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2.4 Towards a Non-Time Image: Notes on Deleuze in the Digital Era

BY SERGI SÁNCHEZ [\[1\]](#)

1. Squint your eyes and you'll spot the very instant when, according to Gilles Deleuze, the movement-image gives way to the time-image: the suicide of Edmund (Edmund Moeschke) in *Germany Year Zero* (*Germania Anno Zero*, Roberto Rossellini, 1947). Edmund, a twelve-year-old boy in the ruins of postwar Berlin, has just poisoned his sick father, following the advice (as he understands it) of his former schoolteacher, a Nazi and possibly a pedophile, who counsels the boy that the weak should perish so that the strong can flourish. All that Edmund can do now is stare at a reality that has become overwhelming for him, a reality he is no longer able to understand: the war has forever changed human values, and people face an uncertain future. Humankind has just regained the freedom it has fought so hard for, but it still doesn't know what to do with it. *Germany Year Zero* represents the cinema of the seer: the seer can only see, he cannot *not* see; the seer who sees can no longer act. The seeing are like sleepwalkers, like ghosts. That's how Rossellini's Edmund goes with the flow of what he can't change anymore, like a

shipwreck adrift. Edmund is not a character for us to identify with, but a black hole of centripetal forces. The crack of the Holocaust, the war that revealed to us the shame of being human, permanently separates people from things and probably also words from things and concepts from their meaning.

Rossellini's year zero is also a year zero for images: the year when the cinema depicts a teenager committing suicide is the year when the innocence of the movement-image seems insufficient to understand a world ripped apart. Its steaming guts remain on the floor, but this image—"conceived of as being but one element in a natural arrangement with other images within a logic of the set [*ensemble*] analogous to that of the finalized coordination of our perceptions and actions" (Rancière 107)—is not enough anymore. Jacques Rancière calls into question the relationship established by Deleuze between his taxonomy of the film image and the unfolding of History. Deleuze warns us that he is not writing a history of cinema but a classification of signs, and Rancière shows that Deleuze, like Bresson, aims to draw a map of the things of the world, some kind of natural philosophy where "the image need not be constituted at all" because, following Henri Bergson, "[i]t exists in itself. It is not a mental representation but matter-light in movement. . . . Matter is the eye, the image is light, light is consciousness" (Rancière 109).

We know that one of the most controversial points of the Deleuzian theory lies in how he separates the two ages of cinema, in relation to the historical caesura of the Second World War. Rancière refutes that division through common sense: if the two kinds of images belong to two different stages of its evolution, how, for instance, could they equally be exemplified by Bresson's films (112)? Actually, then, we are not talking of two kinds of images, but of an image with two different voices or, according to Rancière's metaphor, of the passage from one shore to the other of the same images (113). The sudden and emphatic

connection between the time-image and the postwar period may seem to contradict Deleuze's assertion that he doesn't want to write a history of images, but in fact it does not. Deleuze is definitely indebted to André Bazin, the first theorist to admit Neorealism looks into the inside of human beings when forcing them to look to the outside. But Deleuze takes the Bazinian idea beyond realism and into the field of thought—if we once had nice, organic representations, then due to the crisis of faith in human actions, all we have now is a cliché we tirelessly come back to in order not to forget how worn out it is. That is why Rancière thinks of the movement-image as a philosophy of nature—much closer to Bazin's theory about realism—and of the time-image as a philosophy of spirit (113). “The thought and spirit that cinema needs (and that we, too, need),” writes Paola Marrati, “are immanent powers of life which hold the hope and pose the challenge of creating new links between humans and *this world*” (Marrati 63-64). It might seem puzzling that Deleuze finds some features of the time-image, emerging from the ruins of movement, in filmmakers like Vincente Minnelli or Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who are so familiar with the cause-and-effect manners of Hollywood's classical cinema. But the French philosopher circles around many different centers and enjoys intersecting zones and past areas to which time endlessly refers in its constant course.

