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The *Cinepheur*:
Post-Cinematic Passage,
Post-Perceptual Passage

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I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights
With multitudes bent towards some flashing scene
Never disclosed, but hastened to again,
Foretold to other eyes on the same screen;

—Hart Crane, “To Brooklyn Bridge”

Introduction

Post-Cinematic Affect, Post-Perceptual Affect

In *The Virtual Life of Film*, D.N. Rodowick argues that announcements of the death of cinema are symptomatic of periods in which the aesthetic, technological and infrastructural co-ordinates of cinema are in flux, and require a new consumptive and critical methodology.¹ In *Post Cinematic Affect*, Steven Shaviro describes the most recent period of media flux in terms of four “diagrams”:

The first diagram is that of Deleuze’s “control society” ...characterized by perceptual modulations, dispersed and “flexible” modes of authority, ubiquitous networks, and the relentless branding and marketing of even the most ‘inner aspects’ of subjective experience....The second diagram marks out the delirious financial flows, often in the form of derivatives and other arcane instruments, that drive the globalized economy...The third diagram is that of our contemporary digital and post-cinematic “media ecology” (Fuller 2005), in which all activity is under surveillance from video cameras and microphones and in return video screens and speakers, moving images and synthesized sounds, are dispersed pretty much everywhere...Finally, the fourth diagram is that of what McKenzie Wark calls “gamespace,” in which computer gaming “has colonized its rivals within the cultural realm, from the spectacle of cinema to the simulations of television” (Wark 2007, 7).²

In “Discorrelated Images: Chaos Cinema, Post-Cinematic Affect and Speculative Realism,” Shane Denson extends Shaviro’s diagrams to consider post-cinematic affect as part of the wider emergence of a post-perceptual media ecology.

Drawing upon Quentin Meillassoux’s concept of discorrelationism, which sets out to redress the post-Kantian, correlationist commitment to “disqualifying the claim that it is possible to consider the realms of subjectivity and objectivity

¹ D.N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 28-29.

² Steven Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect* (London: Zero Books, 2010), 7. Shaviro cites Matthew Fuller, *Media Ecologies: Materialist Tendencies in Art and Technoculture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007) and McKenzie Wark, *Gamer Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 7.

independently of one another,³ Denson identifies post-perceptual media with texts that no longer exclusively address a human sensorium. Instead, post-perceptual texts seem to possess or exhibit an ontology “without us,” challenging the correlationist premise that “reality is exhausted by our means of access to it.”⁴ This results from “a total environment of inhuman image production, processing and circulation”⁵ that, Denson argues, has severed the analog link between the camera lens and the human eye. This producing what Denson describes as the “diegetisation of the camera” – a proliferation of cameras and recording devices that “seem not to know their place with respect to the separation of diegetic and nondiegetic planes of reality,” departing from “the perceptual norms established by human embodiment” to occupy an:

undecidable position between the diegetic and the nondiegetic, or between the world on the screen and the screen’s place in our world, which is similarly pervaded by these post- or nonhuman technologies of the image. Thus, there is a reversible relation between the post-cinematic diegesis and the nondiegetic ecology of our post-cinematic world, and it is occasioned precisely by a camera that no longer situates us as subjects vis-à-vis the film-as-object, but instead institutes a pervasive relation of marginality... This corresponds to a specifically post-cinematic mode of address: the camera no longer frames actions, emotions, and events in a given world, but instead provides the color, look, and feel of the film *qua* material component or aspect of the world.⁶

Canonicity and Cinephilia

This transition from a cinematic to post-cinematic – and incipient post-perceptual – media regime has produced two distinct death-discourses. Firstly,

³ Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: On the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 5.

⁴ Shane Denson, “Discorrelated Images: Chaos Cinema, Post-Cinematic Affect and Speculative Realism,” *Initiative Für Interdisziplinäre Medienforschung* (blog), June 22, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/nrsu9j8>.

⁵ Therese Grisham, Shane Denson and Julia Leyda, “Roundtable Discussion #2 on the Post-Cinematic: Post-Cinematic Affect: Post-Continuity, The Irrational Camera, Thoughts on 3D,” *La Furia Umana* 10 (2011), <http://tinyurl.com/ak59bzz>.

⁶ Shane Denson, “Crazy Cameras, Discorrelated Images, and the Post-Perceptual Mediation of Post-Cinematic Affect,” *Initiative Für Interdisziplinäre Medienforschung* (blog), March 8, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/nnhxhu2>.

the perceived death of cinema has led critics and theorists to attempt some of the most emphatic and extensive canons of cinema since Andrew Sarris' *The American Cinema*, whose interrogation into "the origin and evolution of auteurism"⁷ was "the last major and explicit attempt to rewrite the film canon."⁸ This has been enhanced by the canonical vocabulary surrounding the centenary of cinema in 1995, which itself drew from the renewed interest in issues of canonicity brought about by the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s. Accordingly, Peter Wollen's "The Canon," published in 2002, and arguably the central document of this critical movement, opens with Wollen "wonder[ing] about whether the debate about the canon which was taking place in other disciplines impinged in any important way on film studies."⁹ Similarly, the three most ambitious film canonisers of the last fifteen years – Roger Ebert, Jonathan Rosenbaum and Paul Schrader – all acknowledge the project outlined by Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon*,¹⁰ one of the key texts of the canon wars, as their canonical forebear.¹¹

Along with canonicity, there has been a renewed critical interest in cinephilia, centred on Christian Keathley's 2005 study of *Cinephilia and History, or The Wind*

⁷ Andrew Sarris, *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1996), 269.

⁸ Peter Wollen, "The Canon," in *Paris Hollywood: Writings on Film* (London: Verso, 2002), 217.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (New York: Riverhead, 1995). Bloom antithesises canonical and cinematic pleasure, arguing that the issue of what to read "is no longer the question, since so few now read, in the era of television and cinema. The pragmatic question has become: 'What shall I not bother to read?'" (491). In doing so, he glimpses a negative canon of unreadability, unknowability and nostalgia for scarcity.

¹¹ Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Essential Cinema: On the Necessity of Film Canons* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), xiii. Paul Schrader, "Canon Fodder," *Film Comment* 42:5 (2006), 34. While Ebert doesn't mention Bloom explicitly in the manifesto for his "Great Movies" project (*The Chicago Sun-Times* online, August 7, 2005, <http://tinyurl.com/pe2efll>), he is mentioned in several of the individual selections, including *Chimes at Midnight* (*The Chicago Sun-Times* online, June 4, 2006, <http://tinyurl.com/l2bnkro>), *Richard III* (*The Chicago Sun-Times* online, October 7, 2009, <http://tinyurl.com/n5xen2t>) and *Fargo* (*Roger Ebert's Journal* (blog on the website of the *The Chicago Sun-Times*), May 26, 2007, <http://tinyurl.com/m66u6su>).

in the Trees, and its conception of the cinephilic anecdote as a new object of critical and theoretical enquiry.¹² Although cinephilia's attachment to discrete, privileged moments might seem at odds with the totalisation of a canonical project, Keathley's observation that "contemporary cinema offers little space for such [cinephilic] projection" (16) imbues his study with the same elegaic quality as contemporary canonical projects. In fact, while Keathley emphasises the irreducibly personal quality of cinephilic attachment, he also uses Walter Benjamin's writings on collection to compare those moments of attachment to "the canon into which the collector organizes her treasured objects" (117). In terms of Wollen's observations about the elegaic tendencies of cult film fandom, cinephilic practices and anecdotes might be understood to "play an apparently disproportionate role precisely because they care deeply (obsessively) about the films they love and constitute them spontaneously into a kind of...canon."¹³

However, just as digital cultures have created new forms of cult fandom, so digital technologies have opened up new forms of cinephilia. The five most influential volumes of cinephilic speculation published in the last decade, Marijke de Valck and Malte Hagener's *Cinephilia: Movies, Love and Memory*,¹⁴ Jonathan Rosenbaum and Adrian Martin's *Movie Mutations: The Changing Face of World Cinephilia*,¹⁵ Jason Sperb and Scott Balcerzak's two volumes of *Cinephilia in the*

¹² Christian Keathley, *Cinephilia and History, or The Wind in the Trees* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 130. Keathley prefers the adjective "cinephiliac" due to "that adjectival form's connotation of a 'disorder' of conventional, streamlined spectatorship (xxxii). While not neglecting this "disorder," I will use the term "cinephilic" throughout this thesis in order to signal my engagement with the wider debates and discourses revolving around contemporary cinephilia.

¹³ Wollen, "Canon," 223.

¹⁴ Marijke de Valck and Malte Hagener, eds., *Cinephilia: Movies, Love and Memory* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005). See especially: Marijke de Valck and Marte Halgener, "Down with Cinephilia? Long Live Cinephilia? And Other Videosyncratic Pleasures"; Thomas Elsaesser, "Cinephilia, or the Uses of Disenchantment"; Drehli Robnik, "Mass Memories of Movies: Cinephilia as Norm and Narrative in Blockbuster Culture"; Melis Behlil, "Ravenous Cinephiles: Cinephilia, Internet and Online Film Communities."

¹⁵ Jonathan Rosenbaum and Adrian Martin, eds., *Movie Mutations: The Changing Face of World Cinephilia* (London: British Film Institute, 2008). See especially: Jonathan Rosenbaum and Adrian Martin, "Preface"; Jonathan Rosenbaum, Adrian

*Age of Digital Reproduction*¹⁶ and Jonathan Rosenbaum's *Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia: Film Culture in Transition*¹⁷ are all organised around reparative readings of digital cinephilia – prefaced, in the case of Sperb and Balcerzak's volume, with a piece by Keathley himself, in which he revises his position on contemporary cinephilia in *The Wind in the Trees* to take into account “the development of the Internet blog,” which, out of all the forms of digital cinephilia, has “most changed the landscape of cinephiliac discourse.”¹⁸

If the various essays and pieces in these volumes adopt a constructive approach towards digital cinephilia, they also propose the possibility of a digital or post-cinematic canon, defined by what Thomas Elsaesser describes as the dialectic between “the unlimited archive of our media memory” and the “unloved bits and pieces” of digital cinephilia:

The new cinephilia is turning the unlimited archive of our media memory, including the unloved bits and pieces, the long forgotten films or programs, into potentially desirable and much valued clips, extras and bonuses, which prove that cinephilia is not only an anxious love, but can always turn itself into a happy perversion. And, as such, these new forms of enchantment will probably also encounter new moments of disenchantment, re-establishing the possibility of rupture, such as when the network collapses, the connection is broken, or the server is down. Cinephilia, in other words, has reincarnated itself, by dis-embodimenting itself.¹⁹

Martin, Kent Jones, Alexander Horwath, Nicole Brenz and Raymond Bellour, “Movie Mutations: Letters from (and to) Some Children of 1960”; Adrian Martin, “Musical Mutations: Before, Beyond and Against Hollywood”; Adrian Martin and James Naremore, “The Future of Academic Film Study.”

¹⁶ Jason Sperb and Scott Balcerzak, eds., *Cinephilia in the Age of Digital Reproduction, Vol. 1* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2008); Jason Sperb & Scott Balcerzak, eds., *Cinephilia in the Age of Digital Reproduction, Vol. 2* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2012).

¹⁷ Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia: Film Culture in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). See especially: “Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia,” “From *Playtime* to *The World*: The Expansion and Depletion of Space within Global Economies,” “Film Writing on the Web: Some Personal Reflections,” “Goodbye, Susan, Goodbye: Sontag and Movies,” “*The American Cinema* Revisited,” “Surviving the Sixties” and “Second Thoughts on Stroheim.”

¹⁸ Keathley, “Twenty-First Century Cinephile,” 3.

¹⁹ Elsaesser, “Uses of Disenchantment,” 41.

The Cinepheur

In this thesis, I aim to register such a “moment of disenchantment” or “possibility of rupture” with the canonical-cinephilic continuum as it now stands: a continuum that Jonathan Rosenbaum describes in terms of the convergence of two discourses that, at their most mystical, revolve around the fantasy of “a self-enclosed film that secretes its own laws.”²⁰ This is not an argument for a modified canon, nor a disavowal of the possibility of digital culture to generate cinephilia. Rather, it is an attempt to provide a critical methodology that moves beyond the transition from analog to digital technologies to the wider conditions of spectatorship today. Drawing on Shaviro’s account of post-cinematic affect and Denson’s account of post-perceptual affect, I suggest a new critical methodology based on Franco Moretti’s conception of distant reading, in which “the text itself disappears” in the study of “units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems.” In distant reading, the cognitive and perceptual limitations of the close reader become “a condition of knowledge.”²¹ While this methodology will be drawn, in part, from the language and concerns of the canonical-cinephilic continuum, it will be presented as a discrete and novel methodology for addressing the position of cinema in our current media ecology. This methodology, which I am describing as distant viewing, can only be understood as canonical insofar as it posits a canon of unviewed – and unviewable - films. Similarly, it can only be understood as cinephilic insofar as it expands cinephilic attachment beyond the canonisable confines of what Keathley describes as the cinephilic moment, “a kind of *mise-en-abyme* wherein each cinephile’s relationship to the cinema is embodied in its most, dense, concentrated form.”²² Drawing on Michel Foucault’s concept of heterotopia as “a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the

²⁰ Rosenbaum, “Second Thoughts on Stroheim,” 109.

²¹ Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *New Left Review* 1 (2000), <http://tinyurl.com/nxvuc4s>.

²² Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 22.

space in which we live,”²³ I use the term cinetopic passage – and cinetopic anecdote – to describe this methodology, attributing it to a subject position that I label the *cinepheur*: a portmanteau of “cinophile” and “*flâneur*” that gestures towards an incorporation of cinephilia into a wider attachment to cinematic infrastructure. Whereas the cinephilic anecdote revolves around a discrete or privileged cinematic moment, the cinetopic anecdote revolves around a collapse of cinematic and infrastructural attachment that renders the extraction of such a moment impossible.

Dark Media Ecologies

In *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*, Timothy Morton outlines “dark ecology” as an environmentalist stance that embraces the “leakiness of the world,”²⁴ an “ecological sensibility” that Jane Bennett has described as “posit[ing] neither a smooth harmony of parts nor a diversity unified by a common spirit.”²⁵ Morton opposes dark ecology to ecocriticism and ecomimesis – specifically the dual ecomimetic fantasies of immersion and ambience. For Morton, the ecocritical subject’s drive to achieve immersion in nature draws on a tradition of reifying nature as ambience and atmosphere, “composed of...smooth, risk-free stratified objects in successive gradations from the cosmos to microbes,”²⁶ that reiterates the distinction between the ecocritical subject and ecological object, even as it seeks to challenge and undermine it:

Ecomimesis aims to rupture the aesthetic distance, to break down the subject-object dualism, to convince us that we belong to this world. But the end result is to reinforce the aesthetic distance, the very dimension in which the subject-object dualism persists. Since de-distancing has been

²³ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16: 1 (1986), 24.

