

Georgia State University

## ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

---

Film, Media & Theatre Theses

School of Film, Media & Theatre

---

8-11-2020

### Total Capital – Total Cinema

Jordan S. Chrietzberg  
*Georgia State University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/fmt\\_theses](https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/fmt_theses)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Chrietzberg, Jordan S., "Total Capital – Total Cinema." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2020.  
doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/17994907>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Film, Media & Theatre at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Film, Media & Theatre Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@gsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@gsu.edu).

# TOTAL CAPITAL – TOTAL CINEMA

By

JORDAN CHRIETZBERG

Under the Direction of Angelo Restivo, PhD

## ABSTRACT

Capital and the narrative cinema: interpreting one or the other or one via the other requires a concept of formal totality, but a totality that's multiple, differential, subject to change. Thus, to formulate a method that captures such a singular-plural becoming, this thesis recommends a commingling of approaches, a heuristic cohering of two thinkers of (post)modern totality, Fredric Jameson and Gilles Deleuze—a task accomplished in three chapters. The first argues that Jameson's modal periodization of capital's nonsynchronous logics parallels Deleuze's cinematic "images of thought" given their kindred allegorical structures. The next chapter models a method of cognitive mapping—via an analysis of *Point Blank* (1967)—that harmonizes Jameson's key cartographic tools: the semiotic square and the four-level allegorical frame. Finally, chapter three folds in Deleuze, pointing up the movement-image's aesthetic internalization of the stages of commodity production and the time-image's formal circulation of both financial and utopian temporalities.

INDEX WORDS: Cognitive mapping, Allegory, Fredric Jameson, Gilles Deleuze, Postmodernism, Cinematic narrative, Capital, Point blank, Totality

TOTAL CAPITAL – TOTAL CINEMA

by

JORDAN CHRIETZBERG

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Communication, Concentration in Film, Video, and Digital Imaging, Studies  
in the College of the Arts  
Georgia State University

2020

Copyright by  
Jordan Stephen Chrietzberg  
2020

TOTAL CAPITAL – TOTAL CINEMA

by

JORDAN CHRIETZBERG

Committee Chair: Angelo Restivo, PhD

Committee: Jennifer Barker, PhD

Alessandra Raengo, PhD

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Academic Assistance

College of the Arts

Georgia State University

August 2020

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many thanks to Angelo Restivo, Jennifer Barker, Alessandra Raengo, and my parents.

## TABLES OF CONTENTS

<i>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</i> .....	v
<i>LIST OF TABLES</i> .....	vii
<i>LIST OF FIGURES</i> .....	viii
<i>CHAPTER ONE: IMAGES AND LOGICS</i> .....	1
<i>CHAPTER TWO: LEVELS AND SQUARES</i> .....	45
<i>CHAPTER THREE: MODES AND SYSTEMS</i> .....	86
<i>Move: Affect and Any-space-whatevers (Time-image)</i> .....	120
<i>Countermove: Affect-dispersing Gimps (Movement-Image)</i> .....	124
<i>Move: Episodes and Crystals (Time-Image)</i> .....	127
<i>Countermove: Dream and Recollection (Movement-Image)</i> .....	130
<i>Move: The Unleashed Impulse and the Analogon (Time-Image)</i> .....	133
<i>Countermove: The Axiomatic, Small-Form Vector, and Derivatization (Movement-Image)</i> .....	138
<i>Move: The Failed Derivative/Axiomatic/Vector, Time as a Series, and Gests (Time-Image)</i> .....	148
<i>APPENDIX</i> .....	172
<i>ABBREVIATIONS</i> .....	173
<i>WORKS CITED</i> .....	174

**LIST OF TABLES**

<b>TABLE 1</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>TABLE 2</b> .....	<b>33</b>



**LIST OF FIGURES**

**Figure 1 Mapping of Point Blank..... 172**

## CHAPTER ONE: IMAGES AND LOGICS

“[I]nterpretation is not an isolated act, but takes place within a Homeric battlefield, on which a host of interpretive options are either openly or implicitly in conflict” (Jameson, *PU* 13).

In the Humanities, this line from Fredric Jameson may as well be axiomatic, a rule of law that endures and enables academic work *tout court*, work including even the recurring positivisms and pretensions to science that seem to perpetually turn up like bad pennies, making repressive returns that can’t help but interpret, can’t help but ‘read’ texts despite themselves—“make meaning” in other words in their ahistorical, apolitical desublimations of hermeneutic energies: in short...*plus ça change*. For if all (aesthetic) production produces and effects “socially symbolic acts,” as Jameson puts it, it necessarily demands a reaction, solicits an explanatory reply, a responsive “allegorical act” in kind: a “rewriting [of] a given text in terms of a particular interpretative master code” or “method” (*PU* 10).<sup>1</sup> It’s this back-and-forth, this allegorical exchange—for the artist is as much an interpreter as his audience, his critics—that constructs our consensual social reality, fashioning it through a kind of “semiotic materialism”<sup>2</sup> that “work[s] with words”—via discourses and codes, narrative and genre (Thomas XV)—on the referential, but ultimately unknowable materials of social and historical totality, the Althusserian absent cause, the human Real that gives rise to the mode of production at any given moment, that renders all interpretation “an essentially allegorical act with history standing in the place of the

<sup>1</sup> David Bordwell: “Broadly speaking, all criticism is ‘allegorical’ in looking for another meaning than the one overtly presented. In a narrower sense, allegory is a type of holistic enactment in which the trajectory of this text is interpreted as being congruent with that of some other text, or with the categories or precepts of a preexisting doctrine” (*Making* 195). Bordwell calls all varieties of *Screen*-inspired, post-structuralist, new historicist, and/or culture studies approaches “symptomatic” criticism or interpretation (*Making* 71-104). We’ll be doing a lot of that here.

<sup>2</sup> Calvin Thomas’s term for the “constitutive interrelation between labor and language” (XV).

master text,” “simultaneously ground and cause” (Buchanan 57, 59).<sup>3</sup> As such, the Homeric metaphor is appropriate given that art and discourse form the warp and woof of all of our social relations, be they of production, of power, or of sex, race, and class. The stakes then are high and never more so than today given the global recrudescence of fascist nationalisms, the apophatic impossibility of finding any aspect of life unmolested by financial and surveillance capital (i.e., full subsumption), and the very depressing fact that Jameson’s martial analogy would be best understood in today’s monocultural terms recast as the climax of a Marvel movie (Achilles as Captain America; Hector as Thanos; Troy as Wakanda; etcetera and so on). But one must be humble; one must be realistic; one must acknowledge that the efforts of the critic are at best *de minimis*: one does not change the mode of production through a Master’s thesis alone; that is to say, the academic with political aspirations (so, notwithstanding one’s salary and benefits) can, at the very, very best, only hope to generate some piece of writing, some formulation of theory or methodology, some rhetorically convincing performance of public persuasion that’ll strike some radicalizing chord in the future precariat that comprise their pedagogical charges or the present or soon-to-be precariat of their colleagues—who will hopefully propagate said work via their teaching, their writing—and maybe, just maybe, at some point shock the conscience of a few future elites or even better—really best—plant discursive seeds sufficient to inspire the collective action necessary for substantive social change. (Because given recent events—Covid-19, with its disparate racialized impacts; unprecedented unemployment; massive siphonings upward of wealth; the nadirs of incompetence/greed plunged by ‘both wings of the Property Party’ (Vidal)—the

<sup>3</sup> And we should add here that the “construction of subjectivity as such” shares an “allegorical nature” with time and history in that consciousness is always irreducibly intentional, “that is,” a “not-being” “defined by what it is not: consciousness is always consciousness of something” (Jameson, *AI* 53).

Gilding seems to have come off this present Age of capital. We can only hope people wise-up to the pointless farrago of the executive sideshow and organize for change outside the intellectual cul-de-sac of electoral politics; though, the somewhat ‘whimpering’ affect of this socially-mediated Eschaton gives me pause (a class privilege, to be sure); pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will, I suppose).

But more prosaically, if everyone interprets, if everyone allegorizes the “master text” of history, the politically-motivated critic must come equipped with hermeneutical methods that are not only in keeping with their ideological beliefs but are of an analytical scope, precision, flexibility, and meaning-making force superior to those of their readers and interpretive rivals, as what else besides the diploma, title, or byline, confers, let alone justifies, the legitimating designation of critic. For, at least in popular arts journalism and cultural writing—“the discourse” in other words—interpretation has never been more vigorous and more explicitly political (and more densely joined by academics of varying stripes).<sup>4</sup> The algorithmically-generated churn of content production seems to turn up by the minute boilerplate ‘takes’ and homiletic ‘explainers’ crowing multinational X’s latest IP’s allegorical *samizdat* against Trump, or how premium cable Y’s newest prestige drama unloads a Spartacist enfilade against the global elite, or how streaming platform Z’s most recent episodic half-hour is the SCUM manifesto of our day (not even going to touch the art market here); such risibly fulsome ‘takes’ are manifestly

<sup>4</sup>Which begs the question what exactly is motivating the academy’s “various depoliticizing turns”? The editors of a recent Jameson focused issue of *Social Text* have a predictably Marxist take thereon: “[the]renewed emphasis on avowedly apolitical formalism in literary studies and on description in queer studies arises in tandem with object-oriented ontology and associated modes of new materialism in philosophy. These developments in contemporary theory—for all their internal heterogeneity and nuance—evinces a collective desire to move away from the political investments of what is disparaged as cultural studies and from its associated practices of ideology critique and symptomatic reading. We are tempted to read this desire as itself symptomatic of the cultural logic of contemporary capitalism” (Baumbach 5, 7).

silly, but two points can be drawn therefrom: 1. The instinct for allegorical treatments of cultural texts are on the money, as this paper will argue; and, 2. Art, especially today's art, is rarely, if ever, political in and of itself, standing alone, on face value, taken in its own—i.e. its marketing's, its press notes'—terms; as Jameson observes:

To take art: what I was ascribing to the postmodern period was a kind of art that wished to escape from the high seriousness of modernism, in favor of the entertaining and the relaxing and so on. We're probably beyond that stage in art, and what strikes me about recent art is that, in a sense, everybody's political. But that does not mean that our "political" art works as politics. I don't think anybody knows what a successful political—truly political—art would be, one that would have an effect. But I think that everybody nowadays recognizes that capitalism is an omnipresent form of our existence, and I would say it's a continuation of the process that was called, in the famous missing chapter of *Capital*, a "subsumption." That is, everything has been subsumed under capital to a much greater degree than ever before...Now everything seems subsumed, in that sense; people seem resigned to the idea that everything is commodified.<sup>5</sup>

What this means is that art—which for our and this paper's purposes means narrative cinematic art—can only become political under the scrutiny of interpretation, if read for depth not surface; and it can only ever be political if read against the grain, read symptomatically, read historically, read responsively as a "socially symbolic act." (Ian Buchanan thus avers: "Interpretation exists...because society is not transparent, the workings of power are not always obvious, and we have a corresponding need to decipher the mysterious fabric of our existence" (23)).<sup>6</sup> Thus, the need for a method, which this paper, if not clear by now, submits must—or

<sup>5</sup> Fredric Jameson. "Revisiting Postmodernism: Revisiting Postmodernism: An Interview with Fredric Jameson." By Nico Baumbach, et al., *Social Text*, vol. 34, no. 2 (137), 2016, pp. 143-160, doi: 10.1215/01642472-3468026.

<sup>6</sup> I'm sure Jameson would quibble with my em-dashed qualification, for in his view, all art demands interpretation of some sort in that it's positioned within some kind of extra-textual temporal/historic frame: it's part, in other words, of a narrative—a narrative the reader/viewer brings to the object—and as such responds thereto. How else does one even begin to talk about the work? As for 'surface reading' and the like, he offers the following: "It is clear enough that with the disappearance of the sacred text, and in a modern relativism, this reshuffling [churn] of [interpretations] will in fact be an inevitable outcome, governed now less by a sense of what is

recommends, I suppose—be that of “a Marxian interpretive framework,” or at the least, one informed thereby. For, in its “semantic richness,” its capacity to offer a “metacommentary” on other methods in the “‘pluralism’ of the intellectual marketplace”—so many interpretive responses “faithful[ly] consonan[t] with this or that local law of a fragmented social life”—Marxism, as Jameson conceives it, offers that “untranscendable horizon’ that subsumes such apparently antagonistic or incommensurable critical operations, assigning them an undoubted sectoral validity within itself, and thus at once canceling and preserving them” (*PU* 10); or as Ian Buchanan puts it, “Marxism is not a rival” of other methods and theories, “it is, rather their condition of possibility” (57).<sup>7</sup> As such, the task then, given the departmental aegis under which

orthodox than by what catches the eye, what focuses attention. So it is that where formal attention to the language of the text is demanded, as in style studies (and perhaps in so-called ‘surface reading’), the letter of the text becomes a new level in its own right, as when one listens for sounds rather than meanings (de Man on Rilke) or reads a sentence for its hidden syntax. These foregrounded properties then become a texture in their own right, which is substituted for the original, and the ‘literal’ text has become a palimpsest...[a] reshuffling, which sets one on a search for the ‘method’ or ideology of the interpreter” (*AI* 42).

<sup>7</sup> Jameson helpfully expands upon and summarizes many of the points made above: “If indeed one construes interpretation as a rewriting operation, all the various critical methods or positions may be grasped as positing, either explicitly or implicitly, some ultimate privileged interpretive code in terms of which the cultural object is allegorically rewritten: such codes have taken the various forms of language or communication (in structuralism), desire (as for some Freudianisms but also some post-Marxisms), anxiety and freedom (in classical existentialism), temporality (for phenomenology), collective archetypes (in Jungianism or myth criticism), various forms of ethics or psychological ‘humanism’ (in criticism whose dominant themes are the integration of the personality, the quest for identity, alienation and nonalienation, the reunification of the psyche, and so forth). Marxism also proposes a master code, but it is not, as is sometimes commonly thought, either that of economics or production in the narrow sense, or that of class struggle as a local conjuncture or event, but rather that very different category which is the ‘mode of production’ itself...[a concept which] projects a total synchronic structure in terms of which the themes and the concrete phenomena valorized by the other methods listed above necessarily find the appropriately subordinate structural position. This is to say that no intelligent contemporary Marxism will wish to exclude or repudiate any of the themes listed above, which all in their various ways designate objective zones in the fragmentation of contemporary life. Marxism’s ‘transcendence’ of these other methods therefore does not spell the abolition or dissolution of their privileged objects of study, but rather the demystification of the various frameworks or strategies of containment by means of which each could lay claim to being a total

this thesis will (hopefully) be published, will be to fashion a Marxian method for the interpretation of *cinema*,<sup>8</sup> a method that we will see involves a thorough reworking of Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping as presented in his *Postmodernism* and film books, demonstrating how it's in essence an allegorical operation, one whose very structure springs from its material—

and self-sufficient interpretive system. To affirm the priority of Marxist analysis as that of some ultimate and untranscendable semantic horizon—namely the horizon of the social—thus implies that all other interpretive systems conceal a seam which strategically seals them off from the social totality of which they are a part and constitutes their object of study as an apparently closed phenomenon... we can merely assert here that it is precisely in this respect that a Marxist hermeneutic can be radically distinguished from all the other types enumerated above, since its 'master code,' or transcendental signified, is precisely not given as a representation but rather as an absent cause, as that which can never know full representation. I must here limit myself to a formula I have proposed elsewhere, namely that History is not in any sense itself a text or master text or master narrative, but that it is inaccessible to us except in textual or narrative form, or, in other words, that we approach it only by way of some prior textualization or narrative (re)construction" (*IT* 451-53).

<sup>8</sup> Which to be sure, has been done: most famously by the *Cahiers* editors with their *Young Mr. Lincoln* piece, along with the various structural *dispositifs* advanced by the *Screen* critics. Despite also recommending a combined Marxian/psychoanalytic heuristic as well as depth/symptomatic interpretation, the method advanced herein differs, principally, as follows : 1. It's less beholden to vulgar structuralist models in that it has an articulated theory of materialist history—successive, nonsynchronous modes of production/cultural dominants or "structural historicism," as Jameson dubs it—that directly informs its method, as well its applications; in other words, it doesn't take literally the notion that "ideology has no history" (a critical failing found in the *Cahiers* piece despite its prefatory remarks to the contrary: the analysis in execution being little more than a Freud-inflected (with some dashes of Lacan), Barthes-informed myth-criticism of a seemingly 'timeless' American ideology that apparently experienced no permutational change from 1832 to 1939); 2. It's less Freud-obsessed, accounting for subjectivities outside the Oedipal in keeping with the multiple subject positions (symptomatically) demanded/offered/opened by the postmodern; in addition, it cosigns Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of desire as both individual and social—as they observe re Ray's *Bigger than Life*: "What the film shows so well, to the shame of psychiatrists, is that every delirium is first of all the investment of a field that is social, economic, political, cultural, racial and racist, pedagogical, and religious" (*AO* 274); 3. Given the Jameson-centric approach, the method also endorses a "positive hermeneutic" (Ricoeur) to complement ideological critique in that it argues (and looks) for a Blochian utopian impulse that informs, if not constitutively motivates, all artistic work, even the most reactionary. The upshot of this is that cultural industry product, in theory, can offer useful material for cognitive mapping and thus one need not confine oneself to auteurs (whatever that means any more) or experimental work (of which, the critical fixation thereon, Jameson argues, discloses a nostalgia for modernisms past) (*SV* 160).

the fragmented cultural zones and discursive codes that constitute postmodernity—and is consequently more than a degree more involved than the somewhat simplistic treatments of said trope thus far. But to get there, we’ll first need to take a Deleuzian detour, open the woodshop of Marxist interpretation, and, as Jameson puts it, use—per the Chinese proverb—“one ax handle to hew another (*PU* 13),” apply the blades of the Jamesonian metacommentary to carve off the content of Deleuze’s monadology to obtain a “stripped-down apparatus freed from its doctrine” for usage herein (Buchanan 27): hence, the somewhat ass-backwards—more generously, “transcoded”—entry into the *Cinema* books that’s to start following the period.

(But really, following this parenthetical: as I take a somewhat defamiliarizing, pseudo-dialectical meander through the methodological material<sup>9</sup> to arrive at my proposed critical methodology—a Deleuze-powered cognitive-mapping for cinema—I figure it would be wise to explicitly state what this section accomplishes; so, cards on the table: the critical method proposed herein combines Jameson with the Deleuze of the *Cinema* books; it formally reworks the latter through the methodological framework of the former into a project of “cognitive mapping”; this project’s ample and diverse production of such mappings in turn then informs and expands the mapping capacities of said methodology. By virtue of this critical retrofitting/refurbishing, we’ll have hopefully accomplished the following:

<sup>9</sup> Which entails: sublating the *Cinema*-atic content and its allegorical forms into dual cognitive mappings, then tropologically re-presenting the latter’s synthetic “world-pictures” as themselves allegorical, thereby splitting retroactively their what’s-revealed-to-be Symbolic mediations of core Hegelo-Marxian Dualisms into narrative form and historically-material content or subject (Imaginary) and object (Real) poles; or alternatively, in cinematographic terms: i. close-up on Deleuze the allegorist; ii. axial cut to a medium showing Deleuze the crafter of allegorical “images of thought”; iii. pan-right to include Jameson in frame to reveal both as cognitive mappers; iv. track-forward on Jameson to discover that his cartographic methodology is likewise allegorical; and, v. zoom-in on his interpretive toolkit to reveal the 4-tiered allegorical frame—his key mapmaking instrument.



1. Formulated a Jamesonian critical system specifically for film,<sup>10</sup> one that takes cognitive mapping as its core methodological function<sup>11</sup> and uses it to organize and direct the rest of the Jamesonian toolkit: the four-level allegorical frame, the Greimas Square, the “political unconscious,” and so on.<sup>12</sup>

2. Demonstrated allegory’s centrality to both cognitive mapping<sup>13</sup> and the formal construction of Deleuze’s movement and time-images; and finally,

<sup>10</sup> Clint Burnham does something similar in his *Fredric Jameson and The Wolf Street* (see bibliography); his work therein informed this paper’s Jamesonian ‘filmic system,’ but there are critical differences nonetheless. First, the book’s theoretical section is more a (succinct and sharp) survey of Jameson’s various methods and film writing generally, rather than the formal organization proposed here. Second, and more critically, Burnham does not center cognitive mapping and does not discuss the four-level allegorical frame’s centrality to the former’s operations. The lacuna here, I suspect, can be attributed to the vagaries of publishing: in 2019, three years after Burnham’s book’s publication, Jameson released his *Allegory and Ideology*—a book-length collection of essays arguing *inter alia* the allegorical frame’s utility for mapping postmodernity.

<sup>11</sup> Philip Wegner in his “Periodizing Jameson” (cited in the bibliography herein) argues similarly that cognitive mapping is central to the Jamesonian project; however, like Burnham (see FN above), he neglects to emphasize the importance of Jameson’s allegorical framework which I argue here increases the analytical power of cognitive mapping. Nonetheless, his insights were invaluable for the drafting of this paper.

<sup>12</sup> A subsidiary desire is to put the bulk of Jameson’s methodology in one place and give it a (hopefully) lucid exposition. In my experience, much of the formal rigor of Jameson’s method can be lost in the sometimes indiscernible dialectical phase-shifts of his punishingly allusive—but always evocative—prose. I generally concur with Benjamin Kunkel’s memorable take on Jameson’s writing: “[R]eading Jameson himself has always reminded me a bit of being on drugs. The less exceptional essays were like being stoned: it all seemed very profound at the time, but the next day you could barely remember a thing. Indeed there’s no other author I’ve frequented or admired to anything like the same degree so many of whose pages produced absolutely no impression on me. And yet the best of Jameson’s work has felt mind-blowing in the way of LSD or mushrooms: here before you is the world you’d always known you were living in, but apprehended as if for the first time in the freshness of its beauty and horror.” From “Into the Big Tent.” *The London Review of Books*, vol. 32, no. 8, 22 April 2010, [www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v32/n08/benjamin-kunkel/into-the-big-tent](http://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v32/n08/benjamin-kunkel/into-the-big-tent). Accessed 15 Feb. 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Roland Boer in his “A Level Playing Field?” implicitly makes this connection without ever invoking “cognitive mapping”; rather, he argues the four-level allegorical frame “map[s] this postmodern situation” (56, 66).

3. Shown the *Cinema* books' deployment of allegorical "transversality," along with their various "images" and "signs," as invaluable mapping tools, tools for not only mapping the single cultural object, but the cinematic structures that systemically comprise moving image production, structures we will find might have more than a little to do with capital and its formations, its totality. And with that, finally, we can begin with Deleuze.)

In film studies, it's a given that at some point most scholars, even the most Bordwell-hardened, will get a little Deleuze-curious. As such, for the fair-weather Deleuzians, the *de rigueur* moves for such a passing inclination can reliably be grouped as follows: 1. pious appeals to the authority of *Cinema 2*'s final section's discussion of "conceptual practice," using its textual imprimatur to inflect critical work with a kind of cod-philosophical ambience ("I'm generating film concepts here!"); 2. furious, dissembling gestures toward Deleuze's *enfant terrible*, precedent-flouting, mix-and-match approach to argumentative assemblage (what Jameson calls "metaphilosophy" (*IT* 499)); and, 3. guerrilla citation, in-and-out name-dropping that quickly absconds from the reference as if the scene of a crime ("Like Deleuze's concept of the crystal-image..."). (The idea here is, that by disclaiming the above, I somehow will be free of such critical fault/liability herein: we will see). Taken together, these approaches bespeak anxiety, a trepidation for dealing with Deleuze the philosopher, a mercy-begging plea for just the film stuff, a faint hope that such *sotto voce* invocations won't, to quote Jameson on Hegel, "draw[] the whole tangled, dripping mass of the [Deleuzian] sequence of forms out into the light with it" (*MF* 306) (and heaven forbid Guattari along with them). Herein, on the contrary, the treatment (or disposal?) of the content of the *Cinema* books will take a somewhat different tack given the methodological bearings of this first chapter: allegory as cognitive mapping—and narrative cinema's—key cartographic tool. So, given this argumentative drift, what I'm first

interested in here re Deleuze is Deleuze the writer, Deleuze the maker of arguments, Deleuze *the allegorist*.

Let's posit that the *Cinema* books are by nature allegorical, that their content—the films under review, their analyses, and the narrative arrangement thereof—essentially points to something outside the text, an 'unreachable anteriority' (DeMan) hovering over it, that gives it an extra-textually organizing meaning, a meaning that, for our purposes, *has nothing* to do with Bergson, Pierce, or Spinoza. Thus, the transition from the movement-image's "narrative realism" (Jameson, *SV* 242) to the time-image's (post)modernist narrative experimentation tells a second story of sorts, vehiculating an allegorical tenor that can be interpreted in any number of ways. For instance, Jacques Rancière argues the books allegorize the movement from a "classical, representative regime" of art to his "aesthetic regime of art" (116-122); many others, like Fredric Jameson, view this change, this "crisis in the action-image," as an index of nascent postmodernity, of "spatialized time," a registering of capitalism's pervasive creep via the non-synchronous (Bloch) blocks of "image" types that populate Deleuze's conception of twentieth-century film (*AI* 317-20).<sup>14</sup> Taking this latter reading as a given then, for now, how exactly do the *Cinema* books allegorically track this modal shift?

To this end, let's assume the final chapters of *Cinema 2* effectively recode the entirety of the *Cinema* duology along two lines: first, the conclusion explicitly reveals that what appeared to be "signs" unique to the time-image also constitute what seemed to be the diametrically-opposed movement-image; for example: "[f]rom classical to modern cinema, from the movement-image

<sup>14</sup>See generally: Angelo Restivo. "Into the Breach." *The Brain is the Screen*, edited by Gregory Flaxman, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, pp. 171-192; András Bálint Kovács. "The Film History of Thought." *The Brain is the Screen*, edited by Gregory Flaxman, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, pp. 165-66; Richard Ruston. *Cinema After Deleuze*. New York, Continuum, 2012, pp. 119-138.

to the time-image, what changes are not only the chronosigns, but the noosigns and lectosigns” (Deleuze, *C2* 279)—in other words, the movement-image and time-image are formed of the same “signaletic” stuff. (The “signaletic material” is the “pre-verbal intelligible content” that comprises the cinematic image (Deleuze, *C1* ix); it “includes all kinds of modulation features, sensory (visual and sound), kinetic, intensive, affective, rhythmic, tonal, and even verbal (oral and written)” (Deleuze, *C2* 29)). Second, chapters 7 and 8 of *Cinema 2*—“Cinema and thought” & “Cinema, body and brain, thought” respectively—build on this recoding, reworking the combined architecture of the two books and their respective “system[s] of images and signs” (Deleuze, *C2* 263) into opposed “image[s] of thought” (Deleuze, *C2* 215): the “classic” and “modern,” i.e. the movement-image and the time-image. What we learn then is that each “image of thought” is comprised of arrangements of cinematic “images”—shots and scenes depending, we can call them “parts” to cut down on confusion or use Deleuze’s alternate term, “intervals”—that together relate, or not, to a unifying “concept” or “whole” (*C2* 210-215). For the moment, I want to focus on the “classic image” which Deleuze describes thusly:

The 'classical' conception developed along two axes; on the one hand integration and differentiation, on the other association, through contiguity or similarity. The first axis is the law of the concept: it constitutes movement as continually integrating itself into a whole whose change it expresses, and as continually differentiating itself in accordance with the objects between which it is established. This integration-differentiation thus defines movement as movement of the concept. The second axis is the law of the image: similarity and contiguity determine the way in which we pass from one image to another. The two axes cut across each other, according to a principle of attraction, in order to achieve the identity of image and concept: indeed, the concept as whole does not become differentiated without externalizing itself in a sequence of associated images, and the images do not associate without being internalized in a concept as the whole which integrates them. Hence the ideal of knowledge as harmonious totality, which sustains this classical representation (*C2* 210).

(Note, re this biaxial arrangement, Deleuze is quick to disclaim that it has “nothing to do with paradigm and syntagm”: not surprising given the volumes structural reliance on Pierce and

Hjelmslev (C2 28); yet, he does go on to describe the above as “association through metaphor or metonymy” nonetheless (C2 214). And to the above, we can add that in the concluding chapter, a subsequent revision to this apparently text-centered conceptualization of the “classic-representation” dramatically expands its scope, recasting its “harmonious totality” of image and concept as an “extendable world,” as “self-awareness as internal representation,” as “belief in the external world” (Deleuze, C2 277).

Returning to our larger allegorical narrative for a moment, we can see then that Deleuze treats the movement-image—along with its representative films—as a figuration of this classical “image of thought,” and that this image functions as an “internal representation” of the “external world” that *in toto* gives a “harmonious totality.” The next move here should be transparently obvious given the aforementioned “ultimate aims” discussed up top and the overall Jamesonian remit of this paper, in that what all of this part/whole talk of internal representations, worlds, and totalities brings to mind is the latter’s concept of cognitive mapping. And thus the transitional question: “what is cognitive mapping?”

To begin, we should identify the problematic for Jameson that necessitates cognitive mapping; put simply, it’s the grounding Marxian dualisms, the irresolvable antinomies that make up ourselves, as well our historically material world. But, it’s not just their sheer existence that bothers Jameson;<sup>15</sup> rather, at the present juncture, it’s their never more disabling disjunction, their quantum banishment into seeming parallel universes of ‘autonomatized’ postmodern existence. Thus, as early as 1971—in the midst of capital’s postmodern mutation—with the final lines of his preface to his first major book *Marxism and Form* (wherein he formulates his notion

<sup>15</sup> For as a Marxist, Jameson believes “binary oppositions are precious dialectical resources” which “allow[] us to identify tendencies otherwise imperceptible” in texts, life, and history (*AI* 311).

of “dialectical criticism”), Jameson sets forth what from the perspective of 2019 will turn out to be his organizing critical objects: “It is in this context...that the great themes of Hegel's philosophy—the relationship of part to whole, the opposition between concrete and abstract, the concept of totality, the dialectic of appearance and essence, the interaction between subject and object—are once again the order of the day. A literary criticism which wishes to be diagnostic as well as descriptive will ignore them only at the price of reinventing them” (*MF XVIII-XIX*).<sup>16</sup>

But to Jameson, these constitutive “gap[s]” or “rift[s]” have only widened, have only grown with late capitalism’s simulacral reifications, its electronic bilocations and financialized transubstantiations (body into ‘bread,’ life becomes capital), its globalizing dispersal of world and subject into a multitude of disparate, atomized localities given over to a “phenomenological experience...limited to a tiny corner of the social world, a fixed-camera view” of one incommunicable difference amongst a seeming infinite of differences on a demographic scale that stuns comprehension of the fact that said multitude is now largely, now curiously, the serialized (*pace* Sartre), simultaneous same (*CM* 349; *PU* 53). In this situation then, in the event of this debilitating riving between totality and existential experience (debilitating, that is, to the possibilities for collective action), the task of the critic must be to find a “situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society’s structures as a whole” (Jameson, *PM* 51). More precisely, this “representation” must bridge—necessarily aesthetically, necessarily ideologically—this sundering of “subjective, individual experience” from the social totality, the “objective dimension of history”: construct not “a reconciliation of contraries, but rather...a kind

<sup>16</sup> And we should observe, for philological purposes, that a similar meditation on this postmodern “split” pops up again in *Allegory and Ideology* (2019), Jameson’s most recent book (*AI* 165).

of unified field theory in which two wholly different ontological phenomena...share a common set of equations...expressed in a single linguistic or terminological system” (Jameson, *MF* 208).

What Jameson calls for then is an “aesthetic of cognitive mapping,” an aesthetic that “respects this now enormously complex representational dialectic” opened by transformations in space, time, and demography to “breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable new mode of representat[ion]...in which we may begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is present neutralized by our spatial and social confusion” (*PM* 54).

What exactly does such a mapping look like then? Seb Franklin, in my view, offers the most lucid account of Jameson’s somewhat vague formulation of this “aesthetic”:

the concept of cognitive mapping describes the process through which a subject might make sense of the relationship between their immediate local position and the global late-capitalist networks, which, because of their scale and complexity, cannot be conceived of as a whole, let alone adequately represented in their totality by available modes of aesthetic expression. Built on a synthesis of the Althusserian concept of ideology and aspects of the geographer Kevin Lynch’s book *The Image of the City*, the cognitive map, for Jameson, is a method for making a properly unrepresentable totality at least partially legible... In Jameson’s account, cognitive mapping entails the following procedure: (1) a more or less allegorical representation of a system [object pole] and (2) a representation of the way the local elements of this system relate to the global totality are produced [subject pole], so that (3) a reader, viewer, or user can grasp the otherwise unimaginable relation between the two (96).<sup>17</sup>

To summarize, perhaps reductively, cognitive mapping representationally mediates between the subject and object, the individual and collective, the local and the global, and the existential and

<sup>17</sup>Re Althusser’s Lacan-influenced schema for ideology (“[i]deology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence”), the subject and object poles correspond to the ‘individual’ Imaginary and the Real ‘conditions’ respectively; the cognitive map (usually an aesthetic object) then gives the missing third Symbolic term (Jameson, *PM* 53-54).

social totality. It imperfectly projects or figures a resolution between these subject and object poles, orientating aesthetically “the existential positioning of the individual subject, the experience of daily life, the monadic ‘point of view’ of the world to which we are necessarily as biological subjects, restricted” within a “system so vast it cannot be encompassed by the natural and historically developed categories of perception with which human beings normally orient themselves” (Jameson, *PM* 53; *GP* 2). And like allegory—keep it in mind—it uses a text to represent the “ultimately unrepresentable or, to use the Althusserian phrase...something like an absent cause, one that can never emerge into the presence of perception”: that is to say, historical reality (Jameson, *CM* 350).<sup>18</sup> Thus, to return to Deleuze, we can state that the movement-image (or classic image of thought) and the time-image (the (post)modern) are both cognitive maps—along with the individual films from which their cartographies are drawn, to be sure—whose constitutive forms we can rewrite or ‘transcode’ in Jamesonian terms as follows: 1. their parts/intervals/images become the temporal, phenomenological consciousness of the subject (the subjective pole); their whole/world becomes the global or social totality (the objective pole); and its “internal representation” the cognitive map (the Symbolic representation mediating the two).

Of course, we’ve yet to describe what the “classic image” is actually mapping, yet to identify what its “thought,” its cognitive tracings, seek to represent materially and historically.

<sup>18</sup> Or, another way to put it might be that in postmodern narrative, allegory is cognitive mapping’s condition of possibility: “In the absence of Utopia, however, things, remaining as they do contingent and ‘unequal’ to their own concepts, have to be pumped back up and patched together with allegory. The characterological traits of the protagonists required by the plot have to be remotivated, and made to mean something of a ‘supplementary’ and symbolic nature...it must also be made to mean its meaning: it must in short be allegorized, however discreetly, in order to pass for some more general logical class of which it is itself a member...the narrative cannot but remain allegorical, since the object it attempts to represent—namely, the social totality itself—is not an empirical entity and cannot be made to materialize as such in front of the individual viewer” (Jameson, *GP* 45-46).



We've mentioned above briefly that the two books together figuratively diagram the postmodern turn—that each “image” functions as an allegory for a particular cultural logic before and after the break. Thus, we've already seen that the classic image presents an organic, common sense world of mechanical and expressive causality,<sup>19</sup> a neat and ideologically comfiting fit between subject and world, a kind of organic, bourgeoisie conception of reality—whether referentially accurate or not—that characterized what Jameson describes as “classic” Hollywood's mass-culture realism, that which dominated—and still does in its postmodern form—during the period of monopoly capitalism (*SV* 155-57). In contrast, the time-image (of thought) fragments and fractures this organic composition along remarkably postmodern lines, which, to economize our exposition, are set forth in the below chart:

<sup>19</sup>Kara Keeling in her *The Witch's Flight* argues that Deleuze's movement-image presents a Gramscian “image of common sense” that interpellates by constructing a “cinematic reality” (or image of thought) that overlays and shapes the social Imaginary via the affective (surplus) labor it demands from viewers (or forces on their sensory-motor/intellectual nerve) (12-26); since this paper will be bracketing the question of such *Screen* related theorization, I want to recommend here Keeling's account, which in my view provides the most adroit Deleuze-informed take on such recent Marxist reformulations of the cinematic apparatus (like Marcia Landy's and Jonathan Beller's, both of whom Keeling cites).

<b>TABLE 1</b>	
<b>Time-Image (Deleuze)</b>	<b>Postmodern Cultural Logic (Jameson)</b>
The “associative,” “interstitial links” (montage) between intervals (shots) are “de-linked” giving rise to “non-commensurable relations between” “independent images” (C2 213-214)	Time as a series of “perpetual presents” or “singularity-events” (AS 122); “a consequent weakening of historicity, both in our relationship to public History and in the new forms of our private temporality” (PM 6)
The “de-linked” images are “relinked” by “irrational cuts”; as such, “there is thus no longer association through metaphor or metonymy, but relinkage on the literal image; there is no longer linkage of associated images, but only relinkages of independent images. Instead of one image after the other, there is one image plus another” (C2 213-214); in short, “the internalization of or integration of self-awareness in a whole has...disappeared” (C2 277); Deleuze dubs this, after Pasolini, “free-indirect discourse.”	“Schizophrenic” experience; the “break down in the signifying chain” (PM 26); the ‘exhaustion’ and “end” of the “bourgeois subject” (AS 128).
Likewise, “there are no longer grounds for talking about a real or possible extension capable of constituting an external world: we have ceased to believe in it, and the image is cut off from the external world” (C2 277).	The “postmodern sublime”; the inability “to think the impossible totality of the contemporary world system” (PM 38) due to global geography, demographics, modern communications systems, and financial capital.

To summarize: “Thus modern cinema develops new relations with thought from three points of view: the obliteration of a whole or of a totalization of images, in favour of an outside which is inserted between them [the de-linked images]; the erasure of the internal monologue as whole of the film, in favour of a free indirect discourse and vision [irrational re-linkage]; the erasure of the unity of man and the world, in favour of a break which now leaves us with only a belief” and not certainty “in this world [absence of totalizable whole]” (Deleuze, C2 187-88).

And we should add that like postmodern temporality, this “modern image of thought” is essentially spatial: for one, Deleuze uses terms like “topological” to describe the construction of

this spatialized Bergsonian *durée*.<sup>20</sup> More critically—for our purposes as we shall soon see—its filmic navigation requires a kind of transversal movement between layers, sheets, stratigraphies, ellipses, and other spatial/geometrical arrangements of narrative time. Moreover, the centrality of affect to the time-image—with its any-space-whatevers, pure optical/sound situations, and becomings—pairs well with postmodernity’s decentering of the subject, waning of the “named emotions,”<sup>21</sup> and “reduction to the body” (Jameson, *AS* 106). And, as many have observed, we should also mention that the five “characteristics” of the post-War “crisis of the action image”

<sup>20</sup>It’s a desire of this paper to avoid as much as possible the Bergson discussion that fills most treatments of the *Cinema* books. It’s enough to say that: (1) in as much as all time is human (constructed) time; (2) and if movement’s common sense figuration of temporality adheres to the Aristotelian perceptual/phenomenological/existential triad of abstract time (“time is the number of motion in respect of ‘before’ and ‘after’... and continuous, since it is an attribute of what is continuous”; i.e., movement/change (of poses), number, and succession (before-and-after) (cited in *VD* 477-79)); (3) then the time-image attempts to capture historic, geologic, and nonhuman time (or narrative), time that “transgresses the recognizable pose of the body and opens it up, not only to its successive poses, but also to its animal variations, its object variations, and so on, what one shows is not something in movement, but movement itself; not how something changes into something else, but change as generative of form itself. Time is movement, understood as overlapping, because it is not the abstract frame one must presuppose in order to think change, but change itself” (Wambacq 180). For our purposes, imagine historical time as a three-dimensional object or structure, a singular spatiotemporal flux that films can navigate and manipulate at will, making circuits, arranging sheets, and charting paths of serial, narrative becoming. Keep in mind also that the key to Deleuze’s conception of the time-image’s treatment of *durée* is recognizing that it’s multiple in its singularity in that with historical time there are infinite variations of virtual time superimposed thereon, therewith, and therein; in other words, the time-image captures quantum possibility—multiple/alternate universe theory, Schrodinger’s cat, etc.—through imagination, memory, thought, fiction and falsehood, and so on.

<sup>21</sup>A purposeful revision to his much criticized “waning of affect”; Jameson explains that by that formulation he really meant a waning of the named emotions: “I used the wrong word in that passage. It was written in the early 1980s, before the term affect had the voluminous theoretical attention it has since; I did not then have a binary opposition to guide me, and I simply took the word affect as a synonym for emotion. Today, however, I see the situation as involving an opposition between affect and emotion or, better still, named emotion, as I prefer to call it: where affect as an emergent and bodily sliding scale of feelings and *Stimmungen* (Heidegger’s word for it) is radically opposed to a system of named emotions which in one form or another has been in place since ancient times (in the West).” Jameson, Fredric. “Revisiting Postmodernism: An Interview with Fredric Jameson.” *Social Text*, vol. 34, no. 2 (137), 2016, pp. 143-160.

are all indicative of the postmodern break: the (1) “dispersive situation” and (2) “deliberately weak links”—together, a “world without totality” (Deleuze, *CI* 208)—are simply a restatement of the modern regime’s split between parts and whole, the existential and the social totality; meanwhile, the (3) “voyage” form captures the aleatory, directionless experience of body-centered “lacunary-reality” of post-modern contingency (Deleuze, *CI* 208); and the (4) “consciousness of clichés” and the (5) “condemnation of the plot” respectively function as analogs to the simulacral image-culture of the Spectacle<sup>22</sup> and the omnipresent dominance of automated structures of technology and bureaucracy (Sartre’s *practico-inert*; the Blakean national misery; Deleuze’s own “control society”). And lest we forget, this “crisis,” this inability to believe or represent “any longer...a global situation [that] can give rise to an action which is capable of modifying it” or “an action [that] can force a situation to disclose itself, even partially” took place after World War 2, the transitional moment to late capitalism (Deleuze, *CI* 206).

