time. The representation of the dog combines stillness and movement, static and living picture. Moreover, the dog appears to be an example of a repetition producing unexpected important differences by *r e d u c i n g* differences – reflecting Gilles Deleuze's concept of the *répétition différentielle*. In comic studies the notion that a comic-page can always be red in two directions is well established: As a diachronic story and as a synchronic overall picture of the page's breakdown. [1] However a cartoon does not produce the illusion of time and movement through a technical device. We never see real movement: movements are only a viewer's mental projection onto the pictures. In contrast, the illusion of movement in the cinema is controlled by an apparatus, generally unseen by audience. Lynch's cartoon makes us aware of what we forget as an audience of a film: we do not see real movement, but only the illusion of movement made by the rapid series of still images.

What Walter Benjamin [2] terms the apparatus-free aspect of cinema is similar to Jean-Louis Baudry's dispositive of cinema, which makes the audience of a film accept the reality of the movement as real, much like the humans of Plato's cave do in considering the projected shadows as real. [3] Although Benjamin tends to consider the apparatus as responsible for this result, Baudry uses Plato as evidence for a concept of cinema before the invention of the cinema: the incorporated unconsciousness of the viewer producing living pictures did exist of course long before. Christian Metz termed this the two bodies cinema due to the double projection by an apparatus and by the viewer. The illusion of movement is produced by the automatic and subconscious action of the viewer, who thus forgets the *d o u b l e* projection in time. [4]

Although Metz points out that Deleuze and Guattari distinguish the unconsciousness from the preconsciousness – in contrast to Freud who understood the preconsciousness as only a social incorporated

1   GROENSTEEN, THIERRY: *SYSTÈME DE LA BANDE DESSINÉE*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1999: 21 – 37.

2   BENJAMIN, WALTER: *"DAS KUNSTWERK IM ZEITALTER SEINER TECHNISCHEN REPRODUZIERBARKEIT"*, in: Rolf Tiedeman, Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Eds.), Walter Benjamin. *Gesammelte Schriften. Vol II*, 2: Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1974: 495.

3   BAUDRY, JEAN-LOUIS: *"LE DISPOSITIF: APPROCHES MÉTAPSYCHOLOGIQUES DE L'IMPRESSION DE RÉALITÉ"*, in: *Communications* 23 (1975): 59 – 61, especially 62.

4   METZ, CHRISTIAN: *"LE SIGNIFIANT IMAGINAIRE"*, in: *Communication*, 23 (1975): 36.

history[5] – Deleuze overlooked this difference in his film theory when considering a time-image (stillness) as representation of time itself.[6] According to Deleuze, the time-image should in be in opposition to the time of action cinema. But even if we see a stillness in a film which could be considered as an example of a strong opposition to the time in the action cinema it remains always an illusion of time and not a representation of time itself. In a cartoon we see real stillness and the repetition of stillness, in a film simply a during stillness in time without the repetition of stillness. Thus, even the stillness of a time-image is an illusion and not a real time. Such an idea is not in contradiction with, but rather very much in the essence of 'répétition différentielle', as we shall see. Moreover Metz himself does not follow his own argument when he declares the cinema as a specific institution because of the apparatus.[7] At any given moment a field of art production can have a very specific history, which can no longer be understood as a reflection or simply as ideology of the society, so that an uninformed view cannot understand the avant-garde position of this field. Indeed, there will be always naïve reception, but then this is either a reception dominated by the mass market, or a play on the naïve view by an avant-garde cinema. Here the avant-garde uses a double optics to play with codes of high and low culture and thus distinguish itself *f r o m* the naïve viewer.[8] Lynch's cartoon partakes is just such a play with a double code – ostensibly naïve like a mainstream cartoon, but nevertheless carrying complex hints to the illusion made by a sequence of pictures in time.

When Lynch's dog is finally dominated by the diachronic time created by the last two panels, the representation of its body and sound all but disappear into the darkness. The dog allows us to see what we forget during the narration of a film: The coincidence of an automatic apparatus and the automatic action of the living body leave the viewer quite unaware of the role of his own body in producing both the illusion of movement and of stillness. Although Lynch's cartoon gives some degree of insight for the interpretation of his films, a film cannot be understood simply as a translation of a comic into moving pictures, due to the specific context of cinema's double projection.