²⁴ Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 159.

²⁵ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), xi.

²⁶ Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences Into Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 26.

reified, distance returns even more strongly, in surround-sound, with panoramic intensity.²⁷

Methodologically, my elaboration of the cinetopic anecdote attempts to promulgate a “dark media ecology” in the name of a post-cinematic and post-perceptual regime in which the diegeticisation of the camera has, as Denson argues, precluded the possibility of both total immersion in the individual film and total abstraction of the individual film to so much ambience or atmosphere. Against the temptation to rapturous ecodiegetic immersion in the competing, mediating interfaces of this emergent ecology, the position of the *cinepheur* seeks to map a media ecology without media, an ecology in which “there is not a single medium of interaction between things, but rather just as many media as there are objects,”²⁸ in the same way that Denson’s dark ecology represents ecology without nature, “nature” being precisely the fantasy that is glimpsed and felt at this moment of atmospheric immersion. Drawing on Morton, Levi R. Bryant uses the term “wilderness ontology” to refer to this moment at which our ecological perspective shifts from that of “a sovereign of nonhuman beings” to that of being “amongst nonhuman beings.”²⁹ Bryant argues that this “amongstness” signifies “something that has dark...dimensions,”³⁰ specifically those of the dark object, “a thing that produces no difference beyond the mere difference of existing.” While our current media ecology may not have quite become a media wilderness, its drive towards relegating the act of mediation to a mere “metaphysical possibility” suggests an ambition to transform the objects and sites of mediation into dark objects “that are so thoroughly withdrawn that they do not affect anything else at all;”³¹ which is to say, objects that are so withdrawn that they cannot be *perceived* to affect anything else at all:

²⁷ Ibid., 135.

²⁸ Graham Harman, *Guerilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things* (Chicago: Open Court, 2005), 95.

²⁹ Levi R. Bryant, “Wilderness Ontology,” in *Preternatural*, ed. Celina Jeffery (New York: Punctum Books, 2011), 20.

³⁰ Ibid., 20.

³¹ Levi R. Bryant, “Dark Objects,” *Larval Subjects* (blog), May 25, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/phukj6b>.

In contrast to dark matter, we are routinely able to observe dark culture...Yet we have little in the way of an ordered understanding of its effects, its influence on how we construct meaning. What makes it “dark,” invisible to routine scrutiny, is not simply that it demands highly specialized fluencies (legal or technical) or that it is cloaked by the constraints of sovereignty (copyright and other aspects of the regulatory apparatus accorded the state), but its intrinsic *immateriality*, its *complexity* and its *liminal status* in mediating people, the state and the built world. Though dark culture is undeniably artificial – of human construction – and can profoundly shape the envelope of our daily experience and interaction, it typically creeps into the awareness of the vast majority of us only rarely or indirectly. As the manifold technologies we employ to connect with one another and to mediate our environments continue to proliferate, the proportion of culture that is “dark” will only increase.³²

If a post-perceptual media ecology is one in which the sites of mediation are imperceptible, then the transition from post-cinematic to post-perceptual ecologies might be expected to turn on the absorption of the cinematic screen into dark media matter, accompanied by a “return of the culturally repressed” in which “the current becoming-skin of the screen may be traced back to the nineteenth-century...where physical contact and manipulation was a prerequisite of the visual experience.”³³ If, as Gilles Deleuze argues, the transition from pre-WWII to post-WWII cinema witnessed a slackening of sensory-motor integration, then what we are witnessing here is a slackening of atmosphere and ambience, a slackening of the possibilities for immersion, that depends precisely on the re-integration of the sensorium.³⁴ Morton construes ambience as a paradoxical ecological object, but it is an equally paradoxical cinematic object, insofar as its kinaesthetic primacy only ramifies when subordinated to visuality. This is not to argue that atmospheric, ambient films no longer exist, but that atmosphere is frequently understood in terms of retrospection and pastiche. In an interview for one of the most self-consciously

³² Lane DeNicola, “EULA, Codec, API: On the Opacity of Digital Culture,” in *Moving Data: The iPhone and the Future of Media*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 276.

³³ Alexandra Schneider, “The iPhone as an Object of Knowledge,” in Snickars and Vonderau (eds.), *Moving Data*, 55.

³⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (New York: Continuum, 2005), 59.

historicised films of the last few years, Nicolas Winding Refn's *Drive*,³⁵ Ryan Gosling draws a common denominator between its highly stylised ambience and his upcoming remake of Michael Anderson's *Logan's Run*³⁶ in terms of the importance of "films that are particularly well suited to this communal atmosphere of a theatre."³⁷ This explicit connection between atmosphere and the maintenance of diegetic parameters is extended in Shaviro's "Slow Cinema vs. Fast Films," in which the distinction between atmosphere and slackened atmosphere is phrased in terms of the distinction between the self-consciously "cinematic" and the merely "filmic." Shaviro frames the emergence of CCC – "contemporary contemplative cinema" – as a nostalgic disavowal of a "film industry whose production processes have been entirely upended by digitalization, and where film itself has increasingly been displaced by newer media, and refashioned to find its place within the landscape of those newer media."³⁸

A dark media ecology therefore severs immersion and atmospherics, media and mediation, instead focusing on the "leakiness" that Morton attributes to dark ecology. In a discussion of the treatment of global warming and environmental catastrophe in Richard Kelly's *Southland Tales*,³⁹ Shaviro describes post-cinematic affect in terms of "a leaking away of time – its asymptotic approach to an end it never fully attains."⁴⁰ In *Connected*, he identifies this leakiness of surplus value with what it means to live in a society that networks and subsists upon the vast proliferation of post-cinematic screens: "We have moved out of time and into space. Anything you want is yours for the asking...A surplus has

³⁵ *Drive*, directed by Nicolas Winding Refn (2011; Santa Monica, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2012), DVD.

³⁶ *Logan's Run*, directed by Michael Anderson (1976; Beverly Hills, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007), DVD.

³⁷ Roth Cornet, "Interview: Ryan Gosling on 'Drive' and 'Logan's Run,'" *Screen Rant*, accessed August 23, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/mplladg>.

³⁸ Steven Shaviro, "Slow Cinema vs. Fast Films," *The Pinocchio Theory* (blog), May 12, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/2ajkx3q>.

³⁹ *Southland Tales*, directed by Richard Kelly (2007; New York: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2008), DVD.

⁴⁰ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 87.

leaked out of the exchange process.”⁴¹ As a methodology, the cinetopic anecdote doesn’t attempt to recount a privileged moment of atmospheric immersion, but instead evokes the surplus leak, the perceptual porosity, between cinema and post-cinematic infrastructure. As such, it is itself an eminently leaky form: unlike the cinephilic anecdote, which can be written or recounted in its entirety, the cinetopic anecdote demands the leakage of what will shortly be described as produsage, as well as requiring the recreation or instantiation of the heterotopic fragment from which it takes its inspiration, in an instance of the “affective labour” that Shaviro identifies as “the quintessential mode of production” in a post-cinematic media ecology.⁴²

A New Methodology

The need for such a methodology has become particularly pressing in the second decade of the new millennium. In the 2010s, a new wave of announcements of the death of cinema have emerged. In part, these have reiterated and consolidated familiar millennial arguments, such as the replacement of celluloid with digital film stock⁴³ and the increasing disparity between mainstream and specialised venues (and growing scarcity of the latter).⁴⁴ Other critiques have remediated earlier anxieties about remediation. In his account of the connection between death-critique and methodological revolution, Rodowick prioritises the flourishing of cinephilic culture in the 1960s, which he attributes to anxieties about television encroaching upon cinema.⁴⁵ The remediation of this anxiety in the wake of the most recent Golden Age of television suggests that we are in the midst of a general revival of the critical anxiety and creativity of 1960s film culture, of which Ebert, Rosenbaum and Schrader’s various returns to Sarris are

⁴¹ Steven Shaviro, *Connected, or What It Means to Live in the Network Society* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 249.

⁴² Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 97.

⁴³ Andrew Gilbert, “The Death of Film and the Hollywood Response,” *Senses of Cinema*, 62 (2012), <http://tinyurl.com/l789yxz>.

⁴⁴ David Bordwell, “Got those death of film/movies/cinema blues?” *Observations on film art* (blog), June 15, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/mtolak2>.

⁴⁵ Rodowick, *Virtual Life of Film*, 28-29.

just one facet. Hence Andrew O’Hehir, in a *Salon* article from late 2012, characterises David Chase’s cinematic debut in terms of redundant return:

One of the centerpiece events of the 50th New York Film Festival...is the world premiere of “The Sopranos” creator David Chase’s “Not Fade Away,” a 1960s-set suburban rock-band drama. Along with the rest of the movie world, I’m curious to see it (if there have been any screenings so far, they remain closely guarded industry secrets). But here’s my halfway serious question for Chase: Why bother?⁴⁶

O’Hehir’s article forms part of a critical conversation that occurred in late 2012, spearheaded by a pair of articles published in the *The New Republic*: David Denby’s “Has Hollywood Murdered the Movies?” and David Thomson’s “American Movies are Not Dead, They are Dying.”⁴⁷ Both articles transplant the elegaic register of 2000s death-critique onto the utterance of death-critique itself, creating a self-referentiality that led Richard Brody to observe that “the ‘Death of Movies’ think piece is, by now, a familiar genre, in which digital technology, as employed by Hollywood, has become a stock villain.”⁴⁸ Yet this self-referentiality also signals the exhaustion of this elegaic register, gesturing towards a recalibration of methodology that, upon close examination, recalls Moretti’s characterisation of distant reading.

From Conversation to Producersage

Denby’s article “Has Hollywood Murdered the Movies?” opens by observing that independent, foreign and low-budget film is as prolific as mainstream, American, Hollywood film:

⁴⁶ Andrew O’Hehir, “Is movie culture dead?” *Salon*, September 29, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/92qhthy>.

⁴⁷ David Denby, “Has Hollywood Murdered the Movies?” *The New Republic* online, September 14, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/aveobej>. David Thomson, “American Movies are Not Dead, They Are Dying,” *The New Republic* online, September 14, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/mjsyku8>. All quotes from Denby and Thomson are taken from these articles unless otherwise specified.

⁴⁸ Richard Brody, “The Moves Aren’t Dying (They’re Not Even Sick),” *The Front Row* (blog on the website of *The New Yorker*), September 27, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/92xeyjo>.

Six hundred or so movies open in the United States every year, including films from every country, documentaries, first features spilling out of festivals, experiments, oddities, zero-budget movies made in someone's apartment. Even in the digit-dazed summer season, small movies never stop opening—there is always something to see, something to write about.

Similarly, cinephilic discourse is prolific, encompassing a global community who:

plant themselves at home in front of flat screens and computers, where they look at old films or small new films from the four corners of the globe, blogging and exchanging disks with their friends. They are extraordinary, some of them, and their blogs and websites generate an exfoliating mass of knowledge and opinion, a thickening density of inquiries and claims, outraged and dulcet tweets.

If independent cinema and cinephilia are flourishing, then Denby's elegy cannot be directed at independent film culture. Instead, it is an elegy for a particular kind of dependence, associated with "the shift in large-scale movie production away from adults":

The intentional shift in large-scale movie production away from adults is a sad betrayal and a minor catastrophe. Among other things, it has killed a lot of the culture of the movies. By culture, I do not mean film festivals, film magazines, and cinephile Internet sites and bloggers, all of which are flourishing. I mean that blessedly saturated mental state of moviegoing, both solitary and social, half dreamy, half critical, maybe amused, but also sometimes awed, that fuels a living art form. Moviegoing is both a private and a sociable affair—a strangers-at-barbecues, cocktail-party affair, the common coin of everyday discourse. In the fall season there may be a number of good things to see, and so, for adult audiences, the habit may flicker to life again. If you have seen one of the five interesting movies currently playing, then you need to see the other four so you can join the dinner-party conversation. If there is only one, as there is most of the year, you may skip it without feeling you are missing much.

It is hard to take seriously Denby's suggestion that "film festivals, film magazines and cinephile Internet sites and bloggers" are not responsible for film "as a living art form," or that their practitioners don't participate in the "blessedly saturated state of moviegoing" that he describes. Nor does it seem as if the "mental state of moviegoing" is the real object of his elegy: it is the sociability of cinema that most preoccupies Denby, specifically the sociability of the discussions that occur after

a film. Condensed to "dinner-party conversations" and displaced to "the common coin of everyday discourse," it is cinema as a conversable medium that Denby eulogises. At one level, this is an elegy for conversations about cinema: the problem with independent film culture, as Denby sees it, is that it is *too* prolific. If one adult film per season is too little to generate good dinner-party conversation, then more than five adult films per season are presumably too many. Certainly, the vast proliferation of independent cinema is beyond the purview of a single dinner party. However, this is simultaneously an elegy for conversations *with* cinema: the "private," "dreamy" encounters that are held with the individual film.

In *Conversation: A History of a Declining Art*, Stephen Miller describes conversation as an art of general knowledge, grounding it in the emergence of intellectual generalism and literary journalism in the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ By eulogising conversable cinema, Denby problematises cinematic generalism and journalism to suggest conversation has become uncorrelated from cinematic experience, as well as situating his own "periodical essays" within what Claude Julien Rawson describes as the Augustan tradition:

'Conversation' is an elastic term often stretching to a broader meaning than the verbal. Johnson saw the periodical essays as belonging with the great conduct books of Castiglione, della Casa, and La Bruyère. He regarded Steele and Addison as 'masters of common life' who undertook the first large-scale reform of manners in England and did so in a new journalistic medium ('the frequent publication of short papers') which Johnson considered particularly suited to such an enterprise. And the word 'conversation' readily applied to the entire project, which introduced not only...politically mollifying geniality...but also the correction of Restoration scurrility and the *Tatler's* crusades against gambling and duelling.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Stephen Miller, *Conversation: A History of a Declining Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 25, 84, 121.

⁵⁰ Claude Julien Rawson, *Satire and Sentiment 1660-1830: Stress Points in the English Augustan Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 206.