2. Another suicide, also of a child, marks the reincarnation of the time-image in contemporary cinema. Significantly, that suicide is conceived by Steven Spielberg, accused by Godard of turning the Holocaust into a Hollywood tale in *Schindler's List* (1993) and openly criticized in the French director's *In Praise of Love* (*Éloge de l'amour*, 2001). Godard summoned Spielberg to a face-off in the framework of the Locarno Film Festival; the American director refused, but his *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* (2001) could be the answer of a seer-filmmaker. Two and a half months before the Twin

Towers attack, Spielberg's premiere flooded Manhattan: feet dangling over an aquatic abyss, David (Haley Joel Osment), a robot with the capacity for unlimited love, discovers that he is nothing but a circuit of cables programmed for affection. His silent wandering through a ruined city is not so different from Edmund's in *Germany Year Zero*: the only difference—a big difference—between them is that David, raised in the infinite innocence of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*, cannot die. Sunk into a huge womb, into the quiet waters of femininity, David is rescued by the sunlight that his protector Gigolo Joe (Jude Law) emanates. He falls again into the ocean of neglected childhood, and the rusty Ferris wheel of Coney Island traps him before the sublimated image of his adoptive mother: an icon of the Virgin.^[2]

Critics like Jonathan Rosenbaum and J. Hoberman insisted after the premiere that *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence* was the product of the union of two seemingly opposite sensitivities: Stanley Kubrick's, who promoted the project, and Steven Spielberg's, an inspired replicant.^[3] We must agree with Deleuze that “for Kubrick, the world itself is a brain” (*Cinema 2* 205), and “the identity of world and brain, the automaton, does not form a whole, but rather a limit, a membrane which puts an outside and an inside in contact, makes them present to each other, confronts them or makes them clash” (206). That membrane is what Deleuze calls “memory”—not in the sense of the ability to remember, but of making “sheets of past and layers of reality correspond, the first emanating from an inside which is always already there, the second arriving from an outside always to come, the two gnawing at the present which is now only their encounter” (207).^[4] David is Deleuze's automaton, literally—he is the consciousness of an extinguished world, the only container of the universe's memory of the aliens who visit the Earth two thousand years after the end of everything.^[5] He is the only hope for a human race that explored the vast space-time continuum and was unable to recreate the life flow for longer than twenty-four hours. What if David

was the materialization of the hopes that Kubrick placed in Spielberg, defender of the movement-image, to perpetuate the time-image into an indefinite future with no expiry date? When talking of Resnais and Kubrick, Deleuze emphasizes the idea of a cerebral cinema—which it would be mistaken to identify with an intellectual cinema (*Cinema 2* 204-15). Although the latter—an “intellectual” cinema in its classical form (which Deleuze associates with Eisenstein)—is not devoid of emotion or feeling, it has much more to do with the movement-image, which depends on the reactions caused by sensori-motor situations in the external world. David, on the other hand, is a repository for the pure, Bergsonian memory, one characterized by eternal life. The beautiful coda where Spielberg’s aliens grant David his wish and let him spend one more day with his revived mother doesn’t play into Spielberg’s presumed sentimental vein, but rather opens the door to a reversible time, to a possible resurrection that Spielberg rather mysteriously entertains. So happiness goes through death and reincarnation, and the joining of the spirits of movement-image (Spielberg) and time-image (Kubrick) makes possible the renaissance of time as an emotional vector of contemporary cinema.

