THE HERE TO GATHERED

by

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ABSTRACT

The cinema presents us with the perpetual “becoming” of the movement-image. But, according to Giorgio Agamben, our relationship to the image is characterized by a desire to “capture,” inhibiting our ability to see images this way. Understood as an act of framing, this capture (a drive toward the inside of the image), manifests in our acts of looking. Engaging the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze on cinema, Form Faces Out considers the concept of the out-of-field—that which relates the framed or “captured” part to the Open whole. Through reflections on the thesis project The Here To Gathered and other works of art shown recently in Vancouver, the out-of-field is seen to destabilize the frame, making possible a form of futurity that has no known characteristics other than that it is “to come.” This form of futurity opens images up to the meaning of circulation—the sharing of being.

Keywords: Becoming; Frame; Futurity; Movement-Image; Out-of-Field; Relation

Subject Terms: Art, Modern -- 20th century -- Exhibitions; Art, Modern -- 21st century -- Exhibitions; Deleuze, Gilles, 1925-1995; Motion pictures -- Philosophy; Art -- Philosophy; Art and motion pictures
To Gilles Deleuze and Michael Snow

whose prior bravery bestowed
the only peaceable hours of shut-eye
afforded me while making this film

(...and to Jacques Derrida who ‘always already’ revoked their gift.)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While *The Here To Gathered’s* film credits (re-printed in Appendix B of this thesis) records the names of those who contributed directly to the film’s existence, what they do not report is the fact that almost the entire cast and crew worked for free. Some of these people also make film or art, and so I have already given my labour for theirs, or if not, I will give it in the future. (Out of necessity this is the exchange economy within which many artists must operate and I am no exception.) Nevertheless, I am very thankful for their creative prowess and technical savvy, (and to those whom I am still indebted, I thank you for your patience while I work my way through the IOUs.) Many people listed in the credits however, are not affiliated with art making in any way; these people worked on the film merely to help build something. To them I wish to convey my awe and express how moved I have been, and continue to be, by their overwhelming generosity.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Here To Gathered, a 22.5 minute, 16 mm film is my master’s thesis project, which screened for the first time on March 4, 2008 at the Pacific Cinemathèque in Vancouver. Having stated the facts above, convention holds that I say something like “The Here To Gathered began when...” or “The Here To Gathered emerged as a result of...” This is a narrative convention of linear time. It is a temporal frame that marks out a moment of inception and (at least implies) that there is coming, a moment where it will conclude. To do this here, I would have to fix the film— invent a privileged instant where it started becoming and one where it ceased to become anymore. This would miss the film; it would not account for its movement. In fact any frame, every frame will inevitably fail this task. But perhaps if I draw a frame around the film understood to be artificial, provisional, this might offer a possibility for getting around this problem.

In this case, perhaps the convention of using linear time as a framing device could work after all; its arbitrary relation to what it frames suggests a kind of meaninglessness that seems appropriate for this provisional premise. And if I begin this time-frame with the screening of my last film, perhaps this is so clichéd
that not too much will be read into this beginning, and then the film would not “get
set down any more than the foot of a passerby.”¹

**Expectation**

Originally, *The Here To Gathered* was intended to be part two to my last
film entitled *not*. This was due mostly to the fact that I was still challenged by and
interested in the problem of joining vignettes together that did not connect
narratively to one another in a plot, but were nevertheless thematically part of a
whole. As the process of making *The Here To Gathered* progressed it moved
further and further away from *not*, and in the end, while they shared a similar
overall structure, there was not enough left connecting them to deem the new film
Part Two. Nevertheless, several things emerged while making *not* that went
beyond the film and took hold of my practice generally, and so I mention them
here.

First, I became caught up in editing as a medium, which changed my
focus from the picture the camera makes, to the image the film makes. Image for
me is what happens between the pictures, in the relations between them created
through joins and cuts. This change is reflected in a comparison between the
script I made for *not* (made before I discovered editing) and the one for *The Here
To Gathered*.

A woman is driving along out of the city on a highway in daylight. It is raining lightly and the windshield wipers, set on intermittent mode, occasionally slap the window. When the wipers move, they reveal the windshield wiper dispenser.

1. POV of woman driving looking out of windshield - wide shot: windshield, car, road and vista. The sound of the windshield wipers increases.

2. As the wiper blade comes back down, CUT TO close up of windshield wiper dispenser and hood of car. Wiper comes down blocking the view of the dispenser, the sound of the car begins to slow. Pause.

3. On the action of the wiper blade's movement up, the camera slowly and slightly zooms toward the dispenser, then stops abruptly. On the camera's movement, the sound of the car fades out. Pause. A woman's tentative voice is heard "Hello?" Pause. FADE OUT.

Figure 1: script excerpt from not
The script for *not* is basically a list of camera movements. These direct the character of the camera and determine how it will interact with the picture in its frame. This list of directions disappeared from the script pages of *The Here To Gathered*, to be replaced by collages that don’t determine a picture so much as they score a sensibility.

![Geographical space greatly extended through time. One person’s movement recorded through the passing of others. Maybe not crosswalk, maybe just a sidewalk...](image)

*Figure 2: script excerpt from *The Here To Gathered* (crowd scene)*

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2 I first saw this format for a script in a Stan Douglas retrospective catalogue. He used this form in his proposals for *Monodramas* and *TV Spots*. I started using the form myself because I liked that it enabled me to work on the script, storyboard and shotlist simultaneously and this seems to fit how I make artwork much better than the typical, more linear approach to filmmaking. *see* Scott Watson, Diana Thater, and Carol J. Clover. *Stan Douglas*. (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1998), p.100-109
In the old scripting process, the camera is posited outside the picture it makes (in a way, the picture pre-exists the camera’s actions upon it.) The new process relegates the camera (and its picture) to being merely parts in a relation of elements that make up the image. The new scripts describe for myself, and those who work on the film, the sensibility I’m looking for, something that can only be seen once the elements come into relation with each other and something that might take any number of forms.

Now more than ever, I really don’t know what the image should look like before the shoot. And since I generally don’t operate the camera, I really don’t know what the footage does look like until it comes back from the lab. All this to say, I don’t feel a sense of authorship over the picture at all; I relate to the footage as a viewer. And while I may relate to the image as a maker, as author/editor I am merely one more element in the set of relations the film manifests.

This role as a viewer of my own films particularly characterizes my pseudo-scientific approach to editing. Treating my own shots as found footage, I engage in test after test, experimenting with my own perception and then later with other viewers’ perceptions. I control some variables and set uncontrolled ones into motion to see what happens. I’m particularly interested in moments where our perception of something does not meet our expectations. The gap between our expectation of what will occur and what actually does come to light,

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3 And we don’t use an external monitor, as film cameras with this capability are extremely expensive to rent.
marks a space where difference itself becomes visible, and where, for me, art seems possible, or rather where art's possibility seems to grow.

This analytical method of perpetually asking the question “What happens if...?” in the editing suite, positions expectation as “at stake” in every cut. It is perhaps not surprising then that I consider viewer expectation as part of the very materiality of film. This is not a new idea, as the history of film theory attests. Film manifests itself through language, through common codes and conventions, even when each individual film embodies them differently (if sometimes only slightly). When we see a film, we expect to see those codes and conventions. As such, expectation could be understood through this language model as the “always already” of film.

This use of expectation as a material was present in the artwork I was looking at before making my last film not, specifically in the art films I was looking at. Living in Vancouver, I saw many of the works of Stan Douglas and Rodney Graham and they were, inevitably, influential. In the vignettes that comprise Douglas’ *Monodramas* and *TV Spots* (both made in 1991) expectations set up by Film and Television are constantly undermined. “Negation and refusal are common themes...”, writes Scott Watson of *TV Spots*.

This holds true not just for the characters experiencing the almost-events in these films, but for the experience of viewers as well. Douglas’ “near misses” take the viewer on anti-

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cathartic (but somehow still climactic) journeys in these advertisement length films (15 – 30 seconds). As a result viewers become aware of their own expectations, of what they thought was going to happen but didn’t. Narrative expectations are left unfulfilled, the absence causing those conventions to come into relief, pointing out their ubiquity and perhaps their role (and film’s role in general) in facilitating consumer capitalism.

Rodney Graham’s *How I Became A Ramblin’ Man* (1999) also creates an awareness of dominant Hollywood forms, but does so by diagramming narrative to the letter of the law while removing the specificity of a particular story’s embodiment. Graham achieved this by emptying out the content of film, leaving just the barest outline of the mythical Western. With the camera fixed to the tripod, the film is composed almost entirely of a handful of wide shots and straight cuts. We see a cowboy on a horse in a valley trotting through a landscape away from us through a babbling brook. Cut. The horse trots across the landscape (and screen) from left to right. Cut. Then they trot into the valley as night falls. Cut. With mirror-like perfection, at dawn, they trot out of the valley; then across the landscape from right to left; then toward us through the babbling brook. Together these shots function as the plot points of any given narrative arc. Between the last two points (where the climax exists in narrative film), the cowboy, played by Graham, gets off his horse, pulls out his guitar and sings a country song about the solitary life of a cowboy, filled to the brim with clichéd sentimentality. This stereotype functions as yet another diagram; the tragic
Western hero, epitomized by Shane and a hundred others, is represented here at a meta-level. But Graham sings his song with such emotion that, despite laughing at the sarcasm, viewers are unexpectedly moved. The vehicle for this unexpected moment is carried in the specificity of his voice and the qualities of his guitar playing. And it is this unexpected moment embedded inside the utterly expected that forms the driving mechanism of the piece. The spectatorial distance enacted through all this meta-discussion suddenly collapses in the emotional climax, demonstrating with alacrity, that as viewers even if we become aware of how narrative structure interpellates us, we still allow ourselves to get pulled, or perhaps can’t help getting pulled, into this system of power that it manifests. The piece is a loop and necessarily so. The song, the music, affects us deeply, and motivate us in perpetual unresolved longing, to enter yet again into dominant Hollywood film, caught in our own narrative loop.

**Propositional Logic**

It’s possible to make the argument that given the history of the avant-garde and its traditional oppositional stance to the status quo, defying and manipulating expectation could be used to describe the canonical strategy applied across any medium. But the relationship of expectation to time-based media is particularly significant. Expectation is inherent to any medium that unfolds itself in linear time through a propositional logic. This is the If-Then structure of causal relations, a structure that produces expectation between its terms.
At least since Pudovkin, film has been discussed as setting up expectation through propositional logic. He theorized that each shot either asks a question, answers a question or prolongs a question.\(^5\) For example, a character on a bridge will immediately provoke the question, “Will he jump?” just as a smoking gun will prompt viewers to ask “Who dunnit?”\(^6\) In addition to these questions, according to Pudovkin there are also shots/scenes that give partial answers, an answer that narrows the set of possibilities, as in, for instance, when a suspect in a crime is shown to have an alibi. This reduces the possible answers to the question “Who dunnit?” and prolongs the question at the same time.

Noel Carroll is an advocate of understanding film through this method. He suggests that viewers expect answers to the questions the film raises about its fictional world, and that they are engaged in a constant process of question formation.