No American critic resisted this disconnection more strenuously than Ebert, who repeatedly used Samuel Johnson as a critical touchstone⁵¹ and:

wrote a wonderful memoir, close in its deceptively profound, plainspoken way to two of the writers [he] most admired: Charles Dickens and Samuel Johnson. And indeed, Roger was nothing if not an Anglophile: among the least known books he authored is a slender volume called “The Perfect London Walk,” an instructional travel book that...is a rare case of truth in titling.⁵²

Ebert’s criticism continually sought to transform cinema into a “great conduct book”: “What kind of movies do I like the best? If I had to make a generalization, I would say that many of my favourite movies are about good people...The best films aren’t about what happens to the characters. It’s about the examples that they set.”⁵³ This “politically mollifying geniality” was frequently used in the correction of perceived “scurrility,” personified by figures as diverse as Rob Schneider (for *Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo*),⁵⁴ Vincent Gallo (for *The Brown Bunny*)⁵⁵ and Jonathan Rosenbaum (for *Fanny and Alexander*).⁵⁶ However, it was in his interactions with *New York Press* critic Armand White that Ebert’s “large-scale reform of manners” was most concentrated, as he found in White both a remediation of the “raillery” essential to Augustan conversation⁵⁷ and a cautionary narrative about “gambling and duelling”: “It is baffling to me that a

⁵¹ See “World Affairs won’t be the Same Without Howard,” (*The Chicago Sun-Times* online, November 29, 1995, <http://tinyurl.com/mbmpysj>) and “Blank City: Movie Review” (*The Chicago Sun-Times* online, June 6, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/l3rcbac>).

⁵² Scott Founas, “Roger Ebert: A Mentor to the End,” *Variety* online, April 5, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/cr9ufus>.

⁵³ Roger Ebert, “Twenty-Five Years in the Dark,” in *Awake in the Dark: The Best of Roger Ebert* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 388-389.

⁵⁴ Roger Ebert, “A Bouquet Arrives...” *Roger Ebert’s Journal* (blog on the website of the *The Chicago Sun-Times*), May 7, 2007, <http://tinyurl.com/ow8cv32>. *Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo*, directed by Mike Bigelow (2005; Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005), DVD.

⁵⁵ Roger Ebert, “*The Brown Bunny*: Movie Review,” *The Chicago Sun-Times* online, September 3, 2004, <http://tinyurl.com/pebdz2t>. *The Brown Bunny*, directed by Vincent Gallo (2004; New York: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005), DVD.

⁵⁶ Roger Ebert, “Defending Ingmar Bergman,” *The Chicago Sun-Times* online, August 7, 2007, <http://tinyurl.com/oq95coc>. Ingmar Bergman, *Fanny and Alexander* (1982; Stockholm: The Criterion Collection, 2011), DVD.

⁵⁷ Miller, *Conversation*, 5.

critic could praise *Transformers 2* but not *Synecdoche, NY*. Or *Death Race* but not *There Will Be Blood*. I am forced to conclude that White is, as charged, a troll; a smart and knowing one, but a troll.”⁵⁸

In the wake of Ebert’s passing, elegies have frequently focused on his conversational register. In a rare citational and devotional gesture, the Internet Movie Database reposted Landon Palmer’s paean to Ebert’s ability to frame “Film Criticism as as Conversation,”⁵⁹ while countless other sites, both formal and informal, relate his legacy to his “uniquely accessible, conversational and sharp-witted voice,”⁶⁰ as evinced in his written reviews, his conversations with Gene Siskel, and his books and monographs, often written or structured as a conversation. Even his final review, of Terence Malick’s *To The Wonder*,⁶¹ focused on the “dreamy and half-heard”⁶² dialogue established between audience and screen, while his penultimate review, of Andrew Niccol’s *The Host*,⁶³ reads as a final manifesto for criticism as a “discursive, conversant practice:”⁶⁴ “‘The Host’ is top-heavy with profound, sonorous conversations, all tending to sound like farewells.”⁶⁵ It is this sonorous farewell to conversation that preoccupies and troubles Denby, as well as Stephen Miller, who offers his own cautionary tale:

⁵⁸ Roger Ebert, “Not In Defense of Armond White,” *Roger Ebert’s Journal* (blog on the website of the *The Chicago Sun-Times*), August 14, 2009, <http://tinyurl.com/n8qqqtw>.

⁵⁹ Landon Palmer, “Remembering Roger Ebert, His Thumb and Film Criticism as a Conversation,” *Film School Rejects*, April 5, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/mhen9kn>. Reposted at the Internet Movie Database, 4 May, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/otzx4gl>.

⁶⁰ Jake Walter, “Roger Ebert’s Lasting “Leave of Presence,”” *The Amherst Student* 142: 21 (2013), <http://tinyurl.com/l22jm8m>.

⁶¹ *To The Wonder*, directed by Terence Malick (2012; New York), film.

⁶² Roger Ebert, “*To The Wonder*: Movie Review,” *The Chicago Sun-Times* online, April 6, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/bqvb6v3>.

⁶³ *The Host*, directed by Andrew Niccol (2013; Knoxville, TN: Universal Studios, 2013), DVD.

⁶⁴ Palmer, “Remembering Roger Ebert.”

⁶⁵ Roger Ebert, “*The Host*: Movie Review,” *The Chicago Sun-Times* online, March 27, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/lgmuc4n>.

The Washington Post describes a family that is awash in conversation avoidance devices. The family of six (there are two children from the mother's previous marriage and two from the father's previous marriage) possess nine television sets, six computers, six VCRs, six cell phones, three stereos, three digital music players, and two DVD players. They eat dinner quickly and retire to their electronic cocoons. Sometimes a family member exchanges Instant Messages with another family member even though both are at home.⁶⁶

Here, Denby equates conversation with the home that has been lost, partaking of what Svetlana Boym describes as restorative nostalgia, - nostalgia that takes itself "dead seriously" and aims "to rebuild the mythical place called home."⁶⁷ If only we could restore conversation, Miller suggests, we could restore the lost home once and for all. At the very least, a world of single and enduring marriages would mean no children from previous marriages and no screens from previous marriages. Boym opposes restorative nostalgia to reflective nostalgia, which accepts when the home has been "renovated or gentrified beyond recognition."⁶⁸ It is an interesting question, then, whether Ebert's much-touted use of social media was a radical gesture of reflective nostalgia, or the degree zero of restorative nostalgia. In Ebert's hands, homely conversation was renovated and gentrified through social media, and Twitter in particular, but was it renovated "beyond recognition?" Against Ebert's own suggestion that Twitter, like conversation, is ongoing - "Twitter for me performs the function of a running conversation"⁶⁹ - the canonical climate has tended to identify him with Twitter in such a way that his demise means its demise: "If Twitter was made for Ebert, Ebert was, in the end, made for Twitter."⁷⁰ In "What the Internet owes to Roger

⁶⁶ Miller, *Conversation*, 284.

⁶⁷ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 49-50.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁶⁹ This aphorism is drawn from Shea Bennett's "Roger Ebert's 8 Rules For Using Twitter" (*AllTwitter*, April 8, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/dyjqmx6>).

⁷⁰ Doug Gross, "On Twitter, Roger Ebert found a new voice," *CNN* online, April 5, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/lbrwp93>. See also Ebert's "Confessions of a Blogger" (*Roger Ebert's Journal* (blog on the website of the *The Chicago Sun-Times*), August 21, 2008, <http://tinyurl.com/n5amxgk>): "Your comments have provided me with the best idea of my readers that I have ever had, and you are the readers I have dreamed of. I was writing to you before I was sure you were there."

Ebert,”⁷¹ Gene Seymour argues that it was only with social media that Ebert was able to fulfil the mission of every true conversationalist, and every true critic; namely, to “empower everybody to believe they’re critics.” Yet Seymour also notes that Ebert could be “oracular and didactic when he felt messianic” – and the paradox of a conversational oracle, of a figure who saves social media, and conversation, from itself, is that they eternalise conversation, dissociating it from common discourse in the process.⁷²

Whether Ebert did more to eternalise or revivify conversation, and whether his nostalgia was restorative or reflective, is ultimately less significant than the fact that his status as an elegaic object speaks to a crisis in certain notions of conversation, as well as a crisis in restorative nostalgia. In that sense, his passing represents the perceived end of what Denby describes as “the strong, direct, plain, English sentence.”⁷³ Of course, the critical cultures that Denby dissociates from this “sentence” – “film festivals, film magazines and cinephile Internet sites and bloggers” – are, in many ways, more conversational than the privileged critic-film relationship. The difference is that these conversations are not exemplary in the same way – they are conversations, rather than *the* conversation – and their very premise and point of departure is that there is no such thing as a transcendently privileged spectator-film conversation in the way that Denby describes and Ebert enacted. In part, this signals the emergence of a more collaborative critical conversation, or the subsumption of conversation into the emergence of what Axel Bruns describes as “produsage.” Defining produsage as the key critical register of a digital media ecology, Bruns observes that it “deconstructs larger overall tasks into a more granular set of problems, and therefore in the first place generates a series of individual, incomplete

⁷¹ Gene Seymour, “What the Internet owes to Roger Ebert,” *CNN* online, April 5, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/kzjnet5>.

⁷² In a conversation poem for the post-cinematic era, Ebert constructed a multimedia essay on Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s oracular conversation. “Samuel Taylor Coleridge,” *Balder & Dash* (blog on the website of the *The Chicago Sun-Times*), July 25, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/lupkak2>.

⁷³ David Denby, “Ask the Author Live,” *Ask the Author* (blog on the website of *The New Yorker*), March 3, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/mb9fdn3>.

artefacts.”⁷⁴ Prodosage, like good conversation, is therefore generative: instead of sealing off the exemplary individualism of the participants, it conflates individuality with incompleteness. Accordingly, Bruns suggests that “the conversation about produsage” is best continued “through the medium of produsage itself.”⁷⁵

Bruns’ account of produsage suggests that Denby’s anxiety at the disruption of a previously privileged relationship between critic and screen is simultaneously an anxiety about the distinction between production and consumption. In Jonathan Beller’s terms, this anxiety is symptomatic of the emergence of an attention economy, in which precisely what is lacking is scarcity, and “the productive value of human attention is only now beginning to be perceptible.”⁷⁶ In his 2002 memoir *American Sucker*, Denby offers a personal and economic periodisation of this elegy for cinematic scarcity. The memoir details the years from 1999 to 2002, setting the dissolution of Denby’s marriage and New York apartment home against the backdrop of the Dotcom Bubble. In an effort to compensate for his financial losses, Denby attempted to make one million dollars on the stock market. In *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life and Beyond*, Bruns argues that the investment required of produsage is of “time and effort rather than dollars and cents.”⁷⁷ While Denby’s memoir does detail his delirious economic and financial speculations, it simultaneously expands to more general “investments of time and effort” produced by this openness to produsage. Since his investments were made during the Bubble, these objects of time and effort tend to revolve around the internet. For the most part, these are cinephilic in nature and centre on pornographic addiction. In my second chapter, I discuss the relationship between produsage and pornography in terms of Ramon Lobato’s investigation into informal – or “grey” – economies of cinema, “online

⁷⁴ Axel Bruns, “Beyond Difference: Reconfiguring Education for the User-Led Age,” in *Digital Difference: Perspectives on Online Learning*, eds. Ray Land and Siân Baymne (Rotterdam, NL: Sense, 2011), 140.

⁷⁵ Axel Bruns, *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life and Beyond* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 7.

⁷⁶ Jonathan Beller, *The Cinematic Mode of Production: Attention Economy and the Society of the Spectacle* (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2006), 113.

⁷⁷ Bruns, *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life*, 131.

distribution circuits situated *between* the formal and informal realms, in a grey zone of semi-legality.”⁷⁸ Denby glimpses this “grey zone” as he finds himself both consumed and produced by his pornographic addiction:

After a while, as I spilled from site to site, I felt not that I was controlling and discovering porn on the 'Net but that it was discovering me. It was seeking me out, reading me, and it found out things about me that I didn't know. I continued to review movies, I had dinner with friends, took care of the boys when it was my turn. I fed the cat, read the *Times* and the *Journal*, but I felt, at times, as if I were breaking into fragments. I had this appetite and that one, but what held them together?⁷⁹

Denby's question of what held these desires together is answered by the metonymic chain that precedes it: bookended by “reviewing movies” and “reading the *Times* and the *Journal*,” it encompasses “having dinner with friends” and taking care of his family, pets and property. In other words, “ordinary discourse” is set against produsage, in much the same way as in “Has Hollywood Murdered the Movies?” However, an extra layer of familial, domestic stability has been added to that discourse, only to be subsumed into canonical stability:

The Internet is always spoken of as a medium of connection, but it is also a medium of isolation that surfs the user and breaks him into separate waves going nowhere. There was the movie hunger, and the lust hunger, and the early stirrings of the money hunger. But where was the core, reconciling and joining the many elements together? In the tomes above the computer? My book about the classics was devoted to Columbia's version of the “core curriculum.” That's why the big boys were up there, in the shelves above the monitor. What would they have said?⁸⁰

Here, Denby literally equates the canon with the home that has been lost, once again partaking of restorative nostalgia's need “to rebuild the mythical place called home.” In Denby's case, this might be specified to the conversations that take place in the mythical place called home, since it is those conversations, as much as the home itself, that are the object of his 2012 death-critique. By contrast, Denby's fixation on the immediate pornographic past speaks to the

⁷⁸ Ramon Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema: Mapping Informal Film Distribution* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 95.

⁷⁹ David Denby, *American Sucker* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2005), 15.

⁸⁰ Denby, *American Sucker*, 15.

reflective nostalgic's tendency to envisage the past virtually, as a "multitude of potentialities, nonteleological possibilities of historic development": "We don't need a computer to get access to the virtualities of our imagination: reflective nostalgia has a capacity to awaken multiple planes of consciousness."⁸¹ In fact, Denby opens *American Sucker* with a sustained act of reflective virtuality:

Sometime in early January 2000, I became aware that I was jabbering. I was on the phone, in my little study at home on West End Avenue, in Manhattan, and speaking as breathlessly as a cattle auctioneer in full cry. Jumping over verbal fences, mashing participials, dropping qualifiers ...I was talking to an old friend about movies, and I said something like this: Movie people think platforming works only with quality-word-of-mouth and slow-building three-four-million-a-week pictures in which buzz rolls into multiple viewings like *The English Patient* or *Shakespeare in Love*...I had trouble saying one thing at a time. I had to say two things, or three, tucking statistics into my words as I talked, and I seemed to be grouping ideas or pieces of information rhythmically, by association, rather than by cause and effect. As I hung up, I wondered, Who is this nut, gathering and expelling information in charged little clumps, like a Web site spilling bytes?⁸²

At this point, Denby, like Boym's reflective nostalgic, no longer needs a computer to access the virtualities of his imagination; he has become a computer, or at least become capable of virtual utterance. Like an auctioneer, his utterance occurs at the frenzied nexus between multiple producers and multiple consumers. While Denby is writing of a time when digital cinephilia was more inchoate than it is in 2012, he is nevertheless uttering the discourse of digital cinephilia: this is a conversation, but it is no longer a privileged or exemplary conversation. Rather, it is a conversation that is meaningless without the collaborative voice of multiple participants, a conversation that is meaningless without produsage. While this reflective mode is more or less pathologised over the course of *American Sucker*, it recurs – or at least the possibility of it recurs – at those moments at which Denby dramatises his movement out of his family home, or his effort to map and navigate the dispersals of that home into the surrounding streets: "I would look up and down West End Avenue, waiting for

⁸¹ Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, 50.