It doesn’t seem odd that Spielberg himself was reborn from his creative ashes following *A.I.* Nor does it seem fantastic to suggest that the heroes played by Tom Cruise in two of Spielberg’s later films help us to understand what happens to David, that memory-world that can’t survive in a drowned world. Analyzing Cruise’s character not in Spielberg’s films but in Brian de Palma’s *Mission: Impossible* (1996), and comparing it to the shining Douglas Fairbanks of the silent era, Núria Bou and Xavier Pérez write that the unconscious, happy jumping without a safety net, and the endless chases have been replaced by a bottomless void that turns the new male hero into a puppet that doesn’t even know its demiurge (104)—an opinion we find ratified in *Minority Report* (Steven Spielberg, 2000). Here, Cruise plays Chief John Anderton, head of the “Pre-Crime” special

law enforcement division, which anticipates and thwarts crime with the help of three “Pre-Cogs,” specially gifted beings who are able to see the future. When we see Anderton editing the future memories of the seers on a virtual multiscreen console in order to avert a murder, when we see him heading towards entrapment by that same net of images which will bring him guilt and doom him to a perilous steeplechase, we are reminded of Rossellini’s Edmund and of *A.I.*’s David sinking into the amniotic fluid, forever on the verge of oblivion. Likewise, Cruise in the role of single father Ray Ferrier running away from a relentless alien invasion in *War of the Worlds* (Steven Spielberg, 2005) signifies for us the memory-world developing through an era of void, a void that is able to neutralize time unless our hero struggles to reconquer it. To some extent, 21st-century cinema has gone through a transit space while trying to report on this reconquest: it studied the perseverance of the time-image, it watched the gestures of its body free-falling before surviving and transforming into something else. And it did so to confirm the emergence of that “something else” to which it naturally tends, materializing partly thanks to electronic and digital media images, made of pixels or *non-time particles* (or particles of eternal time, unable to die, like Spielberg’s David).

3. We should consider once more what an image is. That is what Godard has been wondering ever since those “three thousand hours of cinema” that drove him to take up film criticism and filmmaking.[\[6\]](#) The more he wonders about it, the less he finds a calming conclusion: over the last years, his aesthetic project, disillusioned but lively, has been tinged with a certain amount of longing. That longing used to find relief in his enthusiasm for quoting and his active involvement in a cinema of resonances, but now it has turned into full consciousness of loss. That’s why, in the master class depicted in his *Notre musique* (2004)—where Godard plays himself delivering a lecture at the European Literary Encounters in Sarajevo (on the same topic as a

lecture he really gave there in 2002)—he confronts two symmetrical images of Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant speaking on the telephone in *His Girl Friday* (Howard Hawks, 1940), and says: “As you see, it’s the same image repeated twice. That’s because the director is not able to see the difference between a man and a woman.” This, he tells his audience (or us), is a common mistake in cinema, and things only get worse when images refer to historical events, “because that’s when we see that the truth has two faces.” It is therefore mandatory to deal with differences.

Referring to the dichotomy Israelis/Palestinians, Godard concludes that “Israelis came to fiction and Palestinians came to documentaries.” The imaginary belongs to the realm of certitude and the real belongs to the realm of uncertainty. Godard’s famous nostalgia for Howard Hawks’s movement-image becomes a nihilistic, political reflection on the shot-reverse shot relation of a dreaming nation (which has the power) and a sleepless nation (which is oppressed). At the beginning of his master class, he asks: “Where do you think this picture was taken?” “Stalingrad,” “Beirut,” “Warsaw,” “Hiroshima” are the answers. He says: “Richmond, Virginia, 1865. American Civil War.” Godard shows that Deleuze was right when he believed that repetition is a condition of History itself, that it’s not possible to talk of History without repetition. So Godard goes back to the ruins of Sarajevo in *Notre musique*, because he now feels morally compelled to become Rossellini’s Edmund, to feel his helplessness at a later stage. In *Allemagne 90 Neuf Zéro* (1991), Lemmy Caution, a character from Godard’s *Alphaville* (1965), gets out of his grave to walk around through some other ruins, those of reunified Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Caution was another of Godard’s alter egos, a ghost, walking on the pavement of a city that had been a huge cemetery. Godard has been drawing the map of that cemetery for many years. At the time of *Je vous salue Marie* (1983), Godard defined cinema as a depository of suffering (Bergala *Godard par*