When following a narrative film, I want to say, a spectator internalizes the whole structure of interests depicted in the drama, and this structure includes alternative outcomes to various lines of action which the spectator must keep track of in some sense before one alternative is actualized in order for the film to be received as intelligible. I postulate that the spectator does this by tacitly projecting the range of outcomes as subconscious expectations which we can represent as questions.\(^7\)

This model becomes much more interesting and complex when questions, answers and suspensions are not just considered to emerge from the plot (“Will


the hero get the girl?”) but are understood to arise from the relations between the
plot, style and thematic layers of a work.\(^8\) This is the way Rubén Möller\(^9\)
discusses it. He understands these layers to be hierarchically related, whereby
questions can be and are, asked, answered and suspended at any and every
level; and they can be answered at a different level than at the level they were
posed. In fact, according to Möller, prolonging a question is the very mechanism
that opens thematic layers up.\(^10\) Thematics here are understood as the subjects
or ideas, manifested in the form of problems, dilemmas or conflicts, which come
together in the work. There can be many thematic levels and these, too, are
hierarchical, building up to the umbrella of an ultimate or unifying theme. All the
subjects or ideas placed inside the work are called upon to complicate and add
facets to this ultimate theme.\(^11\)

These kinds of analyses share the intentions and approach of the
structuralists and suit my own tendencies well.\(^12\) But they fall prey to the same
criticisms that all theories like it do, notably Jacques Derrida’s criticism that they
are always founded on a transcendental signified – a centre of determination
outside the model which functions to organize meaning within. Transcendental

\(^8\) Carroll notes correctly that answering a question was only one of five principals Pudovkin gave
to justify adding a scene to a film. The other four principals were parallelism, symbolism,
instants of simultaneity, and leitmotifs, p. 252
\(^9\) Rubén Möller, a senior lecturer at Emily Carr University, was my undergrad instructor.
\(^10\) see Appendix C for an illustration of Möller’s theory and a description of how it works.
\(^11\) Incidentally, the etymology of the word “theme” comes from the French, which comes from the
Greek meaning “I put, place.”
\(^12\) Cf. Christian Metz’s style of studying film in the syntagmatic/paradigmatic model. Christian
Press, New York, 1974
signifeds privilege certain meanings and de-privilege others and do so from their hidden place outside the systems they organize.13

At the time of making not, I did not have a thought-based understanding of this argument, but intuitively knew narrative functioned like this, as a centre of determination in the dream machine, pre-existing every film, privileging certain (dominant) meanings and, importantly, de-privileging others. Through the editing process, it became obvious that meeting viewer expectations through film’s logic

of causation facilitated narrative’s naturalization as an organizing principle. So I began actively engaging and working against narrative structure.

The editing suite became the controlled, microcosmic environment of the research lab where I could act and react against film’s very grain in a kind of material dialectics with an ideological apparatus. I brought to the film a deeply embedded understanding of patriarchy through 70s and 80s feminist film criticism (particularly reception theory). Also influential was post-structuralist thought, in particular, the historical materialism of Foucault’s deconstructions and Derrida’s notion of the floating signifier chain. In this constellation of conceptual influences, language loomed large, as a medium in its own right, as a structure within every medium, and particularly as a system or super-structure underwriting all social life. Given this theoretical context, (not surprisingly) I addressed the naturalization of narrative expectations by going through the language of film itself. For each vignette, I set up a narrative language and then played a formal/compositional language against it – two organizing principles in a face-off – constructing two different sets of expectations for viewers, which collided and coalesced throughout the film.

14 Through feminist film theory, I came to see film as a natural fit for the elucidation of a Lacanian interpretation of psychoanalysis as there are many relationships that have been drawn between the world of film and the symbolic order. Of particular interest to me was the screen (mediating the film) as a material reality that can be used as an equivalent surface on which to map the way the symbolic order mediates the world. The function of narrative in dominant cinema can be likened analogically to the role occupied by language at large, and is discussed in feminist film criticism as the portal through which we enter the symbolic realm in the cinema and thereby enter patriarchy.

15 In fact the title “not” refers partly to this.
In particular, I found repetition as a formal device, an ally in the editing suite. Nothing thwarts narrative’s linear progress like the loop: appearing to advance toward the future, instead it catches up to itself in the past, undermining a stable orientation in time. Repetition can remove the purposive drive of narrative – an invisible, fatal slash in the continuity of the line. I employed repetition frequently in not, but carefully, because narrative had to remain in tension as a foil for the formal language. Multiple takes proved particularly useful in this task. The re-take can be either loop or narrative; it can defy linearity or resolve the mutual exclusivity of these forms. Playing with the slipperiness of this double identity, at times the re-take was highlighted as new material, allowing the narrative to move forward, at others the re-take appears as the same shot repeated, thereby ceasing progress. Between linearity and repetition, a recessive space was carved, and un-codified moments suddenly opened.17

Difference and Repetition

In his thesis *Difference and Repetition*, the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze demonstrates that rather than being a property of objects, repetition is a

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17 “...it is this subjective gaze, this construction of the everyday by individual interpretation and its link to pleasure that is at stake in capitalist production at present. The production of identities and emotional states has superseded the production of products. The very concept of “sensibility” (as an attitude toward the world) has now been superseded by the concept of “subjectivity.” And subjectivity has become capitalism’s most important market. However, Kahanoff is suggesting that amid a barrage of market-constructed hopes and dreams, individual imaginings may in fact remain renegade.” —Corin Sworn, in an unpublished review.
sense that resides in us.\textsuperscript{18} According to Deleuze, what transpires to give us our
sense of repetition (and our sense of expectancy) is a series of contractions of
previous instances into one another. Since our sense of repetition is based on a
consistency over time, contractions occur when we feel that consistency, when
we identify and categorize, when we unconsciously relate the unknown to the
known. This contraction process is complex; levels of different kinds of syntheses
are occurring in a relational matrix of independent variables, and we are
perpetually engaged in these unconscious contractions. (In fact Deleuze argues
that it is these contractions that create our habits, which in turn combine to
constitute our subjectivities.)

“Passive Synthesis” is the name Deleuze assigns to this process,
understood as “...acquiring an unconscious relation to the future.”\textsuperscript{19}

The present does not have to go outside itself in order to pass from past to
future. Rather, the living present goes from the past to the future which it
constitutes in time, which is to say also from the particular to the general,
from the particulars which it envelops by contraction to the general which it
develops in the field of its expectation...\textsuperscript{20}

It is our own linking of correspondences that combine to form our sense of
something being repeated, as well as our expectation that it will repeat in the

For his examples, Deleuze looks at Hume’s understanding of repetition as AB AB AB where we
expect the next A to be followed by a B, and Bergson’s example of a clock that chimes A A A
where we expect the fourth A at 4:00. \textit{see also James Williams, Gilles Deleuze’s Difference
\textsuperscript{19} Williams, p. 87
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Difference and Repetition}, p. 71
future. Passive synthesis, then, is predicated on identification, on the determining of an appropriate category for any and every given experience. For Deleuze, while unconscious, this relation to repetition and the expectation that results, is an illusion we enact to try to avoid or tame difference.

The effort to tame difference takes all kinds of forms. It manifests for instance when we ask the question: “What is this experience like?” This kind of question requires we know what something is before we can know it, and this is a mistake, according to Deleuze, based on an “incorrect” view of difference. Instead, the different sensations of expectation can be understood as questions such as: “What is coming? What am I passing into? What should I select?” These questions “unite that which is becoming, with what it is becoming-with,” they embody a view of difference and a relation to repetition that recognize the very sensation of expectation as a sign that something has changed. This view sets things in motion and can only be approached by resisting thought in terms of categories. It requires an active conscious synthesis in which we repeat against the illusions of identity, repeat something not to find its homologies, but in order to come to know it differently, each time we repeat. It should be noted that Deleuze does not suggest that the conscious ways we choose to repeat can

21 “Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it.” Difference and Repetition, p. 70
22 see Appendix D for a more thorough understanding of how we tame difference, and what Deleuze understands to be the “correct” view of difference.
23 Williams, p.162
override what happens unconsciously. But we can become conscious of the
fact that passive synthesis has occurred and left its mark within us in the form of
our expectations, expectations that can’t help but constitute a future in
generalities.

By pursuing an active synthesis, we can come to know things by their
conditions of existence, by their particularity. This is the pursuit of difference-in-itself and it asks how things become different and why this becoming is
significant to others. This pursuit embodies the profound basis for the ethics of
Deleuze’s philosophy: He derives concepts from singularites, from the
conditions of existence of the objects he considers, and only from these does he
conceptualize each one’s possibilities.

The whole task, as evidenced in his work on cinema, is that of discerning
singularities: stepping back from our composed and ordered world and
thinking the differences from which it is composed... Art presents singular
affects and percepts, freed from organising and purposive viewpoints.
Philosophy strives to think the possibility of these singularities... the ethics
of thinking in any form lies in how something works and what it can do,
and not in any of its already given terms... Thinking is not generalising.

25 Although, he does suggest that the interference of active synthesis with passive synthesis is
partly responsible for determining the manner in which sensation and perception participate in
our sense of repetition. Difference and Repetition, p. 72

26 “Far from being individual or personal, singularities preside over the genesis of individuals and
persons” they are distributed in a “potential” which admits neither Self nor I, but which
produces them by actualizing or realizing itself, although the figures of this actualization do not
at all resemble the realized potential. Only a theory of singular points is capable of
transcending the synthesis of the person and the analysis of the individual as these are (or are
made) in consciousness.” Gilles Deleuze. The Logic of Sense. New York: Columbia University
Press, 1990, p. 118

CHAPTER 2: THE MOVEMENT-IMAGE AND THE PROBLEM OF LOOKING

Deleuze and The Movement-Image

In *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, Deleuze uses philosophy as an opaque screen to frame the light of cinema and he uses cinema to do the same for philosophy.\(^{28}\) In the text, a theory of movement based on the ideas of Henri Bergson is a starting point that serves to support a unique body of thought regarding the possibilities of cinema. Instead of relying on any traditional approaches to film, which might organize the cinema by genres, auteurs, spectator-text relations, narratology etc., Deleuze plucks from the database of the history of cinema, this kind of shot, that auteur, this use of fabric, that dance number to sketch both a classification of signs and a philosophy of movement and time. In the process, by operating between the two, Deleuze outlines new ways for thinking art (which is to say he opens the possibility for art to become differently).

Deleuze begins the book with a synopsis of Bergson’s three theses on movement and as these concepts are central to my own enquiry, I summarize them here. In his first theses, Bergson argues that movement is distinct from the space covered, for while space covered can be reconstituted and divided,

movement cannot. On the one hand, you can bring two instants together to
infinity in an effort to recompose movement, but movement will always occur in
the interval between the two. On the other hand, movement will always occur in a
concrete duration; so each time you divide or subdivide time in order to
recompose movement, you change the movement and duration qualitatively. For
example, if I raise my hand up in the air as if to ask a question, the duration of the
movement is approximately one second, and we might describe the quality of the
movement as upward. But if I divide this movement in half, it now lasts only half a
second, and my arm now raised in front of me, would perhaps be described as
having an outward quality of movement. Each movement has its own duration,
and each division will change that movement qualitatively.

While movement cannot be reconstituted or divided, it is nevertheless
often discussed as though it could be. These are two “illusions” of movement,
different from each other, and according to Bergson they correspond to modern
and ancient (mis)understandings. In the ancient conception, “movement refers to
intelligible elements, Forms and Ideas, which are themselves eternal and
immobile.”29 These are the universals, outside time and space, pure essences,
changeless in their near heavenly modes of existence. Remember the discus
thrower, whose impossible pose represents the perfection of all moments of the
throw at once. In this case “time is no more than the image of eternity” because

29 Ibid. p.4
the whole is given - literally ahead of time. This ancient idea re-constitutes movement after the fact, it is deduced from the privileged moment represented in the sculpture. According to Bergson, this misses real movement because in this conception concrete duration does not exist.

The modern conception of movement replaces these privileged moments (the dialectical order of poses) with the mechanical succession of instants. Here, Edward Muybridge’s experiment is the textbook example. Muybridge, of course was the first one to capture a horse in motion by taking photographs of it in 1/1000th of a second intervals, (proving to the world that a horse does in fact lift all four legs off the ground when it gallops.) But, according to Bergson, this modern conception also misses real movement because in this case, time is no more than the construction of accumulated instants, the consequence of the set.

The modern conception recomposes movement by constructing a whole from the parts; the ancient conception recomposes movement by re-constituting the parts from the whole. For Bergson, neither of these ideas accounts for real movement and so to address the problem, he proposes the movement-image, a concept that includes parts, or sets in space which are closed, and simultaneously a whole in duration, which is open. But how can there be both?

Bergson resolves the apparent paradox by arguing that the closed sets, or

30 Ibid. p.4
31 Ibid.
immobile sections of movement, are only artificially closed since they always refer to a whole or a mobile section of movement outside of themselves.