⁸² Denby, *American Sucker*, 4.

some fresh breeze to come along and rescue me – it was there somewhere, coming down the block.”⁸³

Passage

In Benjamin’s terms, this effort to interiorise and domesticate the streetscape at its most transitory corresponds to the perceptual posture of *flânerie*,⁸⁴ just as produsage, and Denby’s apprehension of it, is foreshadowed by Benjamin’s own produced masterpiece of fragmentation and dark ecology, *The Arcades Project*:

These notes devoted to the Paris arcades were begun under an open sky of cloudless blue that arched above the foliage and yet was dimmed by the millions of leaves from which the fresh breeze of diligence, the stertorous breath of research, the storm of youthful zeal and the idle wind of curiosity have raised the dust of centuries.⁸⁵

Intended as Benjamin’s magnum opus, *The Arcades Project*, a study of urban passage and spectacle, was designed to be exhibited as an instance of passage and spectacle, ideally as the captions to an exhibition of photographs.⁸⁶ As well as being a multimodal text, *The Arcades Project* is also a highly collaborative text, including extensive quotations and paraphrases. As Avital Ronell observes in “Street Talk,” Walter Benjamin would “collect quotations, insert them here or there, pick them up, take them home with him, discovering their solicitations on the reading boulevards, caring for them.”⁸⁷ As an attempt to map and evoke the interstices between late nineteenth century and early modernist private and public space, *The Arcades Projects* performs a phenomenology of a media ecology in which photographic and cinematic technologies had not fully emerged from a

⁸³ Ibid., 16.

⁸⁴ I will italicise *flâneur* and its various derivations throughout this thesis, since that is the convention in scholarly examinations of the concept. Benjamin himself does not consistently italicise it in *The Arcades Project*, but that may equally be a decision of the editors and translators, since it appears italicised elsewhere in his work, including in several sources cited throughout this thesis.

⁸⁵ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2002), 884.

⁸⁶ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 4.

⁸⁷ Avital Ronell, “Street Talk,” in *Benjamin’s Ground: New Readings of Walter Benjamin*, ed. Rainer Nagele (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 131.

wider urban spectatorial matrix. Using Denson's argument that the transition from post-cinematic to post-perceptual media ecologies is marked by a diegetisation of the camera, I deploy *The Arcades Project* as a key text for examining and mapping the dispersal of cinematic conversation, canonicity and stability back into the urban spectatorial-infrastructural matrix from which it originally emerged.

In order to perform this mapping – a movement from Fredric Jameson's conception of cognitive mapping to something that I will term tropic mapping – I dovetail Benjamin's conception of *flânerie* with Keathley's elaboration of cinephilia to propose a cinematic hermeneutic revolving around passage. While the German title of *The Arcades Project*, *Passagen-Werk*, is literally translated as *Passage-Work*, it also has a secondary meaning of *Passage-Factory* or *Passage-Plant*.⁸⁸ This secondary meaning speaks to Benjamin's dual project of both describing and producing passage. In English, the double meaning of 'plant' as both a factory, or centre of operations, and a botanical unit, concisely draws out Benjamin's project of "botanizing on the asphalt"⁸⁹ as the consumptive-productive matrix from which this phenomenology of passage emerges. In *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetics of Redemption*, Richard Wolin argues that this phenomenal attention distinguished Benjamin from contemporary Marxists, just as Benjamin himself insisted that "the allegorical mode of intuition is always built on a devalued phenomenal world."⁹⁰ As an attempt to bypass allegory altogether in order "to force the phenomenal sphere itself to yield noumenal

⁸⁸ Heather Marelle Crickenberger, "The Structure of Awakening: Walter Benjamin and Progressive Scholarship in New Media" (doctoral thesis, University of South Carolina, 2007), 15, <http://tinyurl.com/kzr4sfx>.

⁸⁹ Walter Benjamin, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," trans. Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings Vol. 4: 1938-1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2006), 19.

⁹⁰ Walter Benjamin, "'Konspekt' for the Baudelaire Study," in Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, *Briefwechsel: 1933-1940* 1(3):1151, cited in Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 231. Throughout this thesis, whenever I cite a passage as it occurs in another secondary source, I will repeat that source's citation exactly, even if it does not conform to the requirements of the Chicago Manual of Style.

truth,”⁹¹ as well as to insist on “the irreducibility of an embodied experiential domain,”⁹² it is questionable whether *The Arcades Project* is really the unfinished masterpiece that it is claimed to be, or whether its status as masterpiece lies precisely in the fact that it is inherently unfinished and unfinishable, just as “the critico-textual field opened up by Benjamin owes its sublime vastness and uncanny aptness precisely to the detail that he was willing to pursue in a passage.”⁹³ For Morton, dark ecology is operative when “scale is infinite in both directions: infinite in size and infinite in detail,”⁹⁴ and Benjamin’s dark ecological passage between “detail” and “sublime vastness,” of which *flânerie* is merely one iteration, dialecticises “the citation as *shock*, which shatters the continuum and which does not resolve itself in any solution of continuity; and, on the other hand, the citation as *montage* – the literary equivalent of the collectible item – which puts the fragments of the past in a relation of simultaneity.”⁹⁵ Syntactically, this movement from “an open sky of endless blue” to “millions of leaves” - or, in Morton’s terms, “the secret passage between bottles of detergent and mountain ranges”⁹⁶ – produces a succession of vertiginous tableaux:

His sentences do not seem to be generated in the usual way; they do not entail. Each sentence is written as if it were the first, or the last...Mental and historical processes are rendered as conceptual tableaux; ideas are transcribed in extremis and the intellectual perspectives are vertiginous. His style of thinking, incorrectly called aphoristic, might better be called freeze-frame baroque.⁹⁷

In the following chapter, I discuss this tendency towards “freeze-frame baroque” as a syntactic proclivity for the way in which the *Wunderkammer*, or collection of

⁹¹ Wolin, *Aesthetic of Redemption*, 92.

⁹² Mark Hansen, *Embodying Technesis: Technology Beyond Writing* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 231.

⁹³ Henry Sussman, *The Task of the Critic: Poetics, Philosophy and Religion* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 96.

⁹⁴ Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 30.

⁹⁵ Philippe Simay, “Tradition as Injunction: Benjamin and the Critique of Historicisms,” trans. Carlo Salzani, in *Walter Benjamin and History*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), 147.

⁹⁶ Morton, *Ecology Without Nature*, 114.

⁹⁷ Susan Sontag, “Under the Sign of Saturn,” in *A Susan Sontag Reader* (London: Penguin, 1983), 398.

wonders, works to undermine the “allegorical mode of intuition.” For Benjamin, it is in the figure of the collector that this temptation to allegorise and aphorise is most powerfully thwarted and dramatised, and I devote my second chapter to a case study of the Criterion Collection, as well as the more general connection between collection and passage, in order to evoke the “domestic interior” that passage-factories produce, even as they consume it:

On the history of the domestic interior. The residential character of the rooms in the early factories, though disconcerting and inexpedient, adds this homey touch: that within the spaces one can imagine the factory owner as a quaint figurine in a landscape of machines, dreaming not only of his own but of their future greatness. With the dissociation of the proprietor from the workplace this characteristic of factory buildings disappears. Capital alienates the employer too, from his means of production, and the dream of their future greatness is finished. This alienation process culminates in the emergence of the private home.⁹⁸

In an inversion of Denby’s dichotomy between the “alienation process” and the “private home,” the produsage of passage here dictates that the retreat to private, domestic space culminates in the “cocooning” that Miller identified as the degree zero of non-conversible space. In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin describes this symbiotic relationship between an organism and its domicile in terms of the growth of a shell, rather than a cocoon (220), but the figurative import is the same: if the dissolution of proto-cinematic technologies across an urban matrix has somehow returned in the dissolution of post-cinematic technologies across an urban matrix, then so has the recourse to modes of domestic privacy whose reticulation, individuation and fragility are proportionate to that dissolution. The proto-cinematic shell has become the post-cinematic cocoon, but the rationale for domestic interiority – to both safeguard against and collect the sensory dispersal of the metropolis – has become, if anything, more urgent. Benjamin suggested that this notion of dwelling ended with the nineteenth century, observing that “the twentieth century, with its porosity and transparency, its tendency towards the well-lit and airy, has put an end to dwelling in the old sense” (221). Yet even Benjamin could not have imagined the twenty-first century’s “increasing inability to imagine a

⁹⁸ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 226.

different future,”⁹⁹ nor the conditions of a post-cinematic media ecology, which, Shaviro suggests, only start to ramify against a milieu of severe imaginative paucity, at “a time when...the imagination itself threatens to fail us.”¹⁰⁰

Dream Houses of the Collective

For Benjamin, this “domestic interior” culminates in the fragile, provisional interiority of dreams:

In order to understand the arcades from the ground up, we sink them into the deepest stratum of the dream; we speak of them as though they had sunk us. A collector looks at things in much the same way. Things come to strike the great collector. How he himself pursues and encounters them, what changes in the ensemble of items are effected by a newly supervening item – all this shows him his affairs dissolved in constant flux, like realities in the dream.¹⁰¹

Benjamin describes these dream-interiors as “dream houses of the collective,” arguing that they speak to both individual and collective dreaming in ways that I elaborate in my final chapter. For the moment, it is sufficient to observe that Benjamin embodies the produsage of passage involved in the construction and maintenance of this dream house in his use of the word “passage” itself. On the one hand, “passage” occurs continually throughout *The Arcades Project*, in the service of its rich citational economy: “The following passage shows the crowd as depicted by Hugo” (286). At the same time, it forms a critical part of the *Project’s* navigational apparatus: “Names of arcades: *Passage des Panoramas, Passage Véro-Dodat, Passage du Désir* (leading in earlier days to a house of ill repute), *Passage Colbert, Passage Vivienne, Passage du Pont-Neuf, Passage du Casire, Passage de la Réunion...*” (33). Rhetorically, these citational-navigational thresholds produce an ambivalent temporality: for every passage that Benjamin offers through a quotation, or arcade, there is simultaneously an anterior

⁹⁹ Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2005), 232, cited in Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 137.

¹⁰⁰ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 139.

¹⁰¹ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 841.

movement back towards the author of the quotation, or the original passengers of the arcade: “Whoever enters an arcade passes through the gateway in the opposite direction. (Or, rather, he ventures into the intrauterine world)” (415). Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin point out in their footnotes that Benjamin does not use any of the regular German terms for “gateway” in this excerpt. Rather, he uses a portmanteau, *Tor-Weg*, which translates to something like “threshold as passage, or passage as threshold” (985, note 12). By identifying passage with threshold, and vice versa, Benjamin complicates the conventional notion of passage as movement through discrete thresholds, or thresholds as marking-points for discrete passages. To experience, or inhabit, threshold-passage is to be in perpetual thrall to a transitional object, set loose in an “intrauterine world.”¹⁰² Hence Benjamin’s idiosyncratic conception of dialectic: “Accordingly, we present the new, the dialectical method of doing history: with the intensity of a dream, to pass through what has been, in order to experience the present as the waking world to which the dream refers!”¹⁰³ As an instance of this “method of doing history,” threshold-passage takes on a peculiar pregnancy at the cusp between sleep and waking, waking life and dream-life:

Rites de passage – this is the designation in folklore for the ceremonies that attach to death and birth, to marriage, puberty and so forth. In modern life, these transitions are becoming ever more unrecognizable and impossible to experience. We have grown very poor in threshold experiences. Falling asleep is perhaps the only such experience that remains to us. (But together with this, there is also waking up). And, finally, there is the ebb and flow of conversation and the sexual permutations of love – experience that surges over thresholds like the changing figures of the dream...¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Barbara Johnson makes a similar observation about threshold-passage, as well as its relation to the tension between the allegorical and phenomenal worlds, in terms of Benjamin’s trifold relation to the word ‘capital’ – in terms of capitalism, Paris as the capital of France (and the nineteenth century) and the capital letters that commence his fragments: “The capital letter thus, in a sense, allegorizes the unallegorizable” (“The Task of the Translator,” in *Mother Tongues: Sexuality, Trials, Motherhood, Translation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 45.

¹⁰³ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 838.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 494.

Passage-Crisis

Centred on “the ebb and flow of conversation and the sexual permutations of love,” *American Sucker* is thus not an elegy for cinema *per se*, but for a cinematic milieu that has grown “very poor in threshold experiences” and in which the “transitions” that make a certain kind of cinematic pleasure meaningful are “becoming ever more unrecognizable and impossible to experience.” While *American Sucker* has nostalgic recourse to the “half dreamy, half critical” space between sleeping and waking, by way of the wee small hours of internet pornography, “Has Hollywood Murdered the Movies?” metaphorises this cusp in terms of cinematic infrastructure – specifically, in terms of an inability to register where the world ends and the screen begins. Having criticised Joss Whedon’s *The Avengers*¹⁰⁵ for subjecting him to “the airless digital spaces of a digital city,” Denby evokes “the clangorous *Transformer* movies, which are themselves based on plastic toys, in which dark whirling digital masses barge into each other or thrash their way through buildings, cities, and people, and at which the moviegoer, sitting in the theater, feels as if his head were repeatedly being smashed against a wall...filling up every available corner of public space.”

Continuing his critique of Michael Bay, Denby describes how, in *Pearl Harbor*,¹⁰⁶ “the sensation of being rushed, dizzied, overwhelmed by the images” precludes what could have been “a passage of bitterly eloquent movie poetry.” This movement from passage to sensation is presented as a post-cinematic alienation effect, a transplantation of engagement from the film to the fact of seeing it, as well as the screening environment itself: “What, then, is being sold at a big movie that is cut the same way? The experience of going to the movie itself, the sensation of being rushed, dizzied, overwhelmed by the images.” If part of the sensation that precludes – or at least confuses – passage is the sheer “experience of going to the movie itself,” then the theatre has become just another claustrophobic space in the film – or the screen has become just another wall of

¹⁰⁵ *The Avengers*, directed by Joss Whedon (2012; Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Video, 2012), DVD.