Godard 2, 608). One of the image's duties is not to bear witness to the present anymore, but to let the past come back in multiple ways, like the waves we create when we throw a stone into the water: they are alike but different, too, and they are all destined to lap the earth and make it change with every each wave. There is no dialectics of time, for the present's relationship with the past is not linear: the present includes past, absorbs it, lets it leak to create a sediment. The past is not like the cream in the coffee, but like the sugar dissolved in the liquid to become a part of its nature (in Bergson's famous image). We could say then that Godard in *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988-98) is like David in *A.I.*: anchored to his experience as a spectator, he reenacted cinema's history as a 'memory-world' disintegrating and overlapping itself.

4. When, in *France Tour Détour Deux Enfants* (1977), Godard asks a little girl if night is space or time, and she answers "both" without hesitating, an image is taking shape off-camera, where space and time melt and superimpose to give birth to a darkness. It's the darkness of truth, the truth of the image that thinks of itself, that struggles to make its way through the abyss of existence. Godard goes on asking: "When you look at yourself in the mirror, does your image exist? Do you exist only as yourself or, quite the opposite, do you have more than one existence? When your mother thinks of you and has an image of you, don't you exist although she cannot see you?" The girl hesitates: she is a slave to the senses and doesn't allow herself to accept that her image can exist regardless of her presence. "You, reflected in the mirror - is it an image of you or is it your image?" Godard asks her. "Your image on television, is it less real than you, doesn't it exist as much as you?" During the interview, in a stolen moment, the girl's uncertainty reveals itself in an image of her hair over her face, the electronic freezing of a truth that doesn't lie in the inquisitive off-screen words of Godard or in Cécile's childish hesitations. It's a secret

that remains inside the transparent walls of the image.

So that image embodies a certain kind of hope—the hope of the image and of what we can expect from it. Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” considers the significance of the image as a promise of presence; that is, as a kind of prediction that ontologically carries an unresolved past, the only temporality that may open a crack in the present from which the future may emerge. It is the same image that Godard sets in motion in his *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, turning his arduous endeavor into a manifesto that is less pessimistic than its gloomy gravity makes it seem. The pregnant image embraces its own finitude as well as its own celebration, so when Benjamin talks of the “end of History,” we must not take it literally. It’s not about the end of occurrence, it’s about thinking History as if we were thinking its boundary. It’s a good lesson following all those apocalyptic warnings that have foretold cinema’s death for years: realizing that, when we think cinema’s history from an ahistorical view, we think it from an awareness of the boundary – a boundary that we quite possibly don’t know, of course. So there is no sense looking for a cause or a guilty party for the death of cinema as we know it, as Benjamin would say, especially because such a death is inherent to the intelligibility of cinema to begin with. And, in the second place, because the end is not an event in any positivistic sense:

The end of history is not immediately present in history, that is, it’s not *available* [*disponible*] in each one of the present moments of history or in any of them. This non-presence of the end within history can be conceived of in this first way: the end of history transcends history itself; the end cancels history, abolishing its specific temporality. *Knowledge* of the transcendent end of history is therefore *apocalyptic*: it offers itself in a glimpse, by virtue of which

the end is ecstatically present in the present as its image.
(Oyarzún 26, emphasis in original, my translation).

Thinking the cinema is thinking its death, and thinking its death is thinking of it as a mutable, Heraclitean entity. That's why the advent of digitization does not mean the end of cinematographic occurrence: the digital image is like a seed, a fertilized ovule waiting to become a zygote and a living being, just as the time-image was inscribed within the movement-image.