Figure 4: the wedding scene, *The Here To Gathered* (film still)

At first glance, film appears to conform to the modern illusion; it recomposes movement by pulling individual still images through a mechanism at 24 frames per second. But Deleuze demonstrates that the cinema is actually a good example of Bergson’s movement-image. By being careful to distinguish between the mechanism of film and what we receive as viewers, he finds that what the cinema actually gives spectators is the intermediate image, the movement-image.
Closed Sets

According to Bergson, there are essentially two aspects to movement, on the one hand that which happens between objects or parts and on the other, that which expresses the duration or the whole. And it is movement that relates these to each other. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy’s film *Lightplay: Black-White-Grey*\(^\text{32}\) (1932) offers a wonderful illustration of Bergson’s theses on movement. For the artwork, Moholy-Nagy built an object, which he called a light-space-modulator. (It is this object, rather than the film per se which concerns me here.)

The object seems to be an entirely kinetic sculpture that generates light effects as a result of the motion of its parts—parts made of mirrors, metals and glass, a myriad of reflective and transparent surfaces with varying degrees of opacity. Each part of the sculpture is constantly moving on its own plane, at its own pace, and with a different trajectory than the others. But beyond this, the sculpture as a whole is also moving. It is movement itself relating the differing parts to each other and the parts to the whole. But this isn’t a relation based on an abstract category of “things that move,” rather movement relates these parts through time, in duration, through change itself.

When the individual parts come into relation with each other in the object, they extend beyond themselves to become a closed set of moving parts, a closed set of immobile sections of movement. But since beyond the moving parts this object itself is also moving, the kinetic object as a whole is referred to as a mobile

\(^{32}\) Shown in Vancouver at the Presentation House Gallery in the spring of 2007
section of movement, a movement-image. This movement-image is a closed set, but like all closed sets it is only artificially closed because when it comes into relation with other mobile sections, it extends into an even larger movement-image as in, for instance, when Moholy-Nagy’s moving sculpture comes into relation with light. In the room the piece was filmed in, the light that surrounds the sculpture is perpetually changing with the movement of the sculpture’s parts and the movement of its whole. This is not simply a matter of the object affecting the quality of the light, for the light itself is in motion through particle waves, a motion that, on the one hand preceded the kinetic object, and on the other, is being changed by it. In fact, as much as we can say that the sculpture is affecting the light, likewise we can say the reverse: The movement of the light is articulating all the movement in the sculpture; we could say even that it is the moving light, the changes in the quality of the moving light, that are what tell us the sculpture is moving. Movement relates things through change-over-time, in duration.

As a result of taking the light into account, our closed set has extended. Now it includes the moving light that has come into relation with the object’s moving parts and the object’s moving whole, to become a larger movement-image. The process of extension of sets into larger sets can go on and on to infinity. (We could extend the set again, for instance, by bringing it into relation with the moving film that captures its image, and then into a gallery where the moving bodies of viewers interact with it and so on.)
The Open Whole

Each time the movement-image extends into a larger set, a new artificial closure is created. This closure is a framing which creates an information system, and the moment it is created, it produces the “Hors-Champ” (the out-of-field), that which is beyond the frame, that which cannot be seen or understood but that which is nevertheless there. The out-of-field has two aspects: In one sense, the out-of-field is what enables both the isolation of a set and the extension of sets into larger ones. However, the out-of-field is never part of the system that is artificially closed, it is always outside the set. Each new larger set

Figure 5: pastry table, *The Here To Gathered* (film still)
is created “on condition that it gives rise to a new out-of-field,”\(^\text{33}\) therefore we can say the out-of-field is a function of the whole. As such, it is also what prevents sets from closing entirely, and this is the second aspect to the out-of-field: it opens sets onto duration itself, onto a whole that is not visible or divisible.

In one case, the out-of-field designates that which exists elsewhere, to one side or around; in the other case, the out-of-field testifies to a more disturbing presence, one which cannot even be said to exist, but rather to ‘insist’ or ‘subsist’, a more radical Elsewhere, outside homogeneous space and time.\(^\text{34}\)

This more radical outside is the Open whole, a flow, indivisible and ever-changing; and the nature of the whole “is to give rise to something new.”\(^\text{35}\)

The whole creates itself, and constantly creates itself in another dimension without parts – like that which carries along the set of one qualitative state to another, like the pure ceaseless becoming which passes through these states.\(^\text{36}\)

Deleuze defines the whole for us calling it Relation because relation is never a property of objects but is external to them:

Relations do not belong to objects, but to the whole, on condition that this is not confused with a closed set of objects. By movement in space, the objects of a set change their respective positions. But, through relations, the whole is transformed or changes qualitatively. We can say of duration itself or of time, that it is the whole of relations.\(^\text{37}\)

\(^{\text{33}}\) *Cinema 1*, p.17  
\(^{\text{34}}\) ibid.  
\(^{\text{35}}\) ibid. p. 9  
\(^{\text{36}}\) ibid. p. 10  
\(^{\text{37}}\) ibid.
The movement-image then has three levels: the determination of closed systems (mobile sections of movement), the translation of movement between parts (bringing sets into relation with one another), and the continual transformation of the ever-changing whole (whose expression is carried in movement).

**The Out-of-Field and The Here To Gathered**

In making *The Here To Gathered*, I was very interested in the role of the out-of field, in seeing for myself (with my own perception), how it is that movement relates the whole to the parts and the parts to the whole. While any film has a whole and parts, the vignette structure with its obvious and heavy demarcations between parts and whole, seemed to offer a good framework to explore how this works. In fact, given the difference of each vignette from the others (no character appears twice, each scene has a fairly different aesthetic, they do not connect narratively to one another, etc.), one could argue that each vignette has an entire film in its out-of-field. How would movement relate the scenes, how would the whole film emerge?

In some cases, the scenes seem as if they are in conversation with one another. For instance, after the title fades from the screen, we see an old man in a formal suit. A medium-shot shows him standing in a sunlit room, a large palm in the background. He discovers he is being photographed and poses for the camera again and again. He tries to be endearing, but he’s caught on film wearing all manner of expressions. Without warning, the light dims dramatically,
recognition dawns on his face, his jaw drops, his eyes widen and suddenly it’s night. We’re outside a brick building. A woman stands smoking, talking, and gesticulating with her hands. The lighting is theatrical, and the camera is on the move and begins to reveal a line of people chit chatting in small groups. And somewhere in those first few seconds, it will occur that this is a new scene, unrelated to the first. But it takes a moment because the cut point between the two scenes has a teleological quality that makes this new image seem to be the *cause* of old man’s look.

This device is also used to segue between the scene with the women at the tea party and the scene with the girl in the hallway. The women at the party turn with a start to look at the camera. Suddenly the film cuts to a young girl who
sits in a red alcove, looking up toward the ceiling. Again, the purposive cut occurs at a moment pregnant with expectation, indicating a causal relationship between the images. Putting this in terms of Pudovkin’s question and answer theory, we could say that when the women turn suddenly to look, the instinctual question the viewer asks is “What are they looking at?” The answer the film provides is a cut to a new scene. While this cut may be causally “irrational,” segues like these can nevertheless be understood as preserving a continuity maintained through a forced dialogue between characters in the editing.

And continuity is maintained not just through character in the film, but also through abstract formal connections. For instance, the final shot of the line of people outside the gallery ends with the camera tracking past the crowd for the last time, panning into a black cloth, like a curtain closing on the image. When the next scene begins, the camera is in a car driving down a residential street, as if the pan that began in the first scene just keeps going despite being both spatially and temporally re-located. Movement is quite obviously connecting these two scenes, asserting itself in a continuity of pacing. Forging continuity may seem at first to be a way to express the whole, but actually preserving continuity keeps the whole hidden. In this example, it seems both to highlight the scenes as closed off from one another, and also to ‘fake’ a relation between them. But, as Deleuze says:

38 “irrational” is understood mathematically as “outside a set” (of numbers)
...there will always be breaks and ruptures, which show clearly enough that the whole is not [in continuity]... The whole intervenes elsewhere and in another order, as that which prevents sets from closing in on themselves or on each other – that which testifies to an opening which is irreducible to continuities as well as to their ruptures. It appears in the dimension of a duration which changes and never ceases to change.\textsuperscript{39}

While the assertion of continuity between the two scenes conceals the whole rather than reveals it, there is a moment near the cut where I, as one viewer, feel the open whole. Returning to that final pan down the line of people outside the gallery, my experience of the open whole occurs the moment the black ‘curtain’ occupied the entire frame. As a viewer, while I am ‘in’ the black, the sensation of continuing to move is palpable. And even though the next shot down the residential street will reassert the continuity, while I am ‘in’ this moving black, I sense the insistence of duration itself, duration that is there all the time but not perceived because artificial closures and false continuities conceal it.

\textbf{Agamben’s Mythical Rigidity}

The philosopher Giorgio Agamben would very much like it if we understood the history of art itself as a series of movement-images, as sections whose movements express changes in an open whole, the whole that is (western) History. He calls for us to understand in these terms Aby Warburg’s atlas \textit{Mnemosyne}, a collection of approximately 2000 images from the ancient Greek to the modern golfer, which Warburg pinned onto multiple boards covered

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Cinema 1}, p. 27
in black cloth.\textsuperscript{40} For years he obsessively sought new relations between them, manipulating the images on each board, moving images to different boards to make alternate sets, and changing the order of the boards themselves.

According to Agamben, we should not see these as a repertoire of images, as autonomous realities, but as immobile sections that open up onto a whole of which they are a part.\textsuperscript{41} However, he suggests that our treating history this way is not possible because a ‘mythical rigidity’ characterizes our relationship to the image in modernity.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{afternoon tea, \textit{The Here To Gathered} (film still)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{40} Giorgio Agamben. “Notes on Gesture,” \textit{Means Without Ends}. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2000, p54.4
\textsuperscript{41} Giorgio Agamben. “Notes on Gesture,” \textit{Means Without Ends}. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2000, p54.4
This crystallization is exemplified in a film like *Last Year at Marienbad* (dir. Alain Resnais, 1961). The film opens onto the heavy architecture of a Versailles-like set where we hear a rich and repetitive voice-over, detailing a description of the spatial surfaces we are traversing in image. There is an endlessness to this “setting of the scene”, as we come again and again upon the same paintings and statues, “baroque moldings and floors”, the “cold ornamentation in these corridors and halls”, this “luxurious,” “lugubrious” hotel. Finally, the scene set, the film opens onto a shot of two people, posed, stiff like the statues we’ve just seen, interacting with one another in an overly scripted manner. And as the camera pulls back, this is revealed to be a play and now opens onto a shot of clapping people, posed, stiff like the statues we’ve just seen, interacting with one another in an overly scripted manner... *Last Year* can be characterized as a play within a play of manners across the surface of the social, a film that witnesses all its movements choreographed into frozen destinies.

Agamben states: “An age that has lost its gestures is, for this reason, obsessed by them [and]... tries at once to reclaim what it has lost and to record its loss...” And so we return to Aby Warburg’s mammoth collection of images and see it now, not as it could have been, as the exhibition of movement-images (in which, for Agamben, “even the Mona Lisa, even Las Meninas could be seen...”

42 These phrases are from the voice-over narration at the start of the film. Alain Robbe-Grillet (writer) *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961).
43 Agamben, p.52.3
as fragments of a gesture or as stills of a lost film\textsuperscript{44}, but rather we look upon it with the intention of recovering the lost gestures of our age. Embodying the power of Medusa, our very gaze turns the images to stone.

Every image, in fact, is animated by an antinomic polarity: on the one hand, images are the reification and obliteration of a gesture (it is the \textit{imago} as death mask or as symbol); on the other hand, they preserve the \textit{dynamis} intact (as in Muybridge’s snapshots or in any sports photograph). The former corresponds to the recollection seized by voluntary memory, while the latter corresponds to the image flashing in the epiphany of involuntary memory. And while the former lives in magical isolation, the latter always refers beyond itself to a whole of which it is a part.\textsuperscript{45}

Destiny, fate, crystallization, stiffening, history, law, these are all words Agamben places in opposition to gesture; together they form the ‘mythical rigidity’ of which he speaks. These forces drive the image in modernity toward antiquity’s eternal Forms and Ideas—static, frozen, immobile poses—where the whole is given literally ahead of time, held captive in modernity by a nostalgic gaze.