So, to recapitulate: the *Cinema* books cognitively map two images of thought: the movement-image/classic regime traces the contours of the spatiotemporal, *weltanschauung* or world-view dominant in the largely realist narrative cinema of monopoly capitalism, while the

<sup>22</sup>Deleuze clearly has Debord in mind here: “floating images [and]...anonymous clichés ...circulate in the external world, ...penetrat[ing] each one of us and constitut[ing] his internal world, so that everyone possesses only psychic clichés by which he thinks and feels, is thought and is felt, being himself a cliché among the others in the world which surrounds him. Physical, optical and auditory clichés and psychic clichés mutually feed on each other. In order for people to be able to bear themselves and the world, misery has to reach the inside of consciousnesses and the inside has to be like the outside” (*CI* 208-09). What this image-culture means exactly for Deleuze’s “ontology of images” is another question; in other words, what differentiates the “society of the spectacle” from a universe where matter, thought, signification, and being are comprised of flows of images? For more on the *Cinema* books’ image-ontology, see Martin Schwob. “Escape from the Image: Deleuze’s Image-Ontology.” *The Brain is The Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, edited by Gregory Flaxman, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, pp. 109-139.

time-image/modern regime delineates the cinema of late capitalism (or its breakdown?), i.e. the various post-War filmic (post)modernisms: the sound-cinema modernism of the mid-century international auteurs (Hitchcock, Bergman, Kurosawa, Bresson); the transitional figures of Welles, Godard and the New Wave, along with Antonioni, Pasolini, and Fellini's respective mutations of Neo-Realism; and the several strains of filmic/video postmodernity—i.e. the American “crisis” cinema (New Hollywood, both “left” and “right” cycles (Ray), or “reactionary” and “progressive” (Wood)); the new American Cinema (Cassavetes, Clarke); experimental/structural film (Brakhage, Snow); French cinemas of corporeal temporality (Garrel, Akerman, Téchiné); experiments in fiction, documentary, falsehood, and storytelling (Rouch, cinema vérité), and audiovisual essays on history, memory, art, and media, both new and old (Syberberg, Straub/Huillet, Duras).<sup>23</sup>

Now, what allows Deleuze to perform these mappings, these “images of thought,” is, as Rancière observed, allegory: more precisely, his allegorical recoding of the various films that comprise and together project each “image.” In other words, Deleuze uses the films, particularly their narrative construction and distribution of storytelling effects, to represent his “images,” along with their specific structures and qualities. Though the word “allegory” fails to appear once in the extant English translations of the *Cinema* books, the words “figure” or “figuration” appear multiple times, pointing up the essentially allegorical character of the duology in that

<sup>23</sup> The collapsing of filmic modernism and postmodernism into Deleuze's “modern image of thought” conforms to Jameson's argument that the “microchronology of [sound] film recapitulates something like a realism/modernism/postmodernism trajectory at a more compressed tempo” (SV 156); given this telescoped periodization, there'll necessarily be wildly ‘uneven development’ in the residual/dominant/emergent sense (Williams) in the geographical spread of modal logics, taste cultures, and production/distribution networks at any given moment; in other words, it's why we can call Frankenheimer, Fellini, and Fassbinder contemporaries. We will return to this subject later.

figuration is said trope's core textual operation, i.e. one text 'figures' another—the former being an allegory for the latter. (For example, taken randomly from a CTRL-F search of *Cinema 2*: “This economy of narration, then, appears both in the concrete shape of the action-image and hodological space and in the abstract figure of the movement-image and Euclidean space” (Deleuze, 128); “But depth [of field] retains its full importance, beyond a technique, if we take it as a function of remembering, that is, a figure of temporalization” (110); “[t]hus the first chronosign has two figures...” (Deleuze, 274)). Conceptually, too, the various cinematic “signs” Deleuze uses to formulate his “images” work allegorically; first, the “chrono-sign”: Deleuze describes its ‘genetic’ form as a crystal whose various functions and compositions, when transcoded into topological terms, all work allegorically in that said sign generates through its multiplication of narrative lines, realities real and imaginary, fictions and lies, and histories and temporalities—that is to say, through its “powers of the false”—multiple simultaneous semantic recordings of the explicit audiovisual diegesis, or as Deleuze puts it “the uniting of an actual image and a virtual image to the point where they can no longer be distinguished” (C2 Glossary, np). In other words, the sign refracts the on-screen narrative's passage through its manifold facets into multiple, off-screen signifying tracks, threads, or through-lines like a crystal does light (Deleuze, C2 68-97). (In most accounts, this crystalline function is limited to the time-image, our (post)modern image of thought; but as discussed above, the movement-image has its own chronosigns so implicitly it must have its own crystalline makeup, a makeup that should in some fashion conform to the “sensory-motor schema” and its projection of a commonsense, linear view of temporality in line with chronometric time, mechanical/expressive historical causation, and traditional, realist formulations of narrative. Thus, to indulge in Deleuze's crystalline metaphor, a provisional hypothesis: since the movement-image depends on this

“sensory-motor schema,” at all times, the virtuality-producing facets of its chrono-signs are opaqued except at the specific moments or sub-images of the schema—perception, affect, action and so on—where a facet is exposed by one of the moments particular set of genetic/compositional signs; in other words, the virtualities or semantic beams prismatically potentialized by the crystal’s facets are emitted sequentially and singularly and not exposed all at once by the semiotic, interpretive *epoché* opened by the time-image’s opsigns and sonsigns. Alternatively, it could be said the crystal moves, turns, spins, and blurs as a rule in the movement-image only slowing down at its particular moments/sub-images to allow an interpretively metered or narrowed allegorical refraction). Second, like the affection-image’s deployment of “any-space-whatevers” (a key manifestation of the *echt*-allegorical time-image), the various movement sub-images also depend on an essentially allegorical or figurative architecture; for instance, the transformation-image uses the “figure” as its genetic sign; the action-image employs “dualisms” and “duels”; and the mental-image mobilizes “symbols” as one of its genetic signs (“Used here to designate the support of *abstract relations*, that is to say of a comparison of terms independently of their natural relations” (Deleuze, *C1* 218)). Finally, what encourages this pan-image proliferation of connotation is the chronosign’s capacity to function as a “lectosign” or a sign that “must be ‘read’ as much as seen” (Deleuze, *C2* Glossary, np). In essence, what Deleuze is after here is not only narrative art’s inherent solicitation of a kind of negative capability in the viewer, requiring them to read both literally and figuratively (because remember, art is a “socially symbolic-act”), but cinema’s medium-specific capacity to doubly demand this mode of reading by way of disjunctions between image and sound. In other words, whereas painting and the novel function as single-channel works, cinema is multi-channel and therefore offers multiple and separate materially distinct informational layers upon which

allegorical effects can be worked/read. In short, cinema for Deleuze works allegorically and thereby conveys “images of thought”—or, for our purposes, cognitive maps.

With this constitutive link between trope and cartography established, we can now hand the expository baton back to Jameson because for the latter, likewise, allegory is the key rhetorical device by which artists construct and through which audiences interpret the socially-symbolic act of art—creative acts which by their very inherent “intention towards totality” perform cognitive mappings (*MP* 163). For Jameson, this “intention” deploys the aesthetic closure and resolution offered by narrative art’s need to conclude to mediate, always imperfectly, that Hegelo-Marxian split between subject and object, identity and difference, self and other:

For it is axiomatic that the existence of a determinate [artistic] form always reflects a certain possibility of experience in the moment of social development in question. Our satisfaction with the completeness of plot is therefore a kind of satisfaction with society as well, which has through the very possibility of such an ordering of events revealed itself to be a coherent totality, and one with which, for the moment, the individual unit, the individual human life itself, is not in contradiction (*IT* 10-11).

What the artistic alignment of these cartographic axes offers in short is a complete and unified aesthetic world, a generative emplotment in which the existential realm of the subject harmonizes with social totality. A Jamesonian paraphrase of an Adorno text nicely sums up the effects and affects of this dialectically synthetic utopian mediation:

The text under consideration...is first and foremost a complete thing...What happens is rather that for a fleeting instant we catch a glimpse of a unified world, of a universe in which discontinuous realities are nonetheless somehow implicated with each other and intertwined, no matter how remote they may at first have seemed; in which the reign of chance briefly refocuses into a network of cross-relationships wherever the eye can reach, contingency temporarily transmuted into necessity. It is not too much to say that...there is momentarily effected a kind of reconciliation between the realm of matter and that of spirit. For in its framework the essentially abstract character of the ideological phenomenon suddenly touches earth, takes on something of the density and significance of an act in the real world of things and material production; while there flashes across the material dimension itself a kind of transfiguration, and what had only an instant before seemed inertia



and the resistance of matter, the sheer meaninglessness of historical accident...now finds itself unexpectedly spiritualized by the ideality of the objects with which it has been associated, reorganizing itself...into a constellation of unforeseen uniformities, into a socio-economic style which can be named. Thus the mind incarnates itself in order to know reality, and in return finds itself in a place of heightened intelligibility (*MF* 7-8).<sup>24</sup>

This “heightened intelligibility” though is necessarily flawed, necessarily a riven thing, riddled with the contradictions that come with a given cultural logic and mode of production, especially in postmodernity, in which “the inner and the outer, the subjective and the objective, the individual and the social, have fallen apart so effectively that they stand as two incommensurable realities, two wholly different languages or codes, two separate equation systems for which no transformational mechanism has been found” (Jameson, *IT* 11). Yet, taking a kind dialectical reverse angle on this last somewhat hysterical point, it’s key to remember that this subject/object split is, along with closure, the core condition of possibility for art as a socially-symbolic act; that is to say the artist requires his audience, his interpreters, his critics and to obtain them the artist must temper their individual “wish-fulfillments” (Freud) (or “fancies” (Coleridge) or “hobbyhorses” (Sterne)) lest they “repel”—or more likely bore—their audience (Jameson, *AI* XIII). To accomplish this, the artist must do their best to formally conceal their presence in the text, “disconnect[.]...the individual subject from the narrative,” and rewrite it using the collective content of raw, ideologically-mediated reality, with all of its contradictions and mystifications (*AI* XIII). In other words, the work—for it to travel, for it to not be solipsistic gibberish, for it to

<sup>24</sup> Adorno: “There is no determination of the particularity of an artwork that does not, as a universal, according to its form, go beyond the monad. It is delusive to claim the concept, which must be introduced externally to the monad in order to open it up from within and thus to shatter it, has its source exclusively in the object. The monadological constitution of artworks in themselves points beyond itself...The aesthetically determined particular is to be referred to the element of its universality exclusively by way of its monadological closure.” Adorno, Theodor. *Aesthetic Theory*. Translated and edited by Robert Hullot-Kantor, edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, New York, Continuum, 1997, p. 180.

work—must find, like cognitive maps, an “intersection between the biological individual and the collective” (Jameson, *AI* XIII).

But art necessarily bears traces of these contradictions as its formal, patchwork solutions thereto can’t help but draw from the unstable gestalt of antinomies, *doxa*, and stereotypes that comprise a given class/group ideology (itself a “kind of unconscious cognitive mapping” (Jameson, *AI* X)). Through the workings of the “political unconscious” then,<sup>25</sup> this illicit public or ideological content, along with the artist’s own “psychological private property,” is camouflaged and dissimulated, dissembled through a variety of formal mechanisms, and, for Jameson, allegory “often achieves this concealment most effectively, for allegory delivers its message by way of concealing it” (*AI* XIV) (“[T]he cognitive or allegorical investment in this representation will be for the most part an unconscious one, for it is only at that deeper level of our collective fantasy that we think about the social system all the time, a deeper level that also allows us to slip our political thoughts past a liberal and anti-political censorship” (Jameson, *GP* 9)). And for allegory to “deliver its message”—itself a temporal, diachronic act—it must have a narrative for it to recode; more simply: for allegory to tell its story, it needs a story. (“The premise is that we cannot have allegory without first having narrative” (Jameson, *AI* 119)). But at the same time, the narrative of a given work can’t do its “symbolic” reworkings of the

<sup>25</sup> We’ve more or less defined Jameson’s idea of this concept, but a more formal airing may be helpful; adapted from Claude Levi-Strauss’s notion of the *pensée sauvage*, the “political unconscious” is the working or “temporal enactment” (in narrative-form) of the artist/audience’s “dual subjectivity” (*AI* XIII) in which an artistic text constitutes a socially “symbolic act, whereby real social contradictions, insurmountable in their own terms, find a purely formal resolution in the aesthetic realm” (*PU* 79). Jameson goes on: “ideology is not something which informs or invests symbolic production; rather the aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal ‘solutions’ to unresolvable social contradictions” (*PU* 79).

contradictions of the determinate social material—which are of an essentially spatial, static, or synchronic dimension—without the powers of allegory (Jameson, *AI X-XV*); thus, narrative and allegory are co-constitutive—one can’t very well do without the other; and both can’t very well segregate themselves from ideology, which is itself a mediatory mapping, itself allegorical, and hence, in part, narrative.<sup>26</sup>

Before moving on to Jameson’s allegorical method, we should pause a moment to expand on the spatiotemporal aspects of allegory and narrative, as they give us the third aspect of the mutuality of cognitive mapping and artistic representation—the first two being formal (en)closure and mediation of subject and object poles. Phillip’s Wegner’s meditation on the Jamesonian project will help get us there:

In the opening line of *The Political Unconscious* (1981), Fredric Jameson offers what he describes as the “moral” of the book, and, as many would no doubt concur, of all his work: “Always historicize!” However, to this “one absolute and we may even say ‘tranhistorical’ imperative of all dialectical thought,” we need to add another: “Always totalize!” The latter practice—not to be confused, as Jameson himself tirelessly points out, with the totality itself—is synthetic; indeed, he later notes that process of totalization “often means little more than the making of

<sup>26</sup> In my view, Jameson’s best rendition of the narrative/cartographic/mediatory dimensions of ideology is the following: ‘ideology must always be necessarily narrative in its structure, inasmuch as it not only involves a mapping of the [unknowable] real, but also the essentially narrative or fantasy attempt of the subject to invent a place for himself/herself in a collective and historical process which excludes him or her and which is itself basically nonrepresentable and nonnarrative...The narrative apparatus which informs ideological representations is thus not mere ‘false consciousness,’ but an authentic way of grappling with [the always asymptotically-approached] Real that must always transcend it, a Real which the subject seeks to insert itself through praxis, all the while painfully learning the lesson of its own ideological closure and of history’s resistance to the fantasy-structures in which it is itself locked” (*FA* 12-13). We can also add this passage as a runner-up of sorts, if only for its triangulation of ideology, narrative, and cognitive mapping: “ideology is always with us...it will be present and necessary in all forms of society, including future and more perfect ones, since it designates that necessary function whereby the biological individual and subject situates himself/herself in relationship to the social totality. Ideology is therefore here a form of social or cognitive mapping, which (as Althusser argued) it would be perverse to imagine doing away with; and I would want to make a similar argument about narrative itself” (Jameson, *SV* 165).

connections between various phenomena, a process which...tends to be ever more spatial (241; citations omitted).

Thus, we can offer a provisional description—hinted at earlier—that the object pole will be of a spatial character owing to the antinomic suspension and positional paralysis caused by determinate societal contradictions, while the subject pole takes on a more temporal, diachronic aspect due to “the well-nigh indissoluble link between the subject and narrative. The subject is somehow defined by its narrative of itself; and narrative in turn seems always to be wedded in one way or another to the presence of the subject, even when it is a question of the succession of ‘mere’ objective facts” (Jameson, *AI XII*).<sup>27</sup> We can expect then that at the level of form (narrative, metonymic progression), the artistic work will be of a more subjective cast, as it’s in essence an individual subject’s (formal) reworking of the spatial contradictions of the raw, societal content. (Obviously, the collective nature of film production, genre systems, and the like complicate and perhaps defuse this myth of the singular artist). What this means is that the work allegorically recodes the synchronic, social material into narrative form, making the individual, creative act a “socially symbolic act” that tells as much the collective’s story as the artist’s. In theory then, any work’s allegorical tapestry can be unraveled, disentangled into the disparate bundle of semantic threads drawn from the social snarl of its intertwining; that is to say, one can take the temporally worked materials of narrative and spatialize them. (An operation that will be demonstrated in the next chapter with the Greimas Square: a key Jamesonian tool).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> If these connections seem too attenuated, here’s Jameson stating it rather baldly: “time governs the realm of interiority, in which both subjectivity and logic, the private and the epistemological, self-consciousness and desire, are to be found. Space, as the realm of exteriority, includes cities and globalization, but also other people and nature” (*IT* 638).

<sup>28</sup> Pointing up both the spatial *and temporal* qualities of cognitive mapping—the latter of which many critics neglect—Philip Wegener helpfully encapsulates this last point: “Cognitive mapping, like totalization, is always already, as the verb form suggests, a process, a way of making connections, and situating ourselves as both individual and collective subjects within a

(It might be useful to pause here, take stock of our analysis thus far, and render in more formalized terms this allegorical/mapping framing of narrative. My piecemeal finessing of Jameson tracks his own reformulation of Paul Ricoeur's three-fold mimesis, which takes as its starting point the essentially narrative nature of temporality, the fact "time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence" (cited in Hartley at 52). According to Daniel Hartley, Jameson takes this notion—that narrative art has effectivity in the social real in that we understand the latter narratively—and renders it in Marxian terms, arguing that if narrative "as a mode of apprehension presupposes a world which is visibly the product of human praxis, then it is also true that to narrativise at a time when social reality no longer offers itself as easily narrativisable is, potentially at least, to rekindle the flames of human praxis in reality itself...If the writer transforms the narrative or non-narrative structures of the world into a literary object, then narrative itself informs the potential for collective political praxis...Like pin pricks in a temporarily paralysed limb, the textual narrativization of a denarrativized world reminds readers that historical reality is the product of collective action – their action" (172).<sup>29</sup> Whether "images"

particular spatial system. Thus, I would argue that cognitive mapping needs to be understood as way of producing narratives, unfolding through time, rather than static images, or maps—and in this affirmation of the power of narrative, we see most clearly Jameson's refusal to accept the apparent closures and ahistoricity of the postmodern that he outlines elsewhere" (267). My contention here though is that it's allegory that allows this temporal, narrativizing recoding of the spatial.

<sup>29</sup> Jameson: "These matters can recover their original urgency for us only if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story; only if, in however disguised and symbolic a form, they are seen as sharing a single fundamental theme—for Marxism, the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity; only if they are grasped as vital episodes in a single vast unfinished plot...It is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity" (*PU* 19-20).

or “mappings,” these transformative narratives of “the world” are formed, per Hartley, in three “moments”: prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration (52-59), which operate as follows:

1. **Prefiguration:** The artist “prefigures” the “practical field (the world of praxis which is the raw material of the narrative),” performing an operation of totalizing closure thereon—an initial mediatory sampling that captures a phenomenological, “pre-understanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources, and its temporal character,” actualizing and rendering objective/subjective paradigm into rough serialized syntagma (say the *fabula* or anecdote perhaps), a process itself informed by ideology and its various narrative paradigm (Hartley 52-53);

2. **Configuration:** Next, ‘emplotment’ occurs, textually ‘configuring’ said serial slice/sampling into the narrative work itself, transforming *fabula* to *syuzhet*, forming, per Ricoeur ‘the succession of events into one meaningful whole,’ a formation, we can suppose, that’s guided by sedimented aesthetic forms like genre, as well as the creativity and ingenuity (or style) of the individual artist(s) (Hartley 52, 55);

3. **Refiguration:** The finished work ‘refigures’ the “practical field” via reception: viewers/readers “actualize” the world of the work, “in the final instance, a world with its own temporality; this world has the capacity to refigure the prefigured world of the reader. It refigures the semantics and the symbolic mediation of action and—most importantly for Ricoeur—the time of action. Moreover, contrary to Plato’s claim that art produces only weakened images of reality, Ricoeur argues that it performs an ‘iconic augmentation’: it adds something to reality, rather than weakly shadowing it” (Hartley 52, 55-56). So, in Marxian terms, if all reality is human—that is to say constructed, formed by man’s ‘species-being’—we can imagine this aesthetic labor to likewise

work on and potentially transform the world, itself an aesthetic, man-made creation.<sup>30</sup> Before moving on, do mark how totalizations pass through each step like a game of telephone: aside from aligning well with Deleuze's image ontology, this transformational sequence of world-makings and its key operational function—systemic/aesthetic closure—are critical for this paper's theoretical infrastructure, as we'll shortly see.)

Thus, for Jameson, allegory is the binding element of cognitive mapping,<sup>31</sup> but, more importantly, for our purposes, it's also a critical tool for interpreters to perform their own mappings of a work, for Jameson characterizes his allegorical schema as a kind of mechanism to unlock the ways in which history, the "absent cause[,]...find[s] figures through which to express

<sup>30</sup> Jameson articulates this "refigurative" step here regarding "Hollywood realism": "realism and its specific narrative forms construct their new world by programming their readers; by training them in new habits and practices, which amount to whole new subject-positions in a new kind of space; producing new kinds of action, but by way of the production of new categories of the event and of experience, of temporality and of causality, which also preside over what will now come to be thought of as reality. Indeed, such narratives must ultimately produce that very category of Reality itself, of reference and of the referent, of the real, of the 'objective' or 'external' world, which, itself historical, may undergo decisive modification in other modes of production, if not in later stages of this one" (*SV* 166, 174) (citations omitted).

<sup>31</sup> This claim probably needs some additional textual support beyond the formal and conceptual similarities outlined above, but because it's too long and too dull a detour away from our main line of argumentation, I'm bracketing the precedential CYA material to this footnote. We should quickly note though that routinely Jameson speaks of cognitive mapping and allegory together if not interchangeably. For example: from the introduction of the *Geopolitical Aesthetic* (a book explicitly on filmic cognitive mapping), Jameson offers his much derided "national allegory" as a form of cognitive mapping as well observes that the "geopolitical unconscious" deploys "allegory" and its "figurative machinery" to map the "unmappable" "world system": "[a]llegory thereby fatally stages its historic reappearance in the postmodern era (after the long domination of the symbol from romanticism to late modernism), and seem to offer the most satisfactory (if varied and heterogeneous solutions to these form problems)" (3-5). For other examples, please see also: "Cognitive Mapping" at 350, *PM* at 409-18, and "Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture: *Dog Day Afternoon* as a Political Film" (*SV* 35-54) about which Jameson claims his allegorical analysis of the Lumet film constitutes his first cognitive mapping (*PM* 416-17). Finally, we should also highlight the observation that "allegory seems to arise in unique and unrelated national situations, out of the failure of more traditional genres to express a given historical and psychic content"—"situations" that seem to describe the postmodern as well as demand cognitive mapping (Jameson, *AI* 234).

itself in distorted and symbolic ways,” thus allowing the critic to “track down and make conceptually available the ultimate realities and experiences designated by those figures, which the reading mind inevitably tends to reify and to read as primary contents in their own right” (CM 350). What this entails then is a reworking of Northrop Frye’s “four-fold system of interpretation” (itself a reformulation of the medieval allegorical framework) that distills from a given object four allegorical levels, or “levels of meaning”:

1. “Textual objects” (Literal);
2. “Interpretive Codes” (Manifest Interpretive Key);
3. “Terminologies of Desire” (Individual); and,
4. “Terminologies of Ideology” (Collective) (Jameson, *AI* XVII, 11, 18).

The first level is literally the text itself; here, in our examination of film, we will treat it as the story and semantic materials straightforwardly denoted by the *diegesis* (the *fabula*). The second level opens the text up to connotation and tends to come with the first in a relationship of “stereoscopic simultaneity,” almost indexically directing reading toward a certain manifest interpretation or master code; so re our *dicta* at the start about contemporary criticism, this would be the level that most such takes tread, the level of “themes” or “messages” (which will “vary ideologically” of course) (Jameson, *AI* 18, 21). Jameson’s description of the interpretive levels as “libidinal investments” (after Lyotard) seems particularly appropriate to mention here especially given his conceptualization of the second as the initial textual disclosure of “desire” in the Lacanian sense, that is to say, as a kind of perpetual meaning-making motion that “has no [ultimate] content,” freely alternating “master interpretive code[s]” to always-provisionally “translate its objects or texts into this or that specific narrative content or demonstration about last things, metaphysical truths, the nature of reality, and so on—whether that be existential



angst, the human condition, class struggle, the Oedipus complex, the self-designating structures of language, aesthetics itself as such—in short, any transcendental or extratextual thematization” (AI 98).

So, with the lubrication of ‘desire,’ this first “allegorical key” then unlocks the third and fourth levels—“allegory [being] itself allegorical”—propagating interpretation with its pandoric opening (Jameson, AI 19; Baer 56). Taken together, the third and fourth levels speak in the *lingua franca*—or “terminologies”—of the subject and object poles of Jameson’s “cognitive mapping”; Jameson observes of his “politically motivate[ed]” reworking of the schema: “on my own reading, the modern differentiation between public and private, between the logic of the collectivity or the mode of production and the existential life of the individual, is intentionally described in its third and fourth levels, which may be said to find their distinct dynamics in psychoanalysis and Marxism, respectively” (AI 20). We can see in these latter, more symptomatic levels the workings of the “political unconscious” reworking the ideological materials of reality, whether associated with the subject or social totality, into allegorically-coded narratives, socially-symbolic acts that through tropological concealment—thereby dodging the Freudian ‘social censor’—manage “differentiation in the form of the multiple publics it must capture simultaneously, the multiple languages [or “terminologies”] it must coordinate”

(Jameson, AI 23).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Which is what Marxian criticism best allows: the ‘differential coordination’ of multiple “publics,” multiple “languages,” multiple “terminologies,” a capacity amply demonstrated, visualized, and performed by the levels: “The advantage of a Marxist criticism, far from being ‘reductive’, [lies] in the fact that it includes more, it expands the phenomenon of the text to greater and more multiple dimensions of both reference and signification, making of the literary work an act in history and time as well as an inert and static objective structure. I would now say that those possibilities of expansion are internally predicated on the existence within the text of the four levels themselves, which allow and develop just such a complex of multidimensional relationships” (Jameson, AI 276).

A quick demo of Jameson’s allegorical frame may be helpful: in his “Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture: *Dog Day Afternoon* as a Political Film,” Jameson performs what he calls a “cognitive mapping” using allegory as his key analytical tool. (One should note though, he does not explicitly identify said 4-level schema as his method, but his allegorical reading nonetheless traverses and tracks its levels). Without getting into the finer points of his analysis, we can generally map his interpretation as follows:

<b>TABLE 2</b>	
1. Textual objects (Literal)	Sonny (Al Pacino) and Salvatore (John Cazale) attempt to rob a Brooklyn Chase bank; local police arrive led by Sgt. Moretti (Charles Durning) and lay siege; the robbers take the female workers hostages; and hostage negotiations ensue over the titular afternoon and into the night. Sonny humiliates police, stokes the multiethnic, lumpen/working class crowd by invoking the Attica riot, thereby causing a mass-media spectacle. At some point, it’s revealed Salvatore is a Vietnam vet and Sonny planned to finance his lover’s M-F sex reassignment surgery. The FBI arrives, takes over from chastened police, and successfully negotiates an exchange. They take Sonny, Salvatore, and the hostages to JFK for the promised aerial escape. The Feds spring a trap, murder Salvatore, and arrest Sonny.
2. Interpretive Codes (Manifest Interpretive Key)	The star-system: Pacino is the film’s leading man; Durning a character actor for film (but also a television actor); and the head Fed (John Broderick) is a relatively anonymous television actor. The diegetic outcomes together serve as a vehicle for an allegorical tenor telling the story of television’s medium supremacy over film in the latter half of the century.
3. Terminologies of Desire (Individual)	The figuration provided by our star-system triad can now be remapped: 1. Pacino is a sexual minority, working class/petit-bourgeoise, and of a non-WASP white ethnicity; 2. Durning/Moretti is a petit-bourgeoise, enmeshed in the largely ineffective local, city power structures; 3. The Fed is a WASP, part of the bureaucratic, decentralized, national elite. Jameson identifies a narrative tracing the transnational Organization Man’s conquest of (white) subjectivity and the thwarting of the latter’s identification with the local power structure (Durning), as well the fragmented/marginalized groups represented by the crowd and Pacino—who plays the figure of the existential loner or anti-hero (an outmoded type from midcentury filmmaking, signified by Pacino’s method acting).
4. Terminologies of Ideology (Collective)	Finally, Jameson finds the alliance of the ‘middle class’ (corporate, white collar bank employees; Durning) with the emerging mid-century corporate/governmental technocratic class (the nascent PMC) as an aesthetic index of the change from monopoly to financial/multinational capitalism, the triumph of the global over the local (SV 35-54).

We can offer here also a quick example of how allegory works out social contradictions. Jameson posits a broad (white) ‘middle class’ mass audience, suffering a post-60s, post-Vietnam, post-Watergate hangover: institutional trust is at a minimum in other words. The theatre audience, captive spectators like the bank-tellers, watch and variously identify with Pacino/Sal, the exasperated local police (in much the same position class-wise as the employees), and machine-tooled Feds, each of which, via our triadic figurative structure, can be mapped to a mode of production. Since the film deploys popular filmmaking idioms, these contradictions must be managed somehow, sympathies must be distributed to achieve a formal resolution—in other words, one team, one mode of production must win over the other: the audience must land on a final identification, the right ending. To discredit the police, the film uses their ineffectuality and incompetence; as for the charismatic Pacino, homosexuality, then, becomes the pejorative modifier through which the film achieves this resolution, relying on the audience’s (assumed) homophobia to make palatable—or at least comprehensible—his ‘inevitable’ failure, thereby aligning final identification, by default, with the status quo (i.e. Capital). In short, we can see how the mappable network provided by Pacino/Durning/Fed allows the narrative to freely substitute significations at any given moment, moving the triad of figurations up, down, and across the levels to tie up various ideological contradictions (Jameson, *SV* 35-54). At the same time, we can see how art as socially-symbolic act—like the action of Freud’s dreamwork (itself an allegorical operation by way of its manifest and latent layers)—purposefully provokes these repressed social anxieties only to resolve them through formal means (Jameson, *SV* 24-25).

As we move toward the ending of this section and a preview of the next, we can now highlight some of the advantages to Jameson’s allegorical method of cognitive mapping, address potential criticisms, and circle back to Deleuze’s “images of thought”:

1. *Cognitive Mapping and the Cinema books*: We've argued earlier that Deleuze's movement and time images provide cognitive mappings of cinema before and after the postmodern break respectively. (But, as we will see in the Third chapter, this initial framing will be complicated; for now though, it will serve our purposes heuristically). We've demonstrated also that they, like Jameson, deploy allegory as their primary cartographic tool. Each book then not only becomes an example of cognitive mapping, but also an atlas of sorts, as each of the titular images contains a whole series of component "images"—in other words, more particularized mappings—under whose headings are grouped a number of film-specific demonstrations and applications of the allegorical mapping methods presented therein. From this perspective then, the *Cinema books* serve as an invaluable sourcebook for the critical mapping of filmic texts.

2. *The levels, postmodernity, and transversality*: Jameson views the levels of the allegorical schema as a particularly useful—and symptomatic—way to not only map the fragmentation, autonomization and stratification of contemporary society and culture, but 'honor' through its very gaps and separations the innate imperfections of representation *tout court*:

allegory has today become a social symptom: but of what? I tend to feel that allegory raises its head as a solution when beneath this or that seemingly stable or unified reality the tectonic plates of deeper contradictory levels of the Real shift and grate ominously against one another and demand a representation, or at least an acknowledgment, they are unable to find in the *Schein* or illusory surfaces of existential or social life. Allegory does not reunify those incommensurable forces, but it sets them in relationship with one another in a way which, as with all art, all aesthetic experience, can lead alternately to ideological comfort or the restless anxieties of a more expansive knowledge. Above all, it will be said that the relevance of allegory is dependent on this or that dissatisfaction with what it terms the literal level, the surface of the text, history, as it simply consists in what Henry Ford memorably called "one damned thing after another"—in other words, the empirical (AI 34).

Across these levels (or through the turning, flickering facets of the "crystal"), the narrative line makes its progress transversally, crossing from layer to layer, level to level, recoding any given

moment of the film per one, two, or even all of the allegorical strata. Jameson calls this inter-level movement “laterality” after Felix Guattari’s notion of “transversality” (a method/heuristic deployed regularly in the latter and Deleuze’s *A Thousand Plateaus*), a term used to capture the phenomenological experience of interpretation as consciousness “sweeps back and forth across the levels, [such that] the purity of the *isotopie* [or semiotic tendency/drift] is rudely interrupted by cross-currents of attention and discursive semiosis...transversality occurs in every living text as it opens itself to a reading by those multiple subject positions we are all as individuals. It is not that the mind wanders in such moments: it is the text itself that shifts back and forth across its multiple levels, distracted by the multiplicity of the meanings proposed there, unsatisfied with the official ones on offer, and with an insatiable curiosity for the other, more hidden and more precious ones” promised by the hermeneutic act, which itself, as a text, as an allegorical interpretation of the social Real—the absolute horizon of history—can’t help but indulge (Jameson, *AI* 42-43). This figuratively three-dimensional conception of reading/viewing captures, with its pinballing shuttling from meaning to meaning, captures not only the spatialized postmodern temporality of perpetual presents, but Deleuze’s own Bergson-influenced conception of the “orders” and “series” of time—the configurations of “chronosigns” that makeup the time-image: our postmodern “image of thought.” That is to say, in both, we see a spatialized conception of temporality and a transverse movement across figurative levels: so, with “ordered” time we see “sheets,” “regions,” or “strata” of “past,” “memory,” and “history” across which the narrative “diagrams” an almost geographical fault line (Deleuze’s key example is Resnais) (*C2* 99-125); while with “serial” time, the narrative makes a kind of termite-like progression, propels itself as a precognitive, transformative “*puissance*” through a number of layered categories, attitudes, or gesture—be they of “characters, the states of a character, the positions of the author,

the attitudes of the body, but also colors, aesthetic genres, psychological faculties, political powers, logical or metaphysical categories” (Godard is the prime example, here)—subsuming them into one becoming, one transformational movement of intensities, in much the same way a narrative line perpetually mutates its allegorical valence (Deleuze, *C2* 276, 179-188). And even more correspondences: if from Jameson’s criss-crossing allegorical levels we got to Deleuze’s transverse images, we can then return to Jameson’s subjective/objective mappings of history and totality:

we need something like a theory of ‘intersection’ itself as a structural phenomenon (which may well have its correlation and its equivalent in extra-textual “reality”). We may agree that for such texts a first and temporal experience is required, and that the various temporalities determine a reading imperative we may compare to the obligatory traverse or crossing through of all of them, as the narrative constructs multiple paths and varied trajectories, the working through, in time, of the various dimensions of time it projects. Yet the appearance of Time or History as such depends not on the multiplicity and variety of these trajectories, but rather on their interference with each other, with their intersection now understood as dissonance and as incommensurability rather than as a conjuncture which augments them all, in the fashion of a synthesis, by the central space of some harmonious meeting and combination. We must therefore retain this violence and negativity in any concept of intersection, in order for this dissonant conjunction to count as an Event, and in particular as that event which is the ephemeral rising up and coming to appearance of Time and History as such. Nor is this a purely textual or philosophical matter: for it is the same discordant conjuncture that constitutes the emergence of time and of history in the real world, the world of real time and of real history. The moment of intersection, indeed, is also that in which Time suddenly appears to individuals as an existential or phenomenological experience (or, if you prefer, as the radical interference with such private experience, as what breaks into it from the outside and renders it vulnerable and the plaything of unimaginable forces outside itself)...And such a moment, on a vaster scale, is constituted by the intersections of multiple forces and dimensions which make History itself rise up before us, moments of sudden possibility or of unexpected freedom, moments of revolution, moments also of defeat and of the bleakest hopelessness (*VD* 543-44).

Thus, given these fruitful similarities in approach, we can expect Deleuze to provide our cartographic explorations to come with not only a geographic legend of sorts, but the very means of transversal locomotion required for such allegorical navigation. As Alexander Galloway aptly

puts it: to Deleuze, “a concept is always a type of vector for thought, a *cognitive vehicle* designed to move things from one place to another” (xi) (emphasis added).

3. Why four levels? In view of the not infrequent invocations of textuality thus far, the question is begged: why only four levels?<sup>33</sup> If contemporary criticism favors what Jameson calls “allegoresis”—“the reading of a text as *though* it were an allegory” (AI 25)—then it would seem wise to find a method that imposes some degree of constraint on interpretive scope while acknowledging that no one master-analytic adequately captures the expansive hermeneutical experience of a text. It’s my belief that the four-tiered framework strikes the appropriate balance of “constraint” and “expansiveness”:

a. Constrained Expansivity: As discussed, the third and fourth levels map the subject/object poles of cognitive mapping—with all their permutational dualistic forms (self/other, individual/collective, etc.)—ensuring the frame captures and centers the core antinomic pivots of ideological experience, thereby establishing the (aesthetic, constructed) totality all mappings require. Meanwhile, the “stereoscopic simultaneity” between the text and the 2<sup>nd</sup> level (or manifest interpretation, our “allegorical key”) allows other disciplines, as well as classic

<sup>33</sup> It may be useful here to quickly dispel the notion that the allegorical method recommended herein bears any throwback resemblance to medieval allegorical storytelling (Dante, Spenser) beyond its four-level system. Jameson observes: “Our traditional conception of allegory—based, for instance, on stereotypes of Bunyan—is that of an elaborate set of figures and personifications to be read against some one-to-one table of equivalences: this is, so to speak, a one-dimensional view of this signifying process, which might only be set in motion and complexified were we willing to entertain the more alarming notion that such equivalences are themselves in constant change and transformation at each perpetual present of the text” (AI 170); as such, “modern allegory involves a kinship between processes, unlike the personifications of classical or traditional allegory: it is the interechoing of narratives with one another, in their differentiation and reidentification, rather than the play with fixed substances and entities identified as so many traits or passions [or personifications]” (AI 48). We should also note that the four-level system is something the critic imposes on the text—like all interpretations—and is not necessarily something the author consciously builds-in; remember, all “social symbolic acts”—whether of artistic production or interpretation—involve the workings of the political unconscious.

humanistic themes, to enter the interpretive field, thereby holding interpretation in flux between the four levels' twin dualisms ("operator[s] of multiplicity" (Jameson, *AI* 94)), foreclosing their closure via neat symbolisms or synthetic dialectical solutions (all the various centrisms and "Goldilocks principles" of the world).<sup>34</sup> Jameson puts it thusly: "Each of these pairs is fundamentally ideological when taken on its own [as are all dualisms]; the best of fourfold allegory lies in its promise to hold all four levels together in an original and somehow inseparable unity, albeit a unity of differences" (*AI* 19). In another sense, no allegorical mapping will ever truly map the territory of social totality, the historical Real, so its ambitions, while global/universal, will necessarily be restrained, provisional, honest regarding its imperfections.

b. Expansive Constraints: The frame's levels can also be treated as "constraints" in the literary, Oulipan sense, as their injunctive limitations force the critic to come up with creative interpretations to fill out the schema. Regarding this latter task, we should note that each allegorical level can be filled with multiple allegorical terms, provided there's a degree of associative contiguity connecting them horizontally as well hermeneutic productivity vertically. (As we will see in the next section, the Greimas Square is useful tool for identifying these

<sup>34</sup> Regarding "symbolism" (a two-level structure; the text and its allegorical key), Jameson argues it makes "an appeal to homology [which] must always be a warning signal. The two-level system is the mark of bad allegory, insofar as it disperses the elements of each narrative line without reuniting them, at the same time opening a reversible correspondence between the two levels" (*AI* 6), producing a de-temporalized "homogenous representation," a tropological nominalism anathema to allegory's "profound discontin[uities]," "breaks and heterogeneities," and "multiple polysemia" (*AI* 170). Meanwhile, of three-tiered systems ("dualistic allegories")—favored by liberal humanism and the sciences—Jameson writes: "This is bad allegory at its most consummate...all such allegorical structures are essentially humanist in spirit and assert the meaning of their narratives to be an expression of the 'human condition.' In yet a different perspective, they all affirm the existence of a human nature as a normative metaphysic (even when the larger nature into which it is inserted carries the meaning of 'absurdity')...and...reenact those bad readings of Hegel in which opposites are always reunited into this or that 'synthesis'" (*AI* 9).



additional terms, which when found often open up useful connections between levels). Jameson helpfully observes: “genuine allegory is a fourfold discovery process, which explores untheorized territory in familiar texts and finds in them new (as it were) electromagnetic spectra hitherto inaccessible to the naked eye” (Jameson, *AI* 45).<sup>35</sup>

5. Structure and Function: As interpretive, cartographic systems, we can mark synergistic correspondences at the level of:

a. Functions: For Deleuze, the cinematic image conveys information allegorically. First, the disjunctive association between audio and image identified by Deleuze (his “lectosigns”) encourages, if not demands, an allegorical approach given that the film’s “signaletic” information arrives from two separate channels rather than one. Using contemporary film scholarship and poetics, we can increase this analogy in number, make it truly multi-channel, by factoring in the camera and its shot selections/movements, montage, the phenomenological qualities of the image (haptics, textures), its cinematic materiality (film or digital), and the plastic/spatial qualities of the *mise en scène* (blocking, color, costuming, set-dressing, etc.)—style, in short—to give us additional formal supports upon which to map allegorical levels (the same goes for sound as well, of course). (Jameson notes of post-Barthesian interpretation: “the letter of the text becomes a new level in its own right, as when one listens for sounds rather than meaning...or reads a sentence for its hidden syntax. These foregrounded properties then become

<sup>35</sup> Roland Boer helpfully observes that for Jameson the frame’s totalizations are never totalizing: “Another dimension of totalization lies in the challenge to, on the one hand, a liberal pluralism that appears to allow equal validity to any interpretation and method but in fact works to block the moves that would connect interpretations to their political, social, and historical place, and, on the other hand, a ban on master narratives that attempts to allow marginalized voices to speak, yet is so often unable to do so. For Jameson, a Marxist method inspired by medieval allegory would make the connections between interpretation, politics, and history, and provide space for marginalized voices” (56); “difference relates” in other words.

a texture in their own right, which is substituted for the original, and the ‘literal’ text has become a palimpsest” (AI 42)).

b. Structure Jameson characterizes the allegorical frame as a “diagnostic function,” a “fourfold discovery process, which explores untheorized territory in familiar texts and finds in them new (as it were) electromagnetic spectra hitherto inaccessible to the naked eye” (AI 45). In the next section, I intend to demonstrate how Deleuze’s cinematic system refines this hermeneutic spectrometer for the cinema, better tracks the allegorical waves as they peak and trough across the filmic diegesis, its narrative infrastructure. Provisionally, we can state it does this in two key ways: 1. via its “images” as indices of certain residual/dominant/emergent storytelling practices and allegorical structures; and, 2. the “genetic” and “compositional” signs—or parts—that comprise them (which we can treat preliminarily as switching points or forks of sorts that reliably indicate when something “allegorical” might be occurring in the image). The latter are fairly self-explanatory, but the former needs some elaboration before we move on. First, we should state that genre for Jameson is always a genre system and that changes to said system usually indicate historical change, a change not only to a given cultural logic—with all of its ideological permutational particularities—but to a mode of production (Buchanan 72-76; Jameson, *PU* 97-102, 107, 146). Part of the critic’s task then is to keep in mind periodization when analyzing a work as certain generic features (semantics, syntactics, and so on) residually held from a prior cultural dominant may turn up performing some “socially symbolic” task that the new system deploys to figuratively manage historical change/anxieties. (We saw this with Pacino’s method acting in the *Dog Day Afternoon* example above). As Jameson puts it, “genre criticism does not properly involve classification or typology but rather that very different thing, a reconstruction of the conditions of possibility of a given work or formal practice” (SV 101).

Thus, knowing genre systems will better allow one to complete the more historically attuned third and fourth tiers of the allegorical frame, which is where Deleuze comes in with his “movement-image” and its mapping of the Hollywood genres, a mapping that, for our purposes, usefully captures their syntactics (their core narrative and allegorical functions and structures, in other words) rather than the superficial, changeable genre semantics (style, look, “aesthetics,” costuming, locations, etc.) itemized by most genre theory. And as we will see, it’s these syntactic structures that will allow us to identify genre system holdovers—and thus discern modal change—in the chaos of cross-genre postmodernity, where “metageneric” films (and television) freely dip in and out of genre modes from scene to scene, moment to moment (Jameson, *SV* 175-77, 84-85). In short, knowing Deleuze’s “images” will better allow one to historicize postmodern film, track its allegorical lines, and perform a cognitive mapping in keeping with the various, often “uneven” developments of cultural production under late capitalism.

To bring this section to a close—and give a preview of the remaining chapters—it will be useful now to talk more specifically about how this method will be used herein. We can start first by observing that in *Allegory and Ideology* Jameson primarily describes the frame as a mapping tool for narrative texts; yet in his deployments thereof—his actual negotiations of the levels—he nonetheless manages to arrive at a number of novel theoretical observations regarding not only his textual objects but narrative art generally, thereby fulfilling the frame’s mandate as a “discovery procedure.” In contrast, my goal here is to use the frame—and its methodological partner, the semiotic square, as we shall see—from the outset as such a “diagnostic tool,” that is to say, actually attempt to use it to solve, or at the least, explore a theoretical problem. And given the Marxian bent of this paper, it’s no surprise that the problem I’m interested in solving relates to the fourth level, the level of collectivities and modes of production—of structure and totality

in other words. So, along with surveying the proposed method herein (charting its functions, describing its operations and so on), the overall aim then will be to arrange the first three levels into a kind of interpretive three-point lighting, throwing elucidative light on the fourth to solve the following question: how does film *qua* film systematically map capital's totalities before, after, and at the moment of the postmodern break?

So, in line with this trajectory, Chapter Two traverses the first three levels via a close reading of the John Boorman film *Point Blank* (1967) using the method of cognitive mapping sketched above. I will expand on several additional aspects of this approach, as well as fully discuss the rest of the Jamesonian interpretive toolkit (the Greimas Square, Jameson's 3-tiered interpretive horizons, the *analogon*, the ideologeme, and his notion of the "ideology of the form").

With the third and final chapter, we will then allegorically triangulate on the fourth level to explore our question of cinematic totalities, of aesthetic mappings. We will find *Point Blank*—with its 1967 release—to be particularly useful in this regard, as it straddles not only the postmodern turn, but the signal(etic) crisis<sup>36</sup> of Deleuze's action image, the transitory moment in

<sup>36</sup> For those *au fait*—generally—with Giovanni Arrighi's cyclical theory of capital, please skip this footnote. If not, know that in his *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (1994) Arrighi envisions capital as a global system that cyclically moves through "three fundamental stages, "its implantation, its productive development, and its financial...final stage," each respectively modeled on one of the MCM' phases of capitalist investment" (Jameson, *CT* 142-43). The last stage—finance capital—inaugurates a speculative *Walpurgisnacht*, in which capital exorcises the money form from the commodity form, unleashing "spectres of value, as Derrida might put it, vying against each other in a vast world-wide disembodied phantasmagoria"—fictitious capital seeking ascension in its "highest and last stage...as in its cycles it exhausts its returns in the new national and international capitalist zone, and seeks to die and be reborn in some 'higher' incarnation, a vaster and immeasurably more productive one, in which it is fated to live through again the three fundamental stages" (Jameson, *CT* 142-43). Neither *samsara* nor eternal return, this final moment of fictitious capital marks "[d]ecline in Arrighi's schema"—disinvestment, capital flight, outsourcing, globalization *tout court*—and is bookended "temporally by the signal crisis (the beginning of the end) and the

his account between movement and time and their respective “images of thought.” And by putting in dialogue these shared structural correspondences—capital and cinema’s alternation of modal systems, their complementary quiddities of motion and change, of movement and time—we can finally fold in the Deleuze, deploy his aesthetic totalities as tools to begin delineating the coordinates and axes of cinema’s systemic mapping of capital.

terminal crisis (the end of the end)”; and of the former, Joseph Jeon writes: “Occurring around 1970 for the United States, the signal crisis inheres in the hegemonic empire’s turn to financialization. For Robert Brenner the pivot is around 1973, the beginning of what he terms the long downturn of the US economy after the postwar boom, triggered primarily by a fall in manufacturing profitability that caused a protracted decline in the general economy. This crisis produced, in turn, a cycle in which there is decreasing incentive for investment in production, which in turn accelerates the growing disparity between industrial and financial sector profitability. As Joshua Clover has clarified, after the signal crisis ‘no real recovery of accumulation is possible, but only more and less desperate strategies of deferral’” (7-8) (citations omitted).