5. "In the dot, space becomes a metaphor through time and time becomes a metaphor through space" (Engell 483, my translation). Here Lorenz Engell insightfully reads the television image as the utmost expression of Deleuze's time-image. Engell says that the TV screen's image is not defined by a square—that is, by a grid of spatial coordinates—but by the intervals and the reproduction of the minimal units of meaning that make them up—that is, by its temporality.^[7] The phonemes of the television image are the dot-images that constitute the screen's lines and columns, but also the intervals between them. Those dot-images, both absent and present, are never visible at the same time, but they manifest themselves in a temporal sequence. To our perception, the image consists of those intervals between the dot-images, which, according to Engell, are time in addition to space.^[8] Because the pixel or point is the metaphor of what cannot be stretched out nor represented, that is, because the point is the representation of non-representation, the electronic image is not determined by the presence of the pixel-image, but by its lack of dimension. When the point becomes visible, it has lost what gives it its sense: if it exists, if we can see it, if it's microscopically measurable, it's not just a point anymore. The television image is doomed to the time and space of an intersection, that of an image which comes and one which is already leaving. It is an image that is permanently in transit, so it is also a double image: in it we can see how the actual

and the virtual coexist, to the point that it's almost impossible to distinguish them. Engell explains beautifully and precisely how the television image takes shape according to these parameters: on the screen, the image we perceive is never present, but it's there where it splits up as two images, outlined by the cathode ray, one *in* the other and *over* the other: an image cannot be perceived as actual if it needs to be completed by its virtual image. Simultaneity of past and present is inherent to the ontology of the television image, so it would not be mistaken to think that "television is nothing but time turned into image" (485, my translation).[\[9\]](#)

6. It's hard to believe that the visionary intuition of Deleuze's words in the conclusion to *The Time-Image* didn't extend to an aesthetic assessment of the TV image. Deleuze considered that his two volumes about cinema dealt with the subject of an art threatened by a will to change, and by a new format that was going to modify forever not just its ontological dimension, but the way we think of it:

The electronic image, that is, the tele and video image, the numerical image coming into being, either had to transform cinema or to replace it, to mark its death. . . . The new images no longer have any outside (out-of-field), any more than they internalized in a whole; rather, they have a right side and a reverse, reversible and non-superimposable, like a power to turn back on themselves. They are the object of a perpetual reorganization, in which a new image can arise from any point whatever of the preceding image. The organization of space here loses its privileged directions, and first of all the privilege of the vertical which the position of the screen still displays, in favor of an omni-directional space which constantly varies its angles and co-ordinates, to exchange the vertical and the horizontal. And the screen itself, even if it keeps a vertical position by

convention, no longer seems to refer to the human posture, like a window or a painting, but rather constitutes a table of information, an opaque surface on which are inscribed 'data,' information replacing nature, and the brain-city, the third eye, replacing the eyes of nature. (*Cinema 2* 265)

Historically, the postwar period marks the moment when both the time-image appeared and TV became established as a mass medium. As we have seen, the TV image perfectly meets the requirements of the time-image: cinema depends on montage, staging, framing, and sound (four of its main ingredients) for time to emerge as a pure optical and sound sensation; on the other hand, time is in television's DNA, time belongs to it in an ontological sense. Why, if Deleuze realizes the secrets of the electronic image, does he reject television? Just because he blames it for failing to take advantage of its aesthetic specificity, for becoming a thoroughly commercialized communication machine, only able to send back superfluous shapes and contents. Television lacks what Deleuze calls the "supplement" or aesthetic function, which lost ground to "a social function, a function of control and power, the dominance of the medium shot, which denies any exploration of perception, in the name of the professional eye" (*Negotiations* 72). Thus did television replace its natural aesthetic function with a social-technical one.