It is well known that Lynch used lightening effects with a sharp contrast in *E r a s e r h e a d* as a reference to Orson Welles. Yet one must return to André Bazin to clarify that ways in which Welles distinguished himself from the mainstream of Hollywood.[9] At the time of *C i t i z e n   K a n e*, Bazin noted that cinema was developing techniques for greater sharpness .[10] This favored quicker cuts. But Welles chose to reduce the speed of cuts and the movement of the camera, thus distinguished himself from the mainstream. Even the classical shot/reverse shot pattern was suspended during some dialogues in *C i t i z e n   K a n e* [Fig. 6].

The tendency to oppose the mainstream appears today in terms three-dimensional filming. The greater the illusion of space that can be reproduced in the mainstream cinema, the quicker the cuts which reduce the viewer to a pure, bodiless eye capable of anything: flying, springing, jumping great distances at great speed and so forth. Three-dimensional filming suits action cinema. Mainstream cinema is therefore responding to a metaphysical desire of the visual arts dating at least to Leonardo da Vinci. The renaissance painter claimed that it is the eye that makes mankind godlike. It is through his eyes that man can be a pure, abstract spirit, foregoing the body in order to take any position in the world like a bodiless god. Welles was one of the first to establish a distinction against this metaphysical desire of the mainstream cinema. Moreover, Bazin suggests a way to understand how an avant-garde cinema could be able to make aware the double projection as a two bodies cinema. His preference for long sequence shots is well known and often interpreted as a sign of his preference

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5   M E T Z ,   „ S I G N I F I A N T   I M A G I N A I R E " , p. 23.

6   D E L E U Z E ,   G I L L E S :   *D A S   Z E I T - B I L D .   K I N O   2* , Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1997, 53 – 63.

7   M E T Z ,   " S I G N I F I A N T   I M A G I N A I R E " , 53: „[…] l'outillage cinématographique est cette instance grâce à laquelle l'imaginaire se retourne en symbolique, grâce à laquelle l'objet perdu (l'absence du filmé) devient la loi et le principe d'un signifiant spécifique et institué."

8   B O U R D I E U ,   P I E R R E :   *R A I S O N S   P R A T I Q U E S .   S U R   L A   T H É O R I E   D E   L ' A C T I O N* , Paris: Seuil 1994: 77: „Ce qui se produit dans le champ est de plus en plus dépendant de l'histoire spécifique du champ, et de plus en plus difficile à déduire ou à prévoir à partir de la connaissance de l'état du monde social (situation économique, politique, etc.) au moment considéré. […] De même qu'il n'y a plus de place du côté de la production, pour les naïfs, […] de même il n'y a plus de place pour une reception naïve, de premier degré […]."

9   B A Z I N ,   A N D R É :   *" M O N T A G E   I N T E R D I T "* , in: *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* Paris: Cerf 2007: 61.

10   B A Z I N ,   A N D R É :   *" É V O L U T I O N   D U   L A N G A G E   C I N É M A T O G R A P H I Q U E "* , in: *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* Paris: Cerf 2007: 76.

Fig. 5: *Citizen Kane*

for realistic cinema, and thus does not appear to reference Lynch's film language. But in his discourse on Murnau's silent film *T a b o u*,[11] Bazin argued that the sequence shot of a ship without a tracking camera would be a substitute for the sound of a film. There is just Bazin's explanation of his favor for realism. But one could suppose that the sequence shot without tracking camera strengthens the observer's feeling for his real body-position in space. Therefore it triggers the subjectless and unconscious everyday activity of our perception to construct a spatial context with the sonic surrounding. There is not only a diegetic realism of the body in the pictures of a film, but also a non-diegetic realism of the body in front of the screen, which allows us to understand the relation of Bazin's statement about Murnau and Welles.