## CHAPTER TWO: LEVELS AND SQUARES

We could start this section as follows: 1. “If there’s what phenomenology calls an invariant structure to *Point Blank*, it would have to be at the level of sound, have to be located in that hallway-chambered echoing percussively struck from Walker’s pistoning tread, that repetitive clacking of *musique concrete* compressing, fragmenting, and threading *diegetic* time and space, sonically bridging his wife’s daily toilette with Walker’s warpath from airport to car to apartment, reverberating outward, somehow penetrating the audiovisual baffles—the cuts, the act breaks—of the scenes following with their transient talk and locality to infuse and propel a cumulative pulsation to Walker’s movement, rendering him human impulse, a mass of potential energy that moves even when inert—that echoing trod again—a kinetic vibration that resounds in memory such that the whole film becomes a montage of footsteps, of Walker walking, a mechanical *passage l’acte*”; or like so: 2. “To isolate a master motif in *Point Blank*, a kind of guiding interpretive lodestar, one should begin with that of fragmentation, separation, exchange...the idea that anything and everything has its substitute, its replacement, a world where quality becomes quantity, people becomes objects, objects become people, place A becomes place B, and place C becomes somehow both, a culture of planned obsolescence, of fungibility, of seriality, of...let’s just call it consumer culture to avoid the pro forma cliché that invariably seems to infect all description (like the passage immediately preceding, for instance) let alone critique thereof with the wearying banality of its object...and yet...we should note, that if rendered cinematically, in *Point Blank*’s Brechtian, foregrounded fashion, such an all-consuming triteness can exert in its plasticine vulgarity a certain fascination, one that solicits, if not demands, a desire for a destruction beyond consumption, a generative laying waste that creatively destroys, or *détourns*, this all-pervasive Debordian dominant through a kind of

aesthetics of Schumpeterian subsumption—a stylistic afforded by the very medium that’s to a degree congenitally at one with its corrosively attractive vapidness”; or even, 3. “Endings and beginnings, beginnings and endings: both a reliable place to start when dealing with any narrative object given the hermeneutic encapsulation they impress on its contents, but with *Point Blank*, this closed-circuit relationality of interpretive energies, this formal routing of attention toward certain trajectories, certain flows of reading, seems to be hopelessly frustrated, left open, unresolved: because what does one do with the second-long wash of crimson that opens the film, the wash that focally resolves into a close-up of Lee Marvin’s face—bathed in Bava-esque gels, a dermal screen catching projected images of lava, fireworks, explosions—gazing at the viewer, a cryptic non-sequitur of a shot followed by Marvin’s seeming execution, gunned down in a shadow-drenched prison cell separated spatially, temporally, from all sensible storytelling coordinates...adrift, from what the viewer can tell, on another plane of diegetic existence. And how does one factor the ending, the high-angle, long—a still-frame, to be precise—of a corpse splayed out in an Alcatraz exercise yard (or so it seems), that turns—the shot—into an optically printed zoom-out, that then seamlessly transitions into a cinematographic pan/tilt out of the yard across the bay to a matitutinally lit San Francisco, only to be concluded by a pan-left zoom-in—back over the yard—to what appears to be Alcatraz, the very place of the camera’s supposed occupation. And more prosaically, taking the ending at the scene level, why does Marvin abandon the money that’s the stated object (“I really want my money. I want my money”) of his unstinting spree of violence and brutality—the money that’s been, to a degree, the whole damn ‘Point,’ you might say, of the film?”

If the task simply was to interpret *Point Blank* (1967), then such overwriting would seem to do the trick, for in their syntactic pileups, each of the enumerated passages hits a number of

analytical strata: each is form-attuned (movement/sound, image materiality/*mise en scène*, narrative/cinematographic), each allusively targets various thematic throughlines (postmodern subjectivity/drives, consumer culture/the spectacle, postmodern temporality/historicity), and each together isolates a kind of informational motion or movement: vectoral trajectories, fragmenting interchange, and cyclical repetition. But our goal in this chapter, if you'll recall, is not merely to produce *another* interpretation of *Point Blank*; rather it's the exploration and working out of the Jamesonian system (hereinafter, the "System") using *Point Blank* as its object. (Though, by no means should one discount the 'readings' generated, herein; as we will see, they will be essential for the next chapter's discussion of the fourth level and Deleuze). Of course, in giving this limited demo, it will be impossible to do a full blow-by-blow of every move of the critical analysis given the transverse cogitative crosshatch from which interpretation is invariably drawn. As such, I should state here from the outset that there is no one way to deploy this System as ideally the whole interpretive apparatus will be working at once in some amorphous, synoptically conceptual gestalt of constructive reading. What this means is that the System should be treated not as a sequential, comprehensive set of steps one must deploy to arrive at a 'definitive' reading—an impossibility—but rather, as a series of hermeneutic best practices, an array of methodological tools to be wielded as needed as well a series of generative frameworks that help channel and contain connotational excess while inspiring a more multifaceted analysis via the four-fold parallax of the levels, their mapping of constitutive dualisms, and their figuring of the poles of existential and social reality.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves; in order to facilitate this discussion, we should begin first by setting forth a quick and dirty, bullet-pointed rendition of the film's *fabula*, the plot in its most linear, just-the-facts terms: (1) professional heister Walker (Lee Marvin) runs



into his war buddy Mal Reese (John Vernon) at a VA event; Reese gulls Walker into robbing a money drop at Alcatraz Island; Walker introduces Reese to his wife Lynne (Sharon Acker); the latter begin an affair; the trio perform the heist; after, Reese guns down Walker in an Alcatraz prison cell. (2) Reese abandons the gut shot Walker, moves to Los Angeles with Lynne, and pays off a debt to the “Organization” with Walker’s share—\$93,000.00. (3) Walker survives, swims to shore; sometime later Walker meets Yost (Keenan Wynn), a seeming Fed, on an Alcatraz tour boat; Yost tells Walker Reese and Lynne’s whereabouts. (4) Walker flies to Los Angeles, breaks into Lynne’s condo, and shoots up a bed; Walker learns Reese abandoned her; she commits suicide that night. (5) Walker waits, times passes; a bagman shows up to deliver Lynne’s allowance; Walker beats him, interrogates him, learns Reese now works for the Organization, and that Walker should talk to his (the lacky’s) immediate superior: ‘Big’ John Stegman (Michael Strong), a used car salesman. (6) Walker goes to Big John’s Car Lot, asks Stegman to come with on a test drive, careens the car against a cement truck, wrecks it under a freeway overpass with Stegman therein, and ‘enhancedly’ interrogates the latter to learn Reese is now shackled up with Chris (Angie Dickinson), Lynne’s sister. (7) Walker goes to his wife’s funeral; no one attends; an excavator buries her. (8) meanwhile, Reese learns of the resurrected Walker from Stegman; the former orders the latter to handle it. (9) Walker visits Chris’s jazz club, “The Movie House,” roughs up Stegman’s thugs, and then visits Chris’s house. (10) thereat, Chris tells him Reese killed her lover, coerced her into sex, took over the Movie House, and forced her to run it; Chris then agrees to help Walker get to Reese. (11) the next day: at a high-rise office building, home office of “Multiplex Products”—a front for the Organization—Reese is called to task by his superior, an executive named Carter (Lloyd Bochner); the latter instructs the former to handle it, tells him to hole up under armed guard in the Huntley Hotel, wait for Walker, set a

trap. (12) Walker and Chris circle the hotel, and craft a plan. (13) Without getting into the particulars (it involves Chris acting as a kind of sexual lure/distraction (or “Trojan Horse,” as Stegman puts it)), Walker gets in, coitally interrupts Reese and Chris, demands the former turn over his share of the money, learns the Multiplex Board is comprised of Carter, a Brewster, and a moneyman, Fairfax, and then accidentally causes Reese to plummet, nude, off the balcony; Chris then berates Walker for not killing Reese with intent, followed by the mysterious Yost informing Walker re Carter’s whereabouts. (14) Walker accosts Carter at a Chamber of Commerce event, gets him to agree to pay Reese’s debt, and schedules an exchange at the bed of the Los Angeles River. (15) Before the drop, Carter orders Stegman to deliver the package; Stegman goes to the much-filmed concrete channel; meanwhile, Walker raids Multiplex, captures Carter, and takes him to the drop; a contract killer (James Sikking), hired by Carter, mistakenly guns down Carter, thinking its Walker; he then kills Stegman as well; Walker discovers the package contains nothing. (16) Sometime after, Yost meets Carter at a house owned by Multiplex and tells him Brewster will be arriving shortly. (17) Walker visits Chris, discovers her house has been ransacked, and then the pair go to Brewster’s house. (18) Walker and Chris wait for Brewster, fight, and then have intercourse (“make love” seems too tender here). (19) Brewster (Carroll O’Connor) arrives at a local airport, meets with the hired gun, and refuses to pay him. (20) Brewster arrives at the home; Walker accosts him, makes him call Fairfax, and shoots up the phone after Fairfax refuses to pay; Brewster recalls the Alcatraz money drop is still in play and tells him he can get his money there. (21) At the drop, Brewster and Walker wait for the helicopter; Brewster secures the money; Walker waits in the shadows; Brewster gets shot by the contract killer, who steps out of the shadows with Yost; Yost reveals himself to be the moneyman Fairfax and asks Walker to work for the Organization; Walker remains silent,

disappears into the shadows, seemingly abandoning the money; the film ends with a final shot showing the drop to be at Fort Point instead of Alcatraz (see the third of the false openings that initiated this chapter).

With this protracted recapitulation, we thus have our first level of the allegorical frame filled—a crime story, a revenge story—yet also, through this schematic scene-by-scene account, we have a clue as to why I picked this film (beyond me liking it), why it’s sort of cheat, a gimmee, why it’s so susceptible to the method recommended herein. What the numbered rendition should hopefully set off is that the film, when shorn of the manifest narrative content, our level one, is little more than an additive, almost paratactic leapfrogging from location to location—a diachronic stringing together of a disjunctive, dispersed, and serial spatiality. We can take this as symptomatic of postmodernity (which it probably is), but as a matter of interpretation, this collection of disparate spatialized temporal chunks—or semi-autonomous “scenotopes” per Jameson<sup>37</sup>—demands the viewer arrange them into some form of cohesion, a cohesion which should hopefully produce some form of (socially symbolic) meaning. As mentioned in the prior section, the allegorical levels—always of a temporal trajectory—might do

<sup>37</sup> He makes this observation re the narrative distribution of *North by Northwest* (1959), claiming such “spatial experience...has been uniquely constructed as a language”: “We are given, in *North by Northwest*, a whole series or sequence of concrete spaces which are not too rapidly to be reduced to mere places. The places are named, of course (as so often in Hitchcock: Phoenix, Arizona; or Quebec City; or San Francisco — several times); but place and place name alike are only the starting points, the raw material, from which a rather different realization of concrete space is produced which is no longer scene or backdrop for an action or for actors, but includes those in some new, qualitative way. The vocation of these new space-signs is often so imperious as to master the individual episodes and to transform each into the occasion for a qualitatively distinct production: indeed, the very special interest of *North by Northwest* in this respect is that, as in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, it goes further in this direction than most other Hitchcock films, identifying each new episodic unit with the development of a radically different type of concrete space itself, so that we may have the feeling of a virtual anthology of a whole range of distinct spatial configurations, pinned side by side in some photograph album” (Jameson, *SS* 50, 57).

the trick here, in that they travel across the distributed audiovisual contents of the film, arranging them metonymically, if you like, to produce ‘metaphoric’ meaning. As the morphemes of this loose (and disposable) linguistic analogy, the shots, cuts, sounds, and scenes necessarily then take on a spatial character, a joint and several distribution that can be approached with a more synchronic inflection. But before these filmic elements can be gathered ‘vertically’ by the diachronic movement of the allegorical levels, it must be verified that they hold connotational freight sufficient to build the latter’s conceptual narratives. And the tool for locating such extra-semantic materiality in these load-bearing cinematographic units, if we’ll recall, is the semiotic square.

Jameson describes the semiotic square as the “‘black box’ through which narrative is somehow ‘converted’ into cognition and vice versa” (*AI* 349); for obvious reasons, I prefer his other image for the square: “a virtual map of conceptual closure, or better still, of the closure of ideology itself, that is, ideology as a mechanism, which, while seeming to generate a rich variety of possible concepts and positions, remains in fact locked into some initial aporia or double-bind that it cannot transform from the inside by its own means” (*AI* 350). The notion of “conceptual closure” should bring to mind our last section’s discussion of narrative and the allegorical levels’ temporal intertwining of the antinomic double-binds that suspend our social reality; as we will see, the square does the same, but in a more static, spatialized fashion:

Seen in this way, the semiotic rectangle becomes a vital instrument for exploring the semantic and ideological intricacies of the text—not so much because, as in Greimas’ own work, it yields the objective possibilities according to which landscape and the physical elements, say, must necessarily be perceived, as rather because it maps the limits of a specific ideological consciousness and marks the conceptual points beyond which that consciousness cannot go, and between which it is condemned to oscillate...When Greimas’ system is used in this fashion, its closure ceases to pose the problems traditionally raised for a more dialectical position by static and analytic thought; on the contrary, it furnishes the graphic embodiment of ideological closure as such, and allows us to map out the inner limits

of a given ideological formation...More than this, the very closure of the "semiotic rectangle" now affords a way into the text, not by positing mere logical possibilities and permutations, but rather through its diagnostic revelation of terms or nodal points implicit in the ideological system which have, however, remained unrealized in the surface of the text, which have failed to become manifest in the logic of the narrative, and which we can therefore read as what the text represses...So the literary structure, far from being completely realized on any one of its levels tilts powerfully into the underside...into the very political unconscious, of the text, such that the latter's dispersed semes—when reconstructed according to this model of ideological closure—themselves then insistently direct us to the informing power of forces or contradictions which the text seeks in vain wholly to control or master (or manage, to use Norman Holland's suggestive term). Thus, by means of a radically historicizing reappropriation, the ideal of logical closure which initially seemed incompatible with dialectical thinking. now proves to be an indispensable instrument for revealing those logical and ideological centers a particular historical text fails to realize, or on the contrary seeks desperately to repress (Jameson, *PU* 47-49).

Given this similarity between the square and the levels—both images or mappings of sociocultural reality, both workings of the political unconscious, both extractable from narrative—the true “black box” in the way Jameson means it would seem to be narrative. As a sort of socio-symbolic ‘compiler’ then, narrative works like a chiasmic converter between the two semantic distributions: an intermediary that allows them to function as reversible structures—from levels to narrative to square and vice-versa. And, as suggested earlier, each takes a mass of “signaletic” narrative material and distributes it spatiotemporally in a particular direction: the square synchronically, positionally, “march[ing] in place without moving”; the levels diachronically, linearly, sequentially (Jameson, *AI XV*).<sup>38</sup> (However, given their dialectic

<sup>38</sup> To my knowledge, the only place Jameson has explicitly discussed the relation between the levels and the square is in his latest collection, *Allegory and Ideology* (2019); therein, he points up their shared spatially transverse character (or “diagrammatism,” after Deleuze) as well their volatizing “correlations of difference,” of “undisambiguated synonymy,” through which “the multiple [meanings] throng like so many shadows or souls of the dead, their differences elbowing each other and seeking possession of the central signifier...Movement then, like ritual possession, takes place within the multiple personalities of the signifier itself and articulates its capacity to annex radically different contexts. Far from the empty signifier of Laclau and Mouffe, this is a vessel of excess, its associations pouring out in all directions, which allegorical

interrelation, we should note that each can be rewritten by way of their opposite number: the levels can be viewed as a static stack of semantic lines, while the square, to be constructed, requires a narrative progression from one term to another).<sup>39</sup>

Though Jameson calls the square “a kind of discovery principle”—a means to “map a temporal process” or “‘reduce’ a narrative in movement to a series of ‘cognitive’ or ideological, combinatory positions”—like the levels, it’s at root meant to be no more than a heuristic device (AI 350, 353). (Jameson: “it cannot be guaranteed to replace intelligence or intuition” (AI 350)). For us, this means one need not start with the square, one can just as easily start with the levels as I did with the fourth level, just now, I suppose, by loosely pegging it—boundary stakes only at this point (we’re building for now its 3-level interpretive frame this chapter)—to the transition from monopoly to financial capital (as did Jameson with *Dog Day Afternoon*). Admittedly, in “theory” as practice, this is the true dullard’s move, as you can never go wrong arguing a given sociocultural development—in the arts, culture, psychoanalysis, *et al.*—has something to do with late capitalism, with mutations in the mode of production. The challenge then will be to

structure is there to organize and to channel. This is what Benjamin called ‘the violence of the dialectical movement within the allegorical depths’; it is the logic of multiple “publics, in which each group, from preteens to genders, takes something away for itself. I would use the word *universality* if it did not simultaneously carry with it the twin overtones of stuffiness and stigma: but surely universality is allegorical and not just some univocal pronouncement. Yet the final word of allegory is political in any case, with the reassertion of the demands of collectivity in its ultimate, anagogical, instance” (AI 330-34). I would only add here that if allegory organizes via “channeling” diachronically, the square does so by “mapping” synchronically.

<sup>39</sup> Jameson makes a similar observation re figurations of time and space generally: “Under these circumstances, the best we can do in the way of synthesis is to alert ourselves to the deformation of space when observed from the standpoint of time, of time when observed from the standpoint of space. The great structuralist formula itself—the distinction between the synchronic and the diachronic—may be offered as an illustration of the second deformation and is always accompanied by a label that warns us not to confuse the diachronic with time and history nor to imagine that the synchronic is static or the mere present, warnings most often as timely as they are ineffective” (IT 639).

demonstrate how particularly the film formally and semantically works this allegorical line into the signaletic materials of the narrative, as the task, remember, is cognitive mapping, and not just a reading of a text. In other words, we want to extract, if possible, undiscovered (Symbolic) projections of capital, specifically its forms and logics, but forms and logics registered in terms of form and style—a task, if we’ll recall, for the next, Deleuze-added chapter. But to do this, we will first need to secure an idea of what socio-symbolic content the film’s political unconscious is seeking to work out, and not only that: crucially, we will want to know how exactly this semantically-charged material relates to and connects the two levels we’ve identified thus far: (1) the textual: Walker’s revenge/crime story; and, (4) the collective: the global transition to the postmodern mode—and relations—of production.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Some methodological due diligence for only hardcore Jameson completists: At this point, if I were the Jameson circa 1981 of *The Political Unconscious*, I would recommend employing his three-tier “interpretive horizons,” which Clint Burnham analogizes to a hermeneutic “zooming out,” or a series of analytic/epistemic axial cuts, from close-up, to medium, to long shot, from the narrowly political, to the social, to the historic: “the first horizon—or ‘concentric framework,’ as Jameson calls them—refers to the political and current events that mark the appearance of the cultural text: strikes, revolutions, wars, but also the social history of the family, ethnic struggles, or protests movements. Then, in a longer durée or span of time, society conceived of in a properly Marxist fashion as a class struggle (so more absolutely antagonistic and dialectical than the mélange of events and newspaper stories of the first framework). The final horizon is total history, from the earliest, primitive, or prehistoric times of communal living and the slaveholding ancients, through such modes of production as feudalism and capitalism, on to some future, still unimaginable, of socialist or communist equality” (52). The cinematographic analogy works nicely, but I think we can ditch this methodological equipment without any great loss to the System proposed herein for the following reasons: 1. As an interpretive apparatus, the latter is cumbersome enough already with the square and the frame; 2. In favor of the levels, Jameson himself appears to have abandoned—or let fallow—the “horizons” with his postmodern turn in the mid-eighties, if only by virtue of their textual truancy; and, 3. More substantively, the levels adequately force interpretation to fit the historic scope circumscribed by the horizons; for instance, the third and fourth (or individual and collective) levels capture the final (or historic) horizon’s “organizing unities,” its changing, uneven, multiple “modes of production” and “cultural revolutions” (*PU* 89, 95); meanwhile, the first set of allegorical levels are more or less apposite to the first and second horizons’ framing of the former’s narrowly political, contemporary contradictions—that which is ‘disappeared’ in the “symbolic act” of the text’s “formal prestidigitations” (which can be discerned and mapped, per Jameson, via the semiotic

To link up these levels, we need to first look for two things: (1) elements of the film's form and/or content that are susceptible to—i.e. sufficient in number for—the square's mapping operations to trace some palimpsestic totality or whole spanning the text (*SS* 47-49),<sup>41</sup> that (2) share certain manifest semantic, structural, and/or audiovisual properties—and by “manifest,” I mean immediately meaningful via one of the Peircean semiotic triad (icon, index, symbol). Of course, all aspects of a film signify in this triplicate sense, but I don't think it's too controversial to maintain that one of the three will dominate, one of the three will “manifest” given a signalitic particle's catalyzation by the interpretive alembic. In Jameson's case, the first of the latter requirement's set of categories—the semantic—usually provides him the analytic opening for traversal of the square's criss-crossing mesh of meaning, as it requires the least intervening steps to arrive at an interpretation in that it's the most observable and constrained (in the anchor and relay sense) to interpretive operations; in short, what we're talking about here is the “content” of the film, the *fabula*, the film's literary “substance” shorn of style, of form, of its audiovisual materiality, affects, and formal configurations/movements. For Jameson, the character systems of

square)—along with the latter's manifestly-subtextual sociocultural shibboleths, bromides, ‘humanistic’ themes, and ideological class narratives (*PU* 89-96). That being said, we don't need to write the horizons off completely: as we will see shortly, we will retain therefrom Jameson's concepts of the “ideologeme” and the “ideology” or “content of the form”—both important interpretive resources for our proposed analytical System.).

<sup>41</sup> But remember, the “totalizing vocation of such a geographical collection” only offers “a kind of backing or after-image for those narratives that set out to map the social totality in some more fundamental structural fashion,” no more than a “closure effect,” a transitory “sign that somehow all the bases have been touched, and that the galactic dimensions and co-ordinates of the now global social totality have at least been sketched in. It should be obvious that, just as such totalities can never be perceived with the naked eye (where they would remain, in any case, purely contemplative and epistemological images), so also closure in the postmodern, after the end of the (modernist) organic work, has itself become a questionable value, if not a meaningless concept. It will be desirable therefore to speak of a closure-effect, just as we speak of mapping out or triangulating, rather than perceiving or representing, a totality” (Jameson, *GP* 13, 31).



a work are a particular favorite,<sup>42</sup> but since film is a visual medium first and foremost, space takes on an immediacy lacking in other narrative artforms, especially in a film like *Point Blank*, which, as demonstrated by my plot recap, cycles through upwards of ten plus locations (or ‘scenotopes’), with almost each scene turning up a new location. In most critical accounts, this “centrifugal” (Dimendberg) “spatial system”<sup>43</sup> tends to be a regular feature, as helpfully demonstrated by this roll call—provided by Carolin Kirchner (in her doctoral thesis on the “sublime landscapes” of the cinematic Los Angeles of the 1960s)—of critics’ varied responses to the film’s proliferation of “non-places” (Augé):

Critics at the time of *Point Blank*’s release noticed the foregrounding of specific urban settings, but failed to acknowledge and analyze the importance of the space beyond its role as establishing the setting of the action. Arthur B. Clark’s review in *Films in Review* praises the “interestingly color-photographed shots of Alcatraz, San Francisco and Los Angeles,” but is more concerned with the shortcomings that he sees in the “blah” story. In a 1967 *Time* review the (uncited) author proclaims, “*Point Blank* is one of those forgettable movies in which only the settings change—the violence remains the same.” Philip French gives slightly more attention to the film’s spatial representation, mentioning both the iconic use of Alcatraz and Boorman’s depiction of Los Angeles as “Nowhere City.” Stephen Farber takes up a similar position as French by stating *Point Blank* “illuminates the American city, in the language of dream, not social document.” Further, T. J. Ross asserts that the main protagonist’s urban passage can be seen “as overt expression of suburban consciousness,” in that “clearly, he knows his way around the city, through which he tours, however, with the detachment of the commuter.” Contemporary film historians such as Michel Ciment, Robert Carringer, or Andrew Spicer also acknowledge the importance of the Los Angeles setting for the story but do not significantly expand on prior discussions of the same. According to Carringer, *Point Blank* “shows more of Los Angeles than perhaps any previous film,” oscillating between the two paradigms that he sees as constitutive of the cinematic depiction of LA as “commodified Arcadia” and/or “pathological cityscape.” Spicer sees the film’s rendering of Los Angeles “as representative city of modernity, anonymous and indifferent.” Similarly, Ciment points to the “placelessness” of the modern American metropolis in which the “feel of any

<sup>42</sup> For example: his chapter on Conrad in *The Political Unconscious* (pp. 206-280); “Mapping Space” in *Raymond Chandler: The Detections of Totality*. Verso, 2016, pp. 31-56; and his chapter on nostalgia film in *Postmodernism* (pp. 279-296).

<sup>43</sup> A term used by Jameson to name the array of locations—and the movements contained therein—he semiotically maps in “Spatial Systems in *North by Northwest*.”

particular city is absent” so that the Los Angeles that *Point Blank* depicts stands in for “The City...modern, anonymous and indifferent.” (37-38) (Citations Omitted).

Whether it’s something demanded by the film then, or merely pure intuition—‘we need to start somewhere’—the selection of *Point Blank*’s “spatial system” as our primary object of mapping first requires us to identify an initial contradiction—or “contrary”—that’s mobilized by the locations of the film. As a former attorney, one that’s near and dear to my heart—and that’s capable of categorizing every location in the film—is the opposition between public and private property, the binary code of the network of ‘social’ contracts that (forcefully) comprises and maintains our relations of production. Semantic slippage<sup>44</sup> triggers from this initial pair a radiating field of connotational meaning, one that allows us then to add to this initial signification the various *bêtes noires* of Western Marxism/critical theory: the Bourgeois division of public and private life (of work and play, labor and leisure),<sup>45</sup> the Habermasian private and

<sup>44</sup> Jameson: “The [positioning] of [the spaces] and of a [spatial] system is opened up only at the point at which the mind seeks further release from its ideological closure by projecting combinations of these various semes: to work through the various possible combinations is then concretely to imagine the [locational] forms, or the [spatial] types, that can embody and manifest such contradictions, which otherwise remain abstract and repressed” (*PU* 254); similarly, with frame, we find a similar “slippage in niveau”—“fitful connections and intersections suggestive of a flitting of consciousness from one form of attention to another...a perception by distraction analogous to what Benjamin ascribed to our awareness of architecture as we move through it on our way elsewhere, or of those unhappy souls who have too many ideas at once and try vainly to marshal them like sheep the shepherd risks ‘now losing in one direction and another in another’ (as Manzoni puts it)” (Jameson, *AI* 281); in short, the wandering square, as well “[t]he allegorical impulse,” are “a kind of contagion that restlessly infects a wider and wider interpretive circle” (Jameson, *AI* 232).

<sup>45</sup> Jameson himself uses such a binary in his square-aided reading of *North by Northwest*: “While the anxieties about privacy seem to have diminished, in a situation in which its tendential erosion or even abolition has come to stand for nothing less than the end of civil society itself. It is as though we were training ourselves, in advance, for the stereotypical dystopian rigors of overpopulation in a world in which no one has a room of her own anymore, or secrets that anybody else cares about in the first place. But the variable that gears the rest, as always, is the more fundamental transition from the private to the corporate, the latter unmasking the former and thereby problematizing the very judicial system on which it is itself constructed. How there could be private things, let alone privacy, in a situation in which almost everything around us is

public spheres, legal notions of privacy and publicity and so on, etc. So with these two semes—public (S1) and private (S2)—we can then deduce (really, select) our contradictions: the public (S1) forbidding notions of “interiority” (S4), the private (S2) barring “exteriority” (S3). With this new set then, we find now an existential, psychoanalytic inflection added to the square, altering it so that it can take into account the more denotatively descriptive aspects of the spaces (are they open or closed?) along with the phenomenological, subject-centered ‘manners of being’ seemingly demanded thereby. (Note, please refer to the square and frame provided in the Appendix to keep track of the analysis from hereon).

With these semes set forth, we can get on with filling out the remainder of the square: the complex (S1 + S2), neutral (S3 + S4), and implicative (S1+ S3; S2 + S4) terms. Before starting however, I want to reiterate that the proposed analytic System does not require one to complete all of these steps; it should never be busywork in other words. At a certain point, there will be diminishing returns; one should stop if no new information, no new mappings are produced; and one should recognize finally that most films—perhaps even *Point Blank*—don’t merit the interpretive firepower I’m unloading herein. As such, the spatial and character systems of *Point Blank* that I’m about to “get on with” mapping probably won’t be tremendously helpful to anyone or anything—it’s merely more, fairly rote textual analysis as we shall see—unless it’s directed toward the right textual material and/or aims to solve a particular problem (as we will with the next chapter’s discussion of Deleuze and the fourth level). Nevertheless, the immediate goal of the next several paragraphs will be to demonstrate some of the basic operations of this

functionally inserted into larger institutional schemes and frameworks of all kinds, which nonetheless belong to somebody – this is now the nagging question that haunts the camera dolly around our various life-worlds, looking for a lost object the memory of which it cannot quite retain” (SS 11).

interpretive System, show how the semiotic square works and how it almost anamorphically interrelates with the allegorical levels.

But first, a mapping of the spatial system:

1. **Implication: Private + Interiority (S2/S4):** We'll find this particular intersection of semes requires the least amount of interpretive gymnastics, as **Private** property and **Interiority** implies habitation, Bachelard, the American Dream of homeownership; add traditional gender coding and you get images of domesticity, hearth and home, the nuclear family; and from there you arrive at **Lynne's and Chris's homes** for better or worse; it's the 60s, a studio film: expect bad politics. In other words, in the world of *Point Blank*, the Second-wave's still in trough, women's lib: little more than bare sexual exchange, a deterritorialized traffic in women.
2. **Implication: Public + Exteriority (S1/S3):** Another analytical layout: **public** property and **exteriority** give us the outdoors, openness, exposure, which means here the cinematically ubiquitous storm drains and concrete beds of the Los Angeles River, the site of the Polanskian primal scene, the fetishistic figuration of capital's terra-formation of tribal lands into the "City of Quartz" (Davis). This infrastructural coup in turn harmonizes with and enables Los Angeles other great "Ecology of Evil" (Plagens), its paradigmatic car culture, as well its co-constitutive network of highways and roads, together both the life-blood and circulatory system of Fordist capitalism.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Beyond the standard Fordist account—"the car is the commodity form as such in the twentieth century... 'Taylorization,' the assembly line, vertical integration of production, the interchangeability of workers, the standardization of tools and materials... was developed in the process of producing the 'car for the masses' and not the inverse"—Kristen Ross argues that as the Platonically ideal commodity, the automobile not only supercharged Fordist production, marketing, and consumption, but worked a fetishizing dissimulation across its entire processual ambit: "The very fact of its being the commodity form as such tends to consign the car to the edges of historical discourse despite the now common use of terms from the history of its production, 'Fordism,' and 'post-Fordism,' to designate a kind of twentieth-century

3. Neutral: Exteriority + Interiority (S3/S4): We've named it already, but the automobile—Margaret Morse's "mobilized privacy," a portable interiority within public exteriority—gives us our next mappable location, with its door-to-door, home-to-store extension of the domestic: a form of private property that fosters through enclosure/encapsulation an aura of privacy (an "iron bubble, a miniature idyll with its own controlled climate and selected sound") just like home (Morse 106). ("[F]or [cars] are at once extensions of the body and mobile homes, so to speak" (Lefebvre 98)). The characters in *Point Blank* spend as much time in cars as out of them, zooming around the Shed Space (Venturi/Brown) of Los Angeles, the vehicles' windshields mimetically replicating, screening in true Baudrillardian fashion, not only the cinematic image but the vectorial/velocitous passage of the Debordian image-space, the Society of the Spectacle at one with the exurban sprawl of the postmodern "postmetropolis" (Soja). To further channel Morse: as part of a larger "ontology of everyday distraction," this vehicular network links up with other "architectures of persuasion" (Venturi et al. 9) to form "a sociohistorical nexus of institutions"—like transportation, broadcasting, and retail—"which grew together into their present-day structure and national scope after World War II" and "intensified processes of privatization and massification which had begun far earlier," processes that happened to coincide with and feed certain 'core' American values: the "good life" of "liberty in the midst of sociality, privacy amongst community, and an autonomy of protected selfhood nourished by its environment"—a consumerist *satori* somehow won via consumer goods, boot-strapping social

periodization. I think this has less to do with the ubiquity or banality of the object—its now seamless integration into the fabric of everyday life—than with the way in which historicity is, so to speak, 'emptied out' at each of the three 'moments'—production, transformation into discourse (i.e., advertising, media representations), and consumption and use—that define the car. For the car is not only implicated in a certain type of mobilization by capital, it is also an active though partial agent in the *reproduction* of that structure—thus its embeddedness, in each of the three 'moments,' in a temporality of repetition" (19-20).

mobility, and a blind “faith in freedom of movement and choice among commodities, destinations, and channels” (despite the bone-dry bleeding of public support, conveyances, etc.) (Morse 116-118). What we’re talking about here is interpellative infrastructure, architectural instructions-for-use, for being, “interpenetration[s] of layer upon layer of built environment and representation, the formative and derivative, the imaginary and mundane,” that sustains an “empire of the habitual” that constitutes and coheres in the everyday “matrix of mental and social life, made of mundane opportunities and choices and composed of practices conducted half-aware, which assemble one's very personhood” (Morse 118-19). Exiting the car, entering the parking lot, we encounter now the primary site of retail ritual. At Big John's Car Lot, a perimeter-banding scroll of mid-century *moderne* advertising—“8855 Big John's” “You'll love my guarantee” “Lovely Cars” “Big John”—encloses the space, trapping the customer/viewer within the commercial phantasmagoria, which notably includes as part of its graphic display the key props of contemporary protestant masculinity: minority cleaning staff in the background, out of focus (i.e., where they ‘belong’) and a buxom, bed/kitchen-ready Monrovia blonde—at which the camera, in the scene's closing shot, pauses to appreciatively ogle: her bent-forward décolletage amply on view. In this new “commercial vernacular” (Venturi/Brown), flesh, metal, concrete, pasteboard, and asphalt surrender their forms to an assemblage of “symbols-in-space over forms-in-space,” becoming little more than the ‘matter-image,’ the ‘substance of the expression’ (Hjelmslev), the manipulable, signaletic material that comprises, composes, and bears that “changeable and disposable environmental decoration known as advertising art”—an architecture of pseudo-individualization, one shaping the built environment as much as its customer-inhabitants (Venturi et al. 6, 106-07, 119). Thus, “the graphic sign in space has become the architecture of the landscape,” an architecture where “communication dominates space”

(Venturi et al. 8,13), via synthesizing and projecting a compensatory superpositioning of exteriority and interiority, into a subjectivizing image-world, a simulacral space of mastery of not only one's inner life, but the external world, that relies upon a:

split-belief...knowing a representation is not real, but nevertheless momentarily closing off the here-and-now and sinking into another world...Its [production] lies primarily in that it involves two or more objects and levels of attention and the copresence of two or more different, even contradictory, meta-psychological effects" or spaces—like our private and public spheres—which institutes a “liquid” “exchange of values...between different ontological levels and otherwise incommensurable facets of life, for example, between two and three dimensions, among language, images, and the built environment, and among the economic, societal, and symbolic realms of our culture (Morse 99-100).

We can see this effect in The Movie House—Chris's jazz club—where acid-hued images from a psychedelic slideshow of baroque odalisques, cheesecake pin-ups, and celebrity glamour shots bathe go-go dancers, a black jazz trio, and its front man shouter, all for the touristic consumption of the WASP clientele (and the viewer for that matter; the scene begins with a gaping white woman's mouth—screaming? Bawling? Ecstatically howling?—projected on the club's stage-fronting white screen; backstage, 'contained' and 'framed' transparently by the screened maw is the black jazz shouter, who emerges to do some crowd work with the centipedal contiguity of balding white pates arrayed round the performance space, hoggishly baying for their money's worth, for some 'authentic,' 'real' experience. The whole scene's sonically suspended in a punishingly repetitious line of bass, snare, and piano, that never builds, never breaks, only sustains a mindless drive that continues despite the brawl that eventually erupts between Walker and Reese's goons, which itself is intercut—in a what I imagine involved a kind of pre-reflective, associative logic—with several discomfiting, sweaty close-ups of the screaming face of the lead shouter. This admittedly effective conjunction—it's a memorable scene—depends on the (white) viewer's receptivity and attunement to certain pairings of charged affects and

intensities, a sociocultural receptivity that's unavoidably—and seemingly enduringly—racist; to put it simply, the film has its cake and eats it too). In this Spectacle space finally, we see the “local and heterogeneous world beyond” with its constitutive contradictions “continue[] to exist but with fading resources, a phantom from an anterior world... neutralized only to be reconstituted within nonplace in a multilayered compromise formation, a utopian realm of both/and in the midst of neither/nor”—exteriority within interiority, interiority within exteriority (Morse 105-106).

4. Complex: Public + Private (S1/S2): We can first start here with LAX which is publicly owned by the City of Los Angeles, and at the time, was headquarters to private companies like Continental and Western Airlines. Then we have Alcatraz and Fort Point, both publicly owned and managed by the National Park Service, yet both drop sites for private networks of corporate/criminal money laundering. Which brings us to Multiplex, a private corporation, the front for the organized gangsterism of the “Outfit,” presumably a public company by virtue of the executive chatter about shareholders and the like. This collateral talk also tells us that Brewster’s Condo/House is not in fact a private home, but a real estate asset owned by Multiplex, a corporation operating in the public world of interstate commerce as evidenced by the wall art affixed to the stone-clad lobby of the Multiplex front office: a bronze/copper leafed applique of an oak, its branches labelled with the names of the corporation’s regional offices (Chicago, New York, New Orleans, and so on). Another Multiplex asset: their lease of a room at the Huntley Hotel—a private right held by a public-facing business to a private dwelling located in the public place of business of a private company. Observe here the amphibiousness of these terms, public and private, the semantic pliancy that allows their tendential pushing toward whatever property-sense, whatever weighting of the private/public dualism I want them to bear;



that is to say, “private” and “public” mean almost anything and everything in the world of *Point Blank*. We can call this bad faith argumentation or analytical imprecision, but I think it’s more productive to view these conceptual oscillations as vibrating points of stress in the semantic binding of the film, evidence of the political unconscious working in overdrive to tie up this fraying ideological mesh, a mesh now inadequate to suspend the post-Fordist mutations of this core bourgeois contradiction. In other words, rather than using the square to register moments of ideological closure, deploy it instead to locate gaps, tears, or areas of tensile weakness in the film’s interstitial semantic binding.<sup>47</sup>

Yet, at the same time, if viewed as a kind of mimetic “impression of reality,” this seeming socially-symbolic inadequacy can perhaps better be viewed as a fairly faithful capture of the break down between the public and private, between government and corporate, or rather, the postmodern laying bare of their essential structural interrelation.<sup>48</sup> In short, if taken as realist,

<sup>47</sup> Relatedly, of allegory, Jameson writes: “The value-paradoxes of allegory—indeed of postmodernism itself—are then here endlessly replayed, where structural failure is a new kind of success in its own right, and what is worst about such art-works may also often be better than what is best about them” (*GP* 22). He makes a similar observation re art’s “cognitive and constructional function[s]”: “art’s function is to produce contradictions, and to make them visible. The formulation of Lévi-Strauss, that of imaginary solutions to real contradictions—or closer to home ‘real toads in imaginary gardens’ (Marianne Moore)—is satisfactory to the degree to which we grasp such ‘solutions’ as ways in which the contradiction in question is deployed and offered for examination in all its discord or dissonance” (Jameson, *VD* 531).

<sup>48</sup> Given our discussion of American car culture, we can offer as an example of such deep state partnership what Robert Goodman calls “asphalt’s magic circle,” which Henri Lefebvre paraphrases as follows: “In the United States the federal government collects a certain percentage on petrol sales, so generating vast sums of money for urban and inter-urban highway construction. The building of highways benefits both the oil companies and the automobile manufacturers: every additional mile of highway translates into increased car sales, which in turn increase petrol consumption, hence also tax revenues, and so on...It is almost as though automobiles and motorways occupied the entirety of space. Such are the workings of a ‘logic’-- i.e. a strategy...The production of space is carried out with the state’s intervention, and the state naturally acts in accordance with the aims of capital, yet this production seems to answer solely to the rational requirements of communication between the various parts of society, as to those of a growth consistent with the interests of all ‘users’. What actually happens is that a vicious circle

the film merely makes visible—fitfully—capitalism’s capture of all aspects of life, be they private or public, reducing the pair to little more than free-floating designations arbitrarily, residually, assigned to certain times and places and activities, conferring thereon the rapidly fading patina of everyday ritual.<sup>49</sup> If that’s the case, if we’re in a state of full subsumption, if the totality *is* capital, then we can no longer maintain the fiction that isolated things and individual substances exist standing apart therefrom—existence precedes essence, but existence now is a network of property relations, of contracts: the manner, mode, and method of capital’s processual motion, the (seeming) elemental motility of the money/commodity form. Fred Moten observes that traditionally:

[c]ontractual relation implies that there are lives, that there are parties, individuated natural or corporate persons, i.e., that there is individuation, and it is that implication which the law of contract simultaneously assumes and enforces...If individuation is the regulation of social life, then the law of contract is one of its most essential formal mechanisms. Contractual relation is a polite way of naming what Orlando Patterson calls “the game of honor,” and what is implied in that naming is not only the irreducible fact of power in “social relation” but also

is set in train which for all its circularity is an invasive force serving dominant economic interests” (374-75).

<sup>49</sup> We have then “ultimate referent” of Jameson’s rendition of “capitalist realism”: “the effects that result from the power of commerce and then capitalism proper—which is to say, sheer number as such, number now shorn and divested of its own magical heterogeneities and reduced to equivalencies—to seize upon a landscape and flatten it out, reorganize it into a grid of identical parcels, and expose it to the dynamic of a market that now reorganizes space in terms of an identical value. The development of capitalism then distributes that value most unevenly indeed, until at length, in its postmodern moment, sheer speculation, as something like the triumph of spirit over matter, the liberation of the form of value from any of its former concrete or earthly content, now reigns supreme and devastates the very cities and countrysides it created in the process of its own earlier development. But all such later forms of abstract violence and homogeneity derive from the initial parcellization, which translates the money form and the logic of commodity production for a market back on to space itself” (*ST* 25). And not only space, but life itself: “What happens on the level of meanings, however, is that the immense dedifferentiation [and abstraction] of the traditional levels [of society] which has seemed to characterize so much else in contemporary society and culture and its theories...it becomes impossible to say whether we are here dealing with the specifically political, or with the cultural or with the social, or with the economic—not to forget the sexual, the historical, the moral, and so on” (Jameson, *GP* 25-26).

individuation as relation's condition of possibility. The law of contract regulates social life precisely by positing it as the domain of social lives, which is understood as an arena of competing solo performances... What Patterson calls social support is simply antisocial sociality, nothing but a platform upon which individuation can be staged (255).

But what if everything is “platform,” everything is contract, everything is capital? Where then is the off-stage, the auditorium upon which the “platform” dialectically depends, the co-constitutive ‘ground’ against which and before the individual ‘figure’ ‘performs,’ is “staged”? Does it even exist? Can we map it? With Moten's analysis in mind, let's take another circuit around the square, mapping the film's character system, to find not so much provisional solutions to this now fraying dualism—i.e. means to stitch up, ideologically clothe/close this bare contractual personhood—but rather semic indices of not only its unraveling, but the new formal and stylistic perforations, the tearing of textual points de capiton, left with the seeming societal disposal of its organizing contradictions (public/private).

1. Complex: Public + Private (S1/S2): It makes sense to start here given our discussion of capitalism's contractual ontology. Under its law, with ‘natural’ personhood comes corporate, so it would seem only fair, at least in the fiction of *Point Blank*, to add Multiplex to our mappable character system, and we can classify it as a complex term by way of its private (shareholder) ownership, protected and upheld by public law (Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad Co. (1886) is the paradigmatic case). And as discussed, in America at least, the public and private are inextricably intertwined—that is to say, all private property, whether private home or automobile, is always in part state property, in that the very right to ownership depends on exceptional state violence. (“The power to tax is the power to destroy”). Thus, the right to one's property will always be contingent on governmental sufferance, a sufferance that we should know by now is beholden, invariably, to capital. So we're not pushing this semantic bounds of

this seem too far when grouping *Fairfax* therein—an inclusion permitted, in my view, by the liminal Cop/Crook/Exec modulations that throughout the film vibrate the connotational aura of the character: oscillations, which from a more narratological perspective, suggest him as a kind of actantial utility player, but better recommend him as an emblematic ‘Establishment,’ proto-‘Deep State’ figure, a chimeric fusion of public and private corruption and power.