\textbf{The Imago as Wedding}

It seems to me that no image illustrates Agamben’s description of our modern relationship to the image better than those of the Wedding. Held in the culture’s collective consciousness is the image of the “blushing bride” (a medium-close-up shot that draws a metaphor between the bride’s innocence and the purity of the white flowers she holds tight to her breasts); the image of the wedding party (a wide-shot, bride and groom in the centre, her train fanned out in

\textsuperscript{44} ibid. p. 54.5
\textsuperscript{45} ibid.
front of the couple, bridesmaids and groomsmen flanking their sides); the image of the “signing of the register” (a close-up of the document and a hand that holds the pen that marks the deed – posed for the picture of course to avoid a blur).

These are the privileged instants of Wedding, events utterly prescribed in image long before the actual event brings them into being. My cousin reports that ten bridal couples daily come to the park across from her apartment to have their photographs taken. In China, where she lives, this is done six months prior to their union. The image of the cultural form Wedding (and increasingly the images of a particular wedding), literally and iconically pre-exist the event.

In addition to all the official images, we also have all the unofficial ones, images of the bored wedding guest, the lonely wedding guest, and the loud, obnoxious wedding guest; we have images of misbehaving children who entertain themselves by running wildly, around and under the legs of the tables

“...as soon as an idea of the event is advanced, a discourse or a text on the event is proposed, and at the very moment when a history of the event is designated, there is, already, creation and formation of an event.” Jacques Derrida. “Preface: A time for farewells: Heidegger (read by) Hegel (read by) Malabou.” in The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic by Catherine Malabou. trans. Lisabeth During; translation funded by editions Leo Scheer. New York: Routledge, 2005, p. ix

All three of these are often filmed using two intercutting shots, one showing the isolated individual, the next one providing the comparative relation showing a social scene.
for instance;\textsuperscript{48} we know the fake smiles people wear when they encounter long-lost relatives;\textsuperscript{49} we even know the underlying cynicism that accompanies such a blatantly utopic event, often seen through kitchen montages that include shots of the ‘invisible’ servers belying, among other things, the irrelevancy of this event to their lives. We KNOW the image of Wedding. So often has it been represented that each and every one of the images I’ve described is a cliché.

Figure 8: the wedding scene, \textit{The Here To Gathered} (film still)

\textsuperscript{48} Thus providing the opportunity for filmmakers and photographers to justify nearly every possible angle—low and on the ground, low canted up from the child’s POV, from the adult POV looking down reprimandingly, etc.

\textsuperscript{49} This image caught accidentally in countless long and medium shots in amateur wedding videos and captured purposively in the close-up of the pre-planned film.
Resisting the Mythical Image

When it came to the wedding scene in *The Here To Gathered*, I had in mind Agamben’s description of modernity’s relationship to the image. So I posed the problem to Andreas Hahn, the director of photography, in a question: “How do we NOT know weddings in film?” We discussed many possibilities but in the end Andreas came up with his own solution while we were at the wedding itself. He shot images in bursts, never held long enough for character identification to take place, but specific enough that neither did they function as ambience. I would describe what resulted as a sensibility more than anything else. There is a loose quality to the footage first seen in Godard, which has become (and is still becoming) more and more popular as an aesthetic. Godard’s films (I’m thinking of *Breathless* (1960), *Band of Outsiders* (1964), and *Pierrot Le Fou* (1965) to name a few in particular) have this sensibility in spades.\(^{50}\) It comes as a result of his playfulness that, in Godard’s case, represents a serious politic: he will not be tyrannized by the apparatus’ purposiveness that serves so dedicatedly the commodification of the medium. His cuts are those of an anarchist; and the effect of this politic on the image is a liberation of sorts, a kind of anxious “looseness.”\(^{51}\)

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\(^{50}\) Mainstream viewers’ increasing sophistication with filmic languages is due in large part to commercial film’s appropriation of avant-garde strategies like Godard’s.

\(^{51}\) This “looseness” is fragile. In my own film, every time I tampered with the footage in the editing suite, the sensibility was lost. Never mind re-ordering the shots, just the act of making cuts that “worked” (ie. seamless edits) collapsed the fragile bubble the scene creates. In the end, in order to preserve this sensibility, I only allowed myself the “right” to remove shots and trim off the flash frames.
“The editing never allows the scene to settle. It is almost as if, with each cut, the scene is forced to start over.”

...those filmmakers who break the cinematic flow (Godard, for instance) need to labor to do so, for they thwart the mind in its act of seizing something that seems to disappear for it when stopped.

An Analytic Interior Gaze

About a year ago, I encountered a work that I was surprised to find I didn't know how to look at. It was an installation at the Contemporary Art Gallery by Rachel Harrison and Scott Lyall called "When Hangover Becomes Form." This collaborative work was a massive collection of “things” barely held together through compositional relations, filling the entire gallery space. Found objects, made objects, pop-cultural objects, old images, new materials, video footage, even re-used art work from previous shows— they all came together in an aquarium-like conglomeration. This plethora of things just existed together, in tension through a very precise balance, bouncing off the surface of one another in a kind of formal equivalence.

Eventually I came to terms with this work, but for the first half hour I spent looking at it, I didn't know how to make my way through the work. And it was

53 Dudley Andrew. Concepts in Film Theory, as quoted in ibid.
54 Rachel Morrison & Scott Lyall, "When Hangover Becomes Form", Contemporary Art Gallery: March 31 – May 26, 2006 Vancouver, BC.
55 The sculptor Colleen Brown first used the term “formal equivalence” while describing this work in a conversation I had with her.
how this piece resisted my looking that told me that when I look at art, I am looking for something. It's not necessarily a-looking-for-this or a-looking-for-that, but just a looking-for-a-something. Our looking has purpose, intention. And I wondered, “What is that intention?”

The field of aesthetics has been summed up by the philosopher Jacques Rancière in a long list of historical definitions, “a product identical with something not produced, knowledge transformed into non-knowledge, logos identical with pathos, a form of thought that has become foreign to itself...” and the list goes on. Each definition in the list shares this quality of transformation, from one thing to another.

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to something else. If I return to my purposeful looking with this quality in mind, I can say what I am looking into the art for, is something that it's not, something other than art.

Jean-Luc Nancy discusses this very problem in his article “The Vestige of Art.” For his argument, he uses Hegel's definition of aesthetics, “the sensible presentation of the Idea”, a definition of art he defends as the one that includes all others, and a definition, by the way, that also has this quality of transformation – from the sensible to the Idea. The Idea is, by definition, invisible, or unimaginable, and art's task has been to make the Idea visible, therefore the image is always the image of something. Even in modernity, claims Nancy, when the Idea is no more, “the image is still the image of the Nothing.” This way of thinking art is always a move toward the “inside” of Idea. And here is the paradox Nancy sees in this way of thinking art:

...the Idea cannot be what it is – presentation of the thing in its truth – except through, in and as this sensible order that is at the same time its outside... The idea must go outside itself in order to be itself... but this causes the very notion of Idea to withdraw, because what it is, is the ’inside’. Nancy believes that as long as art continues on with this definition, the whole of art will withdraw “as a phantom or phantasm of the Idea.”

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57 Nancy, “The Vestige of Art.”
58 Nancy is referring here to the Eternal Forms and Ideas, as in the discus thrower example used earlier, which aims to represent an Ideal, which, of course, is not presentable as a thing.
59 Nancy, “The Vestige of Art” p. 96
60 Ibid. p.92
61 Ibid. p. 95
gives the name “residual” to art that functions as the image of something and he posits the notion of the ‘vestigial’ as an alternative, one without such a “fateful” end. According to Nancy “…The vestige is an effect that represents only the causality of cause, but not its form.” According to Nancy “…The vestige is an effect that represents only the causality of cause, but not its form.”

He uses Thomas Aquinas’ famous example of smoke to explain this: While we say that smoke points to the absent presence of fire, that it stands in for or represents fire, in actuality the absence is not considered in terms of this unpresentability of absence, rather it is understood as the trace of fire.

In the statue, there is the Idea, the eidos and idol of the god. In the vestigial smoke, there is no eidos of the fire. One could also say: the statue has an “inside,” a “soul”; the smoke is without inside. Of the fire it keeps only its consumption.

There are two traits to Nancy's vestige. The first is that, in its etymology it references the foot and its imprint or trace; this is distinguished from the “face,” the roots of which, incidentally, mean “to pose.” The second is that there is inherent to it a notion of passage:

...the vestige bears witness to a step, a walk, a dance, or a leap... it is not a ruin which is the eroded remains of a presence; it is just a touch right at the ground... it presents what is not “Idea”: motion, coming, passage, the going-on of coming-to-presence... the passing being of being itself.

62 Ibid. p. 93
63 Ibid. p. 95
64 Nancy, “The Vestige of Art,” p. 98
65 Ibid. p. 97-98
Means-being-Means

It’s interesting that Nancy should come to the movement of the body in space; later he will even refer more specifically to the walking passerby. Giorgio Agamben’s “gesture” suggests similar lines, deriving it, as he does, from Muybridge’s snapshots of “Man walking at normal speed,” “Walking woman picking up a jug,” “walking woman sending a kiss”... Toward defining gesture, Agamben, like Nancy, seeks the etymology of his word “gesture” and finds that “gesture” shares its roots with the Latin gerere, which comes from a family of words meaning “action.” In his research he finds a Roman scholar from the first century BC who separates action into three words: facere to make, agere, to act, and gerere to carry.

For... a poet facit “makes” a play and does not act it, and on the other hand the actor agit “acts” it and does not make it... On the other hand, the general, in that he is said to gerere “carry on” affairs, in this neither facit “makes” nor agit “acts,” but gerit “carries on,” that is, supports, a meaning transferred from those who gerunt “carry” burdens, because they support them..  

All three of these kinds of actions are means: the writing of the play is production, a means to an end; acting is understood as praxis, a means as an end in itself; but the general who “carries on” is a means-being-means. Through the identification of this third type of action, the means-end binary is broken.

66 Marcus Terentius Varro (116 BC – 27 BC)
67 Agamben, p. 56.7
According to Agamben, this third type of action is a means without ends, in Kantian terms, “a purposiveness without purpose.”

What characterizes gesture is that in it nothing is being produced or acted, but rather something is being endured and supported. The gesture is the exhibition of a mediality: it is the process of making a means visible as such.

In the last scene of *The Here To Gathered*, among other things, I specifically tried to create an exhibition of mediality, an image that expressed the gesture of the filmmaking process. The different parts of the apparatus of production, made up in my case with actors, camera operator, dolly pusher, and key grip, were identified as means and separated out from one another. Each person was given a set of principles to guide, but not prescribe, their actions: The actor who played the caretaker was told he could go wherever he wanted, but had to travel in straight lines, moving at right angles across the space. The camera operator was told to use the camera to see through, to explore the space. The dolly operator was told not to look up at the camera, but instead, to follow the lines on the gymnasium floor the way children do, by trying to cross the whole space travelling only the coloured lines, using the place they contact each other as legal crossings. (This set of instructions complicated the camera operator’s ability to control his exploration of the space.) Even the lighting grip

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68 Ibid. p. 58.9  
69 Ibid. p. 56. 7
was given a complex set of rules that he acted within, which, while still allowing room for his agency, helped govern the pace of the light.

The result is a series of images that feel somewhat absurd, their movement, angle and purpose unpredictable and unexpected. But how can we understand this scene as a means-being-means, the gesture of film, an exhibition of mediallity? Without a doubt it is the result of my directions to the various pieces of the apparatus, I was external to the set of means organizing their relation, and therefore even if I didn’t prescribe ends, I was nevertheless structuring the ends that would be. But does it necessarily follow that this is what we receive?

Figure 10: gym scene, *The Here To Gathered* (film still)
Signs of Self-Reflexivity and the Exhibition of Mediality

In aesthetic terms, historically, exhibiting mediality can be understood as a function of self-reflexive techniques; they point to the form mediating our experience of the work even as we engage it. Conventionally, self-reflexive signs in film appear at the beginning or the end (in some cases doing both, thereby “book-ending” or bracketing the film.) These signs allow the subject Film – its history, materiality, the codes and conventions of its language, its reception, the politics of the apparatus, the economics of its distribution etc. – to enter into a relation with the rest of the content. Arguably, Vertov’s Kino-Eye is the significant precedent for this usage, still functioning as a model of reflexivity in film today. The film has two beginnings: the first opens Film as the subject – shots of the cameraman, shots of the empty theatre, shots of the editor in the editing suite; and the second opens the machinic nature of the city as subject. In Vertov’s historical moment, film held within it the constructivist ideals of modernity and the hopes of new technologies: “Film” signified a vehicle through which to affect a radically different world for the proletariat.