Much in the way that Michel Foucault inverted Pythagoras' famous metaphysical statement – that for a modern subjectivity the body is not the prison of the soul but rather the soul of the body[12] – so the films of Lynch also tend to reveal the bodiless eye in cinema as the prison of the body. However, Foucault's suggestion does not match Baudry's concept of the desire of cinema. Foucault criticized the theory of power by psychoanalytic theories – especially the Lacanian aspect – which, he suggested, are all inclined to a theory of determination with no escape. Foucault claimed an historical analysis rather than a theory of power to avoid the tendency to over theorization.[13] If one takes, for example, the interpretation of Baudry or Metz – which are both motivated by the Lacanian theory of desire – Metz does not see that not only the observer's desire to self mirroring by the cinema can be criticized as a subjectivity's imaginary but the critique itself as well because such critique exclude every historisation of the cinema and the theory as well. Such a theory tends to strengthen the will to power by the critique of it, if it assumes that the law (according to Lacan: the significant) will always be confirmed by its opposition, so there is never a way out of determination by the theory of the mirror-gaze. This theory appears to be a logic of suspicion which is able to confirm the all mighty theoretician – once more like Plato deeming all the humans to be caught in the cave as long they do not accept his theory of forms. The modern cave is modern subjectivity and the desire for self-realization, and thus psychoanalysis appears as the most suitable theory for this cave.

If we want to understand the two body's cinema in a new way, a specific history of the cultural preconsciousness through Bourdieu's theory of habitus and field history will supplement Foucault's late distinction against the tendency of Psychoanalysis to a theory of a strong determination by the mirror-gaze. Lynch did not simply continue the opposition to mainstream cinema with the same formal language of his

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11   BAZIN, ANDRÉ: "*ÉVOLUTION*": 67.

12   FOUCAULT, MICHEL: *SURVEILLER ET PUNIR. NAISSANCE DE LA PRISON*, Paris: Gallimard 1975: 34.

13   FOUCAULT, MICHEL: *HISTOIRE DE LA SEXUALITÉ. VOL. 1.: LA VOLONTÉ DE SAVOIR*, Paris: Gallimard 1976; concerning the Psychoanalysis: 107; concerning the consequence of theory of power declaring there is no way out: 109.

predecessors in his underground films. In *E r a s e r h e a d* , Lynch even stops the movement of the camera and amplifies the abstract space. This triggers the viewer to produce the idea of space beyond the frame of the screen like the black background in *T h e   A n g r i e s t   D o g   i n   t h e   W o r l d* , although the striking contrast of light and shadows counters this effect by focusing on details and by producing clear lines between darkness and white surfaces on the screen. Indeed, Lynch does not try to prevent the viewer's body from its absorption by the bodiless eye like Murnau or Wells, but rather seeks to reveal and to strengthen at the same time the parasitical combination of the automatic activity of the viewer with the automatic apparatus of the cinematic apparatus. It is a form of an undecided oscillating schizogaze, which fulfills and obstructs the metaphysical desire of a bodiless eye at the same time: The more the gaze feels involved in the space of the film, the more the viewer's body feels to be in the spaces of the film and outside as well.

We can also find evidence of such an undecided schizogaze in the mainstream of horror genre. There is always the standard effect in the horror genre in which the subjective camera gives us the gaze of the aggressive monster just before the first attack, although we still identify with the victim due to that individual's terror. Therefore, our identifying projection is in the body of the (diegetic) attacking viewer and in the (diegetic) observed person at the same time. This schizogaze of the horror genre oscillating between viewer and viewed occurs only briefly in a thrilling moment, intensifying the desire for the appearance of the monster itself or to see the murder. It tends to determine the schizogaze to a paranoid gaze that terminates the oscillation or the experience between the observer and the observed subject. In other words, it favors a paranoid gaze, i.e. the fear of which is directed towards only one purpose: to reiterate the question of the creature's appearance and subsequent actions. It therefore quickly returns to the desire of a sovereign subjectivity for a bodily cinema that is unaware of the projecting activity of its own (non-diegetic) body.

The analysis of this kind of oscillating schizogaze allows us to combine the formal art language of Lynch's films with some of the motives of his narration from the first underground productions until his late LA Trilogy. Lynch's films eliminate the clear purpose of the paranoid gaze in order to get an undecided schizogaze. Generally it is the (diegetic) viewer (subjective camera) who is threatened by the viewed situation or person, as shown, for example, in Jeffrey's covert viewing of Frank's sexual proclivities in *B l u e   V e l v e t* . Lynch often conceals the cause of the fear generally supported by the sound, so that the image does not correspond with the uncertain object of the fear; yet there nevertheless the analogy between the audience and the gazing (diegetic) subject in the horror film remains – as in, for example, Nikki in *I n l a n d   E m p i r e* seeing herself acting in an earlier scene of the film. This schizogaze is not the binary opposite of a paranoid fear, it rather is an undecided oscillation between a fearless schizoid dispensation with the sense of a signifier's uncontrolled chaining (such as time paradoxes or confusion of a diegetic and non-diegetic presence) and the paranoid suspicion directed by an invariant, but never really explained, object of fear. In the words of Metz, the almighty gaze of the audience that now generally has an enduring awareness about itself, becomes objectified and at the same time nevertheless maintains the identification with (diegetic) figures.