2. **Implication: Public + Exteriority (S1/S3):** Without much effort, here we can add the public, exterior face of *Multiplex*: its Board, as well two of its members—*Brewster* and *Carter*—who, in the diegesis of the film, at least as dictated by the propulsive, narrative-shaping force of *Walker*, are never allowed a private moment (as demonstrated by *Walker*’s violent interruption of *Brewster*’s weekend retreat).

3. **Implication: Private + Interiority (S2/S4):** Again, this one—for good or ill, mostly ill—requires the least amount of interpretive exertion: given the female’s tautological equation with the home under the film’s heteronormative logic, the private life and its interiority consign the film’s women—*Chris* and *Lynne*—to domesticity, the marriage plot, and the film’s few brushings, frottages really, with melodrama, but a melodrama, notably, without temporality, neither ‘too late’ nor too soon, but a ‘right now’ that may as well be before, after, or never to *Walker*—a “just-in-time” flexibility deployed more for the audience’s benefit than for anything approximating an internal life for our lead, whose always bored, always brief sentimental phase-shifts, invariably pass, dissipate before the fiscal drive propelling his path of destruction. (That is to say, *Point Blank* is a classic “incoherent text” (Wood), a reactionary and progressive flux both in form and content; so, though *Walker* may at times show a more than sexual attraction to *Chris*, there’s always something ‘odd’ about the presentation of his affection, that seems to split interpretation along multiple conflicting lines. For instance, the several scenes where *Walker*

wakes a sleeping Chris—always coupled with a brief cut back to Lynne’s corpse (death by pill)—may suggest a fear she shared a similar fate, a concern indicative of a more than fleeting attachment. Yet, even so, one can as easily read the scenes more practically as Walker hustling her out of bed to acquire more information, or prepare for Brewster’s arrival. At the same time, the film is replete with Roeg-esque flash cuts to past moments, mimetic matchings (this is like this), that may serve no more purpose than registering formal and semantic patterns, surcharging, juicing up more *proairetic* moments with a kind of mindless, depthless reveling in New Wave stylistics (an element of the film we will explore in greater depth below). Or, if one wants to take it to a more moldy, humanistic register, we can argue that Walker is “dead-inside,” he can no longer truly love, his inert, emotionless affect (present in all the love scenes) suggests he’s simply going through the motions, pumping information out of Chris, using *coitus* as a lever, treating women as sex objects, as interchangeable, as replaceable, substituting the live Chris for the dead Lynne without qualm or care—a callousness aided and abetted by the montage, with its swapping of Chris for Lynne, Lynne for Chris, miming Walker’s frequent and apparent confusing of the two. (Though presented as just one, likely inadequate, interpretation among many, this notion of deadness and replaceability does have some play as we will see shortly). In short, there’s always a troubling undercurrent to these forthrightly focus-tested melodramatic scenes, a destabilizing latency agitating these almost half-hearted, backward-looking exertions of residually reflexive studio-storytelling).

4. Neutral: Exteriority + Interiority (S3/S4): The designation of the *seme* itself seems a good place to start, because “neutral,” implies detachment, dispassion, a kind of static emotive inertia, a lifelessness at one with the dead—like *Stegman* and *Reese*—or at least without subjectivity, without desire, an *exteriority* without *interiority*, or more properly, an *interiority* on the surface,

that's all surface, all *exteriority*, all drive. And given our analysis's pinning of everything to the late capitalist turn thus far, it's no great surprise that Lacan is the go-to on questions of the mid-century American psyche, what it looks like, and how it functions in the post-public, post-private, postmodern world. Joan Copjec, in the course of offering some useful comments on noir, one of *Point Blank*'s genealogical genre predecessors, helpfully paraphrases him for us, helpfully translates Lacan's discourse on the contemporary "choice between sense and being, or...in the dialect of psychoanalysis between desire and drive":

Lacan has argued that this shift describes a general historical transition whose process we are still witnessing: the old modern order of desire, ruled over by an Oedipal father, has begun to be replaced by a new order of the drive, in which we no longer have recourse to the protections against *jouissance* that the Oedipal father once offered. These protections have been eroded by our society's fetishization of being, that is, of *jouissance*. Which is to say we have ceased being a society that attempts to preserve the individual right to *jouissance* to become a society that commands *jouissance* as a "civic" duty. Civic is, strictly speaking, an inappropriate adjective in this context, since these obscene importunings of contemporary society entail the destruction of the *civitas* itself, of increasingly larger portions of our public space. We no longer attempt to safeguard the empty "private" space that counting produced as a residue, but to dwell within this space exclusively. The ambition of film noir seems to have been monitory: it sought to warn us that this fetishization of private *jouissance* would have mortal consequences for society, would result in a "rise of racism," in ever smaller factions of people proclaiming their duty bound devotion to their own special brand of enjoyment, unless we attempted to reintroduce some notion of community, of sutured totality to which we could partially, performatively belong. Thus, of all the admonitory ploys in the noir arsenal, surely the most characteristic was its insistence that from the moment the choice of private enjoyment over community is made, one's privacy ceases to be something one supposes as veiled from prying eyes (so that...no one can be sure that one even has a private life) and becomes instead something one visibly endures like an unending, discomfiting rain. In film noir privacy establishes itself as the rule, not as a clandestine exception. This changes the very character of privacy and, indeed, of "society" in general—which begins with the introduction of this new mode of being to shatter into incommensurable fragments (Copjec 182-83) (Citations omitted).

But what's motivating this "fragmentation," this disappearance of depth (models), this collapse of *interiority* into *exteriority*? As demonstrated by our quadrilateral tour of *Point Blank*'s spatial

systems, Copjec's public/private (con)fusion, merger, and mutation is certainly manifest in the film, and our protagonist, Walker, is most definitely a creature of drive—a ceaseless appetite no better displayed than by Walker's unrelenting pursuit for restitution. But restitution for what in particular? Is he after revenge? Reprisal for his betrayal? Retribution for his cuckolding? Or is it something else? The attentive reader has likely guessed by now that what Walker is after is his end of the heist money, his \$93,000. Diegetically, this revelation truly and finally comes with Walker's shakedown of Brewster, with a dialogue interchange that goes something like this:

- Brewster:** Walker. You're a very bad man, very destructive. Why do you run around doing things like this? What do you want?
- Walker:** I want my money. I want my 93 grand.
- Brewster:** Ninety-three thousand dollars? You threaten a financial structure like this for \$93,000? Walker, I don't believe you. What do you really want?
- Walker:** I really want my money. I want my money;

In this interrogation of Walker's monomaniacal quest for his money, a pursuit that's persisted despite the second-act deaths of his adulterous wife and traitorous friend, a motivation comes in view going beyond mere revenge, almost as if realizing some supra-human force, something that's above (or below) the traditional narrative standbys of folk psychology and epiphanic realization—the screenwriter's crutches of motivation, maturation, and McKee. It comes, the revelation, via a quick montage of past scenes, a burst of images flashing-back to Walker's stone-faced violence and brutality, cut, repetitiously, with what we now know now to be immanently bald-faced statements of truth—"I want my money. I want my 93 grand"; "I really want my money. I want my money"—a truth that retroactively recodes these past moments, of which the viewer, in their metonymic march through the filmic text, could have read—and likely did—as the expressions of a desiring consciousness, one with emotional depths, with a past bearing an interiority that if injured demands the passionate compensations and restitutions that no longer 'truthfully' make 'sense' in the acephalic drives of the capitalist axiomatic. This

recoding thereby explains Walker's unstintingly flat affect, his seeming indifference to the death of his wife (suicide by pain killer), Reese (plummet from penthouse balcony), and the bulk of the Multiplex Board (guns, guns, guns), an indifference whose emotive range evokes that of a corpse—witness: his granite-faced stoicism before the 30-second-plus barrage of blows upon his slab-like form rained by Chris; his bored perplexity before her disgust at his apparent disinterest in revenge (“You let him fall? You should’ve killed him! You owed it to yourself”); and her more truthful than she can know dismissal: “You died at Alcatraz alright.”<sup>50</sup>

This necrotic resonance usefully brings us back to the drive. Within the film, Walker operates under its lethal aegis from the very beginning; in a sense, he dies at the film's opening and persists, Walker, as the walking dead—an impression reinforced not only by the frequent “I thought you were dead[s]” hurled at him, but his seeming ability to appear and disappear at will, fade into the shadows, materialize into a scene, between shots, without the contrivance of ambulation or some other form of diegetic locomotion. (An example: Stegman's voyeuristic ogling of the Monrovia blonde's “visual pleasures” and the unfixing of its shot/reverse shot transfixion visualized by the apparitional appearance—almost as if conjured between shots—of Walker, his obstructing, obtruding figure frustrating the scopic return volley—tied to Stegman's POV—to the blonde.). So, doing what we said we wouldn't do herein—ask already-answered leading questions (hint: the answer relates to capitalism), unveil condescending expository revelations (ditto)—we must ask again what's behind Walker's drive? The elements in play: drive, the pursuit of money, societal “fragmentation,” Copjec's subsidence of public intro

<sup>50</sup> A telling comment from Manny Farber: “The fact that Academy Award Lee Marvin is in the film hardly matters. His blocklike snoutlike nose makes itself felt, also the silvery snakelike hair that doesn't look like hair, and the implacable, large-lipped mouth. Particular parts of his body and face are used like notes in a recurring musical score. His body stays stiff, vertical, very healthy and sunburned, but he is not actually in the movie” (“Cartooned” 591).



private, interiority into exteriority. And since we've invoked them above, we can also add Morse's Frankfurt School-inspired meditations on the contemporary "phantasmagoria of the interior"—the mall/car/TV triad's centrifugal "isolation and spatial segmentation of individuals and families into private worlds...mediated into larger and larger entities by new forms of communication" (117)—along with Moten's contractual matrix of societal being—"[m]aybe the way it works is that the law of contract, in its death drive/regulatory function, assumes the individuation that it then seeks to instantiate"... "in other words, contract law, in its innovative continuances and refinements, which bring online the abstract free individual in all his (un)holiness, is the death drive whereby law attempts to return to the inorganic, to a moment before sociolegality" (255, 257). And so, anticlimactically: what would seem to organize all these pieces, all these thinkers, all these theoretical orbitings of the drive is capital and its accumulative impulse. Drive in other words, Žižek's specifically,

inheres to capitalism at a more fundamental, *systemic*, level: drive is that which propels the whole capitalist machinery, it is the impersonal compulsion to engage in the endless circular movement of expanded self-reproduction. We enter the mode of drive the moment the circulation of money as capital becomes "an end in itself, for the expansion of value takes place only within this constantly renewed movement. The circulation of capital has therefore no limits." (Here we should bear in mind Lacan's well-known distinction between the aim and the goal of drive: while the goal is the object around which drive circulates, its (true) aim is the endless continuation of this circulation as such.) Thus the capitalist drive belongs to no definite individual—rather, it is that those individuals who act as direct "agents" of capital (capitalists themselves, top managers) have to display it (61).

And we can argue—we will in fact—that Walker is one of its "direct agents," as follows: we can observe first that the locale of Walker's "death," the site of the heist, is a decommissioned Alcatraz, public land that now serves, in the world of the film, as a point of exchange for a global money laundering operation, as if cinematically prefiguring the invisible networks of financial capital, mapping their illicit circulation of ill-gotten gains through tax shelters, freeports, and

shell corporations (like Multiplex). And we can observe next that the film ends in another such site (Fort Point), with Walker, his \$93,000.00 in view, disappearing into the shadows, seeming to abandon his money—the ostensible object of his pursuit—to the last living executive of Multiplex (Yost). What motivates, what ‘drives’ this inexplicable decision? More straightforwardly, we can observe first that Yost is accompanied by a contract killer, a killer whom Walker had just seen execute Baxter (another executive) on the orders of Yost, a man with a demonstrated propensity for dispatching his partners and associates, a man who up until that very moment posed as federal agent, feeding Walker information, guiding his destructive path up the corporate ladder: so, for Walker, caution might be in order. (More banally, I suppose one might also argue Walker leaves the scene, having learned the ‘futility of revenge,’ the danger of “cycles of violence” or some such humanistic, mythopoetic insipidity—all fodder for our 2<sup>nd</sup> allegorical level, which we’ll get to shortly; I do want to put a pin on this notion of circularity however as it integrally relates to drive, and will prove important for our discussion of the fourth allegorical level and Deleuze (finally)). But I would like to suggest instead that Walker’s decision is completely attributable—go figure!—to the axiomatic drive of capital: Walker, in other words, has been dead the entire film, that what we’ve seen is nothing but reanimated, undead drive, an agent for the circulation of capital, which “as it were, turns failure into triumph—in it, the very failure to reach its goal, the repetition of this failure, the endless circulation around the object, generates a satisfaction of its own. As Lacan put it, the true aim of a drive is not to reach its goal, but to circulate endlessly around it” (Žižek 63-64). Viewed from this perspective, we can treat Walker’s whole trajectory as one long arc of “violence and cruelty” guided not by the profit motive or greed, but by capital’s desire to perpetuate itself, to expand its limits, to act ‘impulsively,’ setting itself upon languishing capital (Walker’s \$93,000.00,

frivolously wasted by Reese on disposable consumer goods, depreciable luxury assets), malfeasant executives (violators of fiduciary duties, feathering their own nests at the expense of shareholder value), and incompetent, inefficient employees, in a great effort of ferocious rationalization, as if some tutelary deity of private equity, liberating the free-flow of capital, rendering the money *res nullia* for Yost—a faithful adherent—to ‘claim’ and put back in circulation, thereby reigniting capital’s perpetual expansion.

This interpretation usefully explains some of the more baffling stylistic motifs and images of the film: first, we can take the perplexingly-placed opening shot, which upon first viewing, proves utterly incomprehensible; it’s a close-up of Walker that occurs later in the film, a close-up following the backstage brawl at the Spectacle-space of the nightclub. As the film’s first shot, this prolepsistic flash to repetitious, dehistoricized images links the spectral (digitized?) Walker with the Spectacle, which we know from Debord is none other than Capital by another name (“The spectacle is capital accumulated to the point that it becomes images” (11)). Likewise, the echoing audio-bridge of Walker’s metronomic trod down the corridor of the nondescript non-space of the airport, as well the assaultive, looping chords of the electric bass guitar that fills the club, mimes the repetitious, spiraling pulsations of the axiomatic, the vectorial rhythms of the capitalistic drive (as we shall see). Finally, there are the various New Wave flourishes like the Resnais-esque montages of chronologically disjoined action and the Antonioni-inspired dead-times in which Walker rests inert, listless, as if some mothballed block of machinery, both of which might fairly be cast as Studio-system dabbling in the time-images of European art cinema, but as well might be typed, respectively, as attempts to represent the axiomatic drive’s fragmentation of time into “perpetual presents” and the “exhausted” remnant left in its wake, a remnant abandoned with the arrival of money or the promise thereof, an arrival

that reliably reactivates Walker, kick-starting the impulse, propelling it—and Walker, its blank, acephalic, point—to the next space, the next site ripe for violent realization, for a “spatial fix” (Harvey), thereby fulfilling its very “drive” to profligate “weird movement[s]” and “*break the All of continuity in which we [and the film] are embedded*” (Žižek 63, 62).

With this final bit of precedential theoretic work, we can now pause and take stock of what this extended interval of textual analysis has netted us both methodologically and analytically: (1) a mapping of *Point Blank*'s character system; (2) the production, working through, and putting in play of the film's textual givens (many of which will prove helpful in our more explicit discussions of genre and form to come); (3) raw material for the formulation of the remaining allegorical levels, of which, the attentive reader should at this point well be able to formulate the third—the modal shift of dominant (Western) subjectivity from desire to drive; (4) a demonstration of the levels parallax interaction, how they both surcharge and disrupt each other, radiating out connotational fields of meaning—see, e.g. Walker as drive, as blank subjectivity, as capital's deterritorializing pulse, which makes public space private and private public and both value, both Spectacle—that harmonize, reverberate, and cacophonize each other at various moments of the text, generating increasing intensities of allegorical resonance/dissonance, of differential relation; (5) a realization that as presented herein, the levels can be articulated—and often are unintentionally—with the ‘discovery’ of the complex/neutral/implicative terms. In other words, if one narrativizes (i.e. looks for a minimal, A to B movement of thought, change, history) the sociocultural conflicts and contradictions (private v public, exteriority v interiority) the film symbolically ‘deals with’—all the while stipulating the film's various semiotic “solutions” (or fracture points, as we saw) function as sequentializing arcs of sorts—then one can arrive without much trouble at the allegorical levels.

And (6) given this relation between the combined semes and the levels, it's also possible—at least with our mapping of *Point Blank*—to match up the latter with the former via what Jameson calls a kind of semiotic or “generic consonance,”<sup>51</sup> or one could say more simply the particular elements (S1, S2, S3, or S4) one needs to build the allegorical narratives. For instance, it's clear that level 3 (“A3”; desire to drive; the subjective/individual level) goes with the neutral term (S2/S3; exteriority/interiority) while level 4 (“A4”; monopoly to financial capital; the collective level) can be placed at Implication #1 (S1/S3; public/exteriority) given the global scope and

<sup>51</sup>I'm borrowing this term from Jameson only to allow this digression on Jameson's sole demonstration of *his* idea of the interrelation between the square and the levels outside of his discussion of their shared treatments of “spatiality” and “difference” (AI 330-332); I'll let him speak for himself first: “Still, these two diagrams seem to have little in common and to have been constructed for utterly different purposes, which a visual combination will hardly suffice to reconcile. I think we must here adjust the Greimas square to a different kind of negation, which I will call aesthetic or generic. What one term denies of the other—whether absolutely or in some very specifically antagonistic and antithetical way—is not its logical meaning, but rather its generic consonance. We may evoke that fine and strong word *incommensurability* here, for it is rather the unrelatability of wholly different dimensions to one another that is affirmed. But this very unrelatability itself creates a new kind of coherence, one that I have tried to express with the slogan, “Difference relates!”... This is then the sense in which the four levels are sharply enough distinguished from one another in quality for their interpretive and allegorical reunion and superposition to form a complex stamp or surcharge, a world-historical statement” (AI 332-33). Jameson then goes on to construct a Greimas square apportioning the multiple allegorical readings of the Bible into the 8 different semes, arranging them via their “aesthetic” or “generic” similarity and dissimilarity, “[n]egation thus... designat[ing] what distinguishes the levels from one another qualitatively rather than logically, what causes a shift in the reading process and foregrounds an attention to the multiply generic rather than to the content and its coherence” (AI 333). While this is an interesting exercise to be sure, in my view, I don't think it tells us as much about the inner workings of a text as the “System” presented herein, especially since the latter makes an effort to not only show interpretation in action—how it spatiotemporally and semantically makes symbolic meaning with a text—but forces it in the first place, demanding the very analytical material required for its hermeneutic operations. Jameson's approach on the other hand only becomes workable—and questionably helpful—once one has done the work of interpretation and, from the least charitable perspective, seems to be little more than an aesthetic operation, a way to visually arrange one's work that could as well be achieved with a list or Jameson's own 4-tier framework.

collective scale of the mode/relations of production, and as for the first level (“A1”; the textual level), it can be located loosely at the remaining Implication (S2/S4; private/interiority) owing to its narrativization of one man’s personal quest for revenge. (But I’m not terribly committed to this ‘mapping’ as it doesn’t do much for us interpretively; it seems more a box-checking completionism, a neat party trick one can do for the academic coterie). And with that, by process of elimination, we can match the 2<sup>nd</sup> level and the complex term, a pairing we can justify by hauling out from methodological storage the interpretive approach that, in truth, tends to be the gateway drug for most in the cinema studies...an approach that despite the critical puritanism, and epistemic abstinence that characterizes so much contemporary film theory, nevertheless compels in the latter’s most ardent practitioners a sort of jubilant recidivism, a relapse into the seemingly undying bourgeois humanisms, the great-manisms made anathema by the theorists comprising Bordwell’s (goofily) acronymized SLAB (Saussure, Lacan, Althusser, Barthes)...perhaps the paradigmatic, if not foundational film ‘Theory’...*la politique des auteurs*.

We’ve done an impressive job (in my view) bracketing away this always-alluring allegorical approach, but it’s now to time to let it loose, allow it to make its repressed return, but in a constrained, channeled manifestation that’ll give us a bridge to our discussion of Deleuze. To start, let’s let Jonathan Rosenbaum give us the vintage auteurist account via his short, expertly-crafted entry—an example of the reified criticism discussed above; normal criticism in other words—in Richard Roud’s *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary* (1980) on the director of *Point Blank*, John Boorman:

All John Boorman’s films to date have sparks of interest; none is an unqualified success—although his second feature [*Point Blank*] comes close. After the loose and lightweight satire of advertising in *Catch Us If You Can* (U.S.: *Having a Wild Weekend*, 1965), *Point Blank* (1967) more firmly establishes the visual and thematic preoccupations which have informed Boorman’s subsequent work: a sharp graphic eye for Pop Art compositions and iconography which registers most

effectively in wide screen ratios, and a mythology that pits some version of Natural Man against the absurdist version of Natural Man against the absurdist and anonymous abstractions of modern technology. Godard's original title for *Alphaville*, *Tarzan versus IBM*, would serve equally well for either *Point Blank* or *Zardoz* (1974). If the social relationships charted by Boorman tend to suggest a form of updated Rousseau, the coolness of his visual approach usually leavens the romanticism with a certain distancing and saving irony; he is least successful—as in *Hell in the Pacific* (1968)—when he appears to be least in control of this irony. At the top of the mysterious pyramids of power confronting the heroes of *Point Blank* and *Zardoz* stands an ineffectual clown, retrospectively making each fight to the summit a sort of fool's progress. Equally absurdist are the countless black-comic 'puns' equating people and objects: Lee Marvin's violence against a car, telephone and empty bed in *Point Blank*; Marcello Mastroianni's voyeuristic use of a telescope in *Leo the Last* (1970); the grotesque figure of the stranded corpse in the river in *Deliverance* (1972); the floating head and the Vortex's 'hall of mirrors' in *Zardoz*.<sup>52</sup>

While apposite many of its observations may be, the passage's fidelity to a somewhat creaky Sarrisism severely limits its interpretive interaction with the film. Without recapitulating the well-vented critiques of the auteur theory (collaborative medium, studio and genre systems, capital, ideology and culture dominants, etc.), we can state that at least for our purposes its utility becomes questionable when it imposes a kind of expressive causality<sup>53</sup> to the semantic contents and formal construction of a given film; in the passage above, we can see this in Rosenbaum's

<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum, "Jonathan Boorman." *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary*, edited by Richard Roud, vol. 1, Viking Press, 1980, p. 135.

<sup>53</sup> Jameson points up the allegorical form of expressive causality: "The fullest form of what Althusser calls 'expressive causality' ... will thus prove to be a vast interpretive allegory in which a sequence of historical events or texts and artifacts is rewritten in terms of some deeper, underlying, and more 'fundamental' narrative, of a hidden master narrative which is the allegorical key or figural content of the first sequence of empirical materials" (*PU* 28). Per Jameson, the "auteur hypothesis" provides such "fundamental narrative" or "interpretive allegory": "The concept of the auteur is a heuristic concept or methodological fiction which proposes that we treat collective texts (in spite of their commercial contamination) as though they were the work of single 'artist,' and also that we surcharge generic difference with stylistic unity, and treat the multiple productions of a single signature as though those were so many distinct expressions of a single style, a single set of thematic preoccupations, and a single 'world' (in the loose phenomenological sense in which this term passed over into a modernizing literary criticism)" (*SV* 199).

retroactive recoding of *Point Blank* via the subsequent *Zardoz* and *Hell in the Pacific* into a feature length burlesque of *2001*'s primal, Stone Age overture (with a little Jung thrown in the mix perhaps). While there's some insight to be gleaned from such an auteurist approach, enough to possibly merit its full placement in the second level, we can state for sure that at least for *Point Blank* such an allegorical master interpretation or "trans-textual object"—assembled from a dog's breakfast of biographical facts and cherry-picked semantic and stylistic semi-regularities across a body of subsequent films—will not be terribly helpful (Jameson, *SS* 47-48). Yet, we would be remiss not to acknowledge that auteurism can take on a kind of mechanically causative effectivity, almost algorithmically reproducing itself not only in a discursive, Bakhtinian fashion (see the *Zelig*-like proliferation of the Scorsese-machine within the last several decades of film: Paul Thomas Anderson, Quentin Tarantino, Spike Lee, etc.), but at the level of production where films are created/marketed/promoted as 'critical' reworkings of *Goodfellas* (*Hustlers*), 'intertextual explorations' of the New Hollywood (*Joker*), or even more simply as an "Alfred Hitchcock film," that is, as a "phenomenological positing of some central subject or consciousness embodying itself in a distinctive 'world' and 'style,'" that in *loa*-like fashion can inhabit and animate filmic texts (Jameson, *SS* 47).

But Boorman as auteur is only the first element of our allegorical 'narrative'; we'll first need to recruit a 'mythic' (Barthes) sub-thematic that undergirds and gives us the constitutive Other, the bad guy or 'aggressor' (in the Proppian sense) that enables such a semantic movement in the first place. To find it, we'll need to introduce Jameson's notion of the *ideologeme*, which he describes as a "minimal unit" of "class discourse":

The advantage of this formulation lies in its capacity to mediate between conceptions of ideology as abstract opinion, class value, and the like, and [its] narrative materials [like film, for instance]. The ideologeme is an amphibious formation, whose essential structural characteristic may be described as its



possibility to manifest itself either as a pseudoidea—a conceptual or belief system, an abstract value, an opinion or prejudice—as a protonarrative, a kind of ultimate class fantasy about the "collective characters" which are the classes in opposition. This duality means that the basic requirement for the full description of the ideologeme is already given in advance: as a construct it must be susceptible to both a conceptual description and a narrative manifestation all at once (*PU* 87).

With this, we can lay out the associative, almost simpleminded logic that gets us to our 2<sup>nd</sup> level.

Thusly: first, we have the concept of “Boorman the auteur,” with all of its connotations of originality, freedom, and independence; independence then depends on dependence both logically and conceptually which then in turn begs the question independence from what? The popular journalism of the day—and today as well—would tell you it’s the studio system, Hollywood, the ‘Genius [or Idiocy] of the System.’ But Boorman made the film within this Institutional Mode of Representation (Birch) and it, despite the out-of-step tread of its stylistic flourishes, still largely maintains this classic storytelling carriage, willingly or not. Therefore, given this, what the film is ‘about’ then is Boorman’s struggle against the Studio System, an allegorical narrative aided and abetted by a sort of critical magical thinking—likely informed by other style-forward post-Brit invasion auteurs like Lester, Losey, and Anderson (Boorman’s prior film was a concert film a la *Hard Day’s Night* about The Dave Clark Five)—that at the time gestured furiously toward the film’s art film pastiches, as well larger industry promotion of star-directors (to combat television; respond to teleological advances in the medium; inaugurate the New Hollywood with *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967; Arthur Penn); etc. and so on) (Hoyle 27-41).<sup>54</sup> So, in tropological terms, the film ‘vehiculates’ this 2<sup>nd</sup> allegorical tenor via

<sup>54</sup> Whether Boorman triumphs in this critical narrative—i.e. Boorman counts as an auteur and not a mere *metteur en scène*—depends on the whim of the critic. Nevertheless, nearly all accounts of this film point up the film’s clashing ‘aesthetic’ approaches: Peter Cowie: “[Boorman] in effect remodeled the gangster film with *Point Blank*, even more profoundly than Arthur Penn did with *Bonnie and Clyde*. . . . He retained the essential brutality of the genre, while devising a complex chronology worthy of *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*”; Chris Petit compares it to *Alphaville* with its

Walker/Boorman's bellwether struggle against The Organization/Hollywood. This David v Goliath frame then allows us to transpose ideologically fables of American "rugged individualism," of the little guy versus the Crowd, the last of the independents in the face of Big Government's triumph over the Jeffersonian yeoman utopia, where 'Destiny' has 'Manifested' and it's none other than your fellow Americans, packed cheek to jowl, clotting the postwar (sub)urban landscape—Organization men (Whyte) for an "organized" (Bickle) society. In the cinematic forms of the day, this unwitting *ressentiment* against (your fellow) "one-dimensional men" (Marcuse) either manifested as a romantic boomer fatalism, as repressively desublimated *beau gestes* (cinemas of "failure" (Elsaesser) and "loneliness" (Kolker) (i.e. *Easy Rider*)), or via a recobbled bootstrapping Algerism that reshod the little guy with small business shoe-leather, giving him the (self)proprietary moxy to face down the stultifying corporate hegemony—rags-to-riches fables, purportedly valuing the freedom, independence, and the Protestant Ethic of the 'American Dream,' a dream whose ostensible means (riches) invariably become its libidinally oneiric ends, the fantasy of control, power, and privilege upon which capital ideologically depends. In short, what's in view is the usual pudding-headed concoction of American common sense: equal parts narcissism, false consciousness, and the profit motive—a schizophrenic posturing toward a libertarian (re)public of individual privacy and private businessmen, each individually vying in Hegelian/Sartrean fashion for public (sphere) recognition (or publicization) of his publicly-backed, gunpoint privatization and privation of the public: his becoming a capital

utilization of the "the gangster/thriller framework to explore the increasing depersonalization of living in a mechanized urban world"; Rosenbaum's own "Tarzan versus IMB"; and finally, David Thompson characterization of it as: "an Antonioni film reassessed by Sam Fuller" (Hoyle 28, 32, 35).

‘C’ capitalist in other words (and with that, the complex term (S1/S2; public/private)).<sup>55</sup> So a reading in this very *diegesis*-clinging allegorical vein—minus the more explicitly Frankfurtian critique—might go something like this: “stealing a march on the *Godfather* films’ coupling of crime with capital,<sup>56</sup> *Point Blank* renders underworld overworld, fully incorporating crime within the post-Fordist socioeconomic milieu, with its ecosystem of multinationals and small businesses, elite executives and “organizational men,” wage-slaves and independent contractors. Therein, Walker works as a sole proprietor of sorts, doing gig-work on a flexible basis, just-in-time heists for corporate syndicates like the film’s “Organization,” a criminal conglomerate replete with a home office (decorated entirely in shades of green, all the colors of the currency rainbow), secretarial staff, shareholders, and a Board—in short, an association of white-collar gangsters stripped entirely of ethnic/familial markers per the dictates of the (deterritorializing) bottom line, or, as one exec puts it: ‘Profit is the only principle.’” (And there we have it).

Without its extra-cinematic inflection (Boorman v. Hollywood; Level 2), this narrowly, and somewhat cloddish, economic reading might go no further than allegorical level 1, an ideologemic over-text walling off passage to the other levels. What lubricates connotative

<sup>55</sup> Jameson locates a similar allegorical narrative sixteen years later in *Videodrome*, albeit one with a more globalist tinge: “Is *Videodrome* not, for example, the story of the classical struggle between a small businessman and entrepreneur and a great faceless corporation...So we have here a fairly explicit economic reading of the text as a narrative about business and competition; and it is worth measuring the distance between this overt and explicit commercial content (which most viewers will however take as a secondary pretext for the rest) and that deepest allegorical impulse of all, which insists on grasping this feature as an articulated nightmare vision of how we as individuals feel within the new multinational world system. It is as though the narrowly economic had to be thematized and thereby marginalized, in order for the deeper socio-economic allegory to pass the censorship” (*GP* 26-27).

<sup>56</sup> See Fredric Jameson’s “Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture,” as well as Chapter 1 of Carl Freedman’s *Versions of Hollywood Crime Cinema*, both of which are cited below.

penetration however, especially in postmodern narrative texts, is Jameson's notion of the *analogon*, a key topographic feature of cognitive mapping:

in the present world-system, a media term is always present to function as an *analogon* or material interpretant for this or that more directly representational social model...In the film I myself studied (*Dog Day Afternoon*, 1975, directed by Sidney Lumet), the possibility of a class figuration in the content (the sinking of the older middle-class strata into proletarianization or wage work, the emergence of a sham "new class" in the government bureaucracy) is projected out onto the world system on the one hand, and on the other articulated by the form of the star system proper, which interposes itself and is read as the interpretant of the content. The doctrine of the Sartrean *analogon* permitted a theorization of this indirection and its mechanisms: and showed how even representation itself needs a substitute or a tenant-lieu, a placeholder, and as it were a small-scale model of a radically different and more formal type for its completion. What now seems clear is that this kind of triangulation is historically specific and has its deeper relationship with the structural dilemmas posed by postmodernism as such (*PM* 416-17) (Citations omitted).

More simply, the *analogon* is a "structural nexus in our reading or viewing experience, in our operations of decoding or aesthetic reception, which can then do double duty and stand as the substitute and the representative within the aesthetic object of a phenomenon on the outside which cannot in the very nature of things be 'rendered' directly" (Jameson, *SV* 53). And so, as Jameson reminds us re *Dog Day's* Pacino/Durning/Broderick triad, this textual figuration allows transversal passage across the levels, operating as "a bodily reminder inserted into a conceptual scheme," a "shadow of the Real," of materiality in the reified work,

like the beat that attracts our attention within the regularities of musical or poetic meter: it concentrates attention and fixes the eye on one of the levels, even where it is not itself in play in the centrally signifying or allegorical one. The *analogon* in this sense, however, is certainly not limited to allegory: it is the hook that seizes one in a striking metaphor, Barthes' *punctum*, a bodily or gestural reminiscence, of which we are not necessarily aware but which catches our attention like a forgotten muscle. If not itself a rhetorical figure or *gestus*, it is surely a crucial mechanism in the operation of the tropes, a well-nigh physical sensation, a half-forgotten habit, noticed only out of the corner of our eye, which nonetheless grounds the conceptual flight of fancy and certifies the reality of the disembodied intellectual operation, that "tethers the balloon of the mind," as Yeats puts it. What makes the concept of the *analogon* particularly useful for the analysis of allegory is the way in which it

separates centrality from meaning in the fourfold system. It disrupts what seems to be a static and hierarchical arrangement, and alerts us to the possibility that, particularly in the modern era, where allegory has ceased to be an official genre in its own right, the levels may be rearranged and shuffled, their relations with one another altered, the inner generation of one out of the other restructured and *umfunktioniert*: so it is that the literal level may turn out to lie otherwise than in the text itself, or that the allegorical key may itself turn out to be allegorized and promoted to a different status altogether (AI 41-42).

Walker/Marvin—as avatar of revenge, as independent contractor, as auteur stand-in, as pure drive, as Schumpeterian force—is such an *analogon*, a figurative vessel for the levels’ diagrammatic traversal. First, more generally, there’s always something excessive about film acting, a surplus, “spilling-over quality,” as Manny Farber puts it, “[a] suggestive material[ity] that circles the edge of a role: quirks of physiognomy, private thoughts of the actor about himself, misalliances where the body isn’t delineating the role, but is running on a tangent to it” (“Cartooned” 588). As a sort of extra-semantic matter-image, this sensual, bodily ‘third meaning,’ with its iconic/indexical figuration, then sends off or relays the viewer to its filmic carrier’s career, his IMDB page, his star status, with its mutating biographical valences, each of which overlays and affectively and semantically inflects the import and meaning of Walker’s actions throughout the film. Thus, at any given moment, Walker/Marvin’s figurative violence might bring to mind—to varying degrees of discordance—a heavy’s hurling of boiling coffee into Gloria Graham’s face (*Big Heat*), the casual, character actor brutality of his hard-sell bid for the counterculturally glib youth market (*The Dirty Dozen*), his Oscar-minted, leading-man triumph over the strictures of studio typecasting (*Cat Ballou*), and/or his Melville-inspired, clipped taciturnity that abbreviates the *echt*-genre material that dominated the remainder of his career (*Prime Cut*, *Emperor of the North*, *Canicule*). (And lest we forget: his button man in Siegel’s *the Killers*, taking orders from one of late capital’s OG hype men, Ronald Reagan). What we see then is a figure in transition, a figure synecdochally at-one with shifts in Hollywood

production—itself, at the time, undergoing its own neoliberal adjustments with the package-unit system and the late sixties multinational, horizontalizing fragmentation and logistical flexibilization of Studio assets—a figure that, unlike the static-relationality of Jameson’s three-tiered, pseudo-class structured star system, works more diachronically, capturing aesthetically transformational developments in the cinematic mode of production. Such a move—from Marvin to the “Movies” *tout court*—then allows us to reflect on how the film itself analogously, *analogon*-ously, likewise figures these shifts, figures them not only semantically, in the content, as we saw with our laps round the semiotic square, but does so via its form, form not so much in a particular/local camera movement or cut, but rather form in terms of genre, in terms of historic shifts in certain persistently recurrent syntactical structures (Altman), “quasi-material object(s) of perception off which we [can better] read, as from a material interpretant, the narrative language of another set of events: using a nightmare we understand to conjure up a nightmare we cannot imagine”: namely, neoliberal capital (Jameson, *GP* 43).<sup>57</sup> And with that overheated line, we can end this chapter and cue the next.

<sup>57</sup> We should note this line comes from Jameson’s reading of Oliver Stone’s *Salvador* (1986) and describes James Wood’s journalist’s fevered, traumatic dreams as an *analogon* for the CIA-backed fascist coup of El Salvador—“the subjective narrative” figuring the “objective or social narrative” (*GP* 43).

### CHAPTER THREE: MODES AND SYSTEMS

But how does one formally treat a film like *Point Blank*? What generic “frame” does it fit? If “genre criticism does not properly involve classification or typology but rather that very different thing, a reconstruction of the *conditions of possibility* of a given work or formal practice,” what does one do when that frame shatters, gets knocked off kilter, or at the least, loses the interpretive transparency that rendered visible its semantically systemic affects and effects in the first place (Jameson, *SI* 101)? In this vein, to build on our reading of level 2, our allegorical narrative of the European auteur’s single combat against the Studio System, we can add a subplot of sorts detailing surface manifestations of the genre system’s disruption, a story of “reflexivity, of auto-referentiality and the return of artistic production onto its own processes and techniques” (Jameson, *SI* 84).<sup>58</sup> With this approach (glimpsed to a degree throughout this work), we would begin listing all the stylistically unusual aspects of the film: how they depart from the IMR; how they’re the guerilla strikes of a European art film modernism on genre film storytelling structures; or even how they’re harbingers of the New Hollywood—aesthetic forerunners to be subsumed by the aesthetic pluralism of postmodern cultural logics (because ‘before’ for whom else does the avant-garde ‘advance’ but the culture industry?). But we’re still within industry narrative territory here, not really penetrating how the film’s stylistic system, its formal totality, link ups with our fourth level.

<sup>58</sup> Jameson observes that in postmodernity this “self-specification or ‘self-conscious’ identification of the medium or media of the text [often] becomes its allegorical level, so that its production becomes its own allegorical meaning...Such ‘allegories’ destroy the older traditional structure of the fourfold system and substitute an interplay of lateralities or transversalities, for which the act of self-designation often seems a merely secondary or incidental afterthought or side product, but one which can, however, be an essential clue for the allegorist” (*AI* 28-29).

To get there, we might want to do something along the lines of the *Cahiers* editorial board with their *Young Mr. Lincoln* piece, go scene by scene, shot by shot, cut by cut, sifting allegorical meaning through protracted close-reading to inductively, empirically, arrive at some loose approximation of the post-War genre dispositif; but for a film like *Point Blank*, I doubt that would be terribly rewarding given its penchant for what Manny Farber calls “The Gimp”<sup>59</sup>:

The Gimp is the technique, in effect, of enhancing the ordinary with a different dimension, sensational and yet seemingly credible. Camera set-ups, bits of business, lines (“They don’t make faces like that anymore”) are contrived into saying too much. Every moment of a movie is provided with comment about American society...[T]he amount of illogical and implausible material is increased, to such a point that movies which try to be semi-documentary actually seem stranger than the Tarzan-Dracula-King Kong fantasy (“The Gimp” 390).

A “[d]evice that naturally forces the spectator to sociological speculation,” the Gimp works as an “expressionistic shotgun[] peppering the brain...with millions of equally important yet completely unrelated pellets of message—messages about the human personality and its relations to politics, anthropology, furniture, success, Mom, etc., etc. The trick consists in taking things that don’t belong together, charging them up with hidden meanings, and then uniting them in an uneasy juxtaposition that is bound to shock the spectator into a lubricated state of mind where he is forced to think seriously about the phony implications of what he is seeing” (Farber, “The

<sup>59</sup>Farber: “Somebody once told me, no doubt inaccurately, that lady golfers in the Victorian era used a certain gimmick that went by the name of ‘Gimp.’ It was a cord running from hem of skirt to waistband; when preparing to hit the ball, you flicked it with your little finger and up came the hem. Thus suddenly, for a brief instant, it revealed Kro-Flite, high-button shoes, and greensward, but left everything else carefully concealed behind yards of eyeleted cambric. Something like this device has now been developed in Hollywood. Whenever the modern film-maker feels that his movie has taken too conventional a direction and is neglecting ‘art,’ he need only jerk the Gimp-string, and—behold!—curious and exotic but ‘psychic’ images are flashed before the audience, peppering things up at the crucial moment, making you think such thoughts as ‘The hero has a mother complex,’ or ‘He slapped that girl out of ambivalent rage at his father image which he says he carries around in his stomach,’ or ‘He chomps angrily on unlit cigarettes to show he comes from a Puritan environment and has a will of iron’” (“The Gimp” 388).



Gimp” 389, 392). This style “reeking with recondite significance” forces interpretation in a highly particular, some would say (me) allegorical way:

It has always been obvious that the movie camera not only reflects reality but interprets it. This fact used to imply the deepening and enrichment of an intelligible structure of plot and character. What is happening now is the complete disappearance of reality in the fog of interpretation: the underground “meaning” of every shot displaces the actual content, and the movie-goer is confronted with a whole crowd of undefined symbolic “meanings” floating entirely free. Shove the camera up against the pimple on an actor’s face, and you automatically produce an image of immense importance: it will mean something—no matter if you don’t know exactly what, and no matter if you have made it impossible to tell your story. Just as comedians now manufacture their humor out of immense card indexes of gags, so movie directors dip into their mental gag file of disconnected bits of social significance, amateur psychiatry, and visual shock effects.

•   •   •

For better or worse, we seem stuck with an absurdly controlled, highly mannered, over-ambitious creation that feeds on everything in modern art and swallows it so that what you see is not actually on the screen but is partly in your own mind, partly on the screen, and partly behind it. You have to read these pictures in a completely different way from the one you’ve been accustomed to. They are no longer literally stories or motion pictures, but a succession of static hieroglyphs in which overtones of meaning have replaced, in interest as well as in intent, the old concern with narrative, character, and action for their own sakes. These films must be seen, not literally, but as X-rays of the pluralistic modern mind (Farber, “The Gimp” 391, 392, 397).

Descriptively, Farber is on point here, but rather than attributing these developments to conscious directorial design or bad faith auteurist actors like Kazan, Kramer, and Wilder, I think it would be more helpful to view them as manifestations of certain symptomatic changes affecting the entirety of filmmaking at the time, changes we may as well group under the heading of postmodernity.<sup>60</sup> In other words, when “movies” like *Point Blank* “br[eak] up into a

<sup>60</sup> We can view “gimps” as the postmodern degeneration of “visual emblems,” Jameson’s term for aesthetic modernism’s “homeopathic strategy” contra reification, that is to say, a strategy of pitting it “against itself[—]reproducing a social process in its specialized formal languages by way of self-defense” (SV 207). Pointedly, he observes of these ‘emblems’—like Hitchcock’s crane shots, D.A. Miller catnip—that the “menace [of reification] cannot be [aesthetically]

succession of fragments, each one popping with aggressive technique and loud, biased slanting of the materials of actual life,” it likely will not be terribly productive to locate individual meanings for each of the shots, as each of them does its own bit of stylistic ‘business’ that could be taken in any number of interpretive directions (Farber, “The Gimp” 395). Instead, the more useful strategy here would seem to be finding certain patterns and recurrent formal features by which we can group the bulk of the filmic elements, locate certain overlapping logics crisscrossing the fragments comprising the filmic totality. The language here should be telling: the “organizing unities” which I’m after here are the various modes of production—our level 4—as they manifest in terms of form, the idea that within signifying systems are sedimented certain formal features, features which act as historical—or allegorical—bearers of extra-filmic content in and of themselves. Through a kind of formalist mimesis then, this “content” or “ideology of the form,” as Jameson calls it, should manifest the “overlay and structural coexistence of several modes of production all at once”—including the residual and emergent (Williams)—via the text’s various representational structures, and such a structural multiplicity, as Jameson has it, is never more visible than in moments of transition—of “cultural revolution,” of change in the mode of production—wherein genre systems are disrupted and “texts emerge in a space in which we may expect them to be crisscrossed and intersected by a variety of impulses from contradictory modes of cultural production at once” (*PU* 95).