¹⁰⁶ *Pearl Harbor*, directed by Michael Bay (2001; Burbank, CA: Touchstone Home Entertainment, 2001), DVD.

the theatre. In Morton's terms, Denby's experience of the cinema-film typifies a dark media ecology, in which atmospheric immersion is suffocated and precluded, just as Denby's phenomenology of "temporary sensation" is a phenomenology of this post-cinematic inability to decinematise the theatre:

many of us have logged deadly hours watching superheroes bashing people off walls, cars leapfrogging one another in tunnels, giant toys and mock-dragons smashing through Chicago, and charming teens whooshing around castles. What we see in bad digital action movies has the anti-Newtonian physics of a cartoon, but drawn with real figures. Rushed, jammed, broken, and overloaded, action now produces temporary sensation rather than emotion and engagement. Afterward these sequences fade into blurs, the different blurs themselves melding into one another—a vague memory of having been briefly excited rather than the enduring contentment of scenes playing again and again in one's head.

For Denby, what constitutes the movement from Newtonian to Einsteinian cinematics is the dissolution of a screen whose content has become "rushed, jammed, broken and overloaded," spilling out into the cinema. Once again, this reflects the presence of what Denson describes as a diegetic camera – a camera that fails to register its diegetic separateness from the action that it describes, and so fails to impart that separateness to the cinematic audience, meaning that cinema is no longer confined to the screen, or the space between the screen and the seat, but dispersed everywhere and nowhere. At the same time, the movement from the Newtonian differentiation of space and time to the Einsteinian space-time continuum makes for a milieu in which the posture of New Criticism no longer signifies, since the "final necessity" for the New Critic "is, ideally, space and time for withdrawal, for critical distancing; absorption, withdrawal, often repeated, are constantly procedures of criticism."¹⁰⁷ In other words, this is a milieu in which close reading – and close viewing – no longer signifies. Accordingly, Denby is unable to recall or fixate on the individual film, instead having recourse to units that are alternately smaller and larger than it: "sequences" and "blurs."

¹⁰⁷ Austin Warren, *Connections* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1970), ix.

Denby thus registers a distinctively post-cinematic and post-perceptual disconnection between his sensory apparatus and that assumed by the individual film: insofar as this is a discrete “film,” its discretion is operating at a level beyond his sensory comprehension. In his discussion of Christopher Nolan’s *Inception*,¹⁰⁸ Denby articulates this disconnectionism as:

a whimsical, over-articulate nullity—a huge fancy clock that displays wheels and gears but somehow fails to tell the time. Yet *Inception* is nothing more than the logical product of a recent trend in which big movies have been progressively drained of sense. As much as two-thirds of the box office for these big films now comes from overseas, and the studios appear to have concluded that if a movie were actually about something, it might risk offending some part of the worldwide audience. Aimed at Bangkok and Bangalore as much as at Bangor, our big movies have been defoliated of character, wit, psychology, local color.

By describing *Inception* as a “huge fancy clock that displays wheels and gears but somehow fails to tell the time,” Denby situates it as exemplary of a cinematic aesthetic in which Newtonian mechanics no longer ramify. Shortly after, he observes that: “Despite its dream layers, the movie is not really about dreams – the action you see on screen feels nothing like dreams.” If we are continually unaware of whether we are in a film, Denby suggests, we are similarly unaware of whether we are even awake. By connecting this collapse to a market that is “aimed at Bangkok and Bangalore as much as at Bangor,” Denby evokes a media ecology in which there is no fundamental difference between film and place. Not only is it the premise of a blockbuster like *Inception* that it can be watched in Bangkok, Bangalore or Bangor, but that it can be watched *absolutely anywhere*. In my conclusion, I describe a cinetopic anecdote of my own which revolves around a recurring dream I had of a DVD store that could be erected almost anywhere; that is, a dream of the conditions that have made dreaming impossible. As radical as it might seem, this collapse of film and place into a new kind of non-place, or any-place-whatever, is the logical product of a post-cinematic ecology in which “all activity is under surveillance from video cameras and microphones, and in

¹⁰⁸ *Inception*, directed by Christopher Nolan (2010; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2010), DVD.

return video screens and speakers, moving images and synthesized sounds, are dispersed pretty much everywhere.”¹⁰⁹

In many ways, this dissolution of film and place is the common denominator between proto-cinematic and post-cinematic media ecologies, and haunts both the canonical and cinephilic poles of the canonical-cinephilic continuum. Rosenbaum, Ebert and Schrader all position their canonical projects as responses to a bewildering spatialisation of cinema, although the situation is perhaps most pointed in the case of Schrader, who writes that he resolved to embark upon his canon during a conversation in which “I remarked on a former assistant who, when told to look up Montgomery Clift, returned some minutes later asking, “Where is that?” I replied that I thought it was in the Hollywood Hills, and he returned to his search engine.”¹¹⁰ In that sense, Denby’s response to Nolan pre-emptively reads his aesthetic through its incipient remediation on an artifact like the recently released iPhone Movie Map app (Figure 1).¹¹¹ Confined to London at present, this app reinvents the canon of “greatest London movies” by way of “a map of London with pins representing over 100 movie locations from the very best London movies. Using GPS you can view your position as you explore the movies shot in the city.” Like the Netflix queue maps that I discuss in my fourth chapter, as well as the broader connection between Google geographies and post-perceptual cinematic experience invoked by Schrader’s “search engine,” this app might be understood as the mode in which the canonical-cinephilic continuum ramifies in the 2010s, a “twofold effect” in which “we have the creation of additional detours and mediations, but...also the possibility of “finding” cinema even without necessarily having “searched” for it.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 6-7.

¹¹⁰ Schrader, “Canon Fodder,” 34.

¹¹¹ Christian Hayes, “Movie Map London for iPhone,” *Classic Film Show* (blog), April 18, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/lbsszuo>.

¹¹² Francesco Casetti and Sara Sampietro, “With Eyes, With Hands: The Relocation of Cinema Into the iPhone,” in Snickars and Vonderau (eds.), *Moving Data*, 26.

Although it draws from the canonical-cinephilic continuum, the language of both canonicity and cinephilia are clearly inadequate for dealing with such an object, which might be understood as an objective correlative to the conception of cinetopic passage, and cinetopic anecdote, that I elaborate in my opening chapter. Among other things, it suggests that the nexus between walking and cinematic sight that characterises the *flâneur* has been remediated and refined to that of a *cinepheur*. While nobody has yet uploaded a YouTube clip in which they depict a film being watched on a mobile platform as they retrace every passage within that film, a prototype is evident in Charlie Sheen's reinvention of "four-dimensional cinema." During a 2011 screening of *Jaws*¹¹³ on board his private yacht, Sheen made sure that the horizon of the ocean on the screen and the horizon of the real ocean matched up at all times.¹¹⁴ In doing so, he not only

¹¹³ *Jaws*, directed by Steven Spielberg (1975; Universal City, CA: Universal Studios, 2000), DVD.

¹¹⁴ Many of the interviews surrounding Sheen's infamous night on his yacht with Brooke Mueller, Bree Olsen and *Jaws* have become difficult to find online. However, segments, punctuated by frathouse commentary, have been uploaded by Vince Mancini at "Frotcast 36: Fun with Charlie Sheen," *Filmdrunk* (blog), <http://tinyurl.com/qahk3h3>. As of July 9, 2013, there is an excerpt, at 35:40, at which Sheen states: "It was incredible. If you haven't done this, I urge you to make plans and do this tonight. What I wanted to do was I wanted to watch *Jaws* on the ocean, in the dark, and be afraid. I wanted to embrace the fear and relive the movie. What I didn't count on was that it basically turned into *Star Tours*. It turned into 4D...their horizon matched ours...So, it was an incredible experience, and I felt...you know, I took full credit, but I had no idea that the four-dimensional aspect of it would occur, and it occurred in such a magical sense that we all just sat there in awe..." In terms of world screening venues, the closest approximation of Sheen's four-dimensional theatre is possibly Büro Olo Scheeren's Archipelago Cinema in Nae Pie Lagoon on Kudu Island, Thailand. In "Thailand's Floating Cinema" (*Architizer* (blog), March 28, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/8yozz23>) Kelly Chan explicates this connection to the American cinematic sublime: "The drive-in movie theater may be a uniquely North American institution, but the icon of the wide-open American landscape recently experienced its most heroic revival in Thailand, leaping forth from its humble, grounded origins and into the clear blue waters of Nai Pi Lae lagoon on Kudu Island." In their press release, Büro Ole Scheeren made it clear that the cinema's novelty was in the service of a media ecology in which the architecture of cinematic experience has become increasingly drift-oriented, characterised by temporal modularity: "A screen, nestled somewhere between the rocks. And the audience... floating... hovering above the sea, somewhere in the middle of this incredible space of the lagoon, focused on the moving images across the water: a sense of temporality, randomness, almost like driftwood. Or maybe something

embodied the *flâneur*'s peculiar proclivity for "transformation, passage, wave action...swell" – discussed shortly – but crystallised it into the passage of a *cinépheur*, personifying a media ecology that itself apotheosises the way:

the *flâneur* perceives the events in the street as a film that is projected on his mind. Modern life becomes a sequence of pereption that runs through his mind as a potentially infinite film of reality in all of its variations and unforeseeable diversity. Viewing phenomena on the screen or in the street, neither the *flâneur* of the city nor the spectator of film can ever quite exhaust the "objects he contemplates. There is no end to his wanderings."¹¹⁵

As Denby recognises, there is something fantastic and fantasmatic about this inexhaustible "wandering":

At this point the fantastic is chasing human temperament and destiny—what we used to call drama—from the movies. The merely human has been transcended. And if the illusion of physical reality is unstable, the emotional framework of movies has changed, too, and for the worse. In time—a very short time—the fantastic, not the illusion of reality, may become the default mode of cinema.

It is at this moment at which "the merely human has been transcended" that Denby moves beyond Einsteinian space-time to what David Harvey describes as the "third option" of relational, or object-oriented space, "space regarded...as being contained *in* objects in the sense that an object can be said to exist only insofar as it contains and represents within itself relationships to other

more architectural: modular pieces, loosely assembled, like a group of little islands that congregate to form an auditorium" ("Archipelago Cinema: A floating auditorium for Thailand's Film on the Rocks Festival: Press Release," Büro Ole Scheeren, March 20, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/pojj5v5>). Büro Ole Scheeren's portfolio might be understood as an attempt to redress the issue of the cinematic venue in the wake of a post-cinematic camera and includes the Mirage City Cinema, CCTV TVCC, the Kinetic Experience Cinema, the Crystal Media Centre and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

¹¹⁵ Anke Gleber, *The Art of Taking A Walk: Flânerie, Literature and Film in Weimar Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 158. Gleber cites Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 165.

objects.”¹¹⁶ For Denby, the discorrelation between critic and film, and conversation and film, has collapsed into a wider discorrelation of perception. Accordingly, he can only understand the canon as a canon of absences, a vast body of unseen and unseeable films: “You cannot mourn an unmade project, but you can feel its absence through the long stretches of an inane season.”

Threshold-Crisis

David Thomson’s companion article in *The New Republic*, “American Movies are Not Dead: They are Dying” also speaks to the crisis in threshold-passage from within the vocabulary of the canonical-cinephilic continuum. However, where Denby’s proclivities are cinephilic and passage-oriented, Thomson’s are more canonical and threshold-oriented:

At the start of August 2012, the world was hanging on election results. Well, not the entire world. The electorate in this case was under 850, though that was nearly four times the number of people who had voted in this election the last time, in 2002. The London film magazine *Sight & Sound* was holding its international poll of critics and writers to determine the top ten films ever made, and the best one of all. *Citizen Kane* had held that position for fifty years.

In *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*, John Guillory identifies this conflation of artistic and democratic representation as one of the legacies of the culture wars: “The democratic metaphor is quite potent here, since the conflation of judgment with a kind of election betrays the fact that the terms of the canon debate are entirely determined by the basic assumptions of liberal pluralism.”¹¹⁷ According to Guillory, these terms ensure a symbiotic relationship between syllabus and canon, whereby the syllabus appears to be a site from which to contest the canon, but in fact becomes the point from which the fantasy of the canon is generated:

¹¹⁶ David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, rev. ed. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 13.

¹¹⁷ John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 28.

So far from being the case that the canon determines the syllabus in the simple sense that the syllabus is constrained to select from only canonical works, it is much more historically accurate to say that the syllabus posits the existence of the canon as its imaginary totality. The imaginary list is projected out of the multiple individual syllabi functioning within individual pedagogic institutions over a relatively extended period of time. Changing the syllabus cannot mean in any historical context overthrowing the canon, because every construction of a syllabus *institutes* once again the process of canon formation.¹¹⁸

In many ways, the *Sight & Sound* poll functions as one of the syllabic institutions that Guillory describes. Established in 1952 by the British Film Institute, it gathers prominent thinkers on film into an imaginary, multidisciplinary institution. Each contributor is required to offer a list, or syllabus, of the ten greatest films of all time, which is then projected into an imaginary list, or canon. Moreover, the fact that the *Sight & Sound* poll is held once a decade means that the “extended period of time” that Guillory stipulates comes into play as well; over the course of its sixty year existence, various meta-lists have been projected out of the individual lists.¹¹⁹ Not only does this continual projection of lists from lists encapsulate the imaginary, fantasmatic status of the canon, but it displaces and assuages anxieties about the more troubling continuity between canonical and non-canonical texts, the fact that “the historical continuum of literature is that of a complex continuum of major works, minor works, works read primarily in research contexts, works as yet simply shelved in the archive...an indefinite number of works of manifest cultural interest and accomplishment.”¹²⁰

As Ben Alpers points out in “Canon Wars, The Informationalization of Cinema, and the *Sight & Sound* Poll,” the “historical continuum” of cinema has become harder to ignore in the wake of digital availability, contributing “to our experience of the *Sight & Sound* poll as a kind of mixtape – a cultural production we can both experience and *re-mix* ourselves – rather than as the hermetic

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 38.

¹¹⁹ The British Film Institute offers a selection of such speculations and statistical responses to the 2012 poll at “The Greatest Films of All Time: comment from around the web,” accessed June 28, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/qahzbn7>.