In *T h e   G r a n d m o t h e r,* an underground film that predates *E r a s e r h a e d* , Lynch uses sound to establish a sense of space that does not correspond to the visually represented space, because this film lacks the depth of sharpness. Very rarely do the pictures correlate with the sound and, when they do, the sound of the persons seldom consists of spoken words. The grandmother communicates with a whistling noise and the parents bark like aggressive dogs. Although there is music, it resembles a sound producing space in the sense of Sergej Eisenstein. Eisenstein as it is generally known did not accept the sound in film, with one exception: only if the sound can create a sense of space through a surrounding noise. The sound should not serve the narration, only the idea of space. In *T h e   G r a n d m o t h e r* , we see the bodies of the actors in their exactly represented space, but the sound creates an indeterminate space that does not correlate with the diegetic space of the actors. The visible space of the film and the sense we have for a space that cannot be focused within the frame of the screen are quite different things, much like the two positions of viewing and feeling in the horror genre – but here once more without a claim to reveal the object of fear.

There is another practice to demonstrate the undecided schizogaze of a two bodies' cinema in *T h e G r a n d m o t h e r* : the combination of the film's indexicality with animation. The Grandmother opens with an animation that shows the process of fertilization and birth in an abstract manner [Fig 7]. Real actors – and thus

the transition from animation to moving pictures of a film's indexicality – appear a as the mother earth give birth to the parents of the child. They emerge like plants, but become more and more animal like, transforming into barking dogs. [Fig. 8]

Fig. 7: *The Grandmother*

Fig.8: *The Grandmother*

The fertilization itself is represented as an abstract explanation of life echoing the drawings of medical or botanical books. This abstract representation anticipates the bodiless viewer because it represents the anatomy as seen by a surgeon under a microscope. In other words:

The abstract drawings of the body's inner world make forget the armed eye which is a condition to get the knowledge of the body's inner geography. Moreover, in the abstract representation of birth there is no clear distinction between plant, animal or even mechanical, beyond or within the body or apparatus, and life itself. The lack of indexicality enables the animation to have choice of references between signs and signification. Life, instruments, cyborgs, plants and animals establish a network amongst one other like a rhizome. But with the birth and the transformation into the indexical film, the rhizome ends as animal life emerges a clear hierarchy. The dogfather attacks his own child to maintain the hierarchy.

Fig. 9: *The Grandmother*

In theatre there is only one single standpoint from which one cannot see the apparatus producing the illusion, according to Benjamin's analysis of the apparatus-free aspect in cinema. Special practices such as cuts and shots ensure that the viewer is always in this ideal standpoint. Indeed, this apparatus-free aspect is a response to the metaphysical desire for a pure bodiless eye. Yet, the animation in Lynch's *T h e G r a n d m o t h e r* makes us not only aware of the apparatus through the aesthetics of stop motion, it also reveals, in contrast to Benjamin's analysis, that postmodern cinema could be in harmony with the revealed

apparatus aspect by virtue of the bodiless eye walking through the represented body itself. This produces an awareness of the permanent shifting boundary between the apparatus and vital energies; and, therefore, the collaboration of the automatically functioning body of the viewer with the automatic apparatus in cinema.

This undecided schizoplay of shifting boundaries is constitutive even for the difference between botanical and animal life within the narration. The parents of the child are shown as aggressive dogs, eating flesh although the child belongs to the realm of botanic life. The father represents the controlling subjectivity by punishing the child for bed-wetting. Nevertheless, the punishment is misguided because the wet bed is the best setting to plant the seed, which becomes a form of a rhizomatic tree giving birth to the grandmother [Fig. 9]. The grandmother does not exist in a time before the child, but the child rather brings the grandmother to life by planting a seed in his bed.