With regard to film, Jameson muses on such ‘generic disruptions’ in his “Existence of Italy” (*SV* 155-177), his impressively comprehensive Marxian transcoding of the various film histories and interpretive methods circa 1992 (so before ‘post-theory,’ existential

fulfilled without destroying the very structure of the modernist work,” shattering its whole into Farber’s gimps, into the “discontinuous structure of the variety show” (Jameson, *SV* 207, 211).

phenomenology, and affect theory gained currency in the 90s). Therein, on the question of aesthetics and narrative formations, he borrows the notion from his *Political Unconscious* that genre systems isomorphically track modes of production and—given the latter’s uneven development, “the radical discontinuity of modes of production and of their cultural expressions”—compose a generic background of sedimented “structural form[s]” and discourses in differential coexistence with “contemporary materials and generic systems” (*PU* 95-102, 130, 141). As such, the narrative text—as another “synchronic unity of structurally contradictory or heterogeneous elements, generic patterns and discourses”—will “detect[.]...a host of distinct generic messages [:] some of them objectified survivals from older modes of cultural production, some anticipatory, but all together projecting a formal conjuncture through which the ‘conjuncture’ of coexisting modes of production at a given historical moment can be detected and allegorically articulated” (Jameson, *PU* 99, 141).<sup>61</sup> In short, Jameson conceives of the text as a “field of force in which the dynamics of sign systems of several distinct modes of production,” as a textual palimpsest overwritten with aesthetic scrawlings of the mode(s) of production (*PU* 98). In cinema studies, taxonomizing these “ideologies of the form”—Jameson’s

<sup>61</sup> From a methodological perspective, “[t]he strategic value of generic concepts for Marxism clearly lies in the mediatory function of the notion of a genre, which allows the coordination of immanent formal analysis of the individual text with the twin diachronic perspective of the history of forms and the evolution of social life” (Jameson, *PU* 92). Jameson puts it more plainly here: “The question of genre, for example, always one of the privileged mediations between the formal and the historical, is relatively neglected here...it being understood that genre criticism does not properly involve classification or typology but rather that very different thing, a reconstruction of the conditions of possibility of a given work or formal practice. It is therefore less a question of ‘deciding’ what genre Hitchcock’s films belong in, than rather of reconstructing the generic traditions, constraints, and raw materials, out of which alone, at a specific moment of their historical evolution, that unique and ‘non-generic’ thing called a Hitchcock film was able to emerge. Genre functions to prevent embarrassing or unwanted questions from being asked (it is thus like a ‘frame’ with respect to the reader’s or spectator’s interpretive temptations)” (Jameson, *SI* 101).

term for “formal processes as sedimented content in their own right, as carrying ideological messages of their own, distinct from the ostensible or manifest content of the works”—has largely been left to *Screen* theory (Mulvey, Baudry, Metz, Silverman, et al.) with its *ideologiekritik* of the IMR’s various interpellative structures (gaze theory, suture, apparatus, and so on) (*PU* 99). But herein, I would instead like to look to conflicting genre systems as indices of “cultural revolution,” as a “permutational scheme or combinatoire” of symbolic forms against which “deviation of the individual text from [dominant formal and narrative] structure[s] directs our attention to those determinate changes in the historical situation” (Jameson, *PU* 146). (“Totality emerges into view only when two modes of production exist side by side during a process of transition; there is something about the co-presence of differing temporalities, of conflicting value-systems and ways of life that generates that fundamental sense of historicity which is a prerequisite to any totalising insight” (Hartley 175)). This will allow us—hopefully—to begin to offer a structural account for level four (collectives, modes of production, capital) in much the same fashion as the suture/psychoanalytic theories of the seventies did for level three (but with due recognition of the limitations of such models—this isn’t science after all).

We can start with some initial observations from Jameson regarding our cinematic dominant, Hollywood’s genre system and its “socio-aesthetic construction” of “middle-class...reality” (*SV* 174, 175). He observes that most formulations of said system—even those “underscore[ing] the ideological implications of categories of narrative continuity and verisimilitude as such, including that of closure and the ‘happy end’”—not only neglect to account for its underlying “meaning,” but “the necessary multiplicity or structural diversity of [its] essential unity, of addressing the question, not merely why this style can only manifest itself by way of multiple genres, but how and why the contents of its ‘constellations’ change”

(Jameson, *SV* 175). Pivoting off these criticisms, Jameson then proposes that the “synchronic genre system” has something to do with mapping the social totality and that its inherent “multiplicity” registers an attempt to ideologically cohere capital’s autonomization of reality:

the reality socially constructed by Hollywood “realism” is a map whose coordinates are parceled out among the specific genres, to whose distinct registers are then assigned its various dimensions or specialized segments. The “world” is then not what is represented in the romantic comedy or in film noir: but it is what is somehow governed by all of them together—the musical, the gangster cycles, “screwball comedy,” melodrama, that “populist” genre sometimes called social realism, the Western, romance, and the noir (but the enumeration must be closely and empirically linked to a specific historical moment)—and governed also, something more difficult to think, by their implicit generic relationships to each other. The unreal—the not-said, the repressed—is then what falls outside of the system as a whole and finds no place in it (or else—in this moment of a 20th-century mass-cultural “realism”—finds its place in the accompanying “high art” or modernism of the period) (*SV* 175-176).

After World War II, Jameson observes a “mutation” in this system’s “aesthetics,” a simultaneous “transcendence of genre” via sound-film, auteur modernism and its “inversion”—“omnibus texts” that “paraded the various genres before us as in a variety show or music hall” (*SV* 176). (“There the *auteur* broke through genre to *style* by practicing all the different genres in turn—here the systemic genre text combines them all within a single production, dismissing its ‘auteur’...into anonymity” (Jameson, *SV* 176-77)). To this taxonomy, Jameson adds also the postmodern, intertextual iterations of these forms: the “metageneric” auteur film, in which a “pregiven structure of inherited genres” is used self-reflexively, intertextually “as a pretext for production which is no longer personal or stylistic in the sense of the older modernism” (Altman, Roeg, Polanski) and Jameson’s own “nostalgia film,” a “degraded version” of the former, which “express[es]...the same historical impulse in a non-reflexive form” but via pastiche: “confus[ing] content with form, set[ting] down to reinvent the style, not of an art language, but of a whole [‘historic’] period” (Bertolucci, Lucas, Kasdan) (*SV* 84-86)). And with that, Jameson

abandons his speculation on this topic, leaves it to the film specialists to track the “coordinates” of this generic “parceling,” and, as a parting shot, remarks in a footnote:

It is worth noting that the model of a genre system called for here is not exactly satisfied by the combinational scheme devised by Gilles Deleuze (in his remarkable two-volume *Cinéma*) for what we here call narrative realism, or what is elsewhere called classical film (it being understood that fantasy, dream sequences, filmic expressionism, and the like, are perfectly consistent with a dominant realistic paradigm). Deleuze grasps the national traditions contemporaneous with Hollywood as variations on a more general Leibnizian structure in which a monad links the particular—the image or shot, the present of the work—with its totality or world by way of a unique stylistic solution (*SV* 242 FN 37).

Before offering the expected *Cinema-tic riposte* to this claim—as required by the argumentative drift of this paper—I would like first to highlight two implicit—and integral—assumptions/conclusions in Jameson’s account: 1. That with the postmodern turn, filmic realism and modernism—two differentially related synchronic structures of form/genre comprising the mid-century filmic totality—collapsed into a single “image of thought” marked by a stylistic pluralism and interpretive relativism; and, 2. That narrative realism as a cinematic dominant allegorically mapped the social totality via synchronic distribution, constitutively apportioning distinct stylistic semantics (shot suites, lighting schemas, and so on) and content *qua* sociocultural content into the various genre forms. In my view, these hypotheses (tentatively offered, to be sure) short-circuit analysis—and even worse—impose shortsightedly a kind of critical astigmatism that blurs and obscures the depth analysis required of cognitive mapping. While there’s no way to ‘prove’ Jameson wrong here, I can at least offer my own anecdotal experience as a critic and observer of cinema to suggest these alternate premises in their stead: 1. That there was and always will be, at least formally, if not critically, a “commercial figurative cinema” and art/world/festival cinema in systemic, co-determinative interrelation—that is to say, one cannot very well exist without the other (Deleuze, *C2* 165). In other words, given the

nonsynchronous coexistence of narrative realism and filmic modernism in Jameson's account, why should we not expect a similar differential distribution of aesthetic totalities in today's contemporary cinema? (To paraphrase Justice Potter Stewart: I know an art film when I see it). Not to discount the brow-leveling effectivity of postmodern cultural logics in terms of reception and taste cultures, but it seems a dereliction of critical duty not to attempt to track how these two aesthetic formations have changed since mid-century, not only in terms of style, storytelling, genre, and so on, but in their cartographic responses to the mutations in the social totality. Moreover, this same received wisdom—that it's all postmodern now—rewrites many of the accounts *Cinema* duology into a clumsy, periodizing sequencing of movement to time-image, from “narrative realism” to (post)modern art film (like mine in the first Chapter(!)), when such a reformulation is by no means clearly borne out by Deleuze's texts as we will soon discover. (For now, see, e.g. his classification of Welles, Dreyer, and the like as time-image filmmakers). Instead, why not view the “images” as differentially related dominant and emergent cinematic modes of production? Doing so, will allow us to begin our cartographic task, our mapping of cinema's mapping of 20th century social totalities, and discover what the cinematic dominant and emergent—today's commercial and art film—might actually look like in terms of form following the postmodern turn. Moreover, as we will see, such a model of systemic interrelation will allow us to theorize—if only heuristically—how these two systems interacted with each other across the break, how they mapped in their filmmaking formations the fitful interface between capital's Fordist dominant and financial emergent. In short, this differential frame will help us account for—or at the least, describe—the moment of epistemic change through the language of film form.

2. While usefully centering notions of closure and totality, Jameson's genre system mapping of the Hollywood dominant offers no critical path beyond more semantic/syntactic work within the individual genres. And even worse, with the system's collapse into meta-genre and pastiche (per Jameson's account), this conceptualization then offers no coherent—or even discernible—means to track how commercial film does its cartographic work. (This is perhaps why Jameson seeks recourse to various stripes of auteur film (Kubrick, Cronenberg, Pakula/Willis, Lynch, Coppola, Spielberg) for his post-Hitchcock American objects). The problem with this model—in my view—lies in its key strength: structuralist periodization. It's a synchronic model in other words that depends on the diacritical separation of its filmic elements into compartmentalized genre categories—that is to say, it spatializes. As such, when this positional segregation breaks down, when there's no longer Jameson's systemic genre *langue* organizing the various aesthetic bundles of formations, qualities, and objects that constitute, say, *noir* and the like, then one cannot very well do the work of mapping an individual film's narrative *parole* (a *parole* that may, as we'll see, be as systemic as its synchronic genre typing). We need then to find an organizing structure or logic that's shared across the IMR's synchronic genre distribution, one that systemically survives this arrangement's reorganization, yet at the same time somehow tracks the global totality in spite of its postmodern transformation. (We need another words a diachronic model that tracks capital's "deep structure, that explains the way in which motion is actually instantiated within a capitalist mode of production" (Harvey 13)). Some scattered speculations across Jameson's film writings will get us there (and to Deleuze, as we will see):

A. In some rare ruminations on medium-specificity, Jameson ponders the distinctions between film and photography: to the latter, he attributes a Barthesian temporality—memory's



*punctum*, subjectivity's stilled third meanings, “‘realities of the ‘existential’...time and death, the very death of the image in question”—that the former naturally “draw[s] back into the formal process, so that [it] [does] not have to be added in as content and as message, in that slippage from history to finitude (from the political to the existential-metaphysical) which we have observed at work in the interpretation of still photography.” Meanwhile, “the very movement of film, therefore, makes the existential component of still photography concrete and experiential, thus liberating the contents of the image itself for a more historical and social intuition of Being. Renoir’s characters and Stroheim’s—or Renoir’s and Stroheim’s actors—are not the long deceased human beings of the photography albums of the same period: they are active components of a set of social relations which may have vanished, but which comes before us with the lively energy of radical difference, rather than with the melancholy of mortality. The deconcealment of Being in the filmic image is therefore historical rather than existential” (Jameson, *SV* 192-193).<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> We should also note here that it’s this ‘very’ historicizing ‘movement’ that Jameson believes complicates—or objectivizes—conventional theorizations of cinematic point of view, which in his view err too heavily on subjective identification; he writes: “[i]n film, however, the visual nature of the medium alters the fundamental data of the problem...Now, where it is a matter of looking at the body or features of an actor, something like a whole psychology would seem to displace the ethical framework of the more literary version of the problem, and raise (equally false, but different) issues of facial expression, ‘mirror stages,’ intersubjectivity, and the like. What is suspicious about both ethical and psychological perspectives is their apparent willingness, ‘in the last analysis,’ to ground their analyses on some conception of human nature; hence the usefulness of the new Lacanian permutation on all of this, the concept of ‘suture, in which ‘identification’ is less the effect of some *a priori* harmony between my own ego and some external representation of the identity or personality of another, than rather my mesmerization by the empty place of ‘interpellation,’ for instance, by the returning gaze, from the open screen, of the shot/reverse shot as that empty place becomes ambiguously associated both with myself as spectator and with the other character/interlocutor. At that point, however, this more rhythmic and formal conception of ‘identification’ as process, by radically dissolving the link to any given protagonist or star, tends to liquidate the problem altogether rather than to solve it” (*SV* 112).

B. If film, through photographic movement, can frustrate a purely “anthropomorphic point of view”—‘redeem’ through its fusion of “machinery and perception” ‘physical reality’—then we can treat the genre system and its narrative realism as a “form of demiurgic praxis”: as mappers and makers of “images of thought” that allegorically grasp through figural movement materiality and corporeality, object and subject (Jameson, *SV* 120, 162, 163, 185).

C. To go with this soft Bazinianism (Jameson, *SV* 191-97), in his essay on Hitchcock’s *North by Northwest*, again we find this emphasis on cinematic movement as a means to resolve—or map—our subject/object poles; therein, Jameson suggests that tracking the serialized suite of spaces and movements in a film (using the square) might offer a better way to mediate between the conflicting interpretive frames of auteur and genre, each of which, as we’ve seen, respectively manifest our subject and object axes (*SS* 47-50).<sup>63</sup>

D. Given this repeated motif of movement’s mediation of subject/object,<sup>64</sup> what to make then of Jameson’s account of Deleuze’s “crisis in the action image”:

Deleuze, however, stages his version under the sign of an organic unity—that of an action—which is in the process of dispersal. This is at one and the same time a unity of the situation and a unity of the agent of action in that situation. (The rather Greek identification of that action with movement as such seems to me to have been forced upon him by the nature of the medium in question, namely film.) Thus, he proposes on the one hand a dispersal of agency, a body gradually fragmenting into its various

<sup>63</sup> “This story—of the adventures of space, if you like —will not turn out to be terribly different in its form from the psychological or character-development story already caricatured, in which the [Cary] Grant figure evolves towards love and marriage. But it offers a better, nonsubjective way of telling that story (doing away with consciousness, 'character', and the anthropomorphic), and thus may not really be 'the same' any longer in the important senses” (Jameson, *SS* 50-51).

<sup>64</sup> Wambacq on Deleuze’s moving image ontology: “The image, which Bergson defines as something that acts and reacts on other images in every one of its elementary parts, is central to [Deleuze]’s argument. An image is defined by the movements it undergoes and exerts: it is nothing more than movement. Since things and consciousness [object and subject] are both images for Bergson, the dualism between them is dissolved. And since moving images are the instruments of cinema, Deleuze argues that this overcoming of dualism is cinematographic” (125-26) (Citations omitted). I’d only add here that Jameson does not argue for some kind of synthesis of the poles, rather a dialectical suspension thereof.

senses, and thereby enabling sight to emerge as a dominant; the agent losing the sense of a unified action, which weakens into an aimless displacement in space (the *balade*) and becoming a *flâneur*, whose former purpose is gradually undermined by the awareness of the mediation of clichés and stereotypes and the relativity of narrative. Meanwhile, the situation itself, in which agent, action, and setting have hitherto formed a kind of symbiotic unity, disintegrates into an anonymous spatial background, an anyplace, in a loss of any of the intentions or projects that would have entitled it to have been grasped as a scene or articulated field for actions, let alone a move in that larger intelligible totality we call history, or even in the personal strategies of a biographical unity, a career, a life, a romance, an adventure, or whatever other “minor epic forms” (Lukács) are still available in postmodern life. For Deleuze, it is through the dispersal of all these features that one suddenly glimpses that unnamable and incomprehensible existential reality we call time (*AI* 319).

As we did in the first chapter, Jameson does here: posits “situation” as the object pole, “action” as subject pole” (or “agent of action”), and cinematic movement as the medium-specific unifier of both, a unifier which gives way to the time-image, our (post)modern “image of thought,” and its “dispersal” of “actions” and “situations.” But we’ve seemed to have reached another dead-end, returned to where we began only with Deleuze and movement in tow this time. Yet, if the task was to find a more enduring systemic dimension to cinema’s synchronic mapping of capital, why not start with movement, especially since, as David Harvey has it, “capital...is not a machine or a sum of money, but value in motion” (Harvey 143)? For as Deleuze envisions it, the movement-image is not just a synchronic structure that encompasses all “[t]he great genres” of the “action-image”—i.e., the narrative realism of classic Hollywood—but rather a process of image-formation that moves sequentially from perception to affection to action in a temporal development that can systemically repeat itself at any duration of the filmic image, whether shot, scene, or entire film (from the molecular to the molar in other words)(*CI* 211). And if, as Jameson puts it, the “peculiar object of [cinematic] realism (and its situation of production) is...the historically specific capitalist mode of production,” then we may expect its “material structure...to reflect (and to express), in its very formal structure, a particular moment or stage of

capital and of the latter's intensified, yet dialectically original, reification of social relations and processes" (SV 101, 163)). 'We may expect' then, in other words, that in cinema, not only capital's modal stages, but its internal, metabolic 'moments' manifest in the sequential instants of movement's totality, isomorphically instantiate themselves in aesthetic form, within the temporal procession of the narrative work, shaping and directing the internal succession of images that secures aesthetic closure, with its hermeneutic circling of the stylistic parts into a meaningful, mappable whole. We may expect then, in short, production, exchange, and realization to be cinematically registered in movement's signalitic progression. And with that formulation, we've arrived at a tentative solution to our cartographic task: to wit, locate a cinematic structure or process that might aesthetically track capital across its own 'late' mutations; for as we shall see, the commercial/movement cinema not only survives the postmodern turn but does so with changes to its image system, changes that respond to the financial modulations of capital's classic commodity production structure. (So, just as we have commercial and art cinema in co-constitutive, changing relation, we should expect classic commodity production to be in some kind of differential, symbiotic relation with financial capital. This would seem in keeping with Jameson's notion of multiple modes and stages of production in mutable, overlapping relation; and even if we're in a financial dominant, we can expect—if only ideologically—that there's still some need to maintain classic commodity exchange (capital's seed form) and its interpellating myths and fetishes of circulation and exchange. This durability might explain why we still seem to have a commercial dominant in cinema (the movement image being *its* seed form), though one no doubt transformed by an art film emergent (or residual?)).

Thankfully, Deleuze had done some of this work already, that is to say, taken his two “images of thought”—the movement image and the time image—and transcoded them allegorically into cinematic transfigurations of the mode of production, a transcoding Deleuze does so here with this remarkable passage from *Cinema 2* (perhaps the inspiration for this paper):

The cinema as art itself lives in a direct relation with a permanent plot [complot], an international conspiracy which conditions it from within, as the most intimate and most indispensable enemy. This conspiracy is that of money; what defines industrial art is not mechanical reproduction but the internalized relation with money. The only rejoinder to the harsh law of cinema—a minute of image which costs a day of collective work—is Fellini's: ‘When there is no more money left, the film will be finished.’ Money is the obverse of all the images that the cinema shows and sets in place, so that films about money are already, if implicitly, films within the film or about the film. This is the true ‘state of things’: it is not in a goal of cinema as Wenders says, but rather, as he shows, in a constitutive relation between the film in process of being made and money as the totality of the film. Wenders, in *The State of Things*, shows the deserted, run-down hotel, and the film crew, each of whom returns to his solitude, victim of a plot whose key is elsewhere; and this key is revealed in the second half of the film as the other side, the mobile home of the producer on the run who is going to get himself murdered, causing the death of the film-maker, in such a way as to make plain that there is not, and there never will be, equivalence or equality in the mutual camera-money exchange. It is in this sense that it is money: in Marx's two formulations, C-M-C is that of equivalence, but M-C-M is that of impossible equivalence or tricked, dissymmetrical exchange. Godard presented *Passion* as posing precisely this problem of exchange. And if Wenders, as we saw in the case of his first films, treated the camera as the general equivalent of all movement of translation, he discovers in *The State of Things* the impossibility of a camera-time equivalence, time being money or the circulation of money. L'Herbier had said it all, in an astonishing and mocking lecture: space and time becoming more and more expensive in the modern world, art had to make itself international industrial art, that is, cinema, in order to buy space and time as ‘imaginary warrants of human capital!’ This was not the explicit theme of the masterpiece *Money* [Stroheim], but it was its implicit theme (and in a film of the same title [*L'Argent*], inspired by Tolstoy, Bresson shows that money, because it is of the order of time, makes impossible any reparation for evil done, any equivalence or just retribution, except of course through grace). In short, the cinema confronts its most internal presupposition, money, and the movement-image makes way for the time-image in one and the same operation. What the film within the film expresses is this infernal circuit between the image and money, this inflation which time puts into the exchange, this ‘overwhelming rise’. The film is movement, but the film within the film is money, is time. The crystal-image thus receives the principle which is its foundation: endlessly relaunching exchange which is dissymmetrical, unequal and without equivalence, giving image for money, giving

time for images, converting time, the transparent side, and money, the opaque side, like a spinning top on its end. And the film will be finished when there is no more money left... (C2 77-78).

For the remainder of this paper, I'd like to stick with this notion—cinema as, or at least homologous with, the mode of production—but rather than treat the cinematic image from the perspectives of ontology (photography as general equivalent, as money), medium-specificity, phenomenology, and/or cinema's substantive interrelation with economic, 'base' level structures,<sup>65</sup> I'd like to instead approach it as a matter of movement and time, specifically the movement and time image, and analyze how these allegorical structures both register and dissimulate capitalism's fundamental motions and processes, its formal distributions of material and meaning, of vision and value, of sense and sensation. So, how then do they do this exactly? We can start with a quick review of both "images": in the movement-image, time is the measure of movement and nothing else; as such, it manifests (indirectly) empirical causality with its organic totalities and attendant "common sense" world views. In contrast, the time-image directly proliferates numerous structures and "representations" of time, one of which necessarily—per the passage above—includes Marx's abstract labor time, along with its primary "forms of appearance": money and the cinematographic image (as argued by Deleuze and the theorists mentioned in footnote 65 *supra*). From there, we can follow Deleuze's lead by pairing Marx's C-M-C alternation with the movement-image and his M-C-M cycle with the time-image. His riffing logic goes as follows: if per Marx time is the "socially-necessary" measure of labor

<sup>65</sup>For several notable examples, see Allan Sekula. "The Traffic in Photographs." *Art Journal*, vol. 41, no. 1, Spring, 1981, pp. 15-25; Vivian Sobchack. "The Scene of the Screen. Envisioning Photographic, Cinematic, and Electronic 'Presence.'" *Carnal Knowledge*, University of California Press, 2004, pp. 135-62; Jonathan Beller. *The Cinematic Mode of Production: Attention Economy and the Society of the Spectacle*. Dartmouth College Press, 2006; and, Steven Shaviro. *Post-Cinematic Affect*. Zero Books, 2010.

and time is money, then per Deleuze ‘pure’ time via the time-image—our postmodern (or financial) image of thought—and its chronosigns lay bare the operations of capital, show the “infernal circuit between the image and money,” its “endlessly relaunching,” dissymmetrical” and “unequal” exchange”—surplus meaning here miming surplus value. This move then allows us to logically recode the movement-image—which, if you’ll recall, is likewise comprised of chronosigns, of temporal materiality—as something that conceals this exploitative production of surplus through a simulated “equivalence,” screening the time-image’s “tricked” “exchange.” In other words, the movement-image functions like the market; it ‘circulates’ meaning by obscuring time’s multivalent operations (as the capitalist does surplus labor time), subordinating it to the one-to-one, meaning for meaning, transactional significations of social realist narrative, just as the C-M-C ‘movement’ of commodities between buyer and seller masks the M-C-M motion of money, of (labor) time. (If we wanted to indulge ‘critical theoretically,’ so to speak, we could also argue that with its balance sheet approach to narrative accounting (whether Proppian, Lévi-Straussian or what have you), the movement-image also performs two other types exchanges, both related to the IMR’s interpellative centering of the bourgeoisie liberal subject<sup>66</sup>: (1) ‘visual

<sup>66</sup> Bordwell paraphrases Burch’s take on Classic Hollywood’s cinematic mode of production: “According to Burch, the ideology that founded the IMR considers the individuated person to be at once prime mover and center of attention. The characters’ psychological depth, so prized by orthodox criticism, defines the narrative worlds, or ‘diegesis,’ they inhabit...In order for this world to become convincingly real, the IMR must make technique ‘invisible’ or ‘transparent’...Along with the conventions of Renaissance perspective, the editing codes serve to ‘center’ the viewer, creating the illusion of being an invisible, all-knowing witness to events. Yet the film’s space is always phenomenologically grounded in the spectator’s bodily perception: in obedience to continuity editing principle, the imaginary world of the narrative is oriented around the viewer[...][T]he IMR offered at once the illusion of reality and a visual experience organized according to the priorities of a specific ideology. Of all media, only film could completely and unobtrusively fulfill the bourgeois dream of replication” (*History* 96; at times quoting Burch). In short, the IMR’s “narrative worlds” conjure movement and its mappable poles of subject and object, of “action” and “situation.”

pleasure' for cash; and, (2) the various identificatory transactions hypothesized by Baudry, Metz, Mulvey, and the 'common sense' world-construction of Keeling (see FN 19). We should also add that these four latter types of (generally) equivalent exchanges both propagate and legitimate the formal equality and abstracting inequities promoted variously by Moten's contractual matrix—the market, money, and the commodity form—producing a kind of ideological surplus value). And, to give a preview of what's to come, we can also stipulate that America's cinematic dominant ("commercial configurations of sex and blood" (Deleuze, *C2* 157)) and its foregrounding of the action-image—with its pairing of situation (S) and action (A) into combinations of the former's 'collectives,' 'fundamental groups,' and 'milieus' and the latter's 'agents,' 'individuals,' and 'actors'—in some fashion maps the social totality, maps both subject and object poles.<sup>67</sup>

Given this allegorical interrelation, we can then argue the movement-image aesthetically replicates the general stages of commodity production via Deleuze's sensory-motor-schema ("SMS"). To do so, we first need to give a canned summation of the movement-image, its modeling per the SMS, and the crisis of the action image. Per Angelo Restivo's glossing of *Cinema I*, the SMS, for Deleuze, works as a formal, meaning making structure, a "machine for

<sup>67</sup> A mercilessly abbreviated summary of the action-image's dual forms: if action posits a world—or "image of thought"—conducive to agential realism, it necessarily presents "defined" acts and "actions" (A) taking place in "determinate" "milieus" or "situations" (S). The relation then between these actions (A) and situations (S) gives us our large (SAS) and small (ASA) forms. In the former, a situation (S) produces an action (A) which will produce a new situation (S') or not (S). Alternatively, in the small-form, an action (A) reveals a situation (S) which may (A') or may not (A) give rise to a transformed action. Deleuze pairs the large-form with the Western (Ford, Hawks), noir (Huston, Wilder), the "psycho-social film" (King Vidor, Kazan), and the historic film (Griffith, Cecil B. Demille) and the small-form, generally, with comedy (Keaton, Lubitsch, Chaplin, Langdon) and the detective film (the Chandler/Hammet adaptations of Hawks/Huston). For much more detail regarding the above, please review Chapters 9 and 10 of *Cinema I* (141-196).



the reproduction of motion” that allegorically models a positivist, neuropsychological formulation of “perception and response”—in which, one senses something, reacts to it internally, and then does something—thereby “binding character, action, and world...such that the open, the indeterminate, never emerges as an issue,” foreclosing both for a “closed totality” (89). Cinematically, the movement-image then formally replicates the SMS through the sequential progression of its primary sub-images: perception, affection, and action—the first and third doing signaletically what they say on the tin, while the second depicts directly presubjective affects, states, and intensities (Deleuze, *C1* 87-101). As Deleuze argues it, each movement image is comprised of each and all of the sub-images—it’s a “system” after all, a totality—but in cinematic practice, one tends to ‘dominate’ over the others.<sup>68</sup> For most cinema, the “dominant” tends to be the action-image, that which collapses the moments of perception and affection into one active and purposive movement, rendering the former the unseen means to the action-image’s ends; thus perception becomes targeted, goal-oriented, directed, while affection demolecularizes into molar formations of thought and emotion; in short, everything becomes (classical, organic) narration. (“Thus the movement-image gives rise to a sensory-motor whole which grounds narration in the image” (Deleuze, *C2* 32); “The sensory-motor link was thus the unity of movement and its interval, the specification of the movement-image or the action-image *par excellence*. There is no reason to talk of a narrative cinema which would correspond to this first moment, for narration results from the sensory-motor schema, and not the other way round”

<sup>68</sup>Deleuze: “A film is never made up of a single kind of image: thus we call the combination of the three varieties, montage. Montage (in one of its aspects) is the assemblage [agencement] of movement-images, hence the inter-assemblage of perception-images, affection-images and action-images. Nevertheless a film, at least in its most simple characteristics, always has one type of image which is dominant: one can speak of an active, perceptive or affective montage, depending on the predominant type” (*C1* 70).

(Deleuze, *C2* 272)). Bracketing the Deleuzian philosophical argot for a moment, we can state, perhaps reductively, that the action-image works as an allegorical descriptor for classic Hollywood, Burch's IMR, that factory-model verisimilitude which feeds the "bourgeois appetite for illusion" by offering "psychologically convincing representations" and constructing an autonomous fictional world, that together form "an intelligible narrative centering on character and promising self-sufficiency and closure" (Bordwell, *History* 95-96). Within this "closed" system, actions are effective, narrative follows "affirmative-consequential" lines, pursues an "implicit causality...which manages to transform spatial and temporal sequence into consequence, a continuum of cause and effect" that transforms "conflict, contradiction and contingency" into narrativized "order, linearity, and articulated energy"; in other words, therein, "[c]ontradictions [are] resolved and obstacles overcome by having them play[] out in dramatic-dynamic terms or by personal initiative: whatever the problem, one can do something about it" (Elsaesser 280-81).<sup>69</sup> So, with the late sixties 'crisis' in the American 'action-image,' the SMS's totality falters, situation (S) and action (A) split, action 'falls' into affect, giving way, for a time, to the conditions of possibility required for the opsigns and sonsigns needed for the time-image, that which "breaks the sensory-motor schema...where the seen is no longer extended into action" (Deleuze, *C2* Glossary, np). In practical terms, this "crisis" translates into the New Hollywood's tempered adoption of Bordwell and Staiger's "Art Cinema" "Mode of Film Practice"—in other words, a "looser more tenuous linkage of events than we find in classical film," actual locations, "'realistic' eroticism and genuine problems (e.g., contemporary 'alienation,' 'lack of

<sup>69</sup> Elsaesser's "affirmative-consequential" model might seem to conflict with his essay on family melodramas; rather, he views the two as alternate modes/strategies of narration deployed by the classic American cinema. See, Baron, Cynthia. "'Tales of Sound and Fury' Reconsidered: Melodrama as System of Punctuation." *Spectator*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1993, pp. 46–59.

communication’),” “psychologically ambivalent or confused characters,” “a drifting, episodic quality to the...film’s narrative,” and a “foreground[ing] [of] the author as a structure in the film system”: each together producing a cinema “concerned less with action than reaction...a cinema of psychological effects in search of their causes” (“Persistence” 373-74).<sup>70</sup> Stylistically then, we can expect a lot more of Farber’s “gimpering,” for, lacking traditional narrative action, the film needs something to attend to, to show, to render sensible, and what else, but itself is available, at hand, susceptible to display...what else but the camera and temporal materiality, of which the latter one must do something with, find some way to convey it socially, convey it symbolically, so that meaning can be made in this new open totality, this new image of thought. And thus, “invisible” style becomes visible, deploying “overt stylistic and technical devices—telephoto lenses, zooms, unmotivated pans, oblique camera set-ups, complex editing patterns of both image and sound—[along]” with the art film stand-by, the *plan-séquence*, the long take (Keathley 299), which for Deleuze is the device *par excellence* for generating affects and percepts: the raw materials of pure time and becoming, as well as capitalism’s harnessing thereof. Mark this tension; we will be returning to it in our discussion of the time-image and financial capital.

(Before going too deeply into our capital/SMS system, we would be remiss not to observe here how all of the above is Deleuze’s transcoding of Bergson; per Wambacq, Deleuze’s movement-image captures the abstract temporality of classic philosophy, which treats change as “transition from one position in space to another” in a model that “denies movement any creative character,”

<sup>70</sup> Bordwell and Staiger argue that these elements are expressive of “two principles”: “realism and authorial expressivity” (“Persistence” 373); said elements capture as well the formal expression of Deleuze’s “five apparent characteristics of the new image: the dispersive situation, the deliberately weak links, the voyage form, the consciousness of *clichés*, the condemnation of the plot” (*CI* 210).

reducing it to molar subject/object images alternating different “spatiotemporal positions” along a “homogenous line,” “the same at all moments,” evolving “linearly” across its “arbitrary (because exchangeable), immobile, and external moments” (126). Meanwhile, the Bergsonian Deleuze moots the time-image as a temporal succession of moments that truly do differ in that they “can evolve toward a qualitatively different state...[toward a] particular or singular movement or inner becoming.” In this model, “time is responsible for qualitative changes: time *is* change, movement, creation. In Bergson’s terms, there exists a duration immanent to the whole of the universe, and this duration has to be understood as ‘invention, the creation of new forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new’” (Wambacq 126) (Citations omitted)).

Returning to our Marxian analogy, is it possible then to find similar formal resemblances between the stages of commodity production and the instants of the SMS system? Provisionally, yes, but with a few modifications and additions to each triad; let’s take them order:

1. Perception and (Primitive) Accumulation: Rather than pairing perception with production, it makes more sense to link up the latter with accumulation. As the “degree-zero” of cinematic image production (in that there’s no images without sight, without vision), perception functions like the anti-physical, alienating, and accumulative work on the world that marks all moments of production, whether capitalist or otherwise (Deleuze, C2 31-32).<sup>71</sup> And like accumulation’s

<sup>71</sup> Deleuze: “The perception-image will therefore be like a degree zero in the deduction which is carried out as a function of the movement-image... Between the perception-image and the others, there is no intermediary, because perception extends by itself into the other images” (C2 31-32). In this Derridean vein, Carl Freedman observes of this “untranscendable” violence: “primitive accumulation is usefully understood in Marxist economic theory as a supplement, in the Derridean sense, of ‘normal’ capitalism. From the most widely shared and commonsense coigns of vantage, primitive accumulation appears to be as secondary to the normal functioning of generalized commodity production—to the routine capitalist processes of the production, extraction, and realization of surplus-value... Primitive accumulation is, it may first appear, a special case of value creation, sharply distinct from genuinely typical capitalist practices. Yet a more careful reading of the history of capitalism shows that primitive accumulation, with all its

systemic subjection to capital, perception only becomes primitive—i.e. a motile, reified interval or moment (perception of perception)—when included within the SMS’s objectivizing, privatizing totality (Deleuze, *C2* 31-32).<sup>72</sup> (And we should note, that like perception, ‘so-called’ primitive accumulation—capitalism’s ‘original sin’—never ends: as David Harvey argues it, this originary and ongoing violence provides the fundamental motor to capitalism’s continued immiserating operations (304-313)). In short, via perception, all cinema gathers “images” like capital, primitively, does value: it kicks off movement’s never-ending circle just as accumulation does capital.

2. Affection and Production: What organizes the SMS into an “assemblage of images” is what Deleuze calls a “centre of indetermination,” his term for consciousness, “unicentered” subjectivity, thought, a point of view (*CI* 62-66).<sup>73</sup> This “centre” gathers or “subtracts”—using

violence and fraud, is actually indispensable to the entire capitalist mode of production: and not only as a foundational moment during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but as the repressed yet continual ‘shadow,’ so to speak, of the whole capitalist project, up to the current day” (19).

<sup>72</sup> Some more Deleuzian precedent: “Of course, perception is strictly identical to every image, in so far as every image acts and reacts on all the others, on all their sides and in all their parts. But, when they are related to the interval of movement which separates, within one image, a received and an executed movement, they now vary only in relation to this one image, which will be called ‘perceiving’ the movement received, on one of its sides, and ‘carrying out’ the movement executed, on another side or in other parts. A special perception-image is therefore formed, an image which no longer simply expresses movement, but the relation between movement and the interval of movement. If the movement-image is already perception, the perception-image will be perception of perception, and perception will have two poles, depending on whether it is identified with movement or with its interval (variation of all the images in their relations with each other, or variation of all the images in relation to one of them). And perception will not constitute a first type of image in the movement-image without being extended into the other types, if there are any: perception of action, of affection, of relation, etc... Thus the movement-image gives rise to a sensory-motor whole which grounds narration in the image” (*C2* 31-32).

<sup>73</sup> Again, more Deleuzian textual support: “All things considered, movement-images divide into three sorts of images when they are related to a centre of indetermination as to a special image-, perception-images, action-images and affection-images. And each one of us, the special image or the contingent centre, is nothing but an assemblage [*agencement*] of three images, a consolidate [*consolidé*] of perception-images, action-images and affection-images” (*CI* 66).

perception—from the signaletic mass of images (plane of immanence) and “organizes” it into “action” (Deleuze, *CI* 62-66; *C2* 272). Affect—the center of this “centre”—manifests and makes sensible this interval or “gap” between perception and action; the experience thereof constitutively guides the centre’s “qualification,” “imprinting,” and “allocation” of raw “percepts” into action and “expression” (Deleuze, *CI* 62-66; *C2* 272).<sup>74</sup> In other words, affection, when harnessed by the SMS, “actualizes” powers and qualities, “embodies” them in a “state of things,” rendering them into “determinate space-time, spatiotemporal co-ordinates, objects and people, [and] real connections between all these givens” (Deleuze, *CI* 97) (“In a state of things which actualises them the quality becomes the ‘quale’ of an object, power becomes action or passion, affect becomes sensation, sentiment, emotion or even impulse [pulsion] in a person, the face becomes the character or mask of the person” (Deleuze, *CI* 97)). From here, we can then analogize SMS affection to capitalism’s moment of production as follows: (1) Affection functions as a “centre” that “organizes” its perceived materials, “actualizing” their unique qualities into the molar “quale[s] of an object” in much the same fashion production adds abstract “value” to its objects through labor, turning quality into

<sup>74</sup> In a sense, movement’s placement of affection—a “motor effort on an immobilized receptive plate”—as the center term in his perception->affection->action triad sequentializes the B to A retroactive movement of the Hegelian account of consciousness, which presumes that the ‘receptive plate’ of self-consciousness arises through the ‘perceived’ ‘motor effort’ of the ‘other’ that strikes it. In other words, it avoids the A to B, subject centered Cartesian model in its modeling of cinematic representation, which would seem to line up with our speculations on Jameson, movement, and polar mapping above; Deleuze observes: “There is therefore a relationship between affection and movement in general which might be expressed as follows: the movement of translation is not merely interrupted in its direct propagation by an interval which allocates on the one hand the received movement, and on the other the executed movement, and which might make them in a sense incommensurable. Between the two there is affection which re-establishes the relation. But, it is precisely in affection that the movement ceases to be that of translation in order to become movement of expression, that is to say quality, simple tendency stirring up an immobile element” (*CI* 66).

quantity, object into commodity, man's species-being into abstract labor; (2) both transmute raw time into a variety of quantified/absolute temporality, whether abstract labor time, clock time, or movement-based narrative time; and as we observed above (3) affection is obscured or dissimulated by the action-image like production is by circulation/exchange. (And lest we forget, filmmaking itself is labor—"a minute of image...costs a day of collective work"—and thus subject to capital's rules of fetishistic exchange (Deleuze, C2 77)). And as we will see shortly, that within this indeterminate "interval" dwell the possibilities for (a) direct time (image), pure *durée*, a temporality unsubordinated to the indirect measure of (the) movement (image), that can represent pure becoming despite the chronometric shackling of its present subjectivizing progenitor: human consciousness (because how else can time be experienced or even exist for that matter) (CI 68-69).<sup>75</sup> That is to say, with the crisis of the action-image, "the [narrative/global] situation no longer extends into action through the intermediary of affections. It is cut off from all its extensions, it is now important only for itself, having absorbed all its affective intensities, all its active extensions. This is no longer a sensory-motor situation, but a purely optical and sound situation, where the seer [*voyant*] has replaced the agent [*actant*]...[and the situation] opens onto a direct time-image" (Deleuze, C2 272). And, within this direct time-image, we should not only be able to (imperfectly) represent the variety of temporal configurations taxonomized in *Cinema 2*, but those of the future-eating disjunctures, necrotic resonances, and synchronic simultaneities of financial capital—temporalities that are at once, as

<sup>75</sup> Some more Deleuzian bookkeeping on this point: centered "[s]ubjectivity is never ours, it is time, that is, the soul or the spirit, the virtual. The actual is always objective, but the virtual is subjective: it was initially the affect, that which we experience in time; then time itself, pure virtuality which divides itself in two as affector and affected, 'the affection of self by self' as definition of time" (C2 82-83). More concretely, we can state that in Deleuze's "image" schema, the affection-image and the time-image's opsigns and sonsigns are connected via their shared capacity to manifest "any-space-whatevers."

we shall see, capital's triumph and collapse. (Dialectically speaking then, if capital follows a logic of endless spatiotemporal expansion (it would go back in time if it could), then the only thing that will undo it (besides itself) is something that's antithetically internal to this logic (that can achieve a sublative synthesis namely); and we can stipulate that the time-image occupies such a position: not only does it project a proliferative totality, but it does so openly, without enclosure, such that at no time will its extension reach an ultimate limit, where there's no longer an outside to render inside, to subsume; rather, within the time-image (ideally), nothing's appropriated, nothing's bounded, nothing's owned—without walls, everything is threshold. In other words, to imagine an outside to (financial) capital, we must look inside, and it's the time-image that gives us the means to do this creatively cartographic work).

3. Action and Circulation: Given the action-image's blurring motion and equalizing narrative economies (which obscures its 'actualization' of affection's qualities and powers), we should thus be able to align it, as noted, with the CMC theatrics (or fetishism) of commodity manufacture's moment of circulation/exchange. Through totalizing narrative closure, it models an image of "hodological space," of concrete, specific space-time that conditions the possibility for effective, agential "action" ("behaviors") and a graspable, resolvable "situation" ("milieu")—or "whole" a la Moten's liberal contractual subject and the formal equality of the market. In other words, this is the "classic image of thought" discussed in the first section:

Organic narration consists of the development of sensory-motor schemata as a result of which the characters react to situations or act in such a way as to disclose the situation. This is a truthful narration in the sense that it claims to be true, even in fiction...[It's] located in a 'hodological space' (Kurt Lewin), which is defined by a field of forces, oppositions and tensions between these forces, resolutions of these tensions according to the distribution of goals, obstacles, means, detours. The corresponding abstract form is Euclidean space, because this is the setting in which tensions are resolved according to a principle of economy, according to the so-called laws of extremum, of minimum and maximum: for example, the simplest route, the most appropriate detour, the most effective speech, the minimum means



for a maximum effect. This *economy of narration*, then, appears both in the concrete shape of the *action-image* and hodological space and in the abstract figure of the movement-image and Euclidean space. Movements and actions may present many obvious anomalies, breaks, insertions, superimpositions and decompositions; they none the less obey laws which are based on the distribution of centres of forces in space. We can say in general that time is the object of an indirect representation in so far as it is a consequence of action, is dependent on movement and is inferred from space. Hence, no matter how disordered it is, it remains in principle a *chronological time* (Deleuze, *C2* 127-28) (Emphasis Added).