But today, the predominant use of these techniques allows them to be recognized and absorbed quickly. They are easily immobilized and contained, and as a result they close down into a means as end. Today’s viewers are astute at recognizing these techniques as codes; they are conscious of art’s awareness of itself or of art history, and they have been given the task (by the authority of interpretation) to “read” the work as text, to decode self-reflexivity as the sign-OF-
something.\textsuperscript{70} And this is no floating signifier chain either; the canonized history of these techniques ensures we know what they point to.\textsuperscript{71} So while they may still have meaning, in this case we might say they have lost their means-ing: they no longer interrupt viewers in the act of viewing, they simply sign this interruption.\textsuperscript{72} They have crystallized and stiffened into “the \textit{Imago} as death mask”:

...it is as if a silent invocation calling for the liberation of the image into gesture arose from the entire history of art. This is what in ancient Greece was expressed by the legends in which statues break the ties holding them and begin to move.\textsuperscript{73}

In a tone slightly less apocalyptic than Agamben’s, as an artist I wonder:

“How can I make an art that resists a looking-for, a looking with purpose?” but at the same time, “How can that art exhibit mediality without returning, by default or design, to a means as end?”

\textsuperscript{70} Hollywood likes the signs in the metaphor of the train – the viewer’s journey, conveyed in never-ending tracks that look and act like a strip of film, moving past the wheels of the engine with its light projecting out into the dark tunnel ahead. Independent films use trains too, but I’ve noticed they prefer the metaphor of the bicycle, often seen riding the edge of the frame where its sprockets have more power to signify the celluloid. The bicycle (especially the ones with lights and bells on the front) contains most of the signs the train does, but without being “polluted” by all the references to industry. Meanwhile, experimental films have a penchant for signs that suggest how film is actually made and the “real” materiality of film – celluloid, light, and time. There’s more variety here, but a common one is the “poor man’s dissolve”: A film opens by intercutting image with black in such a way that images appear in short bursts, getting longer and longer while the black gets shorter and shorter, and eventually disappears. (Admittedly, I still find this one interesting, which speaks volumes about my biases.)

\textsuperscript{71} In fact, the speed at which they point to their referent is astounding suggesting the necessity of art strategies that (in Jin-me Yoon’s words) “slow the signification process down.”

\textsuperscript{72} For instance the way self-reflexive signs did when the politics of representation first came to the fore.

\textsuperscript{73} Agamben, p. 56.6
In fact, both of my criteria were met in my initial experience of “When Hangover Becomes Form,” facilitated by the precise formal equivalence at work in the piece.

Figure 11: "When Hangover Becomes Form" Rachel Harrison and Scott Lyall (2006) (photo by Scott Massey courtesy of the Contemporary Art Gallery)

It’s no small feat to balance a black and white blown-up image of Cher, propped on a pile of black blocks, with a gold tube-top hanging off a colourful, lumpen, blob, perched on a plinth. But as I said earlier, after about half an hour into the work my “looking problem” subsided. These parts— with all their various forms,
references, qualities, materials, structures—these objects standing obstinately in relation, refusing to behave inside a stable frame, suddenly manifested one. Individual and specific references to art congregated, then aggregated into an undifferentiated whole: A general mode of reflexivity gained weight over time, becoming an organizing principle with a totalizing effect. Accumulating immobility, the piece eventually stiffened into a pose.74

**Form Faces Out**

My rally against the self-reflexive sign and what I see as its culpability in our contemporary drive toward the inside of image, was severely challenged at the Or gallery in 2006, where I saw *Syntagma*, Valie Export’s 18 minute, 16mm film (1983).75 From its very opening, the film is filled with the most heavy-handed of these kinds of references: a strip of film leader, an image of a woman’s hands gesturing in sign language, a voice-over reading psychologist R. D. Laing’s book *The Divided Self*. But in an altogether surprising turn, I found, in the end, this work did not close down, it resisted my looking-for, and exhibited its mediality without returning to a means as end.

*Syntagma* was made during the heyday of feminist film theory in its most psychoanalytic phase, so what I expected to see was a film that confronted patriarchal codes and conventions through an ideological deconstruction. (My

74 I don’t write about this work to erect a straw man to take down. I credit it with giving me new eyes, and I think it leaves a legacy in Vancouver we’ll see in future works. (Good artwork generates dialogue in art, and, at least for me, this piece has done that in spades.)

75 This was an informal film night organized by Alex Pensato.
eyes were more than a little pre-disposed.) And while that actually does describe the piece, what I saw was a film filled with exuberant experimentation, engaged with its own materiality, and a film that played with the perceptual world. Rigorous and highly complex, in *Syntagma* all the categories through which we understand the body “as a biological, existential, or metaphysical entity” are broken,\(^76\) fragmented into parts and used by Export as units in her inventive formalist language.

We see, for instance, Export walking through a living room as though she is on a mission, arms spurring her movement on. The editing picks up her pace. Repetition and jump cuts abound. The footage is frenetically cut and mildly disorienting. Entrances and exits are frames through which she passes again and again, giving one the sense that she is travelling great distances, quickly and with force. But the cutting of the shots, traps her in the well-worn passageways of this home.

In another scene, a durational shot, we see her outside lying face down with her arms outstretched in front of her, on top of a concrete pony wall that descends next to some steps. Moulding herself to the shape of her surroundings, her knees are bent to accommodate the building upon which she loiters. A mirror (the length of her body) has been inserted behind her, and reflects the image from yet another mirror off-screen. It projects a view of the

building, the steps, and her prostrate body, but does so from a different perspective. The mirror doubles the built environment from another angle, and so the large concrete steps occupy most of the frame. The doubling brings space and rhythm to the fore, and makes it appear as though Export inhabits (has become an element of) a piece of constructivist architecture or a cubist painting.

In yet another scene, we see a series of tight shots of her flesh-toned arm relating in various positions to a life-size black and white photograph of her arm. Illusionistically lining up the real and represented, at times the arms extend into each other’s temporalities, at others, time is ignored, in favour of making seamless body forms of hybridized appendages appear.

Her highly material engagement with props and locations, with the camera, with the processing (optical printing) and editing, turn her scenes into eccentric, fascinating objects that, when taken together, convey three-dimensionality. I mean this the same way as when we use the term to describe a character in a film—when we feel their complexity, their obstinate refusal to be less than they are (ie. to be completely intelligible.) And so what we feel as their three-dimensionality is, in some sense, their unknowable-ness.\(^77\)

Inside the scenes themselves, what amazes is the presence of these highly codified signs that we read or de-code, but which are nevertheless

\(^{77}\) In a talk given by Dieter Roelstraete called “Thing Theory: “Thingness” and the origin of the work of art”, he referred to a quality in certain artworks which he called their enigmatical-ness. Our two terms have much in common, (I like his better.) University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. September 17, 2008
released from their capture. These signs don’t close down into a means-as-end, but neither are they caught in the abyss of the slippery signifier. We know what they point to; Export uses them for their specificity, they are the material “stuff” of her images. In fact, she treats whole systems of representation as a material. Without a doubt, *Syntagma* documents its historical moment in the way it addresses conditions of representation, but nevertheless, in its address, it does not assume a model (of power relations for example) and make a work that deconstructs it.

Her method is not to attack representation, but to make “ontological leaps” between different systems of representation... “to force the body’s code out of the frozen history of culture.”

Export gives us the gendered body in this way, in that mode, by this means, through that lens. Each system has a grip on the image, but together their collective existence denies an ultimate frame. Metaphorically and literally framing and re-framing, Export herself functions as the out-of-field for all the systems of representation that appear in the film. The specificity of her own gendered body artificially closes each generalized system; relates the systems to each other where they collide and conflict; and in duration, over the course of the film, presents and expresses itself through the ever-changing systems. The multiplicity of representations allows Export to re-claim her own body in all its singularity, not by denying its significations and entrenched patriarchal frames,

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but by passing by them, beyond them, through, around and between them. This film emerges, it comes into being, it be-comes.

In this endeavour, I think, perhaps, it is possible to see something of Nancy’s vestige in the film:

It would be necessary to distinguish in art, between image and vestige—right at the work of art and on the same work, on all works perhaps. It would be necessary to distinguish that which operates or demands an identification of the model or the cause, even if it is a negative one, from that which proposes— or exposes—merely the thing, some thing, and thus, in a sense, anything what-soever, but not in any way whatsoever, not as the image of the Nothing, and not as pure iconoclasm (which perhaps amounts to the same thing). Some thing as vestige.79

In this work, Export’s own formalist language is not caught in a model that is “always already.” It is, rather, much more Derridean that that – the film draws language out of itself. The film embodies a kind of working-things-out-on-the-work-itself that shifts both the art and my looking from pointing in to bearing out; from pointing to self-consciousness, to unfolding a whole of which consciousness-of-self is merely a part.

79 Nancy, “The Vestige of Art.” p. 96
CHAPTER 3: FORM FACES OUT

Consciousness and the Subject

The marriage of psychology and science produced psychoanalytic interpretation as a looking-for an interior hidden meaning with a penetrating vision. This marriage became a threesome when Jacques Lacan entered the scene, using language theories to engage in a re-interpretation of Freud’s ideas. Characterized as a science with a psycho-linguistic approach, this interpretation was taken up heavily by feminist film theorists.

Drawing on a series of metaphors between power and the primacy of vision as embodied by the camera, these theories were founded upon a notion of the “gaze,” enabling them to unearth the driving mechanisms of desire. Catalyzed by Laura Mulvey’s essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”, and attenuated by many other writers including Annette Kuhn, Theresa de Lauretis, and Marianne Doanne, to name just a few, these theorists revealed an entire system, the deep structure of patriarchy, and revolutionized our understanding of how ideological power operates. But as Frederic Jameson has pointed out, there is a totalizing dynamic that surrounds any effort to describe a “system:”

Insofar as the theorist wins, therefore, by constructing an increasingly closed and terrifying machine, to that very degree he loses, since the critical capacity of his work is thereby paralyzed, and the impulses of negation and revolt, not to speak of those of
social transformation, are increasingly perceived as vain and trivial in the face of the model itself...\textsuperscript{80}

Despite objections like Susan Sontag's "Against Interpretation," Lacanian psychoanalysis did indeed become the model, attaining a kind of sovereignty in cultural critique. In fact, the complex concept of "the gaze" became naturalized in film theory to such an extent that its non-appearance in Deleuze's germinal texts on cinema is highly suspicious, since the books follow a roughly historical lineage. In an interview with Deleuze, Claire Parnet asks the burning question, "Did you leave out the concept of the gaze deliberately?" He responds:

I'm not sure the notion's absolutely necessary. The eye's already there in things, it's part of the image, the image's visibility. Bergson shows how an image itself is luminous or visible and needs only a "dark screen" to stop it tumbling around in all directions, to reflect and refract the light. "The light which, if it kept on spreading, would never be seen." The eye isn't the camera, it's the screen. As for the camera, with all its propositional functions, it's a sort of third eye, the mind's eye.\textsuperscript{81}

Upon reading this quote, it is immediately apparent that there is a profound distinction between the assumptions that underwrite the metaphors psychoanalysis used (still prevalent today in film and art criticism) versus those in Deleuze's theory. This distinction represents a difference in the thinking of consciousness that returns us to a moment in the history of philosophy at the turn of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Bergson, who Deleuze quotes here, took a radical stance at

that time stating: “all consciousness is something.” He proposed that “Things are luminous by themselves without anything illuminating them: all consciousness is something, it is indistinguishable from the thing, that is from the image of light.”