The botanical life represents, with its roots and branches, a rhizomatic network unaware of any hierarchy. It even inverts the hierarchy of a linear logic of time in the linearity of the filmed story. The vegetative network is beyond the controlling subjectivity of the father, and thus the child brings about the birth of the grandmother against a linear logic and in defiance of the punishment. But the vegetative life is not only a symbolic representation of a subjectless life. Rather, it represents a higher virtuality of life, a higher possibility of productivity that includes all possibilities for individual beings. Therefore, the dogfather attacks the child from the first day on. His hierarchy is not only an effect of the virtuality of a rhizomatic production, but constantly threatened by the rhizom as well.

II. CINEMA AS A PROBLEMATISATION OF THE CAPITALISM'S ONTOLOGY

With the schizogaze and rhizome, I refer of course to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's critique of classical psychoanalysis and capitalism, but not to Deleuze's analysis of modern cinema. However, one could even understand their critique of classical psychoanalysis as a critique of Deleuze's own theory of cinema. Deleuze and Guttari criticized Sigmund Freud's concept of psychoanalysis as being dominated by the paradigm of neurosis in order to support modern capitalism. Moreover, the schizotype could not be completely integrated in Freud's normalizing way of healing. [14] The schizotype attacks the representation itself and therefore constitutes a specific difficulty for scientific analysis. In particular, the narration of Oedipus as the schematic matrix of the permanent and same structure of a family novel in the neurosis can be understood not only as the very opposite of the schizotype, but as a will to control subjectivity and therefore as a will to power. In light of this Nietzschean critique of the will to scientific seriousness, one could ask whether the clear direction of avant-garde cinema towards the objective time-image in contrast to a linear narration of the mainstream cinema is, as Deleuze suggests, a critique of the conventional mass market.

In his theory of cinema, Deleuze inverts the Bergsonian theory of 'la durée' by stating that exactly what Bergson rejected as a misunderstanding of enduring time in the cinema, could be considered as a deliverance of Bergson's vitalism from a metaphysical conception of time. The mechanic division of time with still images in order to produce different times in cinema is not a simple mechanical, and therefore mistaken abstraction as Bergson assumed, but the best starting point to eliminate the traditional metaphysic concept of time. It demonstrates that there is neither an idea, as ancient philosophy assumed, nor subjectivity, as modern philosophy since Descartes has assumed, that founds the unity of movement in time, except for the division of time by time itself. Modern cinema demonstrates the exact opposite to the metaphysical tradition, which always sought the unity of movement with something other than time itself. The mechanical division of time within time itself can give us the real representation of time, and thus the basis for the argument against the Bergsonian refusal of the cinema.

But the rest of Bergsonian idealism remains. If we take Deleuze's and Guattari's critique of capitalism seriously, then an avant-garde cinema can only oppose the mass market by eliminating clear purposes. An

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14 DELEUZE, GILLES; GUATTARI, FÉLIX: *ANTI-ÖDIPUS. KAPITALISMUS UND SCHIZOPHRENIE I*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1977: 65 – 177.

image of real time cannot therefore correspond to his theory of a body without organs – a rhizomatic body without a clear direction of organization – that adapted from Artaud in his critique of capitalism. Deleuze turned to a vitalism that lacked the Bergsonian opposition towards machines. Indeed, this complements Lynch's notion of a permanently shifting boundary between life and apparatus – but not with Deleuze's theory of the time-image as a claim of modern avant-garde cinema. Although he criticized the revitalizing of uncontrollable capitalism by establishing clear purposes in the symbolic representation analogous to his critique of Psychoanalysis, a time-image nevertheless represents a claim to a single direction. And as we saw above, time can never be real in cinema. The division of time by the repetition of timeless dead pictures produces a rhizomatic illusion of time and space, but not an image of a real time.

Deleuze was not the first to call the cinema a philosophical problem. If there is a philosophical position from which to understand the subjectless creativity of the body appropriating time, then we have the late Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who argued against Sartre's strong subjectivism. There is a form of ontological (preconscious) compliance of the automatically active body with space and time, a subjectless grounded time and space in our body before every conscious differentiation or meaning by a 'cogito'. He also saw the cinema as a proof for this onotological unity of body and objective world.[15] Pierre Bourdieu adopted Merleau-Ponty's theory for his own concept of habitus, which is often misunderstood as a mere custom. 'I said habitus and not habit', Bourdieu always argued against this misunderstanding. It is, rather, a creative and subjectless appropriation of objective structures by structuring structures in a new way.[16] But Deleuze follows Bergson, who discerns an automatically productive recognition from a pure recognition of things in our perception,[17] so that he implicitly reintroduces an epistemocentric understanding: a very clear and static difference that does not appear the Nitzeschean advertising against the will to clear distinction in serious science. This will to know tends to suppress any ambivalent status of a (social) reality which can be understood as a form of logic of non-logic practices (a logic that Bourdieu calls a praxeology in order to discern it from an epistemocentric logic with the postulation of clear lines).[18]