And so, without too much difficulty—swapping some words, deleting some extraneous lines—we could take the above description and apply it to circulation and exchange: “centres of force” become buyers and sellers; “action” and “resolution” becomes contractual, equivalent exchange; the “situation” and “space” becomes the global market; “economy of narration” becomes economic narrative; “movement” becomes commodity exchange (CMC)—put simply, the “realism of the action image” becomes capitalist realism (Fisher) (Deleuze, *CI* 123). (“[W]hat constitutes realism is simply this: milieus and behaviors, milieus that actualize and behaviors that incarnate. The action-image is the relation between the two, and all the varieties of this relation” (Deleuze, *CI* 141)). And risking redundancy to this account, we should note that the large form of the action image (see FN 67) features signs of composition that replicate the *mise en scène* of the market: first, the *synsign* “effects a global synthesis” by making mappable totalities or “situations” via “englobing” or “encompassing” them into a “set of qualities-powers as actualized in a milieu, in a state of things or a determinate space-time” (Deleuze, *CI* 141-42); moreover, within this “enclosed” “organic whole,” action is structured per the “binomial” sign of composition, as a series of duels in other words, in which two thematic/actantial forces—or buyers and sellers—emerge from the encompassing “situation” (S), converge, interact, and enact some sort of narrative exchange ((A)ction), thereby transforming the initial situation (S’) or not (S). Deleuze characterizes this SAS’/SAS alternation as “spiraling” and does our work for us by

analogizing its apostrophized form to the MCM' moment of commodity production, specifically in a brief analysis of Ford's *Two Rode Together* (1961), which "has as its subject the spiral of money which, from the start, undermines the community and goes on to enlarge its empire" (*CI* 147). We should caution however that as Deleuze presents it, this Marxian inflection to the SAS' movement will rarely be so overtly carried by the diegesis; rather, it's more a matter of form, of narrative syntax, which we can conjecture here works as ideology (or content) of the form, not only replicating the spiraling motion of profit, but doing so covertly, via the 'invisible' style of the IRM. Amplifying this speculation, we can then suggest that the SAS's formal *dispositif* (MCM' as *syuzhet*) dissimulates the "visual pleasures" proffered thereby, misattributing their "impressions of reality" to the diegesis, the story, content *qua* content (CMC as *fabula*). And given this, finally, we can posit that when the large form deploys the SAS form—i.e. no new situation, no change, only bare "survival" (*Nanook*), the "American nightmare" (*The Crowd*) (Deleuze, *CI* 143-44)—or even worse, the SAS'' form—a "worse" situation, a "descending spiral," "realist degradation," "pathology of the milieu and a behavioral disorder" (film noir, *The Lost Weekend*, *The Hustler*, *The Asphalt Jungle* (*CI* 144-45)—that the cinematic 'apparatus' loses its interpellative effectivity, its formal stasis or dissipation disrupting diegetical bourgeois fantasy in much the same fashion market stagnation or failure (MCM/ MCM'') lays bare the inequities of CMC formal equality.

4. Relation and Realization: Now that we've dilated at length on how Deleuzian action—the mechanical, metonymic progression/execution of plot, narrative, and character—functions like circulation/exchange as a mobile mask for the other moments of the movement image (especially affection's manipulations of temporality), we can now jump directly to locating a cinematic analogue for realization (or valorization). To do so, let's first itemize some general formal

predicates of the latter: (a) realization depends on the commodity form, a bearer of both exchange value (EV) and use value (UV); (b) the former represents the abstract labor time “worked” into the object (V) as mediated by market exchange (hence EV), while the latter is its ‘material body,’ ‘bearer,’ or ‘form of appearance’; (c) value as an (always) ideal unit of measurement (V)—i.e., as a ‘congealed mass’ of ‘abstract labor time’—renders the ‘whole’ of commodities, each with their distinct use values (i.e. qualities/materiality), commensurable; (d) what enables labor time (or Value) to serve as an *effective* unit of measurement—or makes it commensurable—within capitalism is market exchange, which totalizes the masse of commodities into a systemic, circulating whole, rendering their values (V) exchange values (EV) (so, strangely, dialectically even, under capitalism, EV retroactively gives the condition of possibility for V); (e) what enables and mediates this commensurating closure is the—also fictional, also ideal, yet materially consequential—money form, which solely represents EV (and not UV); (f) by foregoing UV (and thus commodity status), money separates itself from the set of commodities to function as both the bearer (and retroactive maker) of their common measure (EV) and medium of exchange; (g) thus, this symbolically quantifying infrastructure (money) is what gives the commodity its dual form (both UV *and* EV) and makes it exchangeable.<sup>76</sup> And so,

<sup>76</sup> Harvey summarizes the above: “[Value] only exists in relations between commodities and only gets expressed materially in the contradictory and problematic form of the money commodity” (37). Harvey also observes the dialectical interrelation between value, exchange value, and use value and their respective totalities: “These three different concepts internalize fundamentally different spatiotemporal referents. Use-values exist in the physical material world of things that can be described in Newtonian and Cartesian terms of absolute space and time. Exchange-values lie in the relative space-time of motion and exchange of commodities [as mediated by money], while values can be understood only in terms of the relational space-time of the world market. (The immaterial relational value of socially necessary labor times comes into being within the evolving space-time of capitalist global development.) But as Marx has already convincingly shown, values cannot exist without exchange-values [and money], and exchange cannot exist without use-values [and their material bodies/forms of appearance]. The three concepts are dialectically integrated with one another” (37).

in circulation, the commodity is exchanged for money, a portion of which (in theory) should represent profit (i.e. an amount approximate to capitalism's exploitative calculus of surplus value: total labor time minus (paid) socially-necessary labor time equals (unpaid) surplus labor). Finally, with profit, capital is "realized" (in its money form) and the capitalist circuit closes, only to begin again with money capital's reinvestment into the labor process as constant and/or variable capital. (Harvey: "Capital is not a thing, but a process. It is continually in motion, even as it itself internalizes the regulative principle of 'accumulation for the sake of accumulation, production for the sake of production;'; "[it is] value in motion. But it is value-in-motion that appears in different forms" (262, 90)). Before returning to Deleuze, I'd like to isolate two key features of the above: (1) money as the structurally separate progenitor of value and relation in commodities—as the general equivalent, in short; (2) money as the means and ends, as the binding connective tissue, of every moment and movement of capital circulation and accumulation.

In the movement-image then, this capacity for "closure" and "relation" is accomplished through the "relation-image" which "reconstitutes the whole of the movement with all of the aspects of the interval [centre]," "complet[ing] the circuit of the movement-image and [bringing] to its logical perfection what could be called classical cinema" (Deleuze, *C2* 32, 34); that is to say, it allows one to unite or "deduce" the separate moments of perception, affection and action as "a sensory-motor whole...ground[ing] narration in the image" (Deleuze, *C2* 32). The semiotic infrastructure that accomplishes this totalizing abstraction is the relation-image's binary propagation of "marks" and "demarks." As Deleuze has it, the former "designate[] natural relations, that is, the aspect under which images are linked by a habit which takes...us from one to the other," while the latter "designate[] an image torn from its natural relations" (*C1* 218); and

what organizes their “bipolar composition” is their shared “genesis” as “symbols” (C2 32, 33)—their differential, co-constitutive origination from a “support of abstract relations, that is to say of a comparison of terms independently of their natural relations” (CI 218). (In other more dialectical terms, “marks” can only represent “natural relations” if there are “demarks” representing unnatural ones; and more linguistically, undergirding both are abstraction, language, and “symbols”: there’s nothing ‘natural’ about the “natural”). So we can state, though perhaps not in the way Deleuze intended, that the demark’s “detachment” from the marks’ “customary series” is what allows the latter’s establishment in the first place, makes it possible that “each can be ‘interpreted’ by the others” (CI 203). At the same time, however, this detachment depends on an underlying, abstracting relation between the two in that all difference relates in some fashion—which in this case means they’re both “symbolic.” So, given its capacity as a “node of abstract relations,” as a “concrete object” that “bear[s]...various relations, or of variations of a single relation, of character with others and with himself,” the symbolic demark can then be said to function like the money form as follows: (i) it’s an object excluded from a set like money from commodities (due to its lack of (use) value); (ii) whose exclusion from the set renders its members mutually ‘interpretable’ as does money make commensurable/exchangeable commodities; (iii) which works to close the set whilst differentially relating its structurally excluded progenitor. In other words, the demarcation of demark from marks depends on a shared ‘symbolic’ form in a fashion not dissimilar to money and commodities shared capacity to represent (exchange) value. But in cinematic practice, what does this closed symbolic system, this cinematic network of mental relations, actually look like? And given the theoretical mandate of this paper, how exactly does it map the transition from monopoly to late capitalism?

5. Modal Transitions: As for the first, more straightforward question, Deleuze's examples come from Hitchcock—the numinous glass of milk in *Suspicion*, the poisoned wine in *Notorious*, the birds in *The Birds*—and, for our purposes, their interest lies less in their diegetically literal objecthood than in their pivotal role in Deleuze's allegorical narrative of the movement-image's disassemblage that climactically closes *Cinema 1*, which argues that the relation-image's "figures of thought" "pushe[d] the movement-image to its limit," taking the "traditional 'perception-action-affection' system" and "smash[ing]" it, "cut[ting] perception off from its motor extension, action, from the thread which joined it to a situation, affection from adherence or belonging to characters. The new image would therefore not be a bringing to completion of the cinema, but a mutation of it...form[ing] a new substance...[a] new thinking image...beyond movement" (Deleuze, *CI* 204, 215). In other words, signaletically foregrounding or magnifying in the *diegesis* the mental relations that make up the movement image—i.e. making the mental-image dominate over the action-image—increases self-reflexivity, makes explicit the film's function as an "image of thought," forcing the viewer to reflect on the film, herself, and the world at large. ("Hitchcock appears as one who no longer conceives of the constitution of a film as a function of two terms—the director and the film to be made—but as a function of three: the director, the film and the public which must come into the film, or whose reactions must form an integrating part of the film" (Deleuze, *CI* 202)). In the transitional passages linking his taxonomization of the relation-image and the "crisis" proper, Deleuze appears to attribute, if not causation, then a mimetic correlation between the relation-image and the conditions of possibility indexically/allegorically preceding the action-image's crisis,<sup>77</sup> which, as we've

<sup>77</sup> Somewhat gingerly, Deleuze comprehensively speculates: "Nevertheless, the crisis which has shaken the action-image has depended on many factors which only had their full effect after the war, some of which were social, economic, political, moral and others more internal to art, to

argued, can be more or less related to the postmodern turn (our level 4),<sup>78</sup> itself, a transformation in the mode of production. And thus, to continue our modal analogy from the prior section, this

literature and to the cinema in particular. We might mention, in no particular order, the war and its consequences, the unsteadiness of the ‘American Dream’ in all its aspects, the new consciousness of minorities, the rise and inflation of images both in the external world and in people’s minds, the influence on the cinema of the new modes of narrative with which literature had experimented, the crisis of Hollywood and its old genres...” (CI 206).

<sup>78</sup> As for movement-image’s formal relation to the levels, if the relation-image invokes the allegorical frame, then what distinguishes it from the “reflection-image”—that which comes between action and relation—and its “figures of discourse” that function, per Deleuze, as audiovisual equivalents to literary tropes (CI 183)? In my view, there’s three ways to approach this question (and effectively quarantine it to this footnote): (1) We can start with giving a canned account of reflection: as the “intermediate between action and relation,” we can presume it involves “actions” and “situations” (C2 32, 33); so, the question to ask then is what comes between the action-image’s direct relation of action and situation and relation’s separating disruption thereof? (Remember, relation organizes the movement-image’s assemblage and allows foregrounding of action, but when it itself is foregrounded, action’s organic totality is shattered). Deleuze provides an answer: “The reflection-image, which goes from action to relation, is composed when action and situation enter into indirect relations: the signs are then figures, of attraction or inversion. And the genetic sign is discursive, that is, a situation or an action of discourse, independent of the question” (Deleuze, C2 33) (Emphasis added); in other words, in reflection, a fraying or making ‘indirect’ of the linkage between action and situation takes place between action’s direct connection and relation’s full separation. In imagistic terms, these ‘reflections’ constitute figural or cinematic signs that ‘indirectly relate’—rather than directly, like the action-image—qualitatively distinct situations (S) and actions (A) (Deleuze, C2 33); thus, they signal a qualitative “transformation” (or leap) from small form to large form, from ASA’ to SAS’, and vice versa and not just action’s traditional limitation to one or the other (more on the “small form” *infra*). What Deleuze means here are Eisenstein’s various plastic/scenographic montages of “attraction”—the murder prefiguring play in *Ivan the Terrible Part I* (small “injected” into large); the abattoir/execution sequence in *Strike* (large inserted into small). So we can see how in Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*, the small-form, comedic situations of the Jewish Barber and the Nazi dictator—both sharing the same mustache—become ‘transformed’ through ‘figures of discourse’ (reflection’s genetic sign), ‘reflected’ via the dictator-disguised barber’s climactic direct address into large-form “situations” that model “two states of society” or “two states of life” that indirectly relate to their generating small-form situations and actions. Importantly, however, unlike the time-image’s crystalline ‘relays,’ these ‘transformations’ and ‘reflections’ take place within the organic/diegetic totality—the ensemble of ‘actions’ and ‘situations’ they indirectly relate—which means, that in terms of our allegorical frame, they’re likely never to traverse beyond the first two interpretive levels, leaving the latter more symptomatic, more ‘depth-modeled’ tier (3 and 4) for relation and the time-image proper. In other words, unlike relation, reflection does not obtrude a seemingly arbitrary, almost emptied allegorical frame into the film that demands extra-diegetic interpretation (like our money/modal/mark/demark example *supra*); its allegorical “themes” are anchored ‘discursively’

transition then marks the moment where the MCM's symbolic substructure becomes apparent in the cinematic image, subordinating the action-image's SAS/CMC function as (ideological state) apparatus to its disturbing, deterritorializing temporal order, "transforming" and "penetrating" its organic "whole" with an overt manifestation of capitalism's relational "frame,"<sup>79</sup> thereby

within the storytelling and thus do not 'include' or 'implicate' the viewer or bring them into 'mental' 'relation' with the film/director by virtue of a diegetic silence in which "characters can act, perceive, experience, but they cannot testify to the relations which determine them" (Deleuze, *CI* 201). (2) We can also more reductively approach the reflection-image as Deleuze's means of slotting the Soviet (or second-world) "image of thought" within the organic totalities of the movement-image (because it's not quite the open totality of the time-image); so if America deploys an action-image centric "organic-active...empiricist montage" (a term to be recursively rewritten in the duology as "model," "whole," and "image"), then the Soviet school uses a dialectical montage of attractions, of "qualitative leaps" from the instant subjective "interval" (or part) to the objective, global "whole" and vice versa (Deleuze, *CI* 37, 55). So, in lieu of genre syntactical dualisms (Altman)—the eternal "organic unity of opposites" of American montage—we have the sublational "transition of the one [action-form] into the other, and the sudden upsurge of the other out of the one...[a] pathetic passage of the opposite into its contrary. There is not simply an organic link between two instants, but a...jump, in which the second instant gains a new power, since the first has passed into it" (Deleuze, *CI* 35). (3) Reflection, then, might just be a catch-all for borderline cases, for filmmaking that's more allegorically complex than the classic model, yet still resists the open totalities of the time-image. In other words, if in most cases the movement-image means the action-image and it's only otherwise—perception, affection, relation—when something goes wrong (or there's a 'crisis') within the cinematic SMS, then reflection captures what's not paralyzed by relation's "crises," what's not launched into the time-image by the dominance of perception and affection (like we see with the book-straddling filmmaking of Pasolini, Bergman, Dreyer, Bresson, and Vertov, each of which Deleuze discusses in his chapters on perception and affection). More prosaically, this means auteurs (or "masters" or "great directors") of a more aesthetically modernist—yet not quite postmodern—bent (which makes one wonder re the practical utility of the movement-image/time-image heuristic). So, the reflection-image means simply films by Eisenstein, Kurosawa, Mizoguchi, Herzog, Hawks, and Chaplin—all directors that straddle the movement/time divide that aren't Hitchcock.

<sup>79</sup>Deleuze on the "frame" versus the "whole": "This is the source of the very special sense of the frame. The sketches for framing, the strict delimitation of the frame, the apparent elimination of the out-of-frame, are explained by Hitchcock's constant reference, not to painting or the theatre, but to tapestry-making, that is, to weaving. The frame is like the posts which hold the warp threads, whilst the action constitutes merely the mobile shuttle which passes above and below. We can thus understand that Hitchcock usually works with short shots, as many shots as there are frames, each shot showing a relation or a variation of the relation. But the theoretically single shot of [*Rope*] is no exception to this rule: it is very different from the sequence-shot of Welles or Dreyer, which tends in two ways to subordinate the frame to a whole, whilst Hitchcock's single shot subordinates the whole (relations) to the frame, being content to open this frame



giving us not only capitalism's "crisis" time, but the raw *durée* of the time-image (Deleuze, *CI* 203-04). (And given financial capital's association with "signal" and "terminal" "crises," we can suppose that the time-image (or art, global, or experimental cinema) maps a capital in collapse, registering an MCM temporality that can no longer sustain itself, a temporality that refuses further cooptation by the movements and actions of the market).

But time's emergence, as we will see, does not necessarily signal its dominance over movement: rather, we will find in our formal analysis to come a kind of textual tug-of-war between the two images, a kind of dialectical push and pull between their sub-images and signs that registers as much their always changing differential flux as their dualistic opposition. To help track these transformational phase-shifts, I will set off each move and countermove of this positional play across the textual field of *Point Blank* by indicating via heading when each image of thought responsively deploys a new Deleuzian sign or sub-image or conscripts one of the aesthetic formations discussed above (like Gimps and the like).

***Move: Affect and Any-space-whatevers (Time-image)***

We can start by diving deeper into the relation-image and observing that its network of symbols, marks, and demarks manifests not only via diegetic on-screen objects, but through the camera, the mobile "frame" that renders "actions, affections, [and] perceptions...interpretation, from beginning to end" (Deleuze, *CI* 200, 201). But it's not camera movement necessarily that weaves this "fabric of relations," rather it's Hitchcock's penchant for "many" "short shots": it's this succession of views that brings to the fore how "relation (the exchange, the gift, the

lengthways, provided that it remains closed breadthways, exactly as in a weaving process producing an infinitely long tapestry. The essential point, in any event, is that action, and also perception and affection, are framed in a fabric of relations. It is this chain of relations which constitutes the mental image, in opposition to the thread of actions, perceptions and affections" (*CI* 200) (Emphasis added).

rendering...) does not simply surround action, it penetrates it in advance and in all its parts, and transforms it into a necessarily symbolic act” (Deleuze, *CI* 200-01). (Endless examples here: pick any Hitchcock and you will find countless doublings, mirrorings, and so on; *Strangers on a Train* is a good one). What’s reached in this “symbolic” “exchange” of “many” “short shots” then is the “mutual camera-money exchange” proposed by Deleuze in the long passage above: the photographic image as general equivalent, as “the money of the real” (Comolli).<sup>80</sup> For what the relation image brings to the fore is the fundamental abstracting operation of photography, its commensurating of unlike into exchangeable like, its ‘crystallizing’ of the real,<sup>81</sup> of *durée*, into

<sup>80</sup> See footnote 65 for more examples of this idea. As for a Deleuze-inflected take thereon, to avoid redundancy, I’ll let Jonathan Beller’s paraphrasing/transcoding of this cinema/capital analogy do the work here: “All things pass through the frame of capital. As Gilles Deleuze tells us, ‘The frame ensures a deterritorialization of the image’ because it ‘gives a common standard of measurement to things which do not have one—long shots of countryside and close-ups of the face, an astronomical system and a single drop of water.’ This principle of equivalence perfectly parallels and indeed extends the principle of equivalence implied by exchange-values (which can be compared directly), becoming the other side of use-values (which cannot be compared directly). In short, Deleuze suggests that the frame functions like money, as the general equivalent. The cutting up of reality according to the abstract logic of the frame suggests that the cinema is both a consequence and a source of fragmentation. Robert Bresson writes, ‘This [fragmentation] is indispensable if one does not want to fall into representation [which capital surely does not]. See beings and things in separate parts. Render them independent in order to give them a new dependence” (my emphasis). Such disarticulation from traditional relationships and the reorganization into new relationships enacts the very process of capital. Indeed, the form of cinema is the process of capital. With the cinematic organization of the world, the logic of capital moves us beyond representation and into simulation. In Deleuze’s words, ‘Money [becomes] the obverse of all the images that the cinema shows and sets in place.’ The images have begun to move like money, and their affects demand the organizational work of capital” (105-06) (Citations omitted).

<sup>81</sup> Some Deleuziana: as noted in Chapter 1, some form of chrono-sign likely undergirds both movement as well as time; Deleuze does not identify explicitly what this sign is but we can assume it’s some form of the ‘crystal’: the genetic sign of the time-image. As such, it’s only with the time-image that we can perceive this fundamentally crystalline form; Deleuze suggests as much at the end of the long passage quoted on page 100 above re money, time, and the passage from movement to time. Remarkably, Jameson also gives the money form a crystalline composition, arguing it “assembles the various ‘crystals’ of labor”: “For money is the crystallization of the contradiction and not its effacement: it now renders the contradiction workable; with money we may now inhabit it and live among its dualities. Money has not solved

signaletic facets, semiotic refractions that more often than not cleave monetarily to the opacities of movement.

So, if one of *Point Blank*'s allegorical narratives—number 4—tracks the shift from monopoly to late capitalism, we can expect the film to register some co-presence and interrelation between movement and time, to find not only action, but “time, time itself, 'a little time in its pure state': a direct time-image” (Deleuze, *C2* 17), or as Beller puts it, “[t]ime cut out from movement and narrative...the expression of the transcendence of signification brought about by capital intensification” (227). So we can start first with the opening credits, which overlay Walker's gut-shot journey from prison cell to shore (#3 in the anecdotal account of the film above); in them, a sort of stuttering in movement, in action, takes place: the montage alternating still-frames and shots of Alcatraz<sup>82</sup> and Walker. Watching them, it becomes impossible to tell whether you're looking at an optically printed photograph or a shot of Walker standing immobile, static, as if in mid-movement—as much an architectural feature as the barbwire, the broken windows, the grating. Like a structural-film, this halting cinematic movement directly manifests the photographic image, extracting it from action and its temporality to reveal that Walker and the carceral ruins—both lifeless, both emptied—share a similar montaged ontology, one whose animation, as well as diegetic continuity and copresence,

the riddle of the equation—how different things could possibly be the same—but it has turned that conundrum into coin of the realm which will allow us to forget about it and to go about our business. Money, to be sure, will eventually raise problems of its own: theoretically, when we grapple with prices as such and try to ascertain their relationship with value; and practically, when in inflation or depression the institution of money itself enters into crisis. And meanwhile, there is the matter of credit, only briefly penciled in, mostly by Engels in *Capital*, Volume One; and finally the whole issue of finance capital, today very much back on the agenda” (*RC* 35, 45). Shortly, we will see how these financial incommensurabilities manifest cinematically, how cinema's own crystal's track derivatively “the ultimate ‘crystallization’ of the money form” (*RC* 35).

<sup>82</sup> Likely taken from a promotional short (“The Rock” (1967)) made for the film.

depends on not only the narrative manipulations of the cutting room floor (much like commodity exchange does production, abstract labor (time)), but the commensurability, the “impression of reality,” manufactured by the photographic equivalent. In doing so, this faltering of action puts the film into a kind of “crisis” time, throwing it into affection, in which proliferate “any-space-whatevers”: “emptied spaces” which not coincidentally tend to be “wasteground,” locations “deserted but inhabited,” like the inert material making up Walker and the prison (Deleuze, *C2 xi*). (We should also add here given our structural film reference above that Deleuze finds affection and any-space-whatevers in *Wavelength* (1967) and *La Région Centrale* (1971) (*C1 122*)). And what’s opened up by this “genetic element of the affection-image” is a kind of raw temporality, a raw meaning,

not an abstract universal, in all times, in all places...[but rather] a perfectly singular space, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, the principle of its metric relations or the connection of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways. It is a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible. What in fact manifests the instability, the heterogeneity, the absence of link of such a space, is a richness in potentials or singularities which are, as it were, prior conditions of all actualisation, all determination (Deleuze, *C1 109-110*).

All of which is another way of saying that affection gives the actionless condition of possibility for the “pure optical and sound situations” needed for time *qua* time-image, for formation of its crystalline chronosigns and their “system[s] of exchange” between “objective and subjective, real and imaginary, physical and mental”—the “continual contact” of its “poles” “in one direction or the other, [with its] passages and conversions, tending towards a point of indiscernibility” (Deleuze, *C2 7, 8-9*). In other words, any-space-whatevers produce Bergsonian temporality—*durée* before its ‘actualization’ and ‘determination’ into chronometric action, into a mechanically and expressively causative “state of things” or “milieu.” And per our capital analogy, this “auto-affection”—which “link[s]...parts” and percepts into an anoriginal surplus of

sense and sensation (Deleuze, *CI* 117)—can be compared to the generative, constructivist capacities of humanity’s species-being, with its utopian temporalities, its “poetry from the future,” its “absolute movement of becoming,” prior to the “absolute working out” of their temporal “wealth” and “creative potentialities” to the measure of abstract, alienated labor time (and money and the commodity form—capital *tout court*).<sup>83</sup> So, in view of this formulation, if affect is paired with raw labor, then when “circulation stops,” when this capital/cinema apparatus—a “process that exists only in motion”—breaks down, “value disappears and the whole system comes tumbling down” (Harvey 12).

***Countermove: Affect-dispersing Gimps (Movement-Image)***

Which is fine and interesting but what does this mean in more prosaic, stylistic terms? Deleuze’s key examples come from Antonioni from which we can extrapolate he means lengthy master-shots of sparsely populated interiors/exterior where nothing much happens except people morosely wandering about, in a brown study, suffering bourgeoisie ‘alienation,’ being—from the perspective of action—boring in short. Per Deleuze, this aesthetic frustration of traditional narrative momentum in theory then forces the viewer (and filmmaker) to somehow think outside

<sup>83</sup> “Poetry from the future” comes from Marx of course, specifically from his “Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.” *Surveys from Exile*. Translated by Ben Fowkes, New York, Verso, 2010, pp. 143-249, p. 149. All other selections come from the *Grundrisse*, which even when read in their original context, sound positively Deleuzian: “In fact, however, when the limited bourgeois form is stripped away, what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity’s own nature? The absolute working-out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the yardstick? Where he does not reproduce himself in one specificity, but produces his totality? Strives not to remain something he has become, but is in the absolute movement of becoming?” Karl Marx. *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. Translated by Martin Nicolaus, Vintage, 1973, p. 488.

of movement and grapple with the disconnected situations and actions, the open totalities and temporalities of post-War life, thereby generating therefrom the time-image's "images of thought." And in the way I just dismissively transcoded Deleuze's work into pre-packaged film poetics—the time-image as formalist defamiliarization, as Bordwellian art cinema, as aesthetic modernism—we can find a similar dilutive reduction within the American "crisis" cinema itself, a stylistic diminishment amply indulged by *Point Blank*'s art cinema pastiches. For after the credit sequence's manifestation of the raw temporalities of *durée/capital*, the film deploys a series of cod-Antonionisms: domestic longueurs that superficially signify art through their ornery floundering in narrative inertia. But these passages never reach the open temporalities of the time-image proper, for there's always "gimping" involved: take Walker and Chris's nocturnal stakeout at Brewster's (#18), where one finds not a lethargy-charged, asymptotic *pas de deux à la* Antonioni, but a kind burlesquing thereof, a postmodern mix and match that exploits the thematic/aesthetic vicinity of *Mon Oncle* (1958) to *Red Desert* (1964) to arrive at something approximating art film Jerry Lewis wherein action finds its outlet in an "out of control cramping of bodies" (Farber, "Cartooned" 591)—affect and its intensities channeled not into narrative, but into a kind of arbitrary outburst of movement, not thought, that fills time until the next bit of plot. A brief recounting of the scene may help give a sense of its effect: it begins with Chris, following her head to toe flailing away at Walker, collapsing to the floor, exhausted, thereby prompting Marvin's bored, ritualized march to the couch/television ensemble, where—while watching a Pond's cold cream ad (in Black and white!), ignoring Chris's stumbling from the room—he's soon interrupted by a cacophony of noise. He investigates the racket, only to discover in the kitchen all the appurtenances and appliances of the aspiring mid-century suburbanite—blenders, mixers, microwaves, toasters, refrigerators, home audio devices,

automated lighting systems—mysteriously turned on. As he goes to turn them off one by one, Chris begins mocking his quest for money through an intercom (“You’re a pathetic sight Walker from where I’m standing...chasing shadows. You’re played out. It’s over...finished. What would you do with the money if you got it? It wasn’t yours in the first place. Why don’t you just lie down and die”); and when finally encountering her at a pool table, he goes to grab her only to have her knock him out with a pool cue, whereupon he grabs her feet, pulling her to the floor, prompting an arty passage of intercourse. And so, we see “ailing Eros” suffer further mutation: the static, *trompe l’oeil* interchange of art objects and human figures of *L’Eclisse*’s opening—with its “wandering camera” (Seymour Chatman), its oblique-angled, disorientating cutting, its detumesced pacing—transformed into the jarring clanging and clashing of the “camera-made massiveness” of Marvin and Dickinson (Farber, “Cartooned” 592), their lovemaking violently lubricated through the ‘marital aids’ of the commodity form, whose purposeless slapstick consumption is presented raw-facedly via staunch—classical even—continuity rules.

And we see something similar with the other Antonioni-esque passage, the one involving Walker and Lynne’s reunion, her suicide, and the dead-time before the money man’s arrival with Lynne’s allowance (#s 4-5). This scene hews more closely to a kind of reified riffing on the Vitti quartet by virtue of its duration, silence, ellipses, long-takes, lack of motion, and a mostly mute, staring off-in-the distance, eye-line-match-mismatching placement of Walker and Lynne per the ‘*maestro*’s’ typical staging of Vitti, Delon, Mastroianni, Moreau, *et al.* But nonetheless, “gimping” still persists: for instance, there’s the “memorable mystical moment [that] has [Walker] flying slow-motion through a bathroom door, his arm waving a blasting Colt 45” at an empty bed (Farber, “Cartooned” 591); the *Lady in the Lake*-esque subjective POV shot of Walker peering at a street-side surveilling Yost through a window screen, its mesh simulated by

(what appears to be) an optically printed filter; and the ambiguously significant close-up of the iridescent, toxic swirl of perfumes and shattered glass knocked by Walker into Lynne's bathroom sink (which we'll return to later). Aside from this catnip for the symptomatic critic, we can also point to a variety of Bordwellian storytelling recuperations that help renarrativize this *temps mort* toward movement: 1. A Lynne-narrated flashback that delivers much of the pre-heist backstory re the principles' romantic affairs (item #1 above); 2. Sufficient interpretive play in Walker's reaction to Lynne's death—is he mourning Lynne? Or are his days/weeks in the home simply for the money?—to allow for more conventional, plot-driven readings; and finally, 3. Lynne's haunting humming (first heard during the heist) played over shots tracking Walker's aimless wandering through an apartment suddenly emptied and then filled with furniture—all of which suggests sections of this sequence may be dream (and thus a variety of mental-image, a movement sub-image per Deleuze's taxonomy, which we'll return to shortly).

***Move: Episodes and Crystals (Time-Image)***

Beyond their narratively local frustrations of affect, the time-image, and its emergent forms of thought, these scenes representatively mark a larger structural transformation that informs the film, one that can be deduced from the manner of their exposition above. In other words, my capacity to break them off and treat them as individual, discrete scenes and set-pieces each meriting their own paragraphs of exposition itemizing the stylistic business packaged therein (almost as if installations or art-events, a curated collection of Farber's gimps or "gimmicks" as Jameson nominates them, "one-time invention[s]" or "device[s]" in which the "form of the work has become the content") at first blush suggests of the film a kind of collaged construction, a bricolaged narrative at one with the "de-linked," "non-commensurable relations between" "independent images" typical of Deleuze's (post)modern image of thought and



Jameson's postmodern "singularity-events" (AS 108-114) (see Table 1). As the latter would have it then, this "crisis" film, with its piecemeal fashioning of stand-alone episodes, with its performance of "spatialized temporality"—where "discontinuity has become more fundamental than continuity"—demonstrates as much a "movement from a temporal conception of action and reality to a spatial one" than a transition from movement to time (which is just how Jameson recodes the *Cinema* books) (AI 318-19). And given this "episodic fragmentation" of movement and action into a series of compartmentalized "qualities" or "affects," into a "motor force...reduction of a general action into so many unique and incomparable moments" that can be "multiplied indefinitely" (Jameson, AI 324-25), how does *Point Blank*, a transitional "crisis" film, resolve this aesthetic dilemma? What totalities, what "images of thought," does it evoke by its necessary, eventual, and inevitable narrative closure?

(It's also an interpretive dilemma as well, especially in works of a less classical orientation. Consequently, allegory becomes a useful tool for imposing some kind of meaningful coherence to the raw hermeneutic material; as Jameson observes: "The tendency toward episodic fragmentation...would seem to undercut any reading that seeks an intelligible sequence or series in the work in question: allegory is to be sure a unique and second-degree kind of sequence, in which the unity of the work's moments is secured by a seemingly external structure, a narrative form like that of the journey, or some more abstract notion like that of redemption. On the side of the episode, then, it is always a question to what degree it can be ranged under such a more unified organizational structure without forfeiting its autonomy" (AI 324-325). We'll see some of this shortly in our discussion of Deleuze's time as a series).

But first, to answer this question, we'll need to perform a brief taxonomy of the time-image, trace its composition and formation, and chart its signs and functions, but in a limited

fashion, fit to our needs herein, a task which Deleuze scholar David Deamer has accomplished to a helpful degree. So, per his explication of Deleuze's crystallography, the opsigns and sonsigns—or pure optical and sound situations—opened by action's stumbling into affect produce a:

de-differentiated image on-screen, visual and sonic fragments in a state of zeroness. This is to say, opsigns and sonsigns are immediately hyalosigns [or crystal-images]. For if 'the actual [image] is cut off from its motor linkages,' there is—for Deleuze—a simultaneous relinkage; this relinkage is the 'coalescence of an actual image and its virtual image' (C2: 127). In other words, opsigns and sonsigns stymie the seamless flow of actual image to actual image; while the hyalosign links the actual image to a virtual correlate. In this way, opsigns and sonsigns 'are nothing other than slivers of crystal-images' (C2: 69). Opsigns and sonsigns—through their very constitution—must become hyalosigns; an actual must relink to the virtual if delinked from other actuals. Accordingly, the hyalosign is the '*description*' of an image on-screen—a fragment, now—the 'most restricted circuit of the actual image and *its* virtual (C1: 69) (Deamer 145).

Without getting into the precise temporal dimensions of this actual/virtual interchange,<sup>84</sup> there's two points I'd like to extract from the above: first, by "virtual," Deamer/Deleuze means what's paratactically "re-linked" to movement's "de-linked" "actuals" in the (post)modern image of thought; it's simultaneously the imaginary, the "empty" yet richly full "future," and the "indeterminacies of the past," of memory, of history, with all of their "interstices, forgettings, and falsities" (Deamer 146). In short, the 'virtual' forces through its "indiscernible" interchange with the 'actual' the conditions of possibility for non-habituated thought, for thinking outside of

<sup>84</sup> They're not relevant in other words; but, for the record, rather than movement's sequential moments, it has to do with the crystal's simultaneous states of actual/virtual exchange: "This actual and virtual of the hyalosign has three aspects: a description of the immediate image, a description of an image that is passing into the past, and a description of an image coming from the future. Each of these descriptions—the in itself, the passing and becoming—concerns the temporal dimensions of an actual with its virtual: an exchange of actual and virtual, the virtual sustaining the disconnection between actuals. Deleuze writes: 'there is no virtual which does not become an actual in relation to an actual, the latter becoming virtual through the same relation' (C2: 69)" (Deamer 145).

movement's totality, for thinking interpretively, allegorically. Second, "description" refers to the on-screen manifestation of the crystal, of an interchange of actual and virtual; and given this crystalline composition, it must be "fractal" in Deamer's words, it must structurally propagate and amplify within the film an underlying structure or logic of some sort, which for our purposes—and Deleuze's if shorn of their philosophical remit—means an explicit, extra-narrative valence, a valence that can be obscure, opaque even, but that forcefully demands interpretive attention nonetheless (149). In other words, the crystal-image is in essence allegorical: its actuals and virtuals nothing more than Deleuzian transcodings of metaphors' vehicles and tenors. (But, lest we forget, this transcoding means a fundamental alteration of allegory's classic operations: that is to say, in Deleuzian allegory, the vehicle is now the tenor as much the tenor the vehicle; this inherent "indiscernibility" thus demands interpretive tools suited to explore, if not capture or control, its proliferative semiosis, its becomings, its (post)modern images of thought; naturally, then, the frame recommends itself). Finally, 'description' refers to crystalline composition at the local level, at its "most restricted circuit of the actual and the virtual" (Deleuze, *C2* 69); so, cinematically at the level of montage rather than *découpage*: circumscribed aggregations of shots, cuts, sounds, and *mise en scène* components—whatever is needed to cohere an instant interchange of actual and virtual, as we saw in the our above detailing of Walker's wounded crawl out of Alcatraz and its structural film conjuring of photographic capital (Deamer 150).

***Countermove: Dream and Recollection (Movement-Image)***

But given the latter's descriptive locality, we're still not quite in the time-image proper, we still don't have chronosigns and their architectures of temporality; that is to say, for chronosigns to appear, "crystalline *narrations* [must] extend crystalline description" (Deleuze,

C2 127-129). So, when Deleuze claims chronosigns “no longer concern...description, but narration” (C2 127), he means simply that such signs constitute the sum of crystalline description, the structure and arrangements of “false continuities” formed by the *multiple* crystal-images (Deamer 151-56). Per Deamer’s take on Deleuze’s taxonomy, these configurations can take on a present, past, or future orientation: “peaks of the present,” “sheets of the past,” and “times as a series,” respectively (Deamer 151-56). And in the film’s opening montage—a wash of crimson red that lap-dissolves, almost pulses, into a close-up of a dazed, film-lit Walker at the Movie House that cuts to his post-heist jailcell gunfire gut-shot double-crossing followed by a disjointed montage of his pre-heist encounter with Reese, their planning the heist with Lynne, their executing it, and a reprise of Reese’s pistol-aided betrayal—we can find the second chrono-structures, the sheets of the past, which for Deleuze means simply crystalline narration’s heedless trajectory, or diagramming, across multiple, chopped and mixed, synchronic narrative slices (or sheets)—a transverse passage that thwarts the kinetic commonsense causality of action: Resnais, circa *Muriel* (1963) in other words. But, notably, this crystalline *narration* does not extend outside of this passage, for anchoring its disruptive montage effects is Walker’s voice-over narration, which in classic noir fashion (think *Sunset Boulevard* or *Double Indemnity*), hectors the jumble of shots into a sort of death-dream accounting of past events—“Cell. Prison cell. How did I get here?”—using the sound “continuum” or “dimension of the visual image” as a kind of throttling baffles on unfettered *durée* (Deleuze, C2 235). So, as with the hallucinatory self-emptying of Lynne’s apartment discussed above, the film uses “dream-images”—a sub-image of movement—to restrain crystalline description’s passage into narration, into the time-image’s chronosigns by oneirically actualizing thought per action’s organic coordinates, “attributing the dream to the dreamer, and the awareness of the dream...to the viewer” (Deleuze,

C2 58). And if we loop back to our discussion of the flashback structure deployed during Walker's confrontation of Lynne, specifically our claim that it disrupted affect's passage into the time-image proper, we can see—again, via the sound “component” (Deleuze, C2 235)—the operation of a similar rearguard hedge tactic: what Deleuze dubs the “memory” or “recollection-image,” another variety of mental image which fuses a “strong” causality, whether pragmatic or psychological, to the temporal development, reinforcing a “sensory-motor determinism” that “despite its circuits, only confirms the progression of a linear narration”—a commonsense, realistic chronology that swerves from the temporal hazards of extra-diegetic thought and signification opened by action's fall into affection, into pure optical/sound situations, into the time-image proper (C2 48). As Deleuze describes it—taking him at his Bordwelliest—such a fall, in its fullest, most Luciferian form, almost always involves some kind of nontraditional narration, demands some kind of defamiliarization of the classic Hollywood *syuzhet*. And if we'll recall that recollection works to (re)impose “interstitial,” “associative” links on “independent images” “de-linked” by “pure optical sound situations” via imposition of “a closed circuit which goes from the present to the past, [that] then leads us back to the present” (C2 48), we can then return equipped to our capital allegory—capital as species of mental image—and treat this closed circuit narrative relinkage as a cinematic moment analogous to capital reinvestment: that is to say, its narrative looping back of a photographic/semantic surplus mimics the movement of money at the close of the commodity cycle—emulates, in other words, the return on investment wrought by capital's systemic, recursive relation. Yet, we should emphasize, however, that like relation, recollection and dream's manifestation should be taken less as movement's triumph than signs of its breaking down, its “broadening or weakening” (Deleuze, C2 130), its attempt to recuperate and foreground an action-image in crisis. As such,

these looping narrative retrenchments may as much reactively register some modal turning in the Arrighian screw (see FN 36), act as rehabilitative bindings of a narrative fabric torn asunder by capital's spiraling warpings.

***Move: The Unleashed Impulse and the Analogon (Time-Image)***

Similarly, such kinetic maneuvers also provide partial answer to our questions above re aesthetic closures and images of thought, in that they impose a kind of containment on crystalline growth and extension, packaging their temporal disruptions, into discrete hermetically-sealed set-piece structures, into location-tied episodes—or Jameson's "scenotopes." Yet, from this perspective, what is the film but a random aggregate of episodes? If the American "crisis" cinema causes "actions" to "float in the situation" (Deleuze, *C2* 4), is not the fulfillment of this logic a film of 'floating situations,' our (post)modern image of thought, with its 'de-linked' episodic images? To forestall this outcome, the film requires some binding, interlinking force to organize these episodes, velocitize them into serialized movement. We'll find the beginnings of such a fix in our *analogon*, Walker/Marvin, for in the same fashion it/he crosses and volatizes our allegorical levels, it/he does similar work here by transversally joining this assortment of episodes through its/his plotting passage through their disparate locations and temporalities. At first blush, such a propulsive, metonymic function might seem to serve movement's commonsense world-building, restore through its extensive motion the scattered 'actions' and 'situations' of a fragmented middle class American reality. However, if we'll recall our Chapter 2 analogization of the drive(n) Walker to capital's extensive movements—its spatial fixes and flights, the ceaseless motivity and motility of profit—is it not also possible that precisely the opposite may be occurring here, that perhaps this proposed narrative bonding agent is the real fracturing force behind this dispersive episodic "crisis"? If so, we'll need to recruit an aesthetic

formation that captures not only drive's shattering operations but it's essentially mobile, motile nature. It's this latter quality then that allows us to return to our overworked capital/Deleuze homology, for counterintuitively, it's in the movement-image that we can perhaps locate a sub-image that will track the violent, splintering propulsion of the capitalistic drive: this image being the impulse. In other words, it's the impulse, rather than the time-image, that may better figure capital's violent disruptions of the cinematic image, more ably track allegorically its scattering of the movement/market system (which if we'll recall, allows the component images/moments—normally subordinated to action/circulation—to emerge cinematically in the first place, including the impulse).<sup>85</sup>

As Deleuze has it, “somehow ‘stuck’ between the affection-image and the action-image,” between the former's “idealism” and the latter's “realism,” the impulse-image acts as a kind of “degenerate affect” or “embryonic action” that:

is not an affect, because it is an impression in the strongest sense and not an expression. But neither is it like the feelings or emotions which regulate and deregulate behaviour. Now we must recognise that this new set is not a mere intermediary, a place of transition, but possesses a perfect consistency and autonomy, with the result that the action-image remains powerless to represent it, and the affection-image powerless to make it felt (*CI* 123, 134).

Obscure, to be sure. To save us time translating this opaque interpretive freight to our capital/drive destination, let's turn to Sulgi Lie, who first points up the impulse's Freudian/Lacanian resonances on two grounds: 1. the correspondence between the latter's libidinal location at the “frontier-line between the somatic and the mental” (Freud) and the impulse's liminal position between action and affect; and, 2. the impulse's insatiable (or

<sup>85</sup> Which is perhaps why we have time-image filmmakers like Duras, Bergman, Bresson, Wenders, and Oliveira popping up in *Cinema I*'s chapters on the affection-image; it's only with action's collapse that the remainder of movement's component ‘images’ can—if only momentarily—come into view.

perverted) fixation on “partial objects” and “fetishes” (58), which for Deleuze, manifests as a kind of filmed naturalism, one that constitutively depends on violence, a violence that’s reliably found in the American crime genres, be they the detective film, the gangster film, or noir (*CI* 124-28, 134). From there, Lie then goes on to link this insatiable, drive-driven violence—and thus the impulse-image—to “fundamental changes in the social formation of capitalism”:

“[d]riven by the compulsion of endless accumulation, the antiteleological temporality of late capitalism is haunted by what Hegel calls ‘bad infinity.’ The bad infinity of sheer quanta addition ( $n + 1$ ) forms the drive matrix of endless capitalist oversaturation, economic as well as psychic: ‘One fix after another, one purchase after another; for there is no end to the accumulation: ‘the lonely hour of the ‘last instance’ never arrives’ (Althusser)” (47, 55). “Oversaturation” then suggests totality which in the impulse’s signaleptic terms necessarily invokes its genetic element, “originary worlds,” which we can suppose capture aesthetically capital’s self-propagating matrix, rendering cinematically its deterritorializing forms, accumulative logics, and *horror vacui*.<sup>86</sup> And to complete this reading, we can tentatively offer that it’s not affection’s any-space-whatevers

<sup>86</sup> Some choice lines from Deleuze on “originary worlds” from *Cinema I* seem to bear out this take: 1. “It is recognisable by its formless character. It is a pure background, or rather a without-background, composed of unformed matter, sketches or fragments, crossed by non-formal functions, acts, or energy dynamisms which do not even refer to the constituted subjects” (*CI* 123); and, 2. on the originary worlds’ constitutive relation to milieu (or culture and society) and synchronous relation to time: “The originary world only exists and operates in the depths of a real [or defined] milieu, and is only valid through its immanence in this milieu, whose violence and cruelty it reveals. But at the same time the milieu only presents itself as real in its immanence in the originary world, it has the status of a ‘derived’ milieu, which receives a temporality as destiny from the originary world. Actions or modes of behaviour, people and objects, have to occupy the derived milieu, and are developed there, while impulses and fragments people the originary world which carries the whole along with it...this world does not exist independently of the determinate milieux, but conversely makes them exist with characteristics and features which come from above, or rather, from a still more terrible depth. The originary world is a beginning of the world, but also an end of the world, and the irresistible slope from one to the other; it carries the milieu along and also makes it into a closed world, absolutely closed off, or else opens it up on to an uncertain hope” (*CI* 125-26).



that put action's defined "situations" and "determined" "milieus" in "crisis," but rather the (capitalistic) impulse unchecked, unleashed. (Reading Copjec against Deleuze, we can see then that noir's "action-images" may be little more than representational rear-guard actions against the drive, against the pulsation of its impulse, a harried retreat that not uncoincidentally aligns with Deleuze's mid-century crisis in the action-image).