7. Lorenz Engell comes to the conclusion that the electronic image, established as a distillation of time's essence, prepares us for an image beyond the image. Not by chance, the Godard of the mid-seventies, the one who left militant cinema behind after the post-1968 disenchantment and a serious motorcycle crash that kept him away from the world for almost three years, was the first to notice the new expressive abilities of the electronic image. In his work for television he devotes himself to a different sort of militancy: the act of wondering about the image's nature, about that "beyond" that

runs away and brings up the rear but remains unaffected as a time cell that surrenders to his study. It's a hopeful recommencement that evolves not only according to the rules of the interplay of opposites but also to the firm intention of conducting an experiment which, in the medium of celluloid, Godard considered to be exhausted. His avant-garde TV projects sought to reach a mass audience ("It's sending 25 postcards per second to millions of people" [Bergala 385, my translation]), a dream he shared with Rossellini's didactic television. It's surprising to see how naïve Godard is when he overrates the media effects of Rossellini's TV experiments, especially since he was aware of the disastrous audience response to films like *Socrates* (1971) or *Cartesius* (1974). However, the most important thing is what Godard discovers in these video experiments: the ontological basis of an electronic image that enlarges the Deleuzian concept of the time-image, and that will result in the birth of a *non-time image*, which is linked to the development of digital media. We have already encountered the notion of a double image; all of these video-period films suggest or show this duplicity (as in the national-cultural as well as medial polarities in *Ici et Ailleurs* [1974]), or else duality plays an important role (the collaborative duos and two-part structures of *Six fois deux/Sur et sous la communication* [1976] or the structural, conceptual, and gendered symmetries of *France/tour/détour/deux/enfants* [1978]), or the number two signifies a new beginning (as in *Numéro deux* [1975], which Godard calls a "remake" of *À bout de souffle*, his first film). All of them illustrate a dialectics, a system of opposites that is always wondering about what comes after a shot and before another one, lastly asking itself about what there is between two shots. Assuming that this interval establishes duplicity, Godard brings closer the possibility of defining a new image that is already beyond the time-image: in editing, it is impossible to draw a sharp line between images because one of them splits up into another before reorganizing as a third one. Godard uses text as an image, a layer that lodges itself into another one, or

forces one image to penetrate another, or disintegrates into it in slow motion. Millions of image-dots spread in millions of image-dots: amateur editing equipment is enough for the miracle to occur, and for the image to prefer intensities to trajectories, random dissolution to a time-scheduled trip. A “third image” emanates from the meeting of the first two, sparkling or solarized or superimposed: from the communion or collision between dot and interval, new images will be born, those of the monumental *Histoire(s) du cinéma*. What if that “third image” was born from the crash between the suicides in *Germany Year Zero* and *A.I.*?

8. Both versions of *The Ring*, Hideo Nakata’s from 1998 and Gore Verbinski’s from 2002, revolve around the topic of a videotape that causes the death of anyone who watches the film it contains. This occurs seven days after watching it, unless the ill-fated spectator makes a copy for someone else to watch. Salvation comes from accepting the viral dimension of electronic images, and understanding that those bewitching images propagate death as they are reproduced. According to Nicholas Rombes, *The Ring* raises a question which is essential to understanding the state of affairs of cinema in the digital era: “does the mass reproduction of the same images threaten to exterminate diversity, in the same way that the mass reproduction of a single virus might threaten to exterminate the diversity of life on earth?” (4). The videotape’s images look like those of an avant-garde film. They are disturbing because it’s as if they lacked an “original.” They are a virus that replicates from nothingness, for there is no genesis. So they call reality into question: there is no reality from whence to be reproduced. “Reality is today’s special effect” (Rombes 5).

What is the place of the human in this context? If Deleuze were alive, he would undoubtedly raise this question, since his two volumes

about cinema try to answer it on page after page. What would the relationship be between humankind and those images that lack an “original”? If reality is a special effect, where is human consciousness? What models do people count on to form identities? These are questions that also run through the present chapter like subterranean waters that a spelunker tries to chart. An image-splunker who wishes to stop the image, to press the pause button and analyze the dissimilarities between the time-image and the non-time image—which is far from being the denial of image. In the first case, the time-image, the freezing of the image shows to us its imperfections, almost highlighting the deformity of men, who need to believe in the world because they know that it is there, though shattered. In the second case, the non-time image, the digital freeze-frame emulates the sharpness of still photography, the pristine texture of a photo stuck to the window, a landscape so realistic that it seems unreal. We know the time-image embraces time even though it doesn’t trust it, holding desperately onto something that hurts it, but makes it exist. We know, by contrast, that the non-time image rejects age, hates erosions, turns away from time to be the epitome of an untouched perfection, which it relates to the intensity of an instant that lasts forever—or won’t last for an instant. It is the pause of the VHS image and it is the pause of the DVD image. From the interval between the two pauses comes a new age of the image which tries to create a space for the human that despises reality’s duration, or rather, that defies reality itself.