According to Deleuze, Bergson's idea went against the whole of philosophy, which had always “placed light on the side of spirit and made consciousness a beam of light which drew things out of their native darkness.” (The English language is filled with words that express this way of thinking the relationship between consciousness and light – Enlightenment, illumination, elucidation, etc.) What Bergson was responding to is the ancient irreducible problem (the aporia) of Materialism and Idealism: How do we get from one order to the other, from the sensible realm to the intelligible realm? How do we overcome this duality? Traditionally, consciousness – the internal light, spirit, soul, brain – was endowed with the power to traverse the space between the two, to enact the move from one realm to the other. This thinking, of course, hit a pivotal point in Descartes, who used the presence of his consciousness, which could not be doubted, as the basis on which to determine the objective certainty of everything else in the world.

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82 Cinema 1, p56
83 Cinema 1, p. 60-61 If everything has light innately, Deleuze's comparison between the screen and the eye makes absolute sense: both allow images to be seen by stopping the light. This isn't so much a metaphor as a literal equivalence.
84 ibid.
85 Interestingly, Deleuze implies that it is the historical crisis of psychology that brings this ancient problem to a head.
Writing at the same time as Bergson, the phenomenologist Husserl took up Descartes’ method of doubt, not to confirm the world but to figure out the structure of consciousness itself. (This would become the legacy of psychoanalysis, providing the justification for its method of “scientifially” collecting evidence needed for interpreting the inside.) Husserl maintained the *grounding* (or in Deleuze’s words the “anchoring”) of consciousness in the first person— in the subjective experience— by describing all consciousness as having intentionality: “All consciousness is consciousness of something.”86 In Husserlian phenomenology, for each object that we direct our consciousness towards, we create a mental image of that object which represents it. Representation is necessary in order to bridge the gap between mental phenomena and physical phenomena, between the internal and external world. Hence, the external world is organized by and around a situated intentional consciousness. In this model, experience is always given to a subject.87

86 *Cinema 1*, p. 60
87 “All the ‘spectres’ which have filed before us [die wir Revue passieren liessen] were representations [Vorstellungen]. These representations — leaving aside their real basis [abgesehen von ihrer realem Grundlage] (which Stirner in any case leaves aside) — understood as representations internal to consciousness, as thoughts in people’s heads, transferred from their objectality [Gegenständlichkeit] back into the subject [in das Subjekt zurzickgenommen], elevated from substance into self-consciousness, are obsessions [der Sparren] or fixed ideas.” Derrida, “What Is ideology.” p. 171
The Water Scene in *The Here To Gathered*

Bergson heavily critiqued this position (and Deleuze and many other contemporary philosophers have done so since). I experienced the critique of phenomenology the first few times I watched the water scene in *The Here To Gathered.*

This entire scene is made up of a single shot in which different movements of water occur simultaneously. These movements are revealed one by one in the

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88 This footage of the water exists as the only video footage in the film, and the only image I actually, physically shot. It was captured months before the production of the film while on vacation. At the time, I was just using the camera to see through, to amplify my vision. It wasn’t until I came home and looked at the footage that I began to feel what I shot. Therefore, in what follows, as elsewhere throughout this document, I describe the image with the authority of a viewer not a maker.
camera’s frame through a zoom out over time. In the first seconds, all that can be seen is the ocean’s white froth traversing the frame horizontally (the first movement). This froth thins as the frame widens out to reveal the black water beneath, moving at a slightly slower pace (the second movement). Still zooming out, now the black water and white froth get taken up in rolling waves that move across the frame (the third movement). Then the shot widens out far enough that the shadow of the ferry, then those of the people riding it, become visible (the fourth); these shadows travel against the grain of the surface of the waves, moving faster than both the black ground and the white froth they leave in their wake. Just as it becomes possible to identify, to “make sense”, to hold all these movements together, the camera appears to zoom in and out slightly, adding yet another movement. But this is not the camera at all. It is the entire ocean itself, undulating under the influence of the moon (the fifth)! This final movement stimulated in me a sensation of vertigo; and it revealed that there was a first movement I didn’t account for— it was the camera’s zoom, the movement that, although tenuous, underwrote all the others. The camera’s zoom was the foundation, the ultimate ground upon which all the other movements were based, its agency corroborating and correlated to my subjective view of the world. It is not coincidental that this is the moment where I felt the deepest sense of expectation. The ocean cast the certainty of my subjective “I” into doubt, by duplicating the zoom from the other side of the camera. (Is it possible that the ocean has a consciousness separate from my own, one in which I am its object?)
Suddenly, my subjective point-of-view is not privileged over and above the others; and in fact this is the cause of my vertigo.

We find ourselves in fact faced with the exposition of a world where IMAGE = MOVEMENT. Let us call the set of what appears ‘Image’. We cannot even say that one image acts on another or reacts to another. There is no moving body which is distinct from executed movement. There is nothing moved which is distinct from the received movement. Every thing, that is to say every image, is indistinguishable from its actions and reactions: this is universal variation... My body is an image, hence a set of actions and reactions. My eye, my brain, are images, parts of my body. How could my brain contain images since it is one image among others? And can I even, at this level, speak of ‘ego’, of eye, of brain and of body? Only for simple convenience; for nothing can yet be identified in this way. It is rather a gaseous state... It is a state of matter too hot for one to be able to distinguish solid bodies in it. It is a world of universal variation, of universal undulation, universal rippling: there are neither axes, nor centre, nor left, nor right, nor high, nor low...

This is the plane of immanence. It pre-exists the divisions between subject and object, inside and outside. Experience just is. Subjects are formed after experience, from experience. We do not begin as subjects who, in order to know the world, create a representation of it in our minds; rather it is from experience that we make a representation, an image of ourselves as distinct subjects.

89 Cinema 1, p 58
90 “There is perception and it is from this perception that a perceiver is formed. This perceiver can then go on to form an image of itself as an “I” in relation to some outside or transcendent world. Any truth or transcendence, any foundation or ground for experience, is always an event of experience.” Colebrook, p. 74
91 ibid. p. 75
For Deleuze, then, there is no break with history when Phenomenology alters the concept of consciousness set up by Descartes in the 17th century: Husserl and the phenomenologists replaced God or Truth with the Subject as the ultimate foundation, the transcendental signified, the centre of determination. From antiquity to modernity, there has always been a ground.  

...the inside of subjectivity and the exteriority of the world are produced from the radical outside of impersonal experience or perception. The ‘outside’ of thought, for Deleuze, is not what we know or represent; it is the ‘plane of immanence’... [and] the multiplication of destabilising perspectives found in works of art can affirm difference without having to depend on representation.  

The Here To Gathered and the Opening of the Out-of-Field

During the shooting of The Here To Gathered, an angry neighbour outside the art gallery where we were filming one night, complained bitterly about the noise. Apparently, this gentleman was primed and ready for a fight; the Helen Pitt gallery, who’d been kind enough to let us film there for free, had prior dealings with this man (he was angry about the sound and smoke wafting into his apartment during openings). As a result, we wound up shooting in virtual silence using hand signals, but he phoned the police anyway and we were shut down before we got all the shots. This posed some problems in editing, especially for

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92 Alain Badiou has suggested that Deleuze’s philosophy in fact does have a ground as it relies on the univocity of being. For Deleuze, this univocity sets itself against transcendence, which is equivocal, dividing between an outside world and a being that knows or represents (as I have been describing.) However, Badiou argues that Deleuze’s reliance on univocity does not account for different kinds of being, for being in different ways, whereas, Badiou’s own philosophy does. see Alain Badiou. Deleuze: The Clamor of Being. trans. Louise Burchill. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

93 Colebrook, p. 75
Paul Bennett, the sound designer. After trying many possibilities, we finally settled on a track of clips cobbled together from the shoot, which suggested an event or almost-event off-screen. The addition of the soundtrack radically changed my perception of the scene when I reviewed it: The scene seemed to shift from being an illustration of an opening to becoming an enactment of it.

Figure 13: outside art gallery, *The Here To Gathered* (film still)

The scene begins with the eye of the camera taking an objective, sociological gaze down a line of people. But actually it feels only semi-objective; it’s not the long shot that would establish the camera as external to the set it frames; it’s a medium-long shot, which always seems a bit awkward to me – made worse here because the heads seem too close to the top of the frame,
some of them even cut-off. I can feel the frame; the group is bigger, more than just what the camera sees.

This first pan is followed by a shot in a subjective point-of-view (POV), locating the camera/viewer amongst the characters. But this too feels only semi-subjective; there is no “suturing” to a character, no seeing through a character’s eyes, through their vision of the world. Several things suggest this: We never get to see the reverse-shot that will tell us which character we are, and the other characters never seem to look at us directly (although perhaps they don’t seem like they’re purposely not looking at us either). But it’s the lack of sync sound that seems to effect the viewer’s separation more than anything else; the sound is not married to the image, yet somehow no doubt still from the scene. Even if there is no identification with a particular character, perhaps at this point, as a viewer, I still identify with the camera, as the camera. (If so, it is my act as a viewer doing this, willing this to conform to what I know, which will become clear in a moment; what transpires as the event or almost-event occurs changes the camera-viewer relationship, if it has not changed already.)

What do I see? Or in this case what do I hear? because the camera has panned into black. I hear a cup drop... a voice says “Get out of the way, get out of the way!”... “You’re cra-zy.”... The picture cuts back to the scene; the characters turn and look toward the street where presumably the sound is coming from. I expect the camera to show me the reverse-shot, to show me the other who looks back, the other whose voice I hear. But the camera doesn’t turn.
(What are they looking at?) Still it doesn’t turn. (Why isn’t the camera turning?)

Suddenly, I’m aware the camera’s frame is no longer commensurate with the image; the image has expanded to include another picture, the one the sound is presenting all on its own. What the camera presents now is merely a “view,” a view on the whole, one that is clearly ‘less’ than the whole, subtracted from the whole.94

If it has not happened already, in this moment I am no longer sutured to the camera. If I must still be sutured, it is to the image, because there are now two different framings, two different views of the same thing— one given by the camera, one by the sound: It is the shot-reverse-shot in a single image, two parts that appear simultaneously. These two parts give each other meaning by putting the other into relief. They come into relation with one another; but:

...this “coming” penetrates nothing; there is no intermediate and mediating “milieu”... There is no mi-lieu [between place]. It is a matter of one or the other, one and the other, one with the other, but by no means the one in the other (another essence, another nature, a diffuse or infuse generality).95

But did the image really extend when I realized the sound and picture were presenting two views? No, that was the moment of recognition that it had already happened; the image had already re-framed to include both picture and sound, the continuity was already re-asserted. Perhaps it extended the moment the camera took on that semi-subjective view, the moment it appeared as if I  

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94 “The first material moment of subjectivity is subtractive. It subtracts from the thing whatever does not interest it.” Cinema 1, p. 63
95 Nancy, “Being Singular Plural” p. 6-7
could inhabit a character, see through their vision of the world, but was blocked.

To recall, it was the lack of sync sound held most accountable for this, “not
married to the image, yet somehow no doubt still from the scene.”

This relationship of sound to picture poses an interesting problem for
viewers. (I have been asked about it in the question period at several artist talks.)
While the sound is a true index of the scene, (the sound was physically caused
by the actors, the set etc.), at any given moment while watching, it is only a
semiotic index—it refers to the true index, which it is not— it points to a-pointing-to
a particular reality.96 This is a system of referentiality. But while I can, in my
head, trace this referencing back to its original source (the shoot), I cannot say I
experience the image this way. Regardless of what it is, this is not what I
receive; what I receive is not continuity or even contiguity, but heterogeneity.97
For a split second, my consciousness has a kind of double vision: I’m aware of
the closed set the camera presents but I’m also conscious of another set, one
that exists but is not visible. What can be said about this second consciousness

96The true index offers empirical evidence. (Smoke is a true index of fire. The mark making of a
painter is a true index of the hand of the painter.) Indices are “objects that point to the
existence of other objects or prior events because they were physically caused by those
objects or events... The connection between an index and its cause is established by inferential
reasoning. The semiotician Charles Peirce argued that an index is also a species of sign. But it
is not clear that he was right. A sign, properly, is a manipulation of an agreed-upon code.
Neither the content of the sign nor its status as a sign can be contingent upon the factual
existence of a referent in the world. Of course, any indexical image or indexical component of
an image can be made to function as a sign. But that function is supererogatory to its identity
as something caused by something else... Many supposed analyses of indexicality in art are
really no more than semiotic analyses of signs of indexicality, that is, signs that signify

97Nancy, “Being Singular Plural,” p. 5. see also Cinema 1 p. 73: “There is no mixture or average
of two subjects, each belonging to a system, but a differentiation of two correlative subjects in a
system which is itself heterogeneous.”
at this point except that it is an opening, an opening that testifies to the moment
the frame of the image began to extend. The process of extension is
characterized by a tendency toward acentredness; it is caused by the insistence
of the out-of-field pushing and pulling, lifting and pressing upon the image; tipping
its equilibrium, and making it increasingly difficult to observe, recognize and
perceive moving bodies and to assign movement to them, because the centre
itself has been put into movement.98

And when I screen the scene again, I can see that really this opening was
there in the first shot, when the objective pans could only be called semi-
objective, because the artificial closure of a frame was felt.