This take on the impulse's "parasite alien force" (Lie 47)—with Walker/Marvin as its propulsively blunt tip—seems to line up nicely with several of the stylistic features of the film: the Walker/Marvin spectacularizing opening shot, the ceaselessly invariant rhythm of the Movie House house-band's unbraking break, the pistoning clatter of Walker's "mechanical soldier quick-stepping through a Bauhaus corridor," and the universal brutality with which Walker "psychlessly" greets and wrecks all objects, people, and spaces in his heedless pursuit of money (Farber, "Cartooned" 591), fulfilling thereby it/his "law or destiny...to take possession through guile, but violently, of everything that it can in a given milieu, and if it can, to pass from one milieu to another" (Deleuze, *CI* 128-29). By keeping in mind that for Deleuze, "milieus" are associated with the action-image's "geographically and historically determinable" "states of things" and sites of "social actualization," we can therefrom conjecture that the impulse's insatiable invasion and exhaustion thereof uncannily mimes capitalism's deterritorialization and subsumption of all aspects of sociocultural life, such, that it may even be fair to claim that the "impulse-image" itself is responsible for the "crisis of the action image" (*CI* 123). But I digress; let's let Deleuze somewhat redundantly continue, but with the thrust of my allegorical take inflecting his observation that the impulse's "exploration, [its] exhaustion of milieux, is constant. Each time, the impulse [or capital] selects its fragment in a given milieu and yet it does not select it, it takes indiscriminately from what the milieu offers it, even if it then means going on further.

[Capital or] [t]he impulse must be exhaustive. It is not even sufficient to say that the impulse [or Capital] contents itself with what a milieu gives it or leaves to it. This contentment is not resignation, but a great joy in which [Capital or] the impulse rediscovers its power of choice, since it is, at the deepest level, the desire to change milieu, to seek a new milieu to explore, to dislocate, enjoying all the more what this milieu offers” (*CI* 129).<sup>87</sup> Which is all to say, that it’s

<sup>87</sup> If one wanted to, I think an interesting reconceptualization of post-noir/crime cinema could be performed along these drive/capital/genre system lines (in effect then an interpretive combination of allegorical levels 2 and 3 and the less-form centered aspects of 4); first, let’s have Copjec’s rendition of classic noir’s stylistic parameters of desire, how they coordinate “deep focus photography,” “‘expressionist’ lighting,” and “the empty, private spaces that compose the primary territory of noir”: “Through the use of wide angle lenses and low key lighting, these spaces are represented as deep and deceptive, as spaces in which all sorts of unknown entities may hide. One must distinguish between the genuine illusion of depth—which is a matter of desire, of not knowing something and wanting, therefore, to know more—and the ersatz representation of depth which is simply a matter of a technical skill in rendering, of verisimilitude—if one wants to avoid being misled by the shadows and depth of field that so famously characterize the noir image. The visual techniques of film noir are placed in the service of creating an artificial replication of depth in the image in order to make up for, to compensate for, the absence of depth in the diegetic spaces; that is, these techniques are placed in the service of a defense against the drive. The makeshift domain of illusion that they create erects a facade of nonknowledge and thus of depth, as a substitute for and protection against their dangerous, and potentially lethal, lack in the noir universe itself” (197). In other words, this folk-psychology and world-limning shadow-play are little more than artistic defenses against the drive, “ersatz representations of depth” simulating that which was lost to the *aphanisis* of desire, that is to say, the *civitas*, public space, and the Symbolic Order itself (Copjec 197). Next, with the multinational rationalization of the studio system, genre filmmaking was ejected from the psychologizing chiaroscuro of the studio-lot into the day-lit, consumer spaces of the postfordist exurban landscape, into the depthless plane of the Spectacle, a zone beholden to and constitutive of the drive—capitalism’s creatively destructive impulse. What marks this cinema is its hyperbolic baring of the drive’s violent deterritorializations, a violence of primitive accumulation (Carl Freedman), of violence displayed as impulse, an impulse represented through its “extract[ion] from the real modes of behavior current in [the] determinate milieu, from the passions, feelings and emotions which real men experience” therein (Deleuze, *CI* 124). Thus we see in films like *Prime Cut* (1972; Michael Ritchie), *The French Connection* (1971; William Friedkin); *The Getaway* (1972; Sam Peckinpah), *The Outfit* (1973; John Flynn), *Charley Varrick* (1973; Don Siegel), *Framed* (1975; Phil Karlson), and *The Friends of Eddie Coyle* (1973; Peter Yates), to name a few, noir’s “ersatz representations” of psychology and depth thrown off, crime cinema’s violent machinery laid bare, an exposure of this impulsive motor to the day-lit, location-shot (sub)urban spectacles of money, violence, and little else. These are not films about morality in other words, about good or bad and other such ethical binaries; their characters don’t

in the impulse perhaps we can locate the disruptive force that displaces action's dominance over the cinematic image, for it's in this sub-image we can find a violence that goes beyond mere *diegetic* action to strike at narrative itself, not only splitting agent from situation but shattering the sensory-motor-system as a whole, unleashing its composite images, bringing them to cinematic view, thereby making visible both relation's photographic equivalent and affection's raw temporalities—the conditions of possibility necessary for the time-image *tout court*.

***Countermove: The Axiomatic, Small-Form Vector, and Derivatization (Movement-Image)***

But is that all that's going on here? Certainly, in terms of content *qua* content, we'll find ample example of this "enjoyment" that "tears away, ruptures, and dislocates" (Deleuze, *CI* 128). And with regards to narrative form, there's clearly a very postmodern, time-image sort of episodic fragmentation, splitting simultaneously the anecdotal *fabula* into a variegated jumble of location-sealed events whilst mixing, in an almost stochastic fashion, said situated actions into a paratactic arrangement of containerized set-pieces (the Movie House brawl, the raid on Multiplex, the car lot con, the riverbed shootout, and so on). But the very fact these episodes

'develop,' have arcs, let alone 'grow.' To the extent there's alienation, it's of the Marxist variety, as what's left in a filmed world of full subsumption are nothing but monadal agents, blank points whose "passions, feeling and emotions" fluctuate and trend per the profit motive, the impulse, the propulsive drive of capital. As a consequence, narrative becomes a zero-sum reduction, an unswerving trajectory of violence that almost mechanically, algorithmically resolves itself per crime's Hobbesian first principle of last-man-standing. In short, what we see in this spectacular criminal naturalism, this depthless, cinema violence, is capital manifested as impulse, as drive, a manifestation that's perhaps, in cinema at least, the most hyperbolically direct representation of the "many factors...social, economic, political" giving rise to the "crisis of the action-image," the postmodern turn. That being said, whether you use my Deleuzian frame or not, somehow, always, production must be kept in view, otherwise one falls into crime fiction's recurrent ideological trap: "Money is always the motive of crime in detective fiction, yet the genre is wholly silent about the production: that unequal exchange between labour-power and wages which is the true source of social wealth. Like popular economics, detective fiction incites people to seek the secret of profit in the sphere of circulation, where it cannot be found... As for the factory—it is innocent, and thus free to carry on" (Moretti 139).

come to an end—are themselves contained in other words—and are several times joined by time-subordinating relinkages (as we saw with the affect-remediating work of dream and recollection) suggests that there may be larger action-powered counterforces operating metonymically in the film’s formal narrative logics, a movement toward movement perhaps, a rehabilitative return toward capitalism’s circulating agential realisms. Not surprisingly, Deleuze & Guattari have a term for such systemic recuperations—the axiomatic—whose broad formal ambit should as well allow its application to matters aesthetic, to functions poetic. As the pair conceives it, the “international capitalist axiomatic” operates through a polymorphous multiplicity of isomorphic forms:

the [capitalist] axiomatic deals directly with purely functional elements and relations whose nature is not specified, and which are immediately realized in highly varied domains simultaneously... The immanent axiomatic finds in the domains it moves through so many models, termed models of realization... For models of realization, though varied, are supposed to be isomorphic with regard to the axiomatic they effectuate; however, this isomorphy, concrete variations considered, accommodates itself to the greatest of formal differences. Moreover, a single axiomatic seems capable of encompassing polymorphic models, not only when it is not yet “saturated,” but with those models as integral elements of its saturation (Deleuze and Guattari *TP* 454-55).

•   •   •

Addition, subtraction. The axioms of capitalism are obviously not theoretical propositions, or ideological formulas, but operative statements that constitute the semiological form of Capital and that enter as component parts into assemblages of production, circulation, and consumption. The axioms are primary statements, which do not derive from or depend upon another statement... There is a tendency within capitalism continually to add more axioms (Deleuze and Guattari *TP* 461-62).

And what these “operative statements” work on are capitalism’s endless propagation of deterritorialization, performing subsumptive reterritorializations thereon:

Wage increases and improvements in the standard of living are realities, but realities that derive from a given supplementary axiom that capitalism is always capable of adding to its axiomatic in terms of an enlargement of its limits: let’s create the New Deal; let’s cultivate and recognize strong unions; let’s promote

participation, the single class; let's take a step toward Russia, which is taking so many toward us; etc. But within the enlarged reality that conditions these islands, exploitation grows constantly harsher, lack is arranged in the most scientific of ways, final solutions of the "Jewish problem" variety are prepared down to the last detail, and the Third World is organized as an integral part of capitalism. The reproduction of the interior limits of capitalism on an always wider scale has several consequences: it permits increases and improvements of standards at the center, it displaces the harshest forms of exploitation from the center to the periphery, but also multiplies enclaves of overpopulation in the center itself, and easily tolerates the so-called socialist formations. (It is not kibbutz-style socialism that troubles the Zionist state, just as it is not Russian socialism that troubles world capitalism.) There is no metaphor here: the factories are prisons, they do not resemble prisons, they are prisons. Everything in the system is insane: this is because the capitalist machine thrives on decoded and deterritorialized flows; it decodes and deterritorializes them still more, but while causing them to pass into an axiomatic apparatus that combines them, and at the points of combination produces pseudo codes and artificial reterritorializations (Deleuze and Guattari, *AO* 373-74).

And if "an axiom will be found even for the language of dolphins," then there's no reason we shouldn't expect to find axioms in art, aesthetic procedures that "effect[] reterritorializations...by reviving the signifying unity" (Deleuze and Guattari, *AO* 238, 327-28).<sup>88</sup> And given the axiomatic's interpellative hinging on private property and the contractual, property-owning Oedipal subject,<sup>89</sup> we should expect also our cinematic axiomatic to somehow rehabilitate action

<sup>88</sup> A claim with which Deleuze and Guattari would seem to agree, at least with regards to painting: "The codes and their signifiers, the axiomatics and their structures, the imaginary figures that come to occupy them as well as the purely symbolic relationships that gauge them, constitute properly aesthetic molar formations that are characterized by goals, schools, and periods. They relate these aesthetic formations to greater social aggregates, finding in them a field of application, and everywhere enslave art to a great castrating machine of sovereignty...It is here that art accedes to its authentic modernity, which simply consists in liberating what was present in art from its beginnings, but was hidden underneath aims and objects, even if aesthetic, and underneath recordings or axiomatics: the pure process that fulfills itself, and that never ceases to reach fulfillment as it proceeds—art as 'experimentation'" (*AO* 370-71).

<sup>89</sup>Deleuze and Guattari: "It is, in fact, the form of private property that conditions the conjunction of the decoded flows, which is to say their axiomatization in a system where the flows of the means of production, as the property of the capitalists, is directly related to the flow of so-called free labor, as the "property" of the workers (so that the State restrictions on the substance or the content of private property do not at all affect this form). It is also the form of private property that constitutes the center of the factitious reterritorializations of capitalism. And finally, it is this form that produces the images filling the capitalist field of immanence, "the" capitalist, "the"

and its circulative exchange of agential realism, find some way to reorganize the episodic fragments into movement, for, as Deleuze claims (without elaboration), that despite the “crisis of the traditional image of the cinema,” the “great genres of [the action-image], the psycho-social film, the film noir, the Western, the American comedy, collapse and yet maintain their empty frame”—“people,” in other words, “continue to make SAS [large-form] and ASA [small-form] films: the greatest commercial successes always take that route” (*CI* 205, 206, 211). Which begs the question, what forms might this axiomatized post-“crisis” action cinema take on, especially in films like *Point Blank*?

Deleuze provides a clue in his discussion of the “neo-western”—Peckinpah, Mann, Boetticher—where he identifies a mutation in the genre proper, a transformation from large-form to small-form action-image. “Borrow[ing] the small-form directly,” the neo-western abandons the “organic representations,” “encompassers,” and “respiration spaces” of the large-form for:

a skeleton-space, with missing intermediaries, heterogeneous elements which jump from one to the other, or which interconnect directly. It is no longer an ambient space, but a vectorial space, a vector-space, with temporal distances. It is no longer the encompassing stroke of a great contour, but the broken stroke of a line of the universe, across the holes. The vector is the sign of such a line. It is the genetic sign of the new action-image, whilst the index was the sign of its composition (Deleuze, *CI* 168).

As the genetic sign of this ‘new’ axiomatized action-image, the vector works to narrativize a broken, fragmented Whole; it manages to secure storytelling’s passage across the postmodern

worker, etc. In other terms, capitalism indeed implies the collapse of the great objective determinate representations, for the benefit of production as the universal interior essence, but it does not thereby escape the world of representation. It merely performs a vast conversion of this world, by attributing to it the new form of an infinite subjective representation” (*AO* 303). So, through its “social axiomatic”—i.e. the “reterritorializations and representations” of Oedipus, the family, psychoanalysis, (neo)liberalism—capitalism axiomatizes people into “capital’s agents,” into property owners, into buyers and sellers of labor and commodities, into workers and capitalists” (Deleuze and Guattari, *AO* 320).

scattering of “scenotopes” (Jameson), navigates its “brutal ellipses [and] sudden reversals of...situation” to give rise to a small-form series of “successive situations...form[ing] in turn with one another, and with the critical instants which give rise to them, a broken line whose path is unpredictable, although necessary and rigorous...like a knotted rope, twisting itself at each take, at each action, at each event” (Deleuze, *CI* 166-68). Interestingly, Deleuze description of this vectorizing tethering at first blush seems to replicate his description of the impulse, for he identifies in the former a similar deterritorializing ethos, one of breaking, of fragmentation in which “[v]iolence becomes the principal impetus, and gains from this as much in intensity as in unexpectedness” (*CI* 167). But critically, in vectorization, this ripping and tearing of the cinematic whole into a disjointed dispersion of “independent” “locations,” “events,” “actions,” and “parts”—into discrete, enclosed episodes and images in other words—is followed by a “bringing together” of the “heterogeneous critical instants” (of affection, of perception, of relation...), which are then, in a last reformation, constellated into a sequential, connect-the-dots sort of narrative arrangement, into a “skeletal space” in which storytelling becomes a kind of moment-to-moment discovery of extension, of action’s arbitrary, headlong plunging into a contingent, “swing[ing]” simultaneity of “logically very different...and opposed situations” (Deleuze, *CI* 166-68). In short, the vector reconstitutes the fractured narrative on action’s terms, but fragily, uncertainly, without the Whole-making fixity of the large-form (which in mapping terms favors the objective pole).<sup>90</sup> In other words, the vector reconstitutes the impulse-shattered

<sup>90</sup> Deleuze fleshes out this “skeletal” storytelling here: “This is because the action can never be determined by and in a preceding situation—it is, on the contrary, the situation which flows progressively from the action—Boetticher used to say that his characters are not defined by a ‘cause’, but by what they do to defend it. And, when Godard analysed form in Anthony Mann, he extracted a formula ASA’, which he opposed to the large form SAS’: the mise-en-scene ‘consisted in discovering at the same time as specifying, while, in a classical Western, the mise-en-scene consists in discovering, then in specifying’” (*CI* 167); “The more the fragments thus

whole, renders its aggregate of images unto action via this second axiomatizing moment, a formation of movement that Deleuze nominates the “line of the universe.”<sup>91</sup> This infrastructural “line” imposes a stop-gap order of action on the impulse’s fragmentation of the large-form’s organic totality into a heap of independent “totalities [ensembles] of locations, men and [objects]” (Deleuze, *CI* 168), putting in narrative file this heap of independent episodes—makes it “small” (form) namely, but “small” not due to the discrete, short film duration of its episodic fragments but through the “connexion of the fragments which compose it, from the placing in

defined are the process of constitution of the space, the less it is a fragmented space: the space is not constituted by vision, but by progression, the unit of progression being the area or the fragment” (*CI* 193). I should also note here that implicitly, one could draw from this discussion of “neo-westerns” an impulsive/vectorial take on the infinitely elastic post- (or neo-) noir crime film. Regarding such a take (and really, my impulse/vector argument generally), at the level of content and humanistic theme (levels 1 and 2), we should offer for the record several resemblances between *Point Blank* and Deleuze’s “neo-Western”: (1) “Not only has the fundamental group disappeared in favour of increasingly incongruous and mixed makeshift groups but the latter, in proliferating, have lost the clear distinction which they still had in Hawks: there are so many relations and such complex alliances between men in the same group and those in different groups that they are scarcely distinguishable and their oppositions constantly shift” (*CI* 167); (2) “Thus, failings, doubts, fear no longer have the same sense as they do in the organic representation: they are no longer the steps—even painful ones—which fill the gap, through which the hero rises to the demands of the global situation, actualises his own power and becomes capable of such a great action. For there is no longer any grandiose action at all, even if the hero has retained extraordinary technical qualities. At the limit, he is one of the ‘losers’, as Peckinpah presents them: ‘they have no façade, they have not a single illusion left: thus they represent disinterested adventure, from which no advantage is to be gained except the pure satisfaction of remaining alive.’ They have kept nothing of the American dream, they have only kept their lives, but at each critical instant, the situation to which their action gives rise can rebound against them, making them lose the one thing they have left” (*CI* 167-68).

<sup>91</sup>Deleuze also identifies this vectorial ‘line’ in Mizoguchi, comparing it (somewhat dubiously) to the “wrinkled” or “broken” “stroke” from Japanese calligraphy. Aside from its soft orientalism, the image works well to give an idea of this vectorial space imposed by Mizoguchi and the neo-Westerns. Interestingly though, rather than the Walker/Marvin *analagon*’s joining—or montage—of narrative episodes, in Mizoguchi, there are long “extravagant camera movements,” “sequence,” “tracking” and “rolling” shots “unravel[ing] the successive fragments of space, to which are nevertheless attached vectors of a different direction...ensur[ing] a sort of parallelism of vectors with different orientations and thus constitute[ing] a connexion of heterogeneous fragments of space, giving a very special homogeneity to the space thus constituted” (*CI* 194-95).



parallel of the different [episodes] (which retain their differences), from the homogeneity which is only formed progressively” (Deleuze, *CI* 194). It is this axiomatizing, vectorial line then that “connects or links up the heterogeneous elements, while keeping them heterogeneous,” which “unites” their impulsive shattering not into the large-form’s objective, organic “whole,” but into a self-propagating, trajectory of equalizing narrative actions, actions whose subject-bound mobility bespeaks small-form limitation as much as triumph (Deleuze, *CI* 194-95).<sup>92</sup>

This desperate dive into action’s circulation, back into a kind of micro-transactional conception of narrative exchange and reconciliation, can perhaps usefully be compared to financial derivatives, for the former’s gathering, binding, and extensive narrativization of diverse

<sup>92</sup>Another one for the Deleuze freaks: to build on footnote 78’s discursus on the reflection-image, we should add that Deleuze identifies Hawk’s westerns and their deployment of “figures of inversion” (as opposed to Eisenstein’s “figures of attraction”) as a transitional, middle-position between the traditionally large-form Western and vectorized, neo-Western small-form (*CI* 164-66). Ronald Bogue offers a succinct and lucid summary of this “topological deformation” (Deleuze, *CI* 166): “Whereas in the standard Large Form Western an englobing milieu shapes the action of a coherent collectivity, in Hawks’s Westerns the milieu tends to lose its organic vitality—a purely functional prison in *Rio Bravo*, a diagram-like town in *Rio Lobo*—and the group engaged in action often is a simple makeshift alliance of individuals pursuing a temporary task. In the Large Form Western, the milieu offers a disruptive challenge to the ordinary activities and plans of the community, whereas in Hawks, ‘the unexpected, the violent, the event arrive from the interior, while the exterior is instead the place of customary or premeditated action, in a curious inversion of the outside and the inside’ [*CI* 166]. Outside and inside take on interchangeable functions, a situation that allows a conversion of one into the other, and hence a transformation of Large and Small Forms through a play of inversions. Throughout Hawks’s films Deleuze finds ‘the constant mechanism of inversions’ [*CI* 166], inversions of male-female and adult-child roles (in the comedies especially), as well as inversions in high speech–low speech, love-money, and so on. Inversion is common in burlesque and comedy, but in Hawks ‘the mechanisms of inversion rise to the state of an autonomous and generalized figure’ [*CI* 183], though precisely how this autonomy is achieved Deleuze does not specify further” (Bogue 95). Given our discussion of relation’s general photographic equivalent, the impulse/drive, the axiomatizing small-form vector (as well as our forthcoming paragraph on derivative commensuration), and even the allegorical content discussed in Chapter 2, it should take no great feat of interpretive translation to render the above motifs of lost collectives and disrupted communities, unexpected violence, random events, and interchangeable (or inverted) locations, people, and objects per the capital inflected terms herein.

and discrete spaces and temporalities (be they that of affect, action, the impulse, or the descriptions and narrations of the time-image proper) is not dissimilar to said instrument's simultaneous "commensurat[ion] [of] the values of different forms of financial assets" and "facilitation of continuity across different forms of money": its "facilitation," in short, "of inter-temporal and spatial efficiency" (Bryan and Rafferty 134, 136).<sup>93</sup> Commensuration is key,

<sup>93</sup>What is a derivative? In the most dictionary sense of the term, we can describe it as "a transmission of some value from a source to something else, an attribute of that original expression that can be combined with like characteristics, a variable factor that can move in harmony or dissonance with others" (R. Martin 85). Meanwhile, "in the technical sense that obtains within financial services, derivatives are conventionally understood as contracts to exchange a certain amount of something at a determinate future time at an agreed-upon price" (R. Martin 85-86). Jameson offers an imaginary example of such a transaction borrowed from Edward LiPuma and Benjamin Lee: "a US corporation contract[s] to provide ten million cell phones to a Brazilian subsidiary of a South African firm. The device's interior architecture will be produced by a German-Italian enterprise, its casings by a Mexican manufacturer, and a Japanese firm will provide other components. Here we have at least six different currencies, their exchange rates in perpetual flux, as is the standard norm in globalization today. The risk of unforeseen variation between these exchange rates will then be underwritten by a kind of insurance—one that combines maybe six or seven different insurance contracts; and it is this entire package which will make up the 'financial instrument' which is this unique derivative in question. Obviously the situation (and the instrument') will always in reality be far more complicated. But what is clear is that, even taking the old-fashioned futures market on crops as a kind of simplified and primitive ancestor, there can never be another derivative quite like this one in its structure and requirements. Indeed it is more like a unique event than a contract—something with a stable structure and a juridical status" (Jameson, *AS* 117-18). Given this endless compositional potentiality, these hedges and bets and bets on hedges and hedges on bets in theory and practice can factor any and all types of risks, "from exchange and interest rates [fluctuations] to changes in temperature and the weather," really, any and every stage of capital, whether production, distribution, exchange, or even consumption can be derivatized, "doing to capital what [it] itself has been doing to concrete forms of money and productive conditions like, labor, raw materials, and physical plants" (R. Martin 86, 89). Consequently, with this adequation of diverse particularities, of multiplicities of risks and futures, comes a related commutation of values, of manifold temporalities: "The core operation of derivatives is to bind the future to the present through a range of contractual opportunities and to make all manner of capitals across disparate spheres of place, sector, and characteristic commensurate with one another. In this respect, derivatives provide some of the anchoring functions of currency sovereignty once afforded by gold and dollar standards. They introduce a highly dynamic but comprehensively convertible measure of prices across time and space so as to stand as a form of metacapital" (R. Martin 88-89). And given capital's mediation of social relations, we can expect a similar commensurating transformation of the latter, call it globalism if you like, yet one whose

because it's this process that allows the derivative to relate its bundled masses of contractual futures, calculated risks, variegated values, and hedges and bets on alternate futures—each themselves qualitatively different ‘derivatives’ of various moments and kinds of money, capital, and assets, both financial and physical (like labor and inventory, for instance)—into one discrete package of commodified exchange, of homogenized, quantified value. And, like the vector's subordinating securing (or securitization?) of the impulse-scattered images—especially those of relation's freed photographic equivalent and the diversity of affection's raw temporal ‘workings’—the derivative also axiomatically rehabilitates the money-form,<sup>94</sup> Marx's mediator of social relations, from its free-wheeling, floating lines of deterritorializing financial flight (Bryan and Rafferty 153-54).<sup>95</sup> And with that, we can now spell out this allegorical relation,

interrelatedly adequated elements maintain their differential, disjunctive particularity; Jameson again on this “locus of incommensurabilities”: “multiple nationalities and labour processes, multiple technologies, incomparable forms of living labour and ways of life, not to speak of the multiple currencies on which we have primarily insisted[:]. . . a host of utterly distinct and unrelated realities are in the derivative momentarily brought into relationship with each other. Difference relates, as I have put it elsewhere: the derivative is the very paradigm of heterogeneity, even the heterogeneity at the heart of that homogeneous process we call capitalism. Indeed, I am not far from believing that the incredible success in our time of the term heterogeneity itself derives from just such amalgams, in which different dimensions—dimensions not only quantitatively distinct but qualitatively incommensurable: different spaces, different populations, different production processes (manual, intellectual or immaterial), different technologies, different histories—are brought into relationship with each other, however fleetingly. The real, we have become convinced, has become radically heterogeneous, if not incommensurate” (Jameson, *AS* 118-19).

<sup>94</sup> Taking this clause and the last sentence together, if, as Dick Bryan and Michael Rafferty argue, that “the effect of derivatives is to merge the categories of capital and money: to bring liquidity to the market for financial assets, making all assets more like money, and to bring capital-like attributes to money at the extreme, presenting money as itself capital. . . break[ing] down the differentiation between the spheres of production of commodities (the so-called ‘real’ economy) and the money economy,” then, per our cinema/capital analogy, the axiomatizing vector works to render actionable/exchangeable both movement's production and time's speculative economies” (153).

<sup>95</sup> Bryan and Rafferty argue the derivative acts as late capital's new money-form, as the general equivalent of the former general equivalent, as Martin's “metacapital” in short: “In this role as money-in-general, the distinctive characteristics of derivatives are twofold. First, they are

more concretely break down how the passage from movement to time back to axiomatized movement works as a kind of allegorically ‘derivative’ effect of late capital’s financializing nascence: (1) both have a systole and diastole movement, a moment of decomposition followed by one of reconstitution; (2) in derivatization, this movement works over capital along Fordist lines, dismantling it into distinct elements, qualities, and attributes—each with their own temporal character—followed by their harmonizing liquidation into parcelized, tradable generic value<sup>96</sup>; (3) meanwhile, in our Deleuzian three-step, we have an impulsive propulsion fragmenting systems of cinematic sociality and form, scattering movement’s whole into the temporally vestibular realms of relation and affect, into a potentially liberating dispersion that’s soon coopted, lassoed, herded back into action’s corral by the axiomatizing harness of the vector.<sup>97</sup> So, with the derivative’s axiomatizing logic, i.e., its shredding, binding, and blending movements, perhaps we have a causal explanation for the film’s episodic images: namely, a (super)structural response that shapes representation per “the financial dynamics of derivatives,” turning the film into a plotted series of Jameson’s “singularity-event[s]” (Jameson, *AS* 121, 123)—vectorized, packaged, and axiomatized episodic totalities strung together by the tethering

important both as particular forms of money (particular contracts for particular purposes) and, in aggregate, as a system of derivatives. They are a concrete universal equivalent form of monetary value. Second, as paper money they are self-mediating and self-referential...but their specific capacity as commodity money is to be self-transmutable, for this is the basis of (competitive) commensuration. In this sense, they have a universal as well as self-referential dimension” (153).

<sup>96</sup> For discussion of the derivative’s Fordist operations on capital’s “constituent elements,” see page 126 of Randy Martin, Michael Rafferty, and Dick Bryan. “Financialization, Risk and Labour.” *Competition and Change*, vol. 12, no. 2, June 2008, pp. 120-132, doi: 10.1179/102452908X314849

<sup>97</sup>I’m not interested in pursuing this further here, but it might usefully be argued that Bordwell’s “intensified continuity” could be fruitfully analyzed per this logic, that is, as an axiomatizing/derivatization of the Classic/IMR mode and style of cinematic production.

tread of our Walker analogon.<sup>98</sup> But, given the Deleuzian coordinates of this paper, we should note here that Jameson observes of these “ephemeral one-time effects” that “[w]e have here rather to do with an inquiry into the status of time in a regime of spatiality; and this will mean, not Bergson’s reified or spatialized temporality [of the movement-image], but rather something closer to the abolition, or at least the repression, of historicity”—so, the time-image in other words, *durée*, but a *durée* that we will soon see cannot be contained without some torsion and warping to movement’s axiomatized totality, its transformation into an “unrepeatable event in time of some sort” with “a unique structure that may come together just once” and only for a fleeting, fugacious moment (Jameson, *AS* 120, 121, 123).

***Move: The Failed Derivative/Axiomatic/Vector, Time as a Series, and Gests (Time-Image)***

But, and this is a big ‘but,’ as we know from 2008, and are presently witnessing under COVID quarantine (a true “terminal crisis”), derivatives and their commensurating totalizations of values, risks, and futures—“[a]ll futures are fictive...at the same time that they are inexorably and constitutively unpredictable, unanticipatable and contingent in their unforeseeability” (Jameson, *AS* 121)—seem, invariably, to fail; here’s Randy Martin:

<sup>98</sup>Another speculative aside I want to leave parenthesized: this sort of serialized episodism might explain the frequency of what Adrian Martin calls “narrative plateaus” and “descriptive idylls” in streaming (especially prestige) television, his terms for an approach—taken from art cinema (i.e. the time-image)—that treats each “episode” as “a plateau, a terrain to be patiently explored, in terms of mood, atmosphere, details of landscape, and décor. And then, at a certain moment, after a somewhat repetitive set of variations on each plateau, there [is]...a hook, turn, or twist (as screenwriters like to say), and a displacement [is]...engineered, a relocation to a new place, and a new or reconfigured set of character relationships. And at the end, it look[s] like many more such episodes could follow” (22). It’s possible this open, potentially endless “plateau structure” might be a solution to or an accommodation of the seeming impetus for infinite iteration that we will soon see escapes vectoral axiomatization.

For all their powers of integrating an ever-enlarging conception of what can be considered a source of value and how price can be represented across wide spans of time and space, derivatives deliver neither equilibrium of value nor stability of price. The conceit of the system metaphor is that the relation of parts to whole is known beforehand and that each retains its integrity, which fixes its position, interest, and contribution. Derivatives, on the other hand, disassemble and bundle attributes of commodities, thereby removing the presumption of functionality upon which the machine-like metaphor of system is based. While prices are formed in futures, options, and swap markets, those prices always are treated not only provisionally but as persistently falsifiable...Crucial in this account is the relation between contestability and unknowability, for it is the self-generating volatility that creates a measure for what cannot be known...As opposed to the fixed relation between part and whole that informs the system metaphysic, the derivative acts as the movement between these polarities that are rendered unstable through its very contestation of accurate price and fundamental value — in effect the truth of the commodity and that of the market which economy served to bind together (90-91).

What the derivative constitutively can't but help giving us then—with its “lateral orientation,” its “[un]fixed relation between part and whole,” its variegated “collection of attributes”—is an “ontology of capital that is not [O]ne,” not “[W]hole,” but one of “boundaries” between “bodies,” between “future and present, of what is near and far,” “significantly eroded...[their] putative contents...[what's] inside and outside...substantially transformed”; it gives us, in short, the open, spatialized totalities of the time-image, Deleuze's (post)modern image of thought (R. Martin 98).<sup>99</sup> And likewise, in Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the axiom, we witness a similar temporal slippage, in which “capitalism is constantly escaping on all sides. Its productions, its art, and its science form decoded and deterritorialized flows that do not merely submit to the corresponding axiomatic, but cause some of their currents to pass through the mesh of the axiomatic, underneath the recordings and the reterritorializations” (AO 375). And in “art,”

<sup>99</sup> Deleuze: “The direct time-image effectively has as noosigns [or images of thought] the irrational cut between non-linked (but always relinked) images, and the absolute contact between non-totalizable, asymmetrical outside and inside. We move with ease from one to the other, because the outside and the inside are the two sides of the limit as irrational cut, and because the latter, no longer forming part of any sequence, itself appears as an autonomous outside which necessarily provides itself with an inside” (C2 278).

specifically cinematic art, we find such “escaping” as well, for even the vector can reach a point where “all the lines of the universe, allow[] a reality to surge forth which is no longer anything but disoriented, disconnected...revealing [thereby] a chaotic reality that [is] no longer anything but dispersive” (Deleuze, *CI* 195-96).

For it’s in this very structure of episodization—an episodization, we are assuming, that’s escaped its axiomatizing vectorial shackles—that we can perhaps locate Deleuze’s other, more future-orientated “narrative” structure of time, what he calls “time as a series,” which not only embraces the derivative form’s relational intermixing of fictive futures, its “powers of the false,”<sup>100</sup> but unbinds them to allow “a becoming as potentialization,” as a series of powers and intensities, abandoning “external exterior succession” for a “reign of 'incommensurables,’” of episodic images separated by “irrational cuts: this is to say that the cut no longer forms part of one or the other image, of one or the other sequence that it separates and divide...The interval is set free, the interstice becomes irreducible and stands on its own”—the “succession or sequence becomes a series” (*C2* 275, 277).<sup>101</sup> (We should note here that movement, our “classic” image of

<sup>100</sup>Another name for Jameson’s “fictive” derivative futures, these “powers of the false” sequence in aleatory fashion “impossibles”; Ronald Bogue explains: in impossibility, “[two] worlds are possible, but the two are not mutually compatible, or ‘compossible’; hence, they are ‘impossible,’ and it is ‘only the impossible that proceeds from the possible; and the past can be true without being necessarily true’ [C2 130]. But what if impossibles belong to the same world, as is the case with simultaneous peaks of the present[,], coexisting sheets of the past[, and the becoming futurity of serialized time]? Then we have a world of ‘impossible presents related to not-necessarily true pasts’ [C2 131], and in such a world, narrative falsifies the truths of commonsense space and time. It becomes ‘a power of the false [une puissance du faux] that replaces and dethrones the form of truth, since it poses the simultaneity of impossible presents or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts’ [C2 131]” (148).

<sup>101</sup> Unlike the order of time’s sheets of “coexistences or simultaneities,” as a direct time-image, the series “is a matter...of the intrinsic quality of that which becomes in time,” the “empirical sequence” “transformed” into “a sequence of images, which tend in themselves in the direction of a limit, which orients and inspires the first sequence (the before), and gives way to another sequence organized as series which tends in turn towards another limit (the after). The before and the after are then no longer successive determinations of the course of time, but the two sides of

thought, therefore maps axiomatized, commonsense thought: “Time as measure of movement thus ensured a general system of commensurability, in this double form of the interval and the whole. This was the splendour of the classical image” (Deleuze, *C2* 277) (Emphasis added). And for lack of a better moment, we can leave here some more precedential backtracking, specifically that the past-orientated formation of chronosigns—the “order of time,” the “transformations of sheets in Resnais”—also operates on a principle of “relinkage...through parceling,” of episodes and images (Deleuze, *C2* 278)). But rather than episodic segments of plot, what’s serialized here are what Deleuze calls “categories,” powers and intensities in other words,<sup>102</sup> with their “limits and transformations, their degrees of power” measured in more practical, more descriptive terms by “relations of the image” like “characters, states of one character, positions of the author, attitudes of bodies, as well as colours, aesthetic genres, psychological faculties, political powers, logical or metaphysical categories,” and so on (*C2* 276).<sup>103</sup>

In a sense, we’ve already presented the film as a serial decomposition and recomposition of the movement/capital assemblage, but that formulation perhaps cleaves too closely to the

the power, or the passage of the power to a higher power”—a “burst of series” (Deleuze, *C2* 275).

<sup>102</sup> “Every sequence of images forms a series in that it moves in the direction of a category in which it is reflected, the passage of one category to another determining a change of power” (Deleuze, *C2* 276).

<sup>103</sup> Jameson observes of postmodern narrative a tendency to deploy episodization to encircle, divide, and discharge the serialized procession of “affects” and “qualities” into a unified aesthetic whole: “I suggest that it is the concept of the episode that governs the solutions we have in mind here, offering the possibility of transforming what might otherwise simply be called fragments, parts, the illusions of a lost unity, and so forth, into forms at least aesthetically intelligible...[into] dialectical unit[ies] of fragment and infinite extension” (*AI* 320); yet, from the perspective of affect and its endlessly generative becomings, this capacity for “infinite extension” puts in question the “identification of the episodes as components of any kind of identifiable whole” (*AI* 325). Without much contrivance then, we can likely chalk up axiomatized action’s aesthetic porousness to this philosophical contradiction—both perhaps manifestations of derivatized totality, *mutatis mutandis*.



empirical, axiomatizing sequencing of containment enforced by the vector's episodic storytelling. Instead, one must look to a signaletic layer less susceptible to rigid division, one that reliably escapes the causal, hermetically-sealed separations of action—a phase-shift, or dissolve then, rather than a cut or break. Categorical progression will obtain then—allegorically—outside the sensory-motor schema; it will over- or underlay the succession of narrative images as a separate sequencing or progression that may or may not vertically interact with the story *qua* story; and, it will be carried or propelled by the disposition and distributions of sound and shots, the montage, *mise en scène* and staging, and the materiality and movements of bodies, objects, and images—that is to say, style and form apart from storytelling, apart from plot (Deleuze, *C2* 275-77). And this is true especially for a film like *Point Blank*, where, as we've seen, substantial portions of the audio (voiceovers harmonizing impulsive footsteps, repetitious club music), the cutting (flashback and dreams re-“ordering” the Resnaisian “sheets”), and shot breakdowns (traditional stuff, aside from some localized gimping, some Antonioni-esque dead-time pepped up with busyness, motion) work to axiomatize the signaletic material, halting Deleuze's serialized cinematic becoming. So, unlike a Godard film, we can't look to intertitles or direct address to cue categorical transformation; rather, to locate in the filmic image capital's postmodern transformation—our allegorical level 4—we must look to signaletic layers or infrastructures that can signal such categorical progression indirectly, that ‘gesture’ toward it despite their simultaneous load-bearing, *fabula*-tive functions.

In his “relation of the images” list offered above, Deleuze identifies one such ‘gestural’ material that may be of use: “attitudes of the bodies.” In such corporeal cinematic configurations, “all the components of the image come together on the body”—“story, plot, action, [and] even space” are “undone” “to get to attitudes as categories which put time [or becoming] into the

body,” creating a “cinema of the body” in which “the character is reduced to his own bodily attitudes, and what [must emerge] is the *gest*, that is a ‘spectacle,’ a theatricalization or a dramatization that is valid for all plot” or character (C2 191-193). This “*gest*” then, with its “development of attitudes,” its “direct theatricalization of bodies,” would seem to buy us the required signaleptic indirection, for it does “not depend on a previous story, on a preexisting plot, or on an action-image” and “takes place independently of any role.” Meanwhile, its Brechtian valence also nets us a means to translate capital’s transformations into the movements and materiality of the body, as the “*gest*” for Brecht always means a “social *gest*,” a striking gesture that mediates social relations as “attitudes,” binding and bringing them to the fore in a “link or knot,” revealing “their co-ordination [and disjunction] with one another” (Deleuze, C2 192). And if these “social,” bodily “attitudes” for Deleuze can convey “categories of the mind”—be they “bio-vital, metaphysical, aesthetic”—then there’s no reason why the *gest*, this “thread which goes from one category to another,” can’t itself bear, can’t itself mediate the great mediator itself—capital (C2 194). Therefore, if the serializing *gest*, with its carnal attitudes, its social categories, can “introduce reflection into the image itself,” then there’s no reason why a film can’t think, can’t cogitate, can’t *map* through its particular distribution of the sensible the movements and transformations of capital itself—gesturally form, in other words, “images of thought,” cognitive maps (Deleuze, C2 186).

And if “[l]andscapes are mental states, just as mental states are cartographies, both crystallized in each other, geometrized, mineralized,” then we can expand this sort of serialized transmutation to all aspects of the diegetic image, find gestural transformations in not only the bodies of *Point Blank*, but its objects and locations (Deleuze, C2 206-07). For the film, as Farber notes, is “hardly about syndicate heist artists, nightclub owners, or a vengeful quest by a crook

named Walker (Marvin) for the \$93,000 he earned on the ‘Alcatraz drop,’ but rather “a strangely unhealthy tactility”:

All physical matter seems to be coated: buildings are encased in grids and glass, rooms are lined with marble and drapes, girls are sculpted by body stockings, metallic or velour-like materials. A subtle pornography seems to be the point, but it is obtained by the camera slithering like an eel over statuesque women from ankle across thigh around hips to shoulder and down again. Repeatedly the camera moves back to beds, but not for the purposes of exposing flesh or physical contact. What are shown are vast expanses of wrinkled satin, deep dark shadows, glistening silvery highlights. The bodies are dead, under sedation, drugged, or being moved in slow-motion stylistic embraces. Thus, there’s a kind of decadent tremor within the image as though an unseen lecherous hand were palming, sliding over not quite human humans. It’s a great movie for being transfixed on small mountains which slowly become recognizable as an orange shoulder or a hip with a silvery mini-skirt. In a sickening way, the human body is used as a material to wrinkle the surface of the screen (“Cartooned” 590-91).

This passage does a fantastic job capturing the film’s sensual qualities (or ‘materiality,’ I suppose, since we’re doing film theory here), but I think Farber has his last point backwards, that it’s not the screen that’s “wrinkled” by the “human body,” but rather vice-versa: it’s the “not quite human humans,” as well the vehicles, consumer goods, and architecture of the film, that’s rendered manipulable “material,” “surface,” and “flesh”—a singular substance of Ballardian interfaces and contact sites, sights to be roiled, flung, and distorted—by the “screen”: our photographic general equivalent. What we see then is deterritorialization’s escape from the vectorial axiomatic, a shunting of raw, de-derivatized fictions and futures (of value) from the narrative layer to the more figural (Lyotard), non-linguistic strata of the image, externalizing the filmic/capital substance, extruding it as a coating that dissolves the *mise en scène* into a commodified graphism expressive of the turbulent and violent motions of capital’s transforming, mid-century metabolism. It’s important to observe, however, that said motions’ manifestations never follow any sort of coherent sequence or logic; they emerge rather as eruptions in the

storytelling topography, rumblings and quakings to the narrative surface from a systemic totality beneath, yet anterior to the film's aesthetic, Whole-making closures.