Television represents the time-image in its purest form. Its morphologic structure itself—the dots and the interval between—favors the mingling of the real and the virtual. Deleuze notices this feature in the conclusion to *The Time-Image*, but, like film and TV critic Serge Daney, he also blames television for not taking advantage of its aesthetic possibilities, which are drowned by its social function. Only the video can grow the seed planted by the TV image and search

for a “beyond the image” that leaves behind the idea of time. The expressive possibilities of electronic images develop as a precedent for a digital image that will show itself to be immortal and eternal, timeless. As we have said, one of the more outstanding features of the digital image is its indifference to the effects of time: its volatile nature, the indifference to its erosions, the immateriality of its ontological condition. The digital image tends to reinterpret the depth of field, to underline the frame’s autarchy, to reinterpret what Noël Burch called the “Primitive Mode of Representation” (186-201) according to the criteria of a medium able to fulfill our gaze with its experience of length alone (witness the mesmerizing effect of the static shot in Abbas Kiarostami’s *Five Dedicated to Ozu* [2003], so similar to the Lumières’ actualités). This attention to primitive cinema also turns into a great interest in restoring past images, as if the real meaning of the digital was to save celluloid from the unavoidable deterioration of its chemical nature. Just the way some silent films will always seem perennially new, allergic too to the effects of time.

There is, however, a non-time image that longs for its ancestors, for the movement-image that Deleuze defines as an action-reaction chain. It is the three-dimensional non-time image, which, from the denial of time, wants to create a thorough copy of reality. It is the most publicized form of non-time image, the popular digital cinema that fills the multiplex cinemas, wishing to expand like a “big bang” and turn its show into an immersive experience, a new version of the primitive “cinema of attractions.” It is a non-time image that can hardly coexist with its contradictions, thrown towards the mercurial flexibility of its nature but finding its boundaries in the real representation of what is impossible, as if claiming a narrative logic which is not its own. It is the digital image that tries its best to contribute to the movement-image’s survival in contemporary blockbusters, without realizing that is blowing it up, attracting attention to its own excesses.

From an ontological perspective, the non-time image is total interiority. Its bi-dimensionality opens the possibility that everything happens inside the shot: ghosts appear, emotions assume color, different levels of a singular reality are shown together, focused, in the foreground. Faces are flattened, distances are removed, landscapes are painted, and light is overexposed. This reinterpretation of reality has nothing to do with the mimesis that digital effects, obsessed with being more real than reality, used to look for. Image reveals its skin, is proud of its own texture, from the dirtiness of DV to the sharp perfection of HD. The poor DV quality—which David Lynch compared to that of early celluloid times, when neither the frame nor the emulsion contained so much information—creates a new relationship between image and spectator: I agree with Rombes when he says that there has been a resurgence of humanism in return for the morphological characteristics of the digital image. Something like a poetics of mistakes or unfinished things tries to compensate the unifying action of that no-image time, as if we needed the human factor to become visible, as if we wanted it to show itself only through failure and inaccuracy.^[10] That new humanism doesn't only lie in the impossible post-realism of *Dogma 95* (a false return to reality that shows what a deceit digital realism is), but also in the evolution of home movies, in the possibility of making a filmed autobiography where the self is in front and behind the camera at the same time, as well as in the manifestation of death in the present progressive, where the non-time image let us immortalize a verb tense. What is human comes back to stay: as an antidote but also as a force that pierces a wall to escape in endless directions. Humanity becomes rhizome, taking on a new molecular dimension.^[11] What is human turns into hypertext, into split screen, into mosaic and multiplicity. It is the spectator in a state of dissolution, leaving behind its individual condition and becoming a stream of consciousness, a Body without Organs where is difficult to distinguish the breaking point between gaze and screen. It is the spectator plunged into that “becoming-