Whereas Merleau-Ponty used the soccer player as an example,[19] Bourdieu used the tennis player to demonstrate the unity of automatic actions and creativity, unaware of clear distinctions between outside and inside the body: The players have the structure of the field in their bodies to anticipate creative actions and positions which are not directed by conscious actions at any time, although – albeit seen from outside – it might at times appear an ingeniously and consciously calculated move. This concept of the ontological compliance of the body with time and space is a paradox, and therefore difficult to understand not only with a scientific logic but also with art production. The incorporated structure of time and space does not know the clear difference between inside and outside, subjectivity and objectivity, although it is a condition to produce all these differences. In a way, the difference between conscious and explicit differences, and the unconscious indifferent condition of these explicit differences, can be called in Derridan terms as a non-trivial differance which is difficult to designate without suppressing its element of vagueness, ambivalence, or in short: its indifference.

Art production, psychoanalysis and poststructuralist theories all have to be aware of the difficulty of objectifying this incorporated time understanding with art production. This is because objectifying always tends to favor the realm of the cogito with its clear epistemocentric distinctions. In contrast, it shows us why the other idealistic elements of Deleuze's theory of cinema should be criticized in the name of his Nitzeschean critique of capitalism. If every attempt to objectify this time understanding in art production can therefore obscure its part of indifference by drawing a line between a passive audience and active authorship, or the art

15 MERLAU-PONTY, MAURICE: *SENS ET NON-SENS*, Paris: Gallimard 1996: 61 – 75.

16 BOURDIEU, PIERRE: *"LE MARCHÉ LINGUISTIQUE"*, in: *Questions sociologiques*, Paris: Minuit 1984: 134.

17 DELEUZE: *ZEITBILD*: 64.

18 WACQUANT, J.D. LOÏC: *"AUF DEM WEG ZU EINER SOZIALPRAXEOLOGIE"*, in: Wacquant, Loïc J.D.; Bourdieu, Pierre: *Reflexive Anthropologie*, Suhrkamp: Frankfurt/Main 1996: 40 – 48.

19 MERLEAU-PONTY, MAURICE: *LA STRUCTURE DU COMPORTEMENT*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1990: 182.

object and the viewer more or less, then a modern apparatus of reproduction of symbolic forms such as the cinema allows modern art production the opportunity of a shifting dissemination of these lines by being a witness against a collaboration of objectification and the fetishizing of art production. That is to say, the exact mechanic repetition reducing individual differences which can therefore attack the fetishizing of art as a surrogate of transcendence – but by producing nevertheless unpredictable differences because of different preconscious habitualised perception of recipients. The uses of apparatus (and strong repetitions) in modern art production does not suppress individuality by abstract reification, but it can establish a symbolic economy in which repetitions are freed from serving the linear accumulations of the economic capital.

But one has to differentiate early and new cinema concerning this problem of objectification against itself. Lynch does not make the two cinema's body aware only by deconstructing the illusion of the identity of the automatic apparatus and the subjectless body. A pure deconstruction would draw an even clearer line and destroy the realm of art as realm of illusion, together with art production as a fetish that might at least explain Bazin's preference for realism. But Lynch is the first to catapult this objectifying reflection into a fiction cinema playing with the thresholds between life and art, cinema and theater, body and imaginary picture by objectifying these thresholds at the same time. Not only poststructuralist philosophy but the ethnologic theory of 'the rite de passage' by Arnold van Gennep that was refined by the ethnologist Victor Turner[20] gives us another hint of understanding of this play. The strange figure of beings in between - like clowns, trickster or uncanny prophets we can find all in the Lynch's cinema - are the people of the world in between of art and life, this world and the beyond like the living dead. But they are not simply representatives of a social anti-structure but of an anti-structure to wait on the alleged normal society: a society in a permanent state of thresholds by producing and dissolving permanently new social limits.