As such, in this regard, it might be better to view the film as a four-dimensional object of sorts, a holographic block of matter, color, and sound, as well slices and intervals of time, that one can freely travel through in any which direction (a modality of viewing the filmic object we can gain a diminished glimpse of via today's streaming slider and chapter-menu affordances). From this vantage, we can identify key moments where this spectacularizing "coating" is disgorged into the filmic image, spurted across the metonymic narrative surface in all temporal directions, staining it with the obscene tinctures of the "cult of glossy image."<sup>104</sup> As discussed,

<sup>104</sup> Jameson: "the cult of the glossy image [is] a whole new technology (wide-angle lens, light-sensitive film)...[of] lavish indulgence in contemporary film...the ultimate form of the consumption of streamlined commodities—a transformation of our senses into the mail-order houses of the spirit, some ultimate packaging of Nature in cellophane of a type that any elegant shop might well wish to carry in its window" (SV 85). Jameson observes that this "commodified elegance" likewise indexes "the production process itself: through the features of such images, we simultaneously consume the most streamlined features of the new technologies, latest-model state-of-the-art, computerization, mixing systems, complex banks of counters and dials (which specifically include the human expertise of their inventors if not their tenders)—this whole machinery of reproduction which is itself meant to be consumed like a commodity (whose end-product—the art image, the filmic object—is also its wrapper). At this ultimate stage in the production of commodities by commodities, the distinction between means and ends is abolished, allowing us to consume the idea of the Polaroid itself along with the 'idea' of its latest snapshot, and by means of it. Color is also clearly the sign of this dialectic, as a 'supplement,' a bonus of pleasure that adds nothing to its own content, and yet a 'nothing' which—as the sign of new systems of reproduction—opens up new and equally 'supplementary' spaces for libidinal investment" (Jameson, SV 219-220). The "technological fact" then of these new information and communications technologies—the 'fact' that the latter as *techne* and technique are often "powerfully drawn back inside the work of art itself" as content—provide another way to allegorically register modal transformations in capital (Jameson, SV 181). However, such readings risk positing a vulgar "auto-referentiality" in the work (coincidentally Jameson gives one, parodically, for *Point Blank*, musing on the viewer's "virtual[] spill[ing] out of this window or balcony onto the wide-screen pavement below" as a comment on CinemaScope aspect ratios (SV 179, 181)). Ideally then, in Jameson's view, one should dialecticize these "two kinds of phenomena—the work's 'meaning' and the new technology—...as two distinct symptoms of the same historical moment, now reconceptualized in an exceedingly complex and overdetermined way" (SV 181), but since Deleuze does not cover in any great depth technological change

this simulacral sheen can perhaps first be located in the film's first shot, with its proleptic flash of Walker at (here we go) the "Movie House," but I think there's a more potent moment, one that connotes, or rather, indexically denotes better the "unhealthy tactility" located by Farber: it's the insert of the almost miasmatic spillage of perfumes in Lynne's sink—a lysergic brew of chemicals we can imagine synthesizes a kind of plasticine jelly that almost injection-molds into the filmic emulsion, permeating the diegesis, its figures, its *mise en scene* with the queasy-making luster of a consumer good, varnishing them with the allure of its packaged pornography, its ultimate frangibility, its planned obsolescence.<sup>105</sup> We can see this most obviously in the film's motivated

(barring sound), I figured it'd be best to leave out such a technology centered approach, especially since it's somewhat well-traveled territory.

<sup>105</sup> Since I want to start pulling back from the Deleuze now, I figured it best to leave here some *Cinema-itic* speculation on this insert, *viz.*, that it's reminiscent of Deleuze's notion of the "seed crystal," a type of crystalline "description" that can kickstart the formation of crystalline narration—or chronosigns—like our serialized *gests* and sheets of time (C2 74-78; 88-97). "Formation" here suggests change and that's exactly what the seed does: grow, stagnate, or decay, per hyalographic processes of self-organization, which follow per Wambacq a logic of "amplifying propagation of...structure" (77-78) (citing Toscano). But what's 'propagated' is an "expression" of the virtual introduced into the actual, a 'structure' 'seeded' into a milieu and actualized therein, rendering both—actual and virtual—indiscernible (Deleuze, C2 74). And significantly, this "expression" takes the form of a "seed-image," like our toxic sink, an image we're arguing here introduces the structure of capital into the signaletic material and proliferates its serial transformations (Deleuze, C2 76). (Significantly, the MCM passage cited above comes immediately following Deleuze's discussion of the seed-crystal; he even identifies the Wender's film discussed therein as in "seed-form" (C2 76-77)). While on this discursive detour, we should also take the opportunity to dispense with the *mise en abyme* mirror shot of Lynne at the salon, the one that's intercut, along with several other views of her daily toilette and Walker's seven-league (vectorial) stride to her apartment; its placement within this disjunctive montage—which itself narratively collapses *diegetic* time and spaces, abbreviating Walker's on-screen travel from San Francisco to Los Angeles—might suggest the shot as a better candidate for the film's representative Deleuzian seed-image in a fashion not dissimilar to the one of Bulle Ogier in Rivette's *Out 1* (1971)). I'd argue, however, that given its partial comprising of this impulse-axiomatizing sequence, the shot better serves as a more local variety of crystalline composition, that of the 'mirror'-image (big surprise), which for Deleuze tends to mean some on-screen object of "representation" that presents the actual and the virtual as "presentation" and "re-presentation" in a single image, mediating both simultaneously, causing object and appearance to collapse into reflective de-differentiation; in short, any sort of "mirror image, photo, postcard, painting, or stage prop," as well as "optical illusions" and "artistic illusions" will do the trick: any single

location-shooting around metropolitan Los Angeles—its parking lots, its car lots, its diners, its glass curtain high rises—which captures in caricatured view our petite- bourgeois spectacle, fixing it with that inveterately (lustful) European eye for American vulgarity, that appreciative contempt for our enduringly benighted tackiness (think De Tocqueville, think Baudrillard), coordinating in its lovingly cock-eyed vision the consumerist demimondes and locales of a Robert Venturi with both the kitsch wallows of John Margolis and the aspirational synthetic *luxe* of an *Esquire* photospread. And with this scopic Babbitology comes the Antonionian spray-gun from *Red Desert*, color-blasting the chintz interiors with monochromatizing shades of reifying tonality, rendering objects, decor, wardrobe, and bodies therein one surface, one spectrum of viscous, overlit substance: like the gun-metal silvers of Lynne’s apartment, the gold-leaf of Chris’s, and the dollar-green’s of the Multiplex boardroom—it’s all one fungible substance, transubstantiated into capital, amplified through style, in a parametric (Bordwell) cadence, undulating the *mise en scène*, the costuming, the color, all the textures of the film.

But these emanations don’t just situate themselves passively in the proairetic passages of the film, don’t just expend themselves in a kind of indefinite optical arrest, don’t just pulsate latently from an autonomously parallel Debordian veneer floating stylistically above the

image that blurs “distinctions between object and reflection, [a] physical entity and its celluloid recording, actor and role, real world and fictional world,” causing them to “become indiscernible—not muddled, but unassignable in the sense that one can no longer determine definitively the category to which a given image belongs. Thus, in Deleuze’s analysis, when directors systematically play with the relationship between acting and being, stage world and real world, film and reality, they are not simply questioning art’s function as a re-presentation of reality” (Bogue 119-121). The important distinction to grasp here is that the mirror’s circuits of semantic exchange tend to be more restricted, limited to a single image, a single on-screen object or scene, while the seed works through entire environments/milieus (and hence blocks of narrative time), thereby opening itself to signaletic reflections that go beyond somewhat dull questions of fictionality and artifice to encompass history, death, memory, and—as I argue, allegorically—capital.

axiomatized storytelling. They have effectivity in other words, an effectivity that flexes, exerts itself on the movements and staging of the objects on screen, leaping symptomatically from their advertorial surface, their commodified veneer, like a symbiotic ligature, grasping and clutching the diegesis, the narrative actants, and synchronizing them to the dysrhythmic, St. Vitus dance of a capital in violent flux. So we can see, apart from—and with—the narrative, capital’s shambolic force almost inhabiting the signaletic material, compelling its replication of the transformations and movements enumerated allegorically in the last chapter (like fragmentation/autonomization (level 2) and the drive’s propulsive violence (level 3), not to mention the transpositions, interchanges, repetitions, and cycles discussed in the present chapter (level 4)).<sup>106</sup> (An opportunity presents itself here to offer some final comment on the System: (1) Given my prioritization of the fourth level, we can hypothesize that the signaletic formations of the other three levels form/emerge as a kind aesthetic penumbra of the allegorical shadow cast by the film’s mapping of capital. (That being said, there’s no good reason why one couldn’t do a version of this paper that gives the third, more subjective level the textually umbral position presently occupied by the fourth (think Bellour and the like)).<sup>107</sup> (2) This chapter would not exist without the analytical exertions of Chapter 2; working through the square/levels not only forced

<sup>106</sup> Again, to take a page from the Jamesonian play book, we find he performs a similar reading using the *diegetic* movements of on-screen objects in his “Spatial Systems” essay: “Such a synchronic system of the languages of the various types of space is, however, only a way of representing graphically what also governs the narrative logic and movement of the episodes in time. This is, indeed, finally how we will read the overall formal and narrative movement of *North by Northwest*[: as a transformation of one kind of space, through intermediary combinations and catalytic operations, into another” (SS 51-52).

<sup>107</sup> Jameson makes a similar point here re the third and fourth’s level structurally co-determining capacities: “What I have hitherto examined is the way in which the moral level (or psychoanalytic one, if you prefer) projects its divided structure onto the anagogical one (that of the collectivity) in the form of an impossible consciousness of history. Now we must proceed in the other direction and try to grasp the way in which the collective or political level intersects with the moral or psychological one and leaves its traces in private or personal destiny” (AI 267).

examination of the film's individual signaletic parts in multiple theoretical/heuristic registers, but required consideration of their relation as an aesthetic and interpretive whole. This totalizing spadework then allowed me to analogize the filmic whole (with its overlapping genre systems/images of thought) to the social totality (and its nonsynchronous modes of production/epistemes), which in turn allowed translation of the former's various hermeneutically-charged motifs of movement and change (fragmentation, the impulse) in terms of capital. This allegorical mapping helped me then intuit that both totalities—midcentury capital and Deleuze's action-centered movement-image in crisis—as systems that shared homologously similar sequences of moments whose composition changed around the postmodern turn, a realization which then springboarded my various arguments concerning the phases of commodity production, the axiomatic, and derivatives as they relate to cinema.) Take for instance fragmentation (alienation/abstraction/autonomization): we can start with Farber's comment re the violent poetics that gives form to seemingly all on-screen action, its rendering of bodies into "zigzags, being flung, scraped over concrete, half buried under tire wheels, but it is always sort of cramped, unlikely, out of its owner's control" (Farber, "Cartooned" 591)—a "control," we can attribute (big surprise) to capital. More so than any other (Mal's kissing the cement, the brawl in the Movie House (which takes out several shelves of film canisters), Walker's perforation of Lynne's bed), the scene Farber is alluding to synecdochally figures best the mauling and shattering contact that results from seemingly all on-screen interaction, for in Walker's test drive of Big John's convertible, we watch a very Ballardian configuration of man (Big John) and Walker-piloted machine (a Chrysler Imperial) being smashed, torn, and hurled about by Walker's repetitious, concussive, glass-strewing red-rovering against highway overpass supports (another privileged Ballardian site), leaving Big John and the auto a broken, exhausted pile of



pounded flesh, of twisted metal, streaked with the crimson from the paint of a cement truck, more victims of Walker/capital's violent logics. (While we're on the subject of fragmentation, we should note here that this motif manifests graphically as well: the mesh screen at Lynne's, Multiplex's glass-gridded frontage, the green-stucco verticals lining and dividing its skywalk facing façade (viewed in a memorable wide of Walker's stride across the former's bridging span)). And from this back-and-forth vehicular motion we can extract another motif, isolate through its grating repetition, its destabilizing recursivity an additional connotational valence — capitalism's eternal return of violent extraction and commensurating exchange. So, in our domestic Duchampian mating ritual, we can witness the Walker bachelor machine—in place of Mal—enter into a kind of consumerist apparatus with Chris's bride—in place of Lynne—to form a totalized dispositif of objects and images, photographically exchangeable and subject to endless promiscuous alternation, an arrangement emblemized by the climactic moment, a tight two-shot of the lovers' horizontal profiles that jump-cuts with each rolling, each turning of their clasping clutch, to reveal a new lover on top—rotating (like the kitchen's juicer, mixer, and beater) from Chris and Walker to Walker and Lynne to Lynne and Reese to Reese and Chris, back to Walker and Chris. (Exchange only goes so far apparently: given the Bergman resonances here, it's frustrating we don't get a Walker/Reese alternation or a “composite image of look-alike actresses” (Farber, “Cartooned” 591). And what to make of Walker's tying and binding of a (coded) gay couple as a police-attracting—and therefore henchmen distracting—opening move in his assault on Reese?). And then we have the disposable, fungible Multiplex Board (from Carter, to Brewster, to Yost), whose violent, sequenced dispatch then takes us to the vector, the impulse, capital's thrusting, deterritorializing drive as registered in the percussion of Walker's quickstepping march, his spatial fixing, his blitzkrieg passage through all boundaries, all space.

(And a very quick passage at that: since we're about to do a drive-by invocation of the impulse, we should note here some more graphic resonances like the lunging tilt pan down the Multiplex curtain wall, the vertical blinds of its Boardroom, and the shot of the dummy money gently wending its way down the concrete riverbed—its path, one amongst many of the jutting, perspectival points and vanishing lines that vectorially concatenate the bridges and tunnels hemming and skirting the waterway shootout into a kind of concrete cat's cradle).

But, as aired out above, this violent impulse seems to come to a full stop in the final scene at Fort Point (the new "Alcatraz Drop"), dissipates almost, with Walker's withdrawing fade into the darkness. For, without the genre's traditional avenues of genre closure—death, girl, and/or money—the totality of the film is left open, its sequence of joined, axiomatized spatial situations and situated spaces is left cantilevered, unsupported over a narrative, meaning-making abyss. In frightening effect, the film can keep going in other words, replicate eternally, find new ways to perpetuate Walker's endless quest for money.<sup>108</sup> But what does this abstinence on Walker's part signify? Cautious self-preservation would seem to secure it for common sense—and allow first/second level type readings of "cycles" of revenge and violence and the like—but if that's the case, then what can this last-gasp effort of rationalization do with the baffling final shot of Alcatraz/Fort Point, with its photographic transpositions of the fortifications, its optically printed manipulations of the filmic frame? We can give another overdetermined reading here, say it's another manifestation of the photographic equivalent, of movement's de-derivatizing, de-axiomatizing, decommensurating unbinding by the chaotic rhythms and temporal multiplicities

<sup>108</sup> Jameson describes such *analagon*-ously aberrant movements as "spatial anomalies"—"slippages in the allegorical fabric" in which "personification interrupts the allegorical narrative rather than ensuring its development and precipitates a kind of crisis in the form" (*AI* 229, 234), a "crisis" (whether cinematic or not) we can suppose has something to do with capital personified.

of our (post)modern image of thought—its signification of interchangeability denoting, a spiraling, cycling motion, kickstarting another cycle of Walker-driven deterritorializing violence, thereby miming the mid-century Arrighian churn of financial capital. We could do this, but I'd like in all of the above's stead to offer a comment from a non-cinephile friend, that the film, and especially its ending, is "weird" . . . which with that, we can usher in our penultimate theorist, Mark Fisher, who suggests such a feeling signals something "*which does not belong*. The weird brings to the familiar something which ordinarily lies beyond it, and which cannot be reconciled with the 'homely' (even as its negation)" (10-11). And significantly, with regards to film: "[t]he form that is perhaps most appropriate to the weird is montage—the conjoining of *two or more things which do not belong together* (Fisher 10-11). As such:

Modernist and experimental work often strikes us as weird when we first encounter it. The sense of wrongness associated with the weird —the conviction that this does not belong—is often a sign that we are in the presence of the new. The weird here is a signal that the concepts and frameworks which we have previously employed are now obsolete. If the encounter with the strange here is not straightforwardly pleasurable (the pleasurable would always refer to previous forms of satisfaction), it is not simply unpleasant either: there is an enjoyment in seeing the familiar and the conventional becoming outmoded —an enjoyment which, in its mixture of pleasure and pain, has something in common with what Lacan called *jouissance* (Fisher 13).

So, given this formulation's aesthetic coordinates, we can speculate that the weird's "particular perturbations"—the "way in which it opens up an *egress*" to a "real externality,"<sup>109</sup> generating "an *interplay*, an exchange, a confrontation and indeed a conflict between this world and others"

<sup>109</sup> A term which Fisher also calls the "outside" a la Deleuze's open totality: in the weird, "not the impossible but the outside can make an irruption, through time and space, into an objectively familiar locale. Worlds may be entirely foreign to ours, both in terms of location and even in terms of the physical laws which govern them, without being weird. It is the irruption into this world of something from outside which is the marker of the weird" (20) (citations and quotations omitted).

resulting in a “production of the new” that “cognitively estranges”<sup>110</sup>—might have something to do with capital’s transformations and our artistic/interpretive mappings thereof (15, 16, 19, 21, 48).<sup>111</sup> And if that’s the case, is there a stylistic term or formation than will help us capture this “weird” disruptive sensation of systemic interaction and co-presence? Reviewing the qualities and aspects that catalyze this feeling will help get us there: first, we’ll need an aesthetic form that accounts for the “systemic” interaction between both the movement-image and time-image within the singular filmic totality, that registers its differential translation of capital’s dominant and emergent before and after the postmodern turn. Next, our formation in its handling of the singular artistic entity—in our case, *Point Blank*—must capture how the latter puts those totalizations into fitful formal dialogue, how it disaggregates their functions, divorces them from their organizing logics, to present a grinding collision between two cinematic “images of

<sup>110</sup> A term Fisher borrows from Darko Suvin to describe how Fassbinder’s *World on a Wire* (1973) produces “cognitive effect[s]...by depriving the film’s formal realism of any feeling of reality” (48).

<sup>111</sup> Fisher’s silent on this question, but does reserve such an interpretation for his concept of the “eerie”: “like the weird, the eerie is also fundamentally to do with the outside, and here we can understand the outside in a straightforwardly empirical as well as a more abstract transcendental sense. A sense of the eerie seldom clings to enclosed and inhabited domestic spaces; we find the eerie more readily in landscapes partially emptied of the human [like any-space-whatevers?]....Capital is at every level an eerie entity: conjured out of nothing, capital nevertheless exerts more influence than any allegedly substantial entity The metaphysical scandal of capital brings us to the broader question of the agency of the immaterial and the inanimate...the way that ‘we’ ‘ourselves’ are caught up in the rhythms, pulsions and patternings of non-human forces. There is no inside except as a folding of the outside; the mirror cracks, I am an other, and I always was”; “[s]ince the eerie turns crucially on the problem of agency, it is about the forces that govern our lives and the world. It should be especially clear to those of us in a globally tele-connected capitalist world that those forces are not fully available to our sensory apprehension. A force like capital does not exist in any substantial sense, yet it is capable of producing practically any kind of effect” (11-12, 64). With its inside/outside, gestural pulsions, and emptied spaces, the “eerie” would seem to line up better with our discussion thus far than the “weird,” but in my view, the weird better arranges its structuring capital/aesthetic systems to connote a sense of the “new,” the “emergent,” and possibly even the utopian. However, given our analysis above, there are surely “eerie” dimensions to *Point Blank* in the Fisherian sense.

thought,” one that takes place not so much in terms of content, but in terms of form, in terms of style. And finally, we’ll need something that gets at the “feel” of this collision, whether affectual or phenomenological—in short, we need an aesthetic analytic that captures filmic totality, its stylistic interrelations, and their feel, their texture, and tone. And we have such an analytic, one “virtually absent from film theory and debate in any language, even French,” that one of *découpage* (Barnard 3).

Noël Burch defines it like so:

The French term *découpage* technique or simply *découpage*...refers...to the underlying structure of the finished film. Formally, a film consists of a succession of fragments excerpted from a spatial and temporal continuum. *Découpage*...refers to what results when the spatial fragments, or, more accurately, the succession of spatial fragments excerpted in the shooting process, converge with the temporal fragments whose duration may be roughly determined during the shooting, but whose final duration is established only on the editing table. The dialectical notion inherent in the term *découpage* enables us to determine, and therefore to analyze, the specific form of a film, its essential unfolding in time and space (3-4).

As described by Burch, *découpage*—“the camera engineering of a film” (Barnard 12)—and its “dialectically” stylistic *combinatoire* lend a great interpretive flexibility to the filmic structure, affording it an “almost infinite number of [formal] permutations” determined by its comprising spatiotemporal “articulations” and “parameters,” like: “changes in camera angle and camera-subject distance (not to mention deliberate discrepancies in eye-line angles or matching trajectories),” “frame content and composition” (Burch 11-12), the “relationships between screen space and off-screen space,” “the plastic interactions between shots” “variations in shot size, in camera angle, and height, in direction and speed of camera and subject movements within the shot, and, naturally, in the duration [and frequencies] of [the] shots” (Burch 51). And given this “way of understanding the film’s structure as a series of shots and scenes,” we should note here also its structural and conceptual similarities to our allegorical frame: “To speak...of

découpage...is to refer to a process, a nebulous, ineffable, diffuse creative process which in order to discern requires that we both plunge deeper into the work (and into the work of creating the work) and adopt a greater critical distance so as to be able to explore [the film's] layers the way an archaeologist would" (Barnard 18-19); "it is a continuous and not a finished activity, which we observe as it unfolds before us, and its asperity accommodates us—not as viewers identifying with a narrative or a character, but as active agents of a complex reality...the handling of material reality, and our awareness of this handling, through the tangible presence of the camera" (Barnard 56). Thus, the value of découpage as a critical tool comes from its aesthetic accounting of the film's formal features—both its shots and cuts, its cinematography and montage—as a structural whole and not just as an ephemeral sequence of discretely transient shots and cuts considered in isolation, floating free from the surrounding aesthetic structure. Finally, Burch's conceptualization of découpage's changing topographies of shots, cuts, and methodologically draws out from the filmic object and foregrounds a stylistically sensible texture or *facture*, a "palpably tactile" quality akin to *Ab-Ex impastos* and *quattrocento imprimaturas* (Barnard 55).

And within the film's aesthetic totality, its découpage effect, perhaps we can locate this grinding sensation, this abrasive encounter between two formations of capital/cinema, this stylistic manifestation of the "weird," a feeling that we know from Fisher attracts as much as repels, which seems borne out by my friend's addendum to his first take: "it was weird...but I liked it." And to add further speculation—which I feel justified in indulging given Jameson's Bonaventure vision quest and the fact this paper is about to end—is it possible then that this aesthetic "feeling" might perhaps effect some "utopian" sensation of change, but sensation not in the way of the intensive "feelings" of Richard Dyer's "non-representational" signs and codes—his palliatively performative "escapes and wish-fulfillments," his stop-gap "utopian solutions"

for contemporary “social/tensions/inadequacies/absences”—which arrive only locally, in a targeted-fashion, via the individual genres (musicals, being Dyer’s key example) (20-27), but rather the singular-plural of a whole genre system, of the movement-image, with its related “image of thought,” being replaced by something emergently new, something radically different, something not the status quo, something directed “toward the production of a language that does not yet exist, or of a content which awaits its names” (Jameson, *SV* 213)? This “utopian dimension” of sensational futurity then is not the reactionary nostalgia Jameson identifies in most mass cultural objects—with their “ritual celebration[s] of the renewal social order and its salvation”—nor is it of a more progressive bent, projecting an “anticipatory representation of the Utopian community of the future...of an unimaginable evolutionary mutation in collective relationships.”<sup>112</sup> Rather, this Utopian impulse eschews such “achieved” collective visions,

<sup>112</sup> Jameson lays out the dilemma here when performing such utopian analysis on mass-culture objects like *Dog Day Afternoon*, *Jaws*, and the *Godfather* films, which despite their canonical credentials, nevertheless demonstrate that ‘certain Hollywood tendency’ (Ray) for ‘textual incoherence’ (Wood): “we cannot fully do justice to the ideological function of works like these unless we are willing to concede the presence within them of a more positive function as well: of what I will call, following the Frankfurt School, their Utopian or transcendent potential—that dimension of even the most degraded type of mass culture which remains implicitly, and no matter how faintly, negative and critical of the social order from which, as a product and a commodity, it springs...works of mass culture cannot be ideological without at one and the same time being implicitly or explicitly Utopian as well: they cannot manipulate unless they offer some genuine shred of content as a fantasy bribe to the public about to be so manipulated...Our proposition about the drawing power of the works of mass culture has implied that such works cannot manage anxieties about the social order unless they have first revived them and given them some rudimentary expression; we will now suggest that anxiety and hope are two faces of the same collective consciousness, so that the works of mass culture, even if their function lies in the legitimation of the existing order—or some worse one—cannot do their job without deflecting in the latter’s service the deepest and most fundamental hopes and fantasies of the collectivity, to which they can therefore, no matter in how distorted a fashion, be found to have given voice. We therefore need a method capable of doing justice to both the ideological and the Utopian or transcendent functions of mass culture simultaneously. Nothing less will do, as the suppression of either of these terms may testify: we have already commented on the sterility of the older kind of ideological analysis, which, ignoring the Utopian components of mass culture, ends up with the empty denunciation of the latter’s manipulatory function and degraded status.

abstains from “reappropriating” these “energies” on semantic terms, forgoes “rewrit[ing] the fantasies of...mass culture” as projected content, as the articulated, oxymoronicly defined “unconscious longing[s] of a whole collectivity,” to capture instead the moment of change, the feeling thereof,<sup>113</sup> as anything else is beyond representation, even sensually, even affectively, as it comes, from Thomas More’s titular ‘no place’ (Jameson, *SV* 27, 71, 72, 89).

And with that, we come to the last rearticulation of what’s been perhaps the key theme of this paper on mapping: differential relation, but relation not just between elements and functions, but between one structure, the one that organizes them, say, and another—a thematic of putting in productive conversation totalizing articulations of interpretation and method (the frame, the square), of theory (Jameson and Deleuze), of modes of production (monopoly and late), of cultural logics (realism, modernism, and postmodernism), and of Deleuze’s cinematic “images of thought,” the movement and time image, the IMR’s genre system and what comes after. In other words, without such dual vision (or even quadruplicate, a la the frame), one cannot capture—cannot map—the residual, dominant, and emergent systems coalescing and organizing the social real as such. And in my view, it’s such a failure of collective vision—in all senses of the

But it is equally obvious that the complementary extreme—a method that would celebrate Utopian impulses in the absence of any conception or mention of the ideological vocation of mass culture—simply reproduces the litanies of myth criticism at its most academic and aestheticizing and impoverishes these texts of their semantic content at the same time that it abstracts them from their concrete social and historical situation” (*SV* 29-30). Unfortunately (for this paper), Jameson’s utopia-inflected textual analysis in *Signatures of the Visible*—his key book on popular film—tends to hew closely to content analysis, rather than style/form as discussed herein; for analysis in the latter direction, please refer to his book on utopia and Science Fiction literature, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. New York, Verso, 2005.

<sup>113</sup> If the “feeling” registered by *Point Blank*’s *découpage* effect captures modal transition along the objective pole, then Vivian Sobchack’s chronotopal model might offer a way to do so along the subjective. Vivian Sobchack. “Lounge Time: Postwar Crises and the Chronotope of Film Noir.” *Refiguring American Film Genres*, edited by Nick Browne, University of California Press, 1998, pp. 129-170.



phrase—that forced me to write the “what comes after” above, for our inability to articulate systemically film in an era of postmodernity can’t solely be due to some brow-leveling Götterdämmerung, some ‘schizophrenic’ proliferation of singular styles that resists all standardization or categorization. But, better this “what comes after,” this shoulder-shrugging, plane of aesthetic immanence, than regurgitating the traditional mid-century dichotomy between Classic Hollywood and “art film” upon contemporary moving image works, assuming that the former’s formal and stylistic coordinates describe in any real sense those of the latter, while, even worse, maintaining that they work the same mid-century interpellative effects: in other words, does *Screen* theory still work in an era of intensified continuity? Does Michael Bay do ‘mythopoeic’ cinema with his ‘Brakhage-esque’ cutting?<sup>114</sup> Is *Better Call Saul* slow-cinema a la Pedro Costa?<sup>115</sup> Can we compare the MCU to ‘prestige television’ (whatever that is) or to the likes of *The Cremaster Cycle*? What does art film *ostrenie*, *Verfremdungseffekt*, or defamiliarization even look like now? (And leaving aside matters purely aesthetic, how exactly do we get sutured, obtain theatrical “impressions of reality” via the modalities of distracted, discontinuous viewing ubiquitously afforded by streaming and mobile media?). What I hope to get at with these questions is the seemingly enduring *idée fixe* —if not in theory, then in

<sup>114</sup> Richard Brody. “With ‘*Transformers: The Last Knight*,’ Michael Bay Has Become an Experimental Filmmaker of Pure Sensation.” *The New Yorker*, 20 June 2017, [www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/review-transformers-the-last-knight-michael-bay-experimental-filmmaker](http://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/review-transformers-the-last-knight-michael-bay-experimental-filmmaker). Accessed 24 April, 2017.

<sup>115</sup> “[Cinematographer Arthur] Albert, working with the 11 different directors who’ve signed episodes so far, has (even if totally unconsciously) infused *Better Call Saul* with some of the same magisterial master-shot atmosphere [as Costa]. Albert’s array of outrageously canted, locked-off angles (in contrast to *Breaking Bad*’s bobbing handheld takes), shifting focal depth, and—especially—recurring motif of isolating characters at a distance against and within negative space establish what Kent Jones has often called ‘the greater drama of light and shadow.’” Adam Nayman, “Power of Attorney: Better Call Saul.” Adam Nayman. “Power of Attorney: Better Call Saul.” *Cinema Scope*, no. 67, [www.cinema-scope.com/features/power-attorney-better-call-saul/](http://www.cinema-scope.com/features/power-attorney-better-call-saul/). Accessed 24 April 2020.

practice—that popular film and art film are two enduring, monolithic blocs: aesthetico-political formations working in strident, violent opposition, drawing up formal battle lines, erecting fortified earthworks, policing a *cordon sanitaire* of style that permits no interchange, no passage, no mutuality of influence across an aesthetically emptied no man’s land. And though I suspect most, if not all critics would reject this segregative ukase, such a hyperbolic view imposes an effective, if not dominant, interpretive logic on the discourse nonetheless, one we can see in much contemporary film theory, especially that of a less formalist, Bordwellian register, that takes ‘art film’ X, picks out ‘defamiliarizing’ formal feature Y, and then argues it illustrates hermeneutic/theory/philosophy Z by virtue of an implicitly articulated difference from stylistic component B from some immutable Hollywood gestalt which hermeneutically, theoretically, and/or philosophically does the opposite of Z—so symptomatic ‘C,’ I suppose. And since the bulk of these approaches stick fairly closely to the mid-century (Criterion) canon—films whose stylistic innovations have been well integrated, or axiomatized, by popular moving image making—an argument is made in effect that contemporary commercial film A atavistically does symptomatic B + C despite stylistic evidence to the contrary. Which is not to say that such differential dualism is wrong, especially with regard to the more anecdotal, *fabula*-type content of popular film, but that its formal givens and assumptions need to be reassessed, their parameters and boundaries redrawn to reflect, to map, the stylistic formations and features that define the two camps today. In other words, if contemporary art film strikes its figure against the ground of commercial film, then we need to be sure we’re talking about the most recent formation of the latter—and vice-versa—otherwise what in the world are we talking about and why should anyone bother with our essentially spurious critical work, our fiat interpretations, which, in the worst light, do nothing more than launder taste through theory?

And what will aid this (Bordwellian!?) task is a recognition that these boundaries are by no means impermeable, that there's a kind of tidal motion of influence between the two, a motion captured by films like *Point Blank* that occupy interesting mediating positions, that allow us to not only set both systems in relief (because difference relates), but enable us to see how one shapes the other, and more importantly, recognize how this shaping often has its own kind of logic—call it capital, if you like—one that can't help but subsume, can't help but axiomatize, eventually, all art's techniques of deterritorialization, no matter how progressive, no matter how radical—because remember, before what else does the *avant-garde* come but capital? This may be a bleak way to end—experimental film as 'ineluctable modality' of capital—but alerting ourselves to how art film works in many respects as R&D for commercial filmmaking will better allow us to attend, to map, not only formations of social totality, but the algorithmic attention economies shaping our present aesthetic formations—perhaps the ultimate 'motivations of the device,' the most ideologically potent apparati in the end.

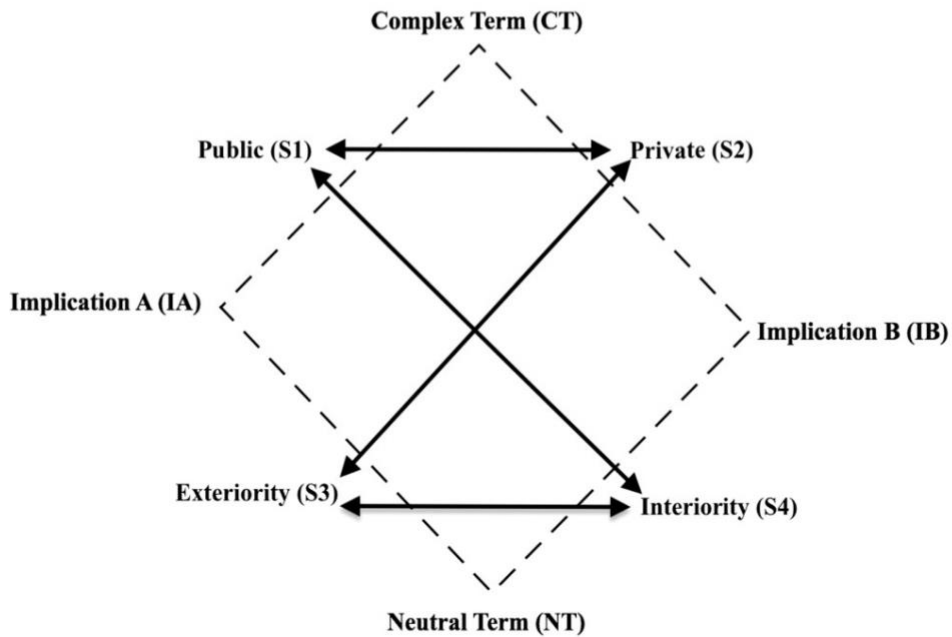
As for the System itself, to the extent it has value lies solely with its focusing of analytical energies on dialectical manifestations of (interpretive) totality, specifically, aesthetic mediations of subject and object (and the endless shadings and negotiations thereof) that emerge structurally in the spatiotemporal negotiation of both content and narrative form as they track allegorically the systemic valences of the social whole, whether synchronic or diachronic. Yet, what always must be kept in view is that the particular 'solutions' of the System—the various frame/square-aided readings—are not and should never be the goal of its execution; rather, they must always be treated as a kind of vanishing mediator, dialectical fuel-cells to be jettisoned as ballast upon arrival at the redefined interpretive problem. And if 'answers' and/or new 'knowledge' are discovered, they're never more than provisional—disposable heuristics to be

discarded with each new cartographic encounter. (In our case, such throwaway ‘solutions’ might be the “neo-liberal indirect discourse” of the serialized *gests* (Jeon 105) or my account of the axiomatic small-form action-image).<sup>116</sup> As such, even the Deleuzian *Cinema-atic* frame requires questioning, requires subjection to his musings on the ‘control’ society and its ‘modulations,’ as well as a taking into account recent theorizations of neoliberal capital arguing that labor occurs not only in production, but in exchange and consumption per a cinematic mode of production (Beller/Keeling). And we haven’t even begun to explore questions of whether and how any of these allegorical manipulations strike libidinally—or affectively, if you like—the viewer at the moment of reception, whether they work per Benjamin apperceptually on the habituated ‘spiritual automaton,’ *Screen-ing* today’s ‘ordinary man of cinema.’ All of which is to say that the task of interpretation never ends, though mercifully, for you the reader, it does in this instance with this sentence.

<sup>116</sup>As for the latter, it’s possible that the post-“crisis” action-image can no longer articulate itself in terms of the large form’s social or global “situations,” only the small-form’s subject-centered agential actions. Though, in his *Cinema after Deleuze*, Richard Rushton argues that the large-form retrenches (or axiomatizes(?)) on the Spielbergian family unit as its new collective “situation” (119-38), which in my view, does not seem to conflict too greatly with my take above. But again, the suitability of any of these formulations for today’s narrative cinema requires rigorous interrogation, especially given their derivation from somewhat superannuated aesthetic coordinates.

APPENDIX

**FIGURE 1** Mapping of Point Blank



<u>Allegorical Frame</u>		
<b>A1 – Textual/Literal</b>	Revenge/Restitution; recurrence thereof	IB
<b>A2 – Manifest Interpretive Key(s)</b>	Collapse and Reconstitution of IMR/Genre System	CT
<b>A3 – Subjective Terminologies</b>	From Desire to Drive	NT
<b>A4 – Collective Terminologies</b>	From Monopoly to Late Capitalism	IA
<u>Character System</u>		
<b>CT</b>	Multiplex, Fairfax	
<b>NT</b>	Walker/Marvin, Contract Killer, 'Big' John Stegman, Mal Reese	
<b>IA</b>	Multiplex Board, Brewster, Carter	
<b>IB</b>	Chris, Lynne	
<u>Spatial System</u>		
<b>CT</b>	Alcatraz Prison/Fort Point, Multiplex, Huntley, Airport, Brewster's Condo/Home, various non-spaces	
<b>NT</b>	Movie House, Spectacle	
<b>IA</b>	Roads, Los Angeles River (Concrete Channel/Tunnels), Underside of Overpass	
<b>IB</b>	Lynne's Condo/Home, Chris's Condo/Home	

*Figure 1 Mapping of Point Blank*

## ABBREVIATIONS

The following books and essays written by Fredric Jameson are abbreviated as follows:

- AI*     *Allegory and Ideology*  
*AS*     “The Aesthetics of Singularity” in *The New Left Review*  
*CM*     “Cognitive Mapping” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*  
*CT*     *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. Verso, 1998.  
*FA*     *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist*  
*GP*     *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*  
*IT*     *Ideologies of Theory*  
*MF*     *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*  
*MP*     *The Modernist Papers*  
*PU*     *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*  
*PM*     *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*  
*RC*     *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One*  
*SS*     “Spatial Systems in *North by Northwest*,” in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*  
*ST*     *The Seeds of Time*  
*SV*     *Signatures of the Visible*  
*VD*     *Valences of the Dialectic*

The following books and essays written by Gilles Deleuze are abbreviated as follows:

- C1*     *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*  
*C2*     *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*

The following books written by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari are abbreviated as follows:

- AO*     *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*  
*TP*     *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

## WORKS CITED

- Barnard, Timothy. *Découpage*. Montreal, Caboose, 2014.
- Baumbach, Nico, et al. "Introduction: For a Political Critique of Culture." *Social Text*, vol. 34, no. 2 (127), 2016, pp. 1-20. doi:10.1215/01642472-3467942.
- Jonathan Beller. *The Cinematic Mode of Production: Attention Economy and the Society of the Spectacle*. Dartmouth College Press, 2006.
- Boer, Roland. "A Level Playing Field? Metacommentary and Marxism." *On Jameson*, edited by Caren Irr and Ian Buchanan, SUNY Press, 2006, pp. 51-69.
- Bordwell, David. *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*. 1989, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1991.
- . *On the History of Film Style*. Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1997.
- Bordwell, David and Janet Staiger. "Since 1960: The Persistence of a Mode of Film Practice." *The Classic Hollywood Cinema*. Columbia UP, 1985, pp. 367-77.
- Buchanan, Ian. *Fredric Jameson: Live Theory*. New York, Continuum, 2006.
- Burch, Noël. *Theory of Film Practice*. Translated by Helen R. Lane, Princeton UP, 1981.
- Burnham, Clint. *Fredric Jameson and The Wolf of Wall Street*. New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
- Copjec, Joan. "Locked Room/Lonely Room: Private Spaces in Film Noir." *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists*. Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1994, pp. 163-200.
- Deamer, David. *Deleuze's Cinema Books: Three Introductions to the Taxonomy of Images*. Edinburgh UP, 2016.
- Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Translated by Ken Knabb, Berkley, Bureau of Public Secrets, 2014.

- Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- . *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
- Deleuze, Gilles & Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- . *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, et al., University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- Dick, Bryan & Michael Rafferty. "Financial Derivatives and the Theory of Money." *Economy and Society*, vol. 36, no. 1, Feb. 2007, pp. 134-158, , doi: 10.1080/03085140601089861.
- Dyer, Richard. "Entertainment and Utopia." *Only Entertainment*. 2nd ed., New York, Routledge, 2002, pp. 19-35.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. "The Pathos of Failure: American Films in the 1970s: Notes on the Unmotivated Hero." *The Last Great American Picture Show: New Hollywood Cinema in the 1970s*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser, Alexander Horwath, and Noel King, Amsterdam UP, 2004, pp. 279-292.
- Farber, Manny. "Cartooned Hip Acting." *Farber on Film: The Complete Film Writings of Manny Farber*, edited by Robert Polito, Library of America, 2009, pp. 588-92.
- . "The Gimp." *Farber on Film: The Complete Film Writings of Manny Farber*, edited by Robert Polito, Library of America, 2009, pp. 388-98.
- Fisher, Mark. *The Weird and The Eerie*. Repeater Books, 2016.
- Franklin, Seb. *Control: Digitality as Cultural Logic*. Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2015.
- Freedman, Carl. *Versions of Hollywood Crime Cinema: Studies in Ford, Wilder, Coppola*,



- Scorsese, and Others*. University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Galloway, Alexander. *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Hartley, Daniel. *The Politics of Style: Toward a Marxist Poetics*. Brill, 2016.
- Harvey, David. *A Companion to Marx's Capital*. New York, Verso, 2010.
- Hoyle, Brian. *The Cinema of John Boorman*. Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Allegory and Ideology*. New York, Verso, 2019.
- . "Cognitive Mapping." *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, Macmillan Education, 1988, pp. 347-60.
- . *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979.
- . *Marxism and Form: Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton UP, 1971.
- . *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke UP, 1991.
- . *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One*. New York, Verso, 2011.
- . *Signatures of the Visible*. Routledge, 1992.
- . "Spatial Systems in *North by Northwest*." *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*, edited by Slavoj Žižek, New York, Verso, 1992, pp. 47-72.
- . "The Aesthetics of Singularity." *New Left Review*, no. 92 Mar.-Apr. 2015, pp. 101-32.
- . *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*. New York, Verso, 1998.
- . *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*. Indiana UP, 1992.

- . *The Ideologies of Theory*. New York, Verso, 2008.
- . *The Modernist Papers*. 2007. New York, Verso, 2016.
- . *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Cornell UP, 1981.
- . *The Seeds of Time*. New York, Columbia UP, 1994.
- . *Valences of the Dialectic*. New York, Verso, 2009.
- Jeon, Joseph Jonghyun. *Vicious Circuits: Korea's IMF Cinema and the End of the American Century*. Stanford UP, 2019.
- Keathley, Christian. "Trapped in the Affection Image: Hollywood's Post-traumatic Cycle (1970-1976)." *The Last Great American Picture Show: New Hollywood Cinema in the 1970s*, edited by Thomas Elsaesser, Alexander Horwath, and Noel King, Amsterdam UP, 2004, pp 293-308.
- Keeling, Kara. *The Witch's Flight: The Cinematic, the Black Femme, and the Image of Common Sense*. Duke UP, 2007.
- Kirchner, Carolin. *Cinemascesapes: Cinematic Sublimity and Spatial Configurations – or – Learning from Los Angeles*. 2018. University of California, Los Angeles, PhD dissertation. *eScholarship*.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Cambridge, Blackwell, 1991.
- Lie, Sulgi. "From *Shame* to *Drive*: The Waning of Affect; or, The Rising of the Drive Image in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema." *Social Text* 127, vol. 34, no. 2, June 2016, pp. 45-70, doi: 10.1215/01642472-3467966.
- Martin, Adrian. "The Challenge of Narrative: Storytelling Mutations Between Television and Cinema." *Cineaste*, Summer 2019, pp. 22-27.

- Martin, Randy. "After Economy? Social Logics of the Derivative." *Social Text 114*, vol. 31, no. 1 Spring 2013, pp. 83-102, doi: 10.1215/01642472-1958908.
- Moretti, Franco. "Clues." *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. Translated by Susan Fischer, David Forgacs and David Miller, rev. ed., New York, Verso, 1988.
- Morse, Margaret. "An Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall, and Television." *Virtualities: Television, Media Art, and Cyberculture*. Indiana UP, 1998, pp. 99-124.
- Moten, Fred. "Erotics of Fugitivity." *Stolen Life*. Duke UP, 2018, pp. 241-267.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Film Fables*. Translated by Emiliano Battista, New York, Berg, 2001.
- Restivo, Angelo. *The Cinema of Economic Miracles: Visuality and Modernization in the Italian Art Film*. Duke UP, 2002.
- Ross, Kristin. *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*. Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1996.
- Rushton, Richard. *Cinema After Deleuze*. New York, Continuum, 2012.
- Thomas, Calvin. *Ten Lessons in Theory: An Introduction to Theoretical Writing*. New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
- Venturi, Robert, et al. *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*. Rev. ed., Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1977.
- Wambacq, Judith. *Thinking Between Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty*. Ohio UP, 2017.
- Wegner, Philip E. "Periodizing Jameson, or, Notes toward a Cultural Logic of Globalization." *On Jameson*, edited by Caren Irr and Ian Buchanan, SUNY Press, 2006, pp. 241-79.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *The Parallax View*. Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2006.