woman” that specifies the feminine dimension—as lunar, liquid, and hard to grasp—of that non-time image which (let’s take two meaningful examples from the same filmmaker) plants *Mulholland Drive* and harvests *Inland Empire*. It is the spectator-author, demiurge of a little world that he shares with the whole universe, a universe made of time endlessly replicating until it loses itself in a limbo made of background noise and supportive or aggressive comments.

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Notes

[1] Chapter translated by Isabel Margelí.

[2] Unintentionally, as it were, Godard seems to agree with his scorned Spielberg when, in *Notre musique* (2004), he tells the story of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes, a young peasant who saw the Virgin eighteen times. When the local nuns and priests showed her canonical pictures of the Virgin created by Raphael or Murillo, Bernadette could not find any resemblance. But when she saw a Byzantine icon, the Virgin of Cambrai, Bernadette identified her at last. Godard says: “Without movement or depth, without the affected side: the sacred,” as if he was referring to the maternal Virgin in *A.I.*

[3] Rosenbaum writes:

If *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*—a film whose split personality is apparent even in its two-part title—is as much a Kubrick movie as a Spielberg one, this is in large part because it defamiliarizes Spielberg, makes him strange. Yet it also defamiliarizes Kubrick, with equally ambiguous results—making his unfamiliarity familiar.

Hoberman asks: “Does the artifice belong to Spielberg and the intelligence to Kubrick?” (17).

[4] For more on this Deleuzian conception and its relation to film and post-cinema, see also Patricia Pisters’s contribution to this volume.

[5] The aliens are imaged in strict accordance with the typical Spielberg iconography. Strictly speaking, these aliens are nothing but the result of

the evolution of the “supermechas,” David’s cyborg race.

[6] “Three Thousand Hours of Cinema” is the title of one of Godard’s most famous articles, resembling something of a diary written in response to Truffaut’s diary of the shooting of *Fahrenheit 451*.

[7] We must remember the transformation process of the image in an analog television:

The first set of 312 ½ odd number lines in the 625 lines, called the first field or the *odd field*, are first scanned sequentially. Halfway through the 313th line, the spot is returned to the top of the screen and the remaining 312 ½ even number lines, called the second field or the *even field* are then traced interleaved between the lines of the first set. This is done by operating the vertical field scan at 50 Hz so that the two successive interlaced scans, each at a 25 Hz rate, make up the complete picture frame. This keeps the line scanning speed down, as only 312 ½ lines are scanned in 1/50 second. The 625 lines of the full picture are scanned in 1/25 second. (Dhake 24)

[8] According to Engell, the most important theory of television, conceived by Marshall McLuhan in *Understanding Media*, is based on a misunderstanding, a wrong hypothesis: McLuhan’s theory starts from a premise that considers the intervals between dots only in spatial terms.

[9] “The difference between cinema and television lies in the fact that cinema is image and space, whereas there’s no space in television, there’s no image, there’s only lines, electronic lines. The essential notion in television is time” (Fargier, Cassagnac, and Van der Stegen 10).

[10] After the Dogme manifesto, Harmony Korine published the “Mistakist Manifesto” with only three rules: “1. no plots. Only images. Stories are fine. 2. all edits effects in camera only. 3. 600 cameras/a wall of images/the Phil Spector of cine” (Roman viii).

[11] Further:

A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines. You can

never get rid of ants because they form an animal rhizome that can rebound time and again after most of it has been destroyed. Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. (Deleuze and Guattari 9)