¹²⁰ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 30.

declaration of a cultural authority.”¹²¹ While that may well be Alpers’ experience, it is certainly not the conscious intention of the *Sight & Sound* project itself, which, for the 2012 election, noted that: “We’re proud that, thanks to its longevity and critical reach, this poll has come to be regarded as the most trusted guide there is to the canon of cinema greats, not to mention a barometer of changing critical tastes.”¹²² In order to ensure barometric accuracy, the 2012 *Sight & Sound* poll once again conflated democratic and artistic representation, offering the vote to more women, ethnic groups and professional backgrounds than ever before. Nevertheless, in a short-circuit between syllabus and canon, the attempt to “globalise” the *Sight & Sound* list resulted in an even more global sweep of its canonical hegemony: “What the increase in numbers has – and hasn’t – done is surprising.” Certainly, *Citizen Kane*¹²³ was toppled from its supremacy for the first time in fifty years, but only to make way for *Vertigo*,¹²⁴ an equally fine film, but hardly a revolutionary canonical object. Not only does this encapsulate the false independence of syllabi from canons, but it speaks to a further distinction Guillory makes between community and association. For Guillory, the fallacy of the liberal pluralist project is that it seeks to restore the canon through representative communities of marginalised or minority groups. However, as Guillory observes, “the real question before us is not whether these subcultural formations produce a demonstrable regularity of behavior in certain social groups (they obviously do), but whether the concept of ‘community’ accurately names the site and mode of these cultural regularities.” By “constituting new cultural unities” at the level of subcultural community, the liberal pluralist canon, like the traditional canon, is unable to describe “the effect

¹²¹ Ben Alpers, “Canon Wars, The Informationalization of Cinema, and the *Sight & Sound* Poll,” *U.S. Intellectual History Blog* (blog), August 27, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/nl8xvcy>.

¹²² “*Sight & Sound* Greatest Films Poll 2012,” British Film Institute online, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/cne4uca>.

¹²³ *Citizen Kane*, directed by Orson Welles (1941; New York: Turner Home Entertainment, 2000), DVD.

¹²⁴ *Vertigo*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock (1958; Hollywood, CA: Universal Studios, 2012), DVD.

of any form of association which does not entail the assumption of cultural unity.”¹²⁵

In Guillory’s terms, the symbiotic relationship between syllabus and canon not only seeks to assuage anxieties about the global continuum between canonical and non-canonical texts, but to redress the local discontinuum within canonical and non-canonical texts, by way of the homogeneous critical community. It is this critical community that forms the object of Thomson’s death-critique – and, while it is related to the conversational community, or critical conversation, that Denby mourns, it is given a slightly different inflection in the light of Guillory’s distinction between community and association. Unlike Denby, Thomson offers a fairly specific and confined canonical object – the 1940s, when “World War II produced a community at the movies, and an innocent immersion in fantasy when there was no shame or irony to curb it.” Thereafter, Thomson suggests, cinema has been in decline: the culture of distraction, ushered in by television, and the culture of deconstruction, ushered in by the institutionalisation of cinephilia as film studies, gradually betrayed that generation “who were kids as movies grew up...there has never been a generation to whom the movies meant more.” While Denby disregards cinephilia as a methodology for contemplating cinema, Thomson explicitly dichotomises them, suggesting that anybody who participates in contemporary cinephilia – especially through the Criterion and Netflix platforms, discussed in my third and fourth chapter - is complicit in the demise of this traditional, communal, cinematic experience.

Against this decline narrative, however, a more ambivalent and sophisticated narrative emerges. Thomson offers *On The Waterfront*, *12 Angry Men* and *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* as a summary and swansong for this Golden Age, a collective synecdoche for its passing.¹²⁶ Thomson points out that the common denominator between these films is cinematographer Mikhail Kaufman, brother

¹²⁵ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 34.

¹²⁶ *On The Waterfront*, directed by Elia Kazan (1954; Culver City, CA: The Criterion Collection, 2013), DVD. *12 Angry Men*, directed by Sidney Lumet (1957; Beverly Hills, CA: MGM, 2008), DVD. *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*, directed by Sidney Lumet (1962; New York: Olive Films, 2012), DVD.

of David Kaufman, known widely by his pseudonym, Dziga Vertov. In fact, the common denominator is something more like a combination of Kaufman and Sidney Lumet: not only does “the outstanding critical and commercial success” of *On the Waterfront* provide “a prelude to the film career...of Lumet,”¹²⁷ but Lumet used Kaufman’s “moody, precise, naturalistic style” for several of his subsequent projects.¹²⁸ In the excursus between my first and second chapters, I explore Lumet’s 1984 film *Garbo Talks*¹²⁹ as an articulation and culmination of this transition from a cinema-centric to television-centric media ecology.

For Thomson, “the example of the Kaufmans thrilled buffs for decades as a proof of the world community of film.” By that logic, *Man with a Movie Camera*,¹³⁰ which Thomson singles out as the Kaufmans’ greatest creation, stands as the foundational text of the Golden Age and the “world community” it produced. However, the thrust of Thomson’s article is simultaneously towards an explanation of why *Man with a Movie Camera* appeared in the *Sight & Sound* top 10 for the first time in 2012, and what it means that it is “the single work in the new top ten that seems to understand that nervy mixture of interruption and unexpected association” that characterises a media ecology in which “the visceral or neurological contact with the movie does not now depend on our being dominated or spellbound by visual attention so much as it depends on a kind of self-interrupting scanning that keeps aural contact with the film’s streaming.”

For Thomson, then, *Man with a Movie Camera* anticipates both the Golden Age of cinema and its devolution into post-cinematic and post-perceptual media ecologies, just as Vertov himself predicted: “The position of our bodies while observing or our perception of a certain number of features of a visual

¹²⁷ Richard Aloysius Blake, *Street Smart: The New York of Lumet, Allen, Scorsese and Lee* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2006), 50.

¹²⁸ Harlow Robinson, *Russians in Hollywood, Hollywood’s Russians: Biography of an Image* (Lebanon, NH: Northeastern, 2007), 158.

¹²⁹ *Garbo Talks*, directed by Sidney Lumet (1984; Beverly Hills, CA: MGM, 2010), DVD.

¹³⁰ *Man with a Movie Camera*, directed by Dziga Vertov (1929; Odesa, UA: Image Entertainment, 2002), DVD.

phenomenon in a given instant are by no means obligatory limitations for the camera which, since it is perfected, perceives more and better.”¹³¹ However, if *Man with a Movie Camera* bears this ambivalent relation to Thomson’s Golden Age, then it is also prescient both of the “world community” of cinema and its devolution into “unexpected association” – and it is this devolution of communal into associative identification that makes it such a troubling and provocative canonical object:

Man with a Movie Camera has always had an order – it was artfully edited by Vertov’s wife, Yelizaveta Svilova. But more than with any other film in the top ten, that order could be changed. The film has no inevitable narrative shape; the formal connectedness of imagery is its glue, but anyone could experiment with it. You could easily start that process – and some may have done so – because the film is now available on YouTube.

Unlike every other film in the *Sight & Sound* top 10, *Man with a Movie Camera* instantiates the local discontinuum and global continuum that the list is designed to disavow: internally fragmented and discontinuous, and taking the diegetised camera as its very premise and point of departure, it nevertheless gestures towards a continuum not merely of canonical and non-canonical cinema, but of cinema and “the screen’s variety that has come back into use with television, the remote control device, and the frenzy for bits, bites, fragments and scattered glimpses that iPhones, iPads, laptops and YouTube offer.”¹³² Like Denby, Thomson frames this shift from a community to an association of texts in terms of the shift in focus from the individual film to units that are both larger and smaller than the individual film. However, Thomson not only offers a provisional account of how such an eviscerated syllabus might appear, but gestures toward the *temporal* fragmentation of these partial, provisional, transitional objects:

Within the last year or two, I have been delighted with these things: a scene (it later proved to be part of *The Trip*) in which two actors, Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon, did competing Michael Caine impersonations. This wasn’t just funny; it had the bonus of showing what an elegant fraud

¹³¹ Dziga Vertov, “Kinoks: A Revolution,” in *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O’Brien (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 15.

¹³² Thomson, “American Movies.”

Caine is, and born to be imitated. Then there was a ninety-eight-second remake of Brian De Palma's *Scarface* (the Al Pacino version) that consisted of nothing except every use of the word "fuck" in the movie. This is as revelatory as it is entertaining, for it leaves one incapable of watching the De Palma film again. I would praise also another brief montage, this one in which still photographs of Lindsay Lohan taken over the course of her life were dissolved together. It is lovely and poignant and the best thing she has done—except that she didn't really do it. But in a very short time it captures the ebbing half-life of figments such as Lohan or Marilyn Monroe.

Distant Viewing

Clearly, each of the "things" that Thomson describes is operating both above and below the structural integrity of the individual film, fusing cinematic fragments and figments into something that is larger, or other, than cinema. In each case, it is not merely a question of a new artistic entity, but a new conception of temporality, operating according to what Fernand Braudel describes as "the history of the long, even of the very long time span, of the *longue durée*":¹³³

A day, a year once seemed useful gauges. Time, after all, was made up of an accumulation of days. But...a new kind of historical narrative has appeared, that of the conjuncture, the cycle and even the "intercycle," covering a decade, a quarter of a century, and at the outset, the half-century...¹³⁴

Like *Man with a Movie Camera*, Thomson's artifacts partake of this temporality by partaking of YouTube temporality, which I discuss further in my second chapter. However they frame this "intercycle" in terms of different combinations of screen and world, diegesis and non-diegesis. While the excerpt from *The Trip*¹³⁵ presents the life cycle of characters played by a single actor (Michael

¹³³ Fernand Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences: On the *Longue Durée*," in *On History*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 27.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹³⁵ *The Trip*, directed by Michael Winterbottom (2010; New York: MPI Home Video, 2010), DVD. *The Trip* is itself a series of fragments, redacted from a six-part BBC miniseries of the same name, also aired in 2010. Those fragments not included in the redacted version have taken on a figmentary, "ebbing half-life" of their own through such YouTube remediations as those that Thomson describes.

Caine), the excerpts from *Scarface*¹³⁶ present the life cycle of a film character (Tony Montana) and the final clip presents the life cycle of an actor (Lindsay Lohan). By conflating them as he does, Thomson gestures towards a hermeneutic which takes the rhythmic, diachronic rupture of diegesis and non-diegesis as its object – or, in Braudel’s terms, the rupture of eventual history and archaeological history, placing a peculiar onus on the historian to contemplate the present as eventual ancient history. From that perspective, Thomson’s list of things conforms to one of the critical methodologies of both the *longue durée* and ancient history – “prosopography,” the “investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives.”¹³⁷ As prosopographic artifacts, Thomson’s things take on the melancholy of an ebbing, figured half-life: their import is partly available now, and partly available centuries from now. Shaviro describes this melancholy affect as “the aesthetic poignancy”¹³⁸ of a post-cinematic media object “that cannot be received now, but must look to the future for its reception”¹³⁹ – and a post-perceptual ecology might also be characterised in terms of the emergence of texts that cannot be properly perceived in the present. In such a media ecology, increasingly dominated by “monstrous agglomeration,”¹⁴⁰ the *longue durée* thus dictates that the conversational and critical distance from the present demanded by Denby, Thomson and the entire canonical-cinephilic continuum can only be achieved hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years in the media future.

In lieu of that vantage point, I am to consider how a provisional hermeneutic based around the *longue durée* might function – or, alternatively, how the *longue durée* might be deployed in the service of a history of the post-cinematic present. In “Conjectures on World Literature,” Franco Moretti offers a provisional version of such a methodology, in the form of:

¹³⁶ *Scarface*, directed by Brian de Palma (1983; Universal City, CA: Universal Studios, 2003), DVD.

¹³⁷ Lawrence Stone, “Prosopography,” *Daedalus* 100 (1971), 46.

¹³⁸ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 133.

¹³⁹ Steven Shaviro, “*Southland Tales*,” *The Pinocchio Theory* (blog), December 10, 2007, <http://tinyurl.com/2pykcj>.

¹⁴⁰ Braudel, “*Longue Durée*,” 25.

Distant reading: where distance, let me repeat it, *is a condition of knowledge*: it allows you to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes—or genres and systems. And if, between the very small and the very large, the text itself disappears, well, it is one of those cases when one can justifiably say, Less is more. If we want to understand the system in its entirety, we must accept losing something. We always pay a price for theoretical knowledge: reality is infinitely rich; concepts are abstract, are poor.¹⁴¹

In *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, Moretti offers three different hypotheses for how distant reading might occur.¹⁴² While these three methods – the construction of graphs, maps and trees based around literary data – are all grounded in quantitative research, they share a figurative preoccupation with drift, specifically “the long-term...drift” that occurs both between and within texts, “where characters meet and drift apart.”¹⁴³ In this thesis, I will elaborate cinetopic passage, and the cinetopic anecdote, as a unit of distant reading. However, instead of conducting the quantitative analysis that Moretti suggests, I take up the figurative import of his writing to construct an epistemology of drift and distraction that jettisons interpretation from close analysis and close viewing. Drawing on Siegfried Kracauer’s account of the eye’s drift from the screen to theatrical infrastructure, I develop an epistemology of drift that connects the perceptual posture of *flânerie* with what Leo Charney describes as “the lived sensation of empty moments, the consequence and corollary of empty moments.”¹⁴⁴ In *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, Anne Friedberg understands this “logic of distraction”¹⁴⁵ as the genesis of “a gradual and indistinct epistemological tear along the fabric of modernity,” produced by a “mobilized ‘virtual’ gaze” that “travels through an imaginary elsewhere and an imaginary elsewhen.”¹⁴⁶ Friedberg periodises this tear in terms of the transition from modernism to postmodernism, and from

¹⁴¹ Moretti, “World Literature.”

¹⁴² Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for A Literary History* (London: Verso, 2007), 2.

¹⁴³ Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1999), 57, 51.

¹⁴⁴ Leo Charney, *Empty Moments: Cinema, Modernity and Drift* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 8.