...the camera does not simply give us the vision of the character
and of his world; it imposes another vision in which the first is
transformed and reflected... We are no longer faced with subjective
or objective images; we are caught in a correlation between a
perception-image and a camera-consciousness which transforms
it.99

From the very first shot, this sensibility of opening put forward the
extension of the frame, the extension of the set that would become this new
image. But this is not like a fore-shadowing, it is not a slipping in of the future
before it arrives like the purposiveness of a narrative structure in a Hollywood
movie. Rather it is proposed, propelled by difference-in-itself, by a future that is
not yet known, that is not inevitable, but only to come.

98 Gilles Deleuze. Cinema 2: The Time-Image. trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam,
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 76. see also ibid. Cinema 1, p. 36
99 Cinema 1, p.74
“To see (what is) coming” is to anticipate, to foresee, to presage, to project; it is to expect what is coming; but it is also to let what is coming come or to let oneself be surprised by the unexpected, by the sudden appearance of what is un- awaited. “To see (what is) coming” means at the same time, to anticipate and to let oneself be surprised, to bear and, at the same time, I mean precisely at the same time, not to bear the unexpected. In other words, the surprise in what is coming, the event of what is coming: the future.¹⁰⁰

Figure 14: man from crowd scene, The Here To Gathered (film still)

Futurity and an Opening to other

It is through the writing, the philosophy, of Jacques Derrida, that I understand what transpires when the future is determined. His method of deconstruction, a necessarily never-ending process, has sought the trace of the de-privileged terms in the privileged ones that have come into being through this

¹⁰⁰ Derrida, The Future of Hegel, p. ix
de-privileging. It is a philosophy that works its way back in time to reveal History in the present.

Derrida is very reticent, and with good reason to embrace any notion of futurity—both fascism and totalitarianism have resulted from a purposive relation to the future, justifying their violent means through ends.\textsuperscript{101} So he is very careful when he says “let it come,” but he does say it.\textsuperscript{102} In “What is Ideology” from\textit{Spectres of Marx}, Derrida first separates out \textit{messianisms}, those forms that call out to a specific-other, who possesses characteristics we know and could recognize in a future coming:

...nation, State, international law, human rights, Bill of rights — in short, everything that concentrates its habitat in the at least symptomatic figure of Jerusalem or, here and there, of its reappropriation and of the system of alliances that are ordered around it.

These \textit{messianisms} rely on the logo-centric assumptions he spent a lifetime exposing—centres that have configured meaning. But then he proffers the \textit{messianic}, which opens up to the coming of the wholly other— that which we can

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{101} Hegel is generally held philosophically responsible for this purposive relation to the future (given the nature of progress that underpins his philosophy.) But in the preface to \textit{The Future of Hegel}, Derrida argues that there may be the possibility of a different kind of future in/with Hegel’s notion of “plasticity,” which Catherine Malabou, the author of the book, engages at great length. Derrida, “Preface: A time for farewells,” p. vii-xlvi.
\item\textsuperscript{102} Derrida, “What is Ideology.” According to Jack Reynolds, it would seem that this form of futurity has in fact been the “always already” in Derrida’s writing all along. “...what motivates deconstruction is neither something specific, nor a vague utopian outline of an ideal world. On the contrary, it is motivated by something that is ‘desertified’ and abstracted of all concrete content: something that is unforeseeable and ‘to come’. We might say simply that deconstruction is motivated by the future.” —Jack Reynolds. \textit{“Derrida and Deleuze on time, the future, and politics”} Borderlands e-Journal 3:1 (2004) http://www.borderlands.net.au/
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
not identify, that which has no known characteristics, that which is indeterminable
(and, of course, in true Derridean fashion, that which can never arrive.)

Open, waiting for the event as justice, this hospitality is absolute only if it keeps watch over its own universality. The messianic, including its revolutionary forms (and the messianic is always revolutionary, it has to be), would be urgency, imminence but, irreducible paradox, a waiting without horizon of expectation.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{103} Derrida, “What is Ideology.” While I am about to connect this form of a “future with no content” in Derridean thought into Deleuzian thought, it should be noted that there is a profound difference in kind between the concepts of futurity in the philosophies of Derrida and Deleuze. While I am not yet equipped to take on the subject, nevertheless I might begin that discussion through a distinction between a futurity that has a present-future aspect and one with a future-future aspect. I have been considering the possibility that these two aspects coincide with Deleuze’s concepts of the movement-image and the time-image. The kind of futurity proposed by the movement-image can be understood within both of these philosophers’ frameworks – in Derridean deconstruction, the floating signifier chain that always opens up the sign embodies this kind of futurity; and in Deleuze, it is found in the function of the out-of-field which perpetually opens and extends sets into other sets. But because the time-image breaks through the frame of representation entirely, it can only be associated with Deleuze. I sense that my focus on the movement-image (as opposed to the more popular time-image) speaks to the fact that while Deleuze’s ethics express a responsibility to others in the active conscious pursuit of repeating “well” (repeating toward difference-in-itself), he and Guattari admit that we cannot pursue these “lines of flight” all the time without going mad. If that is the case though, then forming an image of oneself as a subject is inevitable, which is to say that establishing a ground, however temporary, is inevitable: I can’t help but tame difference by repeating “the same” at least some of the time. This “some of the time” poses a problem for me; for what enables an ethical relationship to others in these moments? It is this question that sends me back into Derrida’s frame, one that insists on a collective monitoring as justice. The difference between these two philosophers notions of difference is argued very passionately by Gordon C. Bearns “Differentiating Derrida and Deleuze.” \textit{Continental Philosophy Review}, Vol. 33, Number 4 (October, 2000): 441-465

With regard to their differences in futurity, while reading “What is Ideology,” I felt Derrida directing his roving, peripheral vision onto Deleuze’s philosophy, warning us of a potential (though not inherent) danger, which is something like the ease of its imbrications into the “magical” system of Capital. And in fact, when I did an Internet search of a quote written by Deleuze to find a citation I misplaced, there were two hits; the book I was looking for, and an information page on how to target market using Holistic Branding. Deleuze is not cited on this page (though he is cited on this web-site’s main page) but most of the ideas are his, some direct quotations: “A brand must be dramatised in particular sensations for it to be expressed in actual situations. Without such sensation, there is no creative movement in the actual – sensation is the sign that something has changed, both at the level of brands and at the level of actual things.”

But what is “a waiting without horizon of expectation?” In explaining the subtleties of Bergson’s three theses on movement, Deleuze quotes Bergson’s famous example of the glass of sugared water. The shift from a lump of sugar in a glass of water to that which becomes sugared-water expresses a change in the whole. And, Deleuze notes, if a spoon is added to the glass to help the sugar lump dissolve faster, both the stirring spoon and now the movement of the molecules that have been sped up, all contribute to expressing change in the whole:

Above all, what Bergson wants to say using the glass of sugared water is that my waiting, whatever it be, expresses a duration as mental, spiritual reality. But why does this spiritual duration bear witness, not only for me who wait but for a whole which changes? According to Bergson the whole is neither given nor giveable... if the whole is not giveable, it is because it is the Open, and because its nature is to change constantly, or to give rise to something new... So that each time we find ourselves confronted with a duration, or in a duration, we may conclude that there exists somewhere a whole which is changing, and which is open somewhere.

As Bergson’s glass of sugared-water example demonstrates, “the image is the system of relationships between its elements” and it always expresses the

To the best of my knowledge, very little on this website’s page counters the letter of Deleuze’s philosophy except the words “larger purpose” and “brand”: “Branding = direct experience + larger purpose + active participation.” But, a purpose in this sense is what Deleuze and Guattari call a “coded interest”; this is the face of power when it enslaves. (Colebrook, p. 93) A larger purpose is ultimately a centre around which everything is made to bend. Difference-in-itself, which can never be made a centre or a ground, has no purpose, other than to become. (This is the safeguard of Deleuzian ethics.)

104 Cinema 1, p. 9
105 Cinema 1, p. 9
106 Cinema 2, p. xii
Open, even while the Open is never visible. It is however palpable in the experience of duration – in moments where futurity is laid bare, a future that is unknown, not prescribed and where therefore there do not yet exist divisions. On the other hand, the Open can only ever be expressed through the image and the image is made visible only through the distinguishing of parts. The more detailed these delineations, the bigger the system of relationships that can be seen, but also the more closed and totalizing that system becomes. And the more totalizing the system, the more the image closes off the experience of this form of futurity I have been discussing. This is a paradox.

But it is a paradox already resolved by Bergson’s third thesis on movement: a closed set is only ever artificially closed; belied through the out-of-field artifice gapes, unfurling the closed onto the Open.

Where delineations in a system, expressed as cuts, borders or edges, destabilize the very divisions they enact, there is an art preventing itself from collapsing into its own interior and an art that exhibits mediality. This is an art with stereoscopic vision: one eye focused on exposing its image, the other dilated, waiting, without horizon of expectation, clearing the opening for an expression of duration, of difference-in-itself.

107 Divisions that “distinguish... right at the work of art and on the same work... that which operates or demands an identification of the model... from that which proposes– or exposes – merely the thing, some thing, and thus, in a sense, anything what-soever, but not in any way whatsoever, not as the image of the Nothing...” Nancy, “The Vestige of Art,” p. 96
The Whole and The Parts

When parts are delineated by difference the social manifests itself (often literally, always metaphorically for me.) Forms that face out are implicated in this definition; they are meaningful because of their “being-with.” This term represents Jean-Luc Nancy’s main philosophical project in which he argues that we are a “we” before we become an “I,” we are a social first from which we then individuate.\textsuperscript{108} When Nancy uses the word “we”, he does not mean that we (as in a context) give something meaning.

...we are meaning in the sense that we are the element in which significations can be produced and circulate... There is no meaning if meaning is not shared, and not because there would be an ultimate or first signification that all beings have in common, but because meaning is itself the sharing of Being... there is no other meaning than the meaning of circulation.\textsuperscript{109}

Nancy’s meaning of circulation lends significance to The Here To Gathered's structure: It is not the parts that commune that give these forms their sociality.\textsuperscript{110} In fact, when I watched The Here To Gathered all the way through

\textsuperscript{109} ibid. p.2-3
\textsuperscript{110} This is what Nicolas Bourriaud suggests Relational Aesthetics works do, and what Claire Bishop critiques so heavily. Relying on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s theory of democracy which has antagonism as its condition, Bishop states: “…the relations set up by relational aesthetics are not intrinsically democratic, as Bourriaud suggests, since they rest too comfortably within an ideal of subjectivity as whole and of community as immanent togetherness. There is debate and dialogue in a Tiravanija cooking piece, to be sure, but there is no inherent friction since the situation is what Bourriaud calls “microtopian”; it produces a community whose members identify with each other, because they have something in common…” Claire Bishop. “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics.” October 110 (Fall 2004), p.54-55
for the first time, I was surprised by how antagonistic the vignettes are with each other; and how this antagonism also characterizes the relation of parts within the vignettes themselves (the jump cuts at the wedding, the cuts that cross the axis in the crowd scene, the irrational cuts in the gym).\textsuperscript{111} And yet, the film’s sociality is there in the whole: the vignettes, separate from one another through their lack of shared content come into relation through their difference; not in their being together but through their being-\textit{with}, where meaning circulates amongst them.