III. THE WAY OUT FROM BLACK AND WHITE

Now, we are able to understand the critique of capitalism by the avant-garde cinema of Lynch's underground films without reference to either a theory of social reflection or to a mere play of codes. At the end of *Eraserhead*, Henry daggers his alleged baby with the scissors, but this action does not kill it, it rather makes the baby grow, fed by the energy of electricity in the room. Indeed, electricity superposing life energy is another typical motif in the films of Lynch that allows us insight into the implicit critique of capitalism in postmodern times. If Karl Marx once stated that the productivity of capitalism is related to the destruction of every tradition by vitalizing modern productivity, the new relation between destruction and vital productivity will not be driven by a reification of subjectivity to pure biological facts by mechanical abstraction, but a permanent exchange of machinery and individual life in both directions – especially by the industries of communication in which an engineering of network and habitualised social structures overlap in a mutual vitalizing of unconscious creativity and economic markets – a form of an intermedia bio-politic. The integration of an undecided schizotype does not destroy the representation by destroying every code; it must be understood rather as a total productivity wherein destroying and productive playing with life would be the same process by new ways of communication. But is this not the same critique of a strong determination without any escape?

There is a link between the early critique of the broadcast communication by Bertolt Brecht, of television by Vilém Flusser, and finally Deleuze's and Guattari's theory of the phone in their *Anti-Oedipus*. If Brecht criticizes the undemocratic centralization of sending messages by broadcast rendering the mass audience as nothing but consumers,[21] Deleuze and Guttari consider the phone as the opposite sense, a possibility to become an active producer of messages and therefore a means to the democratic

20 TURNER, VICTOR: *FROM RITUAL TO THEATRE. THE HUMAN SERIOUSNESS OF PLAY*, New York: PAJ Publication 1982.

21 BRECHT, BERTOLT: *"DER RUNDFUNK ALS KOMMUNIKATIONSAPPARAT"*, in: Elisabeth Hauptmann (Ed.), *Bertolt Brecht. Gesammelte Werk in 20 Bänden. Vol. 18*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1967: 130.

decentralization. [22] Such an argument can, of course, also be applied to the Internet. Flusser (1993) [23] even saw the possibility of the Internet before its general emergence, stating that one could transform television into a form of phone to achieve network communication. Yet there is also a difference between the early critique of Brecht and Deleuze's/Guattari's theory of late capitalism. According to Deleuze/Guattari, the means of the vital energy of democratic networking with this new form of communication can also be used as a stricter control of information, and therefore to establish new centralized territories. This is exactly the point at which the schizologic of a permanent deconstruction of a network's clear direction and representation can transform into the paranoid fear of ambivalence between sender and receiver that tends to re-establish the desire for territories with clear boundaries and centers.

After his decapitation (in the dream/theatre), the head of the protagonist Henry is used to produce erasers for pencils. The dead white brain is the substance for the erasers on pencils, so that erasing and writing, that is destroying and producing, is united in an instrument of scriptural communication that always is connected to a visual perception. A pencil with a white eraser and a black top reminds us of *E r a s e r h e a d* as a film in black and white. Therefore, *E r a s e r h e a d* is a formal reflection of Lynch's critique of centralization as integrated in a visually dominated communication collaborating with centralization. Moreover, the sexuality of Henry and Mary represents a communication of individual subjects, which becomes the more productive the more virtual their relationship becomes. Both become strange living beings during the night, as they lie in Henry's bed without any real intercourse [Fig. 10]. Sex is transformed into a banalized infection. Sex becomes a lift to social productivity the more it becomes a bodiless network without adjustment by any explicit contact. The more life will be exploited for its capability of virtual communication without directions, the more the difference between death and life will be unclear. Thus a mutual exchange of machinery and biology increases with the network in order to revitalize the productivity of a capitalism that no longer needs the old industrial factories. Henry lives in a domain of dead industries. One never sees a producing factory in *E r a s e r h e a d*. The vital network remains always ambivalent as simultaneously founding and attacking a new capitalism.