¹⁴⁵ Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 112.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

flânerie to *flâneuserie*, arguing that the *flâneuse*'s conflation of botanising on celluloid with botanising on shop windows culminates with the postmodern mall and multiplex. If, as Margaret Morse argues, this peculiarly postmodern mode of distraction is a "dual state of mind" that "depends on an incomplete process of spatial and temporal separation and interiorization," then it represents a critical moment in the evolution of a dark media ecology.¹⁴⁷ In Morton's terms, the *flâneuse* crystallises the *flâneur*'s peculiar position at the cusp between ecomimetic and dark ecological passage in her attention to "consumerism that makes of the forest a shop window – and allows the ambience of a shop window to be experienced as the temple of nature."¹⁴⁸

While Moretti's theory is grounded in world literature, he does offer an alternate trope to graphs, maps and trees to suggest how distant reading might become distant viewing: "The wave...observes uniformity engulfing an initial diversity: Hollywood films conquering one market after another (or English swallowing language after language)."¹⁴⁹ Although Moretti opposes the wave to the tree as a mechanism of distant reading, I would like to suggest that, at least in the case of cinema, the wave represents something like the conflation of map and tree, or a distillation of their peculiar proclivities to chart drift and passage. Accordingly, in *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin concludes his discussion of *rites de passage* by observing that the wave is the most appropriate trope for botanising on the drift and dissolution of threshold-passage, both etymologically and hermeneutically: "The threshold must be carefully distinguished from the boundary. A *Schwelle* <threshold> is a zone. Transformation, passage, wave action are in the word *schwellen*, swell, and etymology ought not to overlook these senses."¹⁵⁰ Thus, the Benjaminian dialectic can be reframed as a botanisable map, poised at the cusp at which a map diverges into a tree, or is returned to its botanical origins, and the "breeze" that Denby glimpsed is thereby transformed into a wave, or swell:

¹⁴⁷ Margaret Morse, "An Ontology of Everyday Distraction: The Freeway, the Mall and Television," in *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 202.

¹⁴⁸ Timothy Morton, *The Poetics of Spice: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 235.

¹⁴⁹ Moretti, "World Literature."

¹⁵⁰ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 494.

Whoever has stood on the street corner of a strange city in bad weather and had to deal with one of those large paper maps – which at every gust swell up like a sail, rip at the edges, and soon are no more than a little heap of dirty colored scraps with which one torments oneself as with the pieces of a puzzle – learns from the study of the *Plan Taride* what a city map can be. People whose imagination does not wake at the perusal of such a text, people who would not rather dream of their Paris experiences over a map than over photos or travel notes, are beyond help.¹⁵¹

The Great Unviewed

As an object that can only be read by virtue of being unable to be read, Benjamin's map, which starts to signify at the precise moment at which it is dissolved in the drift, swell and texture of its object, represents an instance of what Moretti, after Margaret Cohen, describes as the great unread, "the forgotten 99 percent" of literary production.¹⁵² In *The Sentimental Education of the Novel*, Cohen observes that "twentieth-century literary studies has bought into realism's erasure of its origins in what Walter Benjamin describes as history written from the standpoint of the victors."¹⁵³ In an effort to apply Benjamin's historiography of "the immature, the discarded and the excessive"¹⁵⁴ to this field, Cohen coins the "great unread" to designate the vast majority of overlooked and neglected literary texts, "forgotten material from a collective past that has now been surmounted."¹⁵⁵ As deployed by Moretti, the great unread ascribes the same textual and textural logic to literary history as the *longue durée* to history: both discorrelate their subject from the perception of the individual critic or participant. In doing so, they converge on an epistemological bind: "Knowing two hundred novels is already difficult. *Twenty thousand?* How can we do it, what does 'knowledge' mean, in this new scenario? One thing for sure: it cannot mean

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 85.

¹⁵² Franco Moretti, "The Slaughterhouse of Literature," *Modern Language Quarterly* 61: 1 (March 2000), 208. Margaret Cohen, *The Sentimental Education of the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 23.

¹⁵³ Cohen, *Sentimental Education*, 31.

¹⁵⁴ Eli Friedlander, *Walter Benjamin: A Philosophical Portrait* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 69.

¹⁵⁵ Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 86.

the close reading of very few texts.”¹⁵⁶ When translated into the realm of cinema, this might be understood as the epistemological bind of the canonical-cinephilic continuum: how, in a media ecology characterised by massive and exponentially increasing oversaturation, can we “know” cinema without containing it through canonical or cinephilic attachment? The answer is suggested by Moretti’s migration of the great unread into the great unviewed, in “Homo Palpitans: Balzac’s Novels and Urban Personality.” Despite the nominal focus on Honoré de Balzac, this essay plays primarily as an extended meditation on Benjamin, especially the “hypertrophy of the sense of sight” characterised by the Benjaminian *flâneur*.¹⁵⁷ Against this visual hypertrophy, Moretti insists that the city doesn’t open up sight, but precludes and thwarts it: “We see the city to the extent that it hinders a specific action, interposes between us and something else and makes us ‘waste *time*’” (125). Conflating impeded sight with wasted time, Moretti associates the unviewed – it is not as yet a great unviewed – with the epistemology of drift characteristic of the *longue durée*, observing that:

...city life mitigates extremes and extends the range of intermediate possibilities: it arms itself against catastrophe by adopting ever more pliant and provisional attitudes...The rigid separation between internal and external, which is at the root of the theory of shock, in urban life tends to transform itself into that continuum rendered in Leopold Bloom’s amble. And another continuum – the temporal – overcomes the rigid partition dividing experience and tradition: in the organized and yet ephemeral life of the city no event ever possesses all the characteristics of full-fledged experience, but no event ever lacks them completely (117).

Moretti’s attitude towards cinema is very close to the one I elaborate, although his gesture is considerably more complex than a straightforward revision or repudiation of Benjamin. The article is aimed at Benjamin’s iconic “description of city life as ‘a series of shocks and collisions.’” What Moretti doesn’t articulate is that this is not merely a “description of city life,” but an account of the impact of photographic and cinematic technologies on urban life: “Moving through this traffic involves the individual in a series of shocks and collisions...There came a

¹⁵⁶ Moretti, “Slaughterhouse of Literature,” 208.

¹⁵⁷ Franco Moretti, “Homo Palpitans: Balzac’s Novels and Urban Personality,” in *Signs Taken For Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms* (London: Verso, 1983), 126.

day when a new and urgent need for stimuli was met by film.”¹⁵⁸ At the same time, as will become evident in my first chapter, Benjamin’s *flâneur* eminently exhibits the “pliant and provisional attitudes” that Moretti describes – he is nothing if not a distant viewer (and the distinction between distant and disengaged viewing is at the heart of the Benjaminian *flâneur*). In other words, Moretti’s phenomenology of distant viewing plays as an effort to retain the archaeology that Benjamin brings to the city of the *flâneur* in the face of the eventfulness that he brings to the city of the cinema. The city of the cinema-goer is viewable, if only as a series of discrete shocks, whether in the form of urban interruptions or actual films. Conversely, the city of the *flâneur* is unviewable: it is the very sublimity with which it elides viewability that transforms *flânerie* into an insatiable exercise.

Cinetopic Passage

Over the course of this thesis, I will follow Moretti in attempting to translate Benjamin’s phenomenology of *flânerie* into his phenomenology of cinema, considering what happens when we consider individual films and the corpus of film as a great unviewed, or as inimical to visual totality in the same way as the urban topoi of the *flâneur*. In my first chapter, I explore this disconnect between Benjamin’s thoughts on *flânerie* and cinema by way of Kracauer and Charney’s epistemologies of drift. Having provided an instance of cinetopic passage in the work of Victor Burgin, and a designation of the cinetopic anecdote as a provisional unit of distant reading, I perform a distant reading of Angela Christlieb and Stephen Kijak’s 2002 documentary *Cinemia*¹⁵⁹ in order to apply Shaviro and Denson’s theories of post-cinematic and post-perceptual affect to the model of cinetopic passage outlined. In grafting post-cinematic and post-perceptual affect onto Christlieb and Kijak’s post-cinephilic New York City, I lead onto the excursus between Chapter 1 and 2, which applies Friedberg’s arguments about the postmodern transition from the mobile gaze of the *flâneur*

¹⁵⁸ Walter Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” trans. Harry Zohn, in Eiland and Jennings (eds.), *Selected Writings Vol. 4*, 328.

¹⁵⁹ *Cinemia*, directed by Angela Christlieb and Stephen Kijak (2002; Boston, MA: Winstar, 2003), DVD.

to the mobile virtual gaze of the *flâneuse* by way of a distant reading of Sidney Lumet's 1984 film *Garbo Talks*.¹⁶⁰

My second and third chapters take up the platforms decried by Thomson as symptomatic of the turn from community to attachment - the Criterion Collection and Netflix - as well as shifting the wider field of my distant reading from the cinematicity of New York City to the cinematicity of Los Angeles. In my discussion of the Criterion Collection, I consider the "purposively nonpurposive"¹⁶¹ ecology of cruising as a useful shorthand for the epistemology of drift outlined in the first chapter, by way of Boym's connection between reflective nostalgia and diasporic intimacy. Concomitantly, I deploy Lobato's use of Moretti to perform a distant reading of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò, or The 120 Days of Sodom*¹⁶² across the broad swathe of Criterion platforms, especially those relating to the grey economies of pornography, drawing on Google's perceptual empire to gesture towards how the emergence of STD, or straight-to-DVD, distribution has affected the *cinéphur's* relationship to cinematic and urban space. In my discussion of Netflix, I expand upon Benjamin's notion of dream houses of the collective to consider the analogy between post-perceptual attachment and the great unviewed, by way of a discussion of Beau Willamon and David Fincher's 2013 series *House of Cards*, the most ambitious Netflix artifact to date.¹⁶³ Finally, in my afterword, I examine Steven Soderbergh's account of the death of cinema and how it manifests itself in his 2013 HBO telemovie, *Behind the Candelabra*,¹⁶⁴ before concluding with a cinetopic anecdote of my own.

¹⁶⁰ *Garbo Talks*, directed by Sidney Lumet (1994; Beverly Hills, CA: MGM, 2010), DVD.

¹⁶¹ Morton, *Ecology Without Nature*, 139.

¹⁶² *Salò, or The 120 Days of Sodom*, directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini (1975; Beverly Hills, CA: The Criterion Collection, 2008), DVD.

¹⁶³ *House of Cards*, created by Beau Willamon and David Fincher (2013-present; Los Gatos, CA: Netflix, 2013), Netflix series.

¹⁶⁴ *Behind the Candelabra*, directed by Steven Soderbergh (2013; New York: HBO Films), Televised Movie.

02013

In *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory and the Digital Dark Age*, Paolo Churchi Usai notes that:

It is estimated that about one and a half billion hours of moving images were produced in the year 01999, twice the number made just a decade before. If that rate of growth continues, three billion viewing hours of films will be made in 02006, and six billion in 02011...The meaning is clear. One and a half billion hours is already well beyond the capacity of any human: it translates into more than 171 000 viewing pictures in a calendar year.¹⁶⁵

If my thesis ultimately assuages any death-discourse, then it is that of Usai. Drawing his five-digit dates from the Clock of the Long Now project¹⁶⁶ – surely the most explicit instance of the *longue durée*'s injunction to treat the present as eventual ancient history, rather than eventual modern history – Usai suggests that it is not cinema that has died, but whatever it was that shielded us from the great unviewed. For Denby, Thomson, Ebert and any other elegiser in their vein, what has died is not cinema, but cinematic scarcity. This thesis is, finally, an attempt to explain why that has happened, and to consider a methodology for responding.

On January 1, 2013, Ebert tweeted: “Long lost. ‘My Perfect London Walk,’ on video. Didn't know it was streaming. I'd never seen this show. <http://t.co/cgoMZ6uq>.”¹⁶⁷ The link leads to “(Volume 32) Eric Turnbow's Plane ride home from England (06-25-1992) & Rodger Eberts London Tour (sic.)” Opening with a serene shot of clouds, this clip, made by YouTube musician and personality Eric Turnbow, juxtaposes footage from a plane flight with fragments

¹⁶⁵ Paolo Churchi Usai, *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory and the Digital Dark Age* (London: British Film Institute, 2001), 138.

¹⁶⁶ Stewart Brand, *The Clock Of The Long Now: Time and Responsibility* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 99.

¹⁶⁷ Roger Ebert, “Tweet: Just In Time,” Twitter, January 1, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/owubsap>.

of a television tour that Ebert took around London.¹⁶⁸ Like the London movie app, it is an object that only makes sense in transit: in a post-cinematic iteration of the in-flight movie, it is unclear whether it was produced in transit, consumed in transit or, in the logic of both produsage and streaming, produced as it was consumed, consuming and producing the very notion of passage-threshold itself. Yet it is also, indubitably, a cinematic object: the screen is still there, somewhere, remediated by way of the passage from the plane window to the YouTube window to the computer window that brought it so unexpectedly to Ebert's attention. In my second chapter, I draw on Friedberg's *The Virtual Window: From Albert to Microsoft*¹⁶⁹ to discuss the remediation of the picture window – and it is hard to think of a more concise culmination of the picture window's attempt to confuse and confound threshold-passage: it lifts Foucault's heterotopic boat, and Sheen's yacht, into the clouds, creating a dimensionally new “floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea.”¹⁷⁰ Insofar as Foucault historicises heterotopia, it is through the cemetery, which, like all heterotopias, “begins with this strange heterochrony, the loss of life, and with this quasi-eternity in which her permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance.”¹⁷¹ If this clip, and the post-perceptual media ecology to which it belongs, represents a new iteration of the cemetery, then it is a cemetery in which the great unviewed morphs into something like the great undead, or the great unforgotten. Not remembered, but unforgotten – and we live in a time of great unforgetting. As Ebert himself tweeted, “Long Lost.” And as Ebert's tour guide of Highgate Cemetery emphatically points out, in a botanical aside, “the great hum of insect life in the ferns.” Like Moretti, I hazard a guess that, in this great unviewed, undead and unforgotten, “we will find many different kinds of creatures.”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Eric Turnbow, “(Volume 32) Eric Turnbow's Plane ride home from England (06-25-1992) & Rodger Eberts London Tour.,” YouTube, April 15, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/kn7shxy>.

¹⁶⁹ Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

¹⁷⁰ Foucault, “Other Spaces,” 27.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁷² Moretti, “Slaughterhouse of Literature,” 227.