All of being is in touch with all of being, but the law of touching is separation...\textsuperscript{112}

And so, meaning circulates amongst them, not among them. The difference between “among” and “amongst” is one of articulation. In the myriad of definitions that come to us through linguistics, botany, medicine and history, articulation describes some sort of jointing which enables parts to move in

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Discussing the work of Thomas Hirschhorn and Santiago Sierra, Bishop also states: “These artists set up “relationships” that emphasize the role of dialogue and negotiation in their art... The relations produced by their performances and installations are marked by sensations of unease and discomfort rather than belonging, because the work acknowledges the impossibility of a “micro-topia” and instead sustains a tension among viewers, participants, and context...” Bishop, p. 70

Incidentally, in their argument, Laclau and Mouffe discount two kinds of difference before they proffer their own concept of antagonism: contradiction (\textit{A}–not \textit{A}) and “real difference” (\textit{A}–\textit{B}). Regarding the second of these, Bishop quotes Laclau as saying: “…Nor is “real difference” (\textit{A}–\textit{B}) equal to antagonism; because it concerns full identities, it results in collision—like a car crash or ‘the war against terrorism.’ In the case of antagonism, argue Laclau and Mouffe, “we are confronted with a different situation: the presence of the ‘Other’ prevents me from being totally myself. The relation arises not from full totalities, but from the impossibility of their constitution.” (Bishop, p.16) Of the three kinds of difference, Deleuze would of course choose “real difference.” However, for Deleuze real difference is not based on or in identities at all, never mind full identities; the other (or the “Other”) does not “prevent me from being totally myself,” rather the other sets up the possibility of becoming-other myself.\textsuperscript{112} For a clarification of Deleuze’s understanding of real difference, and its relation to identity, see Appendix D.

\textsuperscript{111} Again, “irrational” is understood here mathematically, as outside the set of numbers, and not psychologically

\textsuperscript{112} Nancy, “Being Singular Plural,” p. 5
relation to one another– the formulation of a list set forth in clauses, that place on
a stem at which the leaf separates, a mouth that splits into lips.¹¹³ For me, a work
of art that presents its sociality, is a work whose parts are jointed, and so moving,
and so in relation, and therefore with each other– parts whose very borders set
up the conditions for this being-with. Without a doubt these are artificial
closures, but closures nonetheless.

APPENDICES
Appendix A: *The Here To Gathered* (2008, 16mm film, 22.5 min.)

© Sharon Kahanoff, 2008

**Description**

A reception hall, an art gallery, a living room, a street, a beach, a ferry, a gymnasium—*The Here To Gathered* plays inside these theatres of the social, performing along with the actors who move through them. Gestural, visceral, corny and critical, meditative, artificial and often realistic, the film threatens to erupt at the seams from its own difference. But *The Here To Gathered* is held in check by a rigid structuralism that, like any law excessively applied, vents itself in the absurd. Lurking on the borders between documentary, narrative and experimental film, *The Here To Gathered* is a portrait, in both major and minor keys, of nothing more than passage.

**DVD**

The DVD attached forms a part of this work.

The DVD can be played in either a computer or a DVD player.

**Data Files:**

- Video TS Folder
- Audio TS Folder
# Appendix B: *The Here To Gathered* Film Credits

## Crew

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Sharon Kahanoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cinematography</td>
<td>Andreas Hahn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Design</td>
<td>Paul Bennett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Manager</td>
<td>Vivienne Bessette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
<td>Kristen Korns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Assistant Camera</td>
<td>Nick Bradford-Ewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaffer/Dolly Grip</td>
<td>Virgile Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Boy</td>
<td>Sebastian Andexer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genie Op</td>
<td>Dan Hodgins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Assistant Camera</td>
<td>Kristen Korns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Camera Consultant</td>
<td>Sasha Popove</td>
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<td>Art Direction and Dramaturgy</td>
<td>Colleen Brown</td>
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<td>Jeremy Todd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costume Designer</td>
<td>Atom Cianfarani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costumer</td>
<td>Maya Suess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make-Up Artist/Hairdresser</td>
<td>Reta Koropatnick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
<td>Ines Mao</td>
</tr>
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<td>Jenny Lee</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lacia</td>
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<td>Steve Calvert</td>
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<td>Tong Xia</td>
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<td>Emily Rosamond</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Arthur Tachdjian</td>
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<td>Klaus Korns</td>
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<td>Al and Bernie Kahanoff</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Rainmaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastering</td>
<td>Star Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Prod. Tech Support</td>
<td>Julie Saragosa</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Cast
(in order of appearance)

Abraham Jedidiah
Lissa Neptuno
Emily Rosamond
Jamie Hilder
Paul Bennett
Jeremy Todd
Nariman Mousavi
Mani Mousavi
Randy Szmek
Andrew Gerbrandt
Corin Sworn
Anika Yuzak
Anahid Aslizadeh
Natasha McHardy
Tauren Stonehouse
Nazik Yousefian
Julie Cohn
Anika Albert Minasian
Genevieve Fleming
Theresa Bessette
Lorraine Powell
Dilene Korns
Bernie Kahanoff
Matilda Aslizadeh
Ryan Haneman
Kevin Sloan
Trudy Ann Tellis

Klaus Korns
Don Coccia
Carl Fletcher
Vivienne Bessette
Reta Koropatnick
Janis Suess
Andres Salumets
Deniz Merdanogullari
Arthur Tashidan
Bronwen Payerle & Emmett
Pessi Parviainen
Rick Coccia
Laura Marks
Bernie Motut
Lacia
Julie Voeuk
Jeremy Braacx
Sylvia Anne Coccia
Atom Cianfarani
Maya Suess
Phyllis Surges
Leanna Korns-Arida
Andrew Arida
Flora Xia
William Cupit
Cindy Mochizuki
Kristen Korns
Special Thanks To

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- Bernie Kahanoff
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- Vicky Snell
- Sergine LaRocque
- Ruth Plato
- Barbara Schindler
- John Doherty
- Al Kahanoff

*General Good Eggs*
- Anahid & Nejdeh Aslizadeh
- Jason and Wendy Smolensky
- Lance Blomgren & The Helen Pitt Gallery
- Keying Xia
- Michael Bessette
- Lissa Neptuno
- Jennifer Daerendinger and Blanche MacDonald
- Mark Nykolaichuck
- Ralph and Betty Sabey
- Julie Saragosa
- Natasha McHardy
- Colleen Brown
- Judy Radul
- Laura Marks

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Kodak Canada
Simon Fraser University
Appendix C: Rubén Möller’s Triadic Relational Analysis

Rubén Möller’s triadic theory suggests that in the process of reception, questions generally (though not always) arise for viewers at the level of plot, and if no answer is provided there, viewers will look for an answer at the level of style. For example, in a famous scene from Wong Kar Wai’s *In the Mood For Love* (2000), Maggie Cheung’s dress changes suddenly prompting viewers to wonder “Why?” The answer is not found in the plot, where we go first (ie. she went home, changed and came back to the same place), rather the answer is found at the level of style– this is an effect by design to convey the routine of her life, a stylistic device meant to represent an act repeated again and again over time.

If a question is left unanswered at the level of style, viewers will move up to the simplest thematic level and on up through the layers in the work until they find a satisfying answer. Michael Snow’s *Wavelength* (1967) is an interesting film to use to demonstrate how this works. The moment we realize the camera appears to be “moving”, a question erupts for viewers: “Where is the camera going?” (Normally this would be a stylistic question, but in this piece the camera operates as the main character, turning it into a question of plot.) Snow uses an inexorably slow 45 minute zoom of an 80’ room to prolong this question until the last few minutes of the film, when we finally learn we have been moving towards a still photograph of waves. Interestingly, this photograph provides the answer not just to the plot question, but also to many of the other questions that develop throughout the work, on all levels.
The photograph resolves, at the level of style, the perplexing relationship between sound and image. The sound, a single tone that increases in pitch at the same pace as the zoom for the entire length of the film, is a sine wave. The moment we identify what the photograph is, sound and image refer to each other perceptibly for the first time, producing a kind of conceptual pun on the idea, picture and sound of “waves.”

Questions that will ultimately be answered in the thematic levels, pile up when the first question “Where is the camera going?” is left unanswered. For instance, “Where is this film going?” follows quickly on its heels. The self-reflexive gesture of the photograph finally confirms film itself, materially and particularly in terms of the way time and space function in film, as a predominant theme of this work. “Why am I sitting here enduring this?” is another question that becomes pressing and then all-consuming as we deal with our internal struggle of whether to stay in our seats or leave the theatre. Marking the end of a painful journey for those who decide to stay, our arrival at the photograph brings an awareness of our own role as viewers in the film. We understand in this moment how narrative structure has been subverted in terms of the action, and re-asserted in terms of the camera/viewer relationship. (Several plot events occur in the film (including a murder), but they function progressively more and more as annoying interruptions of the utterly compelling narrative that is driven! by the question: “Where is the camera going?”) Meanwhile, in the throes of deciding whether to stay or go, we inevitably ask “Why would someone make such an
excruciating film?” Again, the answer is provided by the photograph, this time a profound phenomenological experience linked to transcendence. The moment the frame fills with the still image of waves, one feels the sensation of entering consciousness itself, as well as a profound sense of liberation (no doubt directly related to Snow’s Machiavellian control of pushing perception to its very limits).
Appendix D: The Four Iron Collars of Representation

In any case, difference in itself appears to exclude any relation between different and different which would allow it to be thought. It seems that it can become thinkable only when tamed— in other words, when subject to the four iron collars of representation: identity in the concept, opposition in the predicate, analogy in judgment and resemblance in perception. As Foucault has shown, the classical world of representation is defined by these four dimensions which co-ordinate and measure it.\(^{114}\)

Each of the texts Deleuze has written express his ideas through instances within the fields he examines, be it the art of Francis Bacon, the history of cinema or Nietzsche’s philosophy. But it would be a profound mistake to think he has made a model that he applies, for models are exactly not Deleuzian. Models are a general form, they categorize “like” things, holding them in the same container. Concepts in their everyday use (and quite often within academia) function as models; we feel this particularly when a theory gets applied again and again. For Deleuze, this is the first of the four iron collars of representation: “identity in the concept.”

The second collar in the quote above is “opposition in the predicate.”\(^{115}\) It was Aristotle who first said that the specific difference between two of the same species is the greatest difference that exists. Aristotle termed these specific differences oppositions. “Outside these oppositions, difference becomes less

\(^{114}\) *Difference and Repetition*, p. 262
\(^{115}\) A sentence is divided into a subject and a predicate, as in the sentence “She runs.” The predicate “runs” modifies the subject “she”, essentially determining the category the subject will fall into. Taxonomically speaking, “she” now belongs in the category “things that run.”
strong, in the sense of less well-determined and, therefore, imperfect.” But, for Deleuze, Aristotle’s conceptualization of difference pre-supposes sets and sub-sets, and determines them hierarchically. Therefore, categories pre-exist what goes in them; categories are pre-figured. Determining difference in this way does not allow for the evolution and mutation of any given species, nor for the significance of individuals within that mutation. Deleuze’s idea “difference-in-itself” opposes Aristotle’s idea of specific difference because (for Deleuze), “…there are non-conceptualizable differences that resist the determination of parts or subsets.”

“Analogy in judgment” is the third iron collar. To explain this I turn to our legal system, which is entirely based on precedent. Trials are won and lost based on the similarity of the new to the old, based on how well the prosecuting lawyer can argue for the likeness of this case to the past ones she most wants her current case associated. The defendant’s lawyer will outline a different set of precedents, and juries or legal minds will judge which set of precedents are most like this particular trial. And this logic holds true on a daily basis for most of the judgments we make.

The final collar, “resemblance in perception,” is the relating of one experience to another. For instance, walking into an art gallery I suddenly feel

116 Williams, p. 60
117 Williams, p. 61 To be clear on the difference between the first and second “collar”: “identity in the concept” is the creating of categories based on the determination of likenesses. “Opposition in the predicate” is determining difference by assuming categories and then creating sub-sets within sub-sets to account for these differences.
like I'm at church, so I speak in hushed tones, make sure the children behave and feel awe toward my surroundings. I relate one experience to another, if unconsciously, in order to understand my experience and direct my actions. In a new encounter, when we look for parallels to previous experiences, we are looking for its identity, its category of experience.
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