Fig. 10: *ERASERHEAD*

Even the scene of real sex Henry performs with his beautiful neighbor is unreal. There clear implication that this scene is a dream and occurs only in his head. The scene ends in a theatre with another girl whose face appears to be infected. This scene is key for an exchange of destruction and vitalizing, machinery and life in both ways. When Henry is touching her, the screen turns white from the projection, indicating the contact of an electric stream and the eraser effect by light. The same light, which can produces pictures is therefore the means to obscure it, but it is also true to say that the same light which can produce the imaginary of the cinema

22   DELEUZE, GILLES; GUATTARI, FÉLIX: *ANTI-ÖDIPUS*: 500 – 502.

23   FLUSSER, VILÉM: *MEDIENKULTUR*, Frankfurt/Main: Fischer 2008: 117.

is able to make the surface of the screen appear as an object to the viewers real (non-diegetic) space: a diegetic illusion and the disillusion at the same time as another expression of the oscillating schizogaze. The unconscious rhizome of chaining pictures is therefore no escape from this new capitalism. The film is acting as a witness against itself.

The filmed theatre appeared first as Henry lies on his bed, gazing at the radiator [Fig. 11]. It is obvious that this scene is a symbolic representation of cinema, because behind the radiator appears an electrical lightening background, as if there was an apparatus starting a projection [Fig. 12]. It seems that the two cinema's bodies in this projection are not neglected. After the sex scene with his neighbor, Henry appears in the filmed theatre behind the radiator as actor and audience at the same time. The filmed theatre – another motif of Lynch's films – presents that which cannot appear in cinema without destroying the conscious perception: Henry pays the revelation of the undecided schizogaze of the cinema with the death of his subjectivity by losing his head – but not as in a horror movie, marking the end of his existence. In place of his head he becomes a phallus so that he retains his sexual productivity as vegetative existence beyond a cogito. This scene of theatre in the film allows us an insight into the closeness of destruction and production on a new level: The schizogaze of cinema can always remain undecided between a democratic opening and a paranoid

fear, and it seems indeed that this leads us to a typical postmodern blues: There is no escape. However, if there is no clear line between paranoid fear and a schizologic deconstruction of representations, there will also always be the opportunity of a wild outside in every system. *E r a s e r h e a d* results in a happy end, created by the fully grown monster passing over to a rhizomatic relation of machinery and life, and finally to pictures of a vitally shining light. Thus, these happy endings, following paranoid fear triggered by the uncanny in Lynch's films, suggest the message that there will never be an end of history as long as the schizogaze will find means

for an oscillating production of symbolic forms.

This is after all the difference with the pictures of Gregory Crewdson, who refers explicitly to Lynch's aesthetics and the uncanny of psychoanalytical theory – but a difference which confirms the undecided schizogaze under conditions of the photography. Although Crewdson is the author of his shots during a long process of planning and staging, a single photo shot can hardly be undecided between the uncanny and a happy end in the sequence of a narration due to its real stillness. Rather, Crewdson uses the indexicality of a photo shot as illusion, which in a certain way raises the same paradox of an undecided schizogaze, albeit under the condition of photography. The sites of his shots are real suburbia or small towns in the USA, with real inhabitants, although they appear as if they were staged by actors in the studio. If one could argue whether the little bird at the end of Blue Velvet is red as an indication of realness or an illusion, the same could be said for every person and situation in the images of Crewdson's *B e n e a t h   t h e   R o s e s*.

In his analysis of modern mythology in the photography of advertising, Roland Barthes stated the paradox of a symbolic representation with the code of a non-codified representation.[24] Whereas in advertising the message is a parasite of the codeless indexicality, as if its message was the plane truth attested by the documentary of a photo, the pictures of Crewdson reveal this paradox of a codeless code by keeping the two parts equal and without hierarchy between indexicality and staging: Not a focused picture, like a painting, but very strong and sharp contrasts, like an indexical photo shot so that it has the effect of an unreal realness. Yet, if one argues that one must have an understanding of the process of production as code in order to decode this equality and to discern advertising and art, one can counter with Bourdieu: Is there any avant-garde position in the modern field of art production that can be understood without the expertise in the field history? Even the pure eye, a pure aesthetics, able to deny history is an effect of a field history, and therefore a result of a very specific logic in the historical differentiation of the fields of arts and media.[25] Instead, it plays with the code of naivety in order to distinguish itself from both a mere naïve anti-intellectual gaze and the will to a scholastic theorization.

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25   BOURDIEU: *RAISONS PRATIQUES*: 76 – 77.