Chapter 1: Botanising On Celluloid: *Flânerie*, Cinephilia, Cinetopic Passage

Flânerie

Deriving from the French verb “to stroll,” the term *flâneur* became widespread in France and surrounding countries in the first half of the nineteenth century¹ to refer to a wanderer who was, “by various accounts, a gastronome, a connoisseur [and] an artist.”² An exemplification of the distracted leisure endemic to “the masculine and bourgeois privilege of modern public life in Paris,”³ the *flâneur* was gradually distinguished from other types of urban wanderer. In 1867, Victor Fournel wrote that:

The *flâneur* must not be confused with the *baudad*; a nuance should be observed there. . . . The simple *flâneur* is always in full possession of his individuality, whereas the individuality of the *baudad* disappears. It is absorbed by the outside world . . . which intoxicates him to the point where he forgets himself. Under the influence of the spectacle which presents itself to him, the *baudad* becomes an impersonal creature; he is no longer a human being, he is part of the public, of the crowd.⁴

In 1860, Charles Baudelaire further distinguished between the dandy and the *flâneur* in terms of “a disengaged and cynical voyeur on the one hand, and man of the people who enters into the life of his subjects with passion on the other.”⁵ In doing so, he made two figurative gestures that would become critical to Benjamin’s subsequent formulation of the *flâneur*:

For the perfect *flâneur*, the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the midst of the multitude...To be away from home and

¹ Peter I. Barta, *Bely, Joyce and Döblin: Peripatetics in the City Novel* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996), 6.

² Gregory Shaya, “The *Flâneur*, the *Baudad* and the Making of a Mass Public in Franca, circa 1869-1910,” *American Historical Review* 109 (2004), 47.

³ Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 9.

⁴ Victor Fournel, *Ce qu'on voit dans les rues de Paris*, (Paris, 1867), 270, cited in Shaya, “Making of a Mass Public,” 50.

⁵ David Harvey, *Paris: Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 14.

yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world...

...we might liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself; or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life...every instant rendering and explaining it in pictures more real than life itself...⁶

In these two excerpts, Baudelaire articulates what might be described as the two dialectics of *flânerie*. Firstly, the *flâneur* is caught between private and public space: he experiences such an intense singularity of perception in his passage through the metropolis that the streets are domesticated, or privatised. Secondly, the *flâneur* is caught between reflective and projective mechanisms of perception, and emissive and intromissive mechanisms of visibility. Like the dandy and *baudard*, the *flâneur* is peculiarly sensitive to the multifarious visual stimuli of the metropolis. However, the *flâneur* distinguishes himself from other purveyors of urban passage by “rendering and explaining” those stimuli into a projection “more real than life itself.”

Writing after the advent of cinema, Benjamin extended and elaborated Baudelaire’s dialectic between publicity and privacy. For Benjamin, the peculiar privacy experienced by the *flâneur* is akin both to the privacy of a secluded rural walk and the privacy of an urban room. However, this is not merely figuration – Benjamin argues that *flânerie* can actually take place in the countryside or in a room. As an example of rural *flânerie*, he cites a passage from *Swann’s Way*:

Then, quite apart from all those literary preoccupations, and without definite attachment to anything, suddenly a roof, a gleam of sunlight reflected from a stone...appeared to be concealing, beneath what my eyes could see, something which they invited me to approach and take from them, but which, despite all my efforts, I never managed to discover.⁷

⁶ Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life,” in *The Painter Of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1995), 9-10.

⁷ Marcel Proust, *Du Côte de chez Swann*, Paris 1939, vol. 1, p. 256, cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 420.

Benjamin finds in this passage an instance of “how the old Romantic sentiment for landscape dissolves and a new Romantic conception of landscape emerges – of landscape that seems, rather, to be a cityscape, if it is true that the city is the sacred ground of *flânerie*.”⁸ This affinity for *flânerie* is partly signalled by Marcel Proust’s affinity for the man-made, if not exactly urban objects, that emerge from time to time out of his rural surroundings, as well as his entrancement with the way in which their visual incongruity awakens his sensorium and turns his attention outwards from the “literary preoccupations” that have been consuming him. Similarly, as the fixation on progressive “concealment” suggests, the rhythm of Proust’s walk is one of moving towards a series of imagined objects, only to find the imagination continually moving on towards the next object. The defining moment of his walk is that at which an object wavers, or “gleams,” between imagination and apprehension. For Benjamin, it is this fusion of imagination and apprehension that makes Proust’s walk *flânerie*, despite taking place in the countryside – a fixation with the moment at which an object or vista hasn’t quite dissociated itself from all the things it might be imagined to convey or signify.

Benjamin also argues that *flânerie* can access the gleam of the city from within the confines of an urban room, deploying Søren Kierkegaard to suggest that the breathless anticipation of a walk is as integral to *flânerie* as the walk itself:

So the *flâneur* goes for a walk in his room: “When Johannes sometimes asked for permission to go out, it was usually denied him. But on occasion his father proposed, as a substitute, that they walk up and down the room hand in hand. This at first seemed a poor substitute, but in fact... something quite novel awaited him...Off they went, then, right out the front entrance, out to a neighbouring estate or the seashore, or simply through the streets, exactly as Johannes could have wished; for his father managed everything.”⁹

The lesson of this anecdote, according to Benjamin, is that this “poor substitute” is not a substitute at all. Not only does it become just as satisfying as an external

⁸ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 420-21.

⁹ An early work by Kierkegaard, cited in Eduard Geismar, *Søren Kierkegaard* (Göttingen, 1929), pp. 12-13, cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 421.

walk, but it is absorbed into the substance of an external walk, in an “intoxicated interpenetration of street and residence.”¹⁰ Johannes’ father is not teaching Johannes how to do something instead of going for a walk; he is teaching him how to properly postpone a walk, how to build anticipation and apprehension to the point where a mere outing becomes true *flânerie*. In Michel de Certeau’s terms, Johannes and his father have substituted the actual texture of the city for its texturology, in “a projection that is a way of keeping aloof.”¹¹

For Benjamin, then, the *flâneur* isn’t merely a figure who wanders around the metropolis, but a figure who dreams of wandering around the metropolis, fusing dreaming and wandering as he botanises upon his room, in much the same way that the Baudelairean *flâneur* fuses perception and imagination, reflective and projective visuality. However, Benjamin situates this fusion more concretely in the diurnal rhythms of the metropolis, by citing two ideal abodes for the *flâneur*:

There – on the Avenue des Champs Elysees – it has stood since 1845: the Jardin d’Hiver, a colossal greenhouse with a great many rooms for social occasions....When the sphere of planning creates such entanglements of close room and airy nature, then it serves in this way to meet the deep human need for daydreaming...¹²

Le Corbusier’s houses depend on neither spatial not plastic articulation: the air passes through them! Air becomes a constitutive factor! What matters, therefore, is neither spatiality *per se* nor plasticity *per se* but only relation and interfusion.¹³

Earlier in *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin extends this airy quality of Le Corbusier’s architecture to the way it accomodates vision and suffuses air with light.¹⁴ This clarifies the common denominator between these two spaces: both break down the distinction between inside and outside, room and city, through

¹⁰ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 423.

¹¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 92-93.

¹² Woldemar Seyffarth, *Wahrnehmungen in Paris 1953 und 1854* (Gotha, 1855), p. 130, cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 422-23.

¹³ Julius Rodenberg, *Paris bei Sonnenschein un Lampenlicht* (Lepizig, 1967), pp. 43-44, cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 423.

¹⁴ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 407.

the medium of light. Admittedly, these are rare and ideal spaces, but their suggestion is clear: for Benjamin, the *flâneur* is a figure who dreams of city light, finding in the multifarious, endlessly receding lighting schemes of the modernist metropolis the perfect vehicle for his pleasure in fusing imagination and apprehension. In *The Art Of Taking A Walk: Flânerie, Literature and Film in Weimar Culture*, Anke Gleber identifies this fascination and fixation with light as the foundation of “the phenomenology of *flânerie*”:¹⁵ “Among the most influential visual factors in the shifting perceptions of *flânerie* and culture are the changes in the social and material conditions of public lighting....With these material conditions, *flânerie* becomes imaginable as an all-day pursuit of everyday exteriors, precipitated by the expansion of improved gaslighting and the introduction of electrical illumination.”¹⁶ As Gleber points out, the increasing availability of a nocturnal metropolis is one of the reasons for the city becoming domesticated in the way that both Baudelaire and Benjamin describe. However, the *flâneur*'s passage isn't merely enabled by city light, but takes city light as its object – the imperfections of city light become as attractive as their efficiencies, just as “shadows are a bridge over the river of light that is the street.”¹⁷

Benjamin's *flâneur* thus paces his room imagining the ways in which the city is lit, and then embarks to encounter those lighting devices, walking and walking to ensure that they are always kept just on the fringes of his perception, commensurate with the dreaming that took place in preparation. Gleber writes that “Baudelaire conveys a sense of the city as a site of dreams and poetic trance that is encapsulated in the ‘dream-sleep’ that Benjamin will associate with his Paris.” As Gleber suggests, for Benjamin, the physical component of *flânerie* is subordinate to the imaginative component. The most critical part of *flânerie* takes place before the walk even begins, in one of the millions of darkened rooms that crowd the metropolis. At this level, the pursuit of the *flâneur* is to remain in

¹⁵ Gleber, *Art of Taking A Walk*, 129.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁷ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 854. Benjamin also demonstrates a fascination with the objects and vehicles of light, as evinced in his movement from a series of citations and observations on the efficiency of gaslight to a fascination with the lamps and globes themselves, and the ways in which they have been aestheticised, including as comets, palm trees and banana vines (422).

a state of dreaming – and the whole interiorisation of the city that occurs, the whole domestication of its streets, is simply a way to maintain that dreaming. Accordingly, the *flâneur* frequently moves at the same pace as a somnambulist, or someone who has not quite woken up: “In 1839, it was considered elegant to take a tortoise out walking. This gives us an idea of the tempo of *flânerie* in the arcades” (422). This subsumes the *flâneur*’s cityscape into the “Nineteenth Century Domestic Interior” whose ability to “put on, like an alluring creature, the costumes of moods” (216) results in “a spacetime...in which the individual consciousness more and more secures itself in reflecting, while the collective consciousness sinks into ever deeper sleep” (389). Nevertheless, Benjamin also finds in the *flâneur*’s somnience a reminder that “the first tremors of awakening serve to deepen sleep” (391), gesturing towards a *flânerie* that “elicits from Paris the dream-reality of nineteenth-century capitalism,”¹⁸ and diagnoses a “natural phenomenon in which a new dream-filled sleep came over Europe, and, through it, a reactivation of mythic forces.”¹⁹ I update this investigation into how “nineteenth century dream elements register the collective’s vital signs”²⁰ in my third chapter, by way of the connections between the Benjaminian collector and the post-cinematic collective outlined in my second chapter.

While the “limited number of allusions to psychoanalysis in Benjamin’s work can be accounted for in terms of the way in which he thought, proceeding less by exposition than by practices such as image and citation,”²¹ I do not propose to pursue a psychoanalytic interpretation of Benjaminian dream-work in any extensive way but to instead follow Jan Mieszkowski in understanding it as an instance of Benjamin’s “preoccupation with models of experience – shock, dream, melancholy – for which there is an overt disjunction between the claim to

¹⁸ Stathis Gourgouris, “The Dream-Reality of the Ruin,” in *Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project*, ed. Beatrice Hanssen (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), 214.

¹⁹ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 391.

²⁰ Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 272.

²¹ Sarah Ley Roff, “Benjamin and psychoanalysis,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David S. Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 116.

the immediacy of representation – *this* image, *this* vision, etc. – and the claim to specify the identity of the thing confronted”²² – that is, a conflict between phenomenal and allegorical awareness redolent of Benjamin’s insistence that “the allegorical mode of intuition is always built on a devalued phenomenal world.” The point of Benjaminian dream-work is to journey towards allegory without ever quite arriving at it, just as the Benjaminian *flâneur* continually journeys towards a destination that would become meaningless if it were to arrive. While this is certainly not incongruous with the Freudian dictum that it is the fact, rather than the result, of free association that matters, equally pertinent is Gaston Bachelard’s theory of the daydream, specifically the “daydreams of inhabited stone” – a “psychoanalysis of matter” that, like Benjamin, preoccupies itself with the organic relationship between dreaming and the shell of domestic interiority:

At the slightest sign, the shell becomes human, and yet we know immediately that it is not human. With a shell, the vital inhabiting impulse comes to a close too quickly, nature obtains too quickly the security of a shut-in’s life. But a dreamer is unable to believe that the work is finished when the walls are built, and thus it is that shell-constructing dreams give life and action...For these dreams, the shell, in the very tissue of its matter, is alive.²³

If “shell-constructing dreams,” and the eventual construction of a dream house, is the work of *flânerie*, then the critical period in the *flâneur*’s diurnal cycle is not the night, when the city is privy to the most breathtaking illumination, but rather the afternoon, spent dreaming of the endless possibilities for city light that the evening will afford: “The best way, while dreaming, to catch the afternoon in the net of evening is to make plans. The *flâneur* in planning.”²⁴ Of course, this can be generalised so that the “afternoon” comes to suggest any period before the *flâneur* enters a space and period of comparative darkness - a space in which light is both a medium for perception and a fascinating object of perception in itself, as well as a space whose darkness becomes sufficiently enclosing, sufficiently wrapped around this light source, to become commensurate with the

²² Jan Mieszkowski, “Art forms,” in Ferris (ed.), *Walter Benjamin*, 46.

²³ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 115.

²⁴ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 423.

afternoon's dream-work. It is here that Benjamin's description of the *flâneur's* dream-room starts to bear some resemblance to the space and experience of classical cinema.

Epistemology of Drift

In "So the *flâneur* goes for a walk in his room: Interior, arcade, cinema, metropolis," Charles Rice frames the cinematicity of the *flâneur* in terms of nineteenth century conceptions of the interior. Rice notes that the interior emerged as a critical component of bourgeois private life – and, specifically, as a space in which objects could be dissociated from their commodification and separated from their use value.²⁵ This produced a doubling or dissociation of the interior from its architectural co-ordinates: the interior didn't merely exist physically, as the inner side of an architectural structure, but imagistically, as a refuge where objects could be made exempt from commodification and the subject exempt from reification.

In *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity*, Rice draws upon Theodor Adorno to present the window mirror, or mirror window, as an epitome of this spectral doubling of the bourgeois interior: "The function of the window mirror is to project the endless row of apartment buildings into the isolated bourgeois living room; by the mirror the living room dominates the reflected row at the same time as it is delimited by it."²⁶ As Rice makes clear from his use of this description, this second, spectral series of interior co-ordinates – the moment at which window becomes mirror – doesn't merely create a private world of decommodification and dereification but provides a space from which to dream of the city as similarly decommodified and dereified, in a forerunner of

²⁵ Charles Rice, "So the *flâneur* goes for a walk in his room: Interior, arcade, cinema, metropolis," in *Intimate Metropolis: Urban Subjects in the Modern City*, ed. Vittoria di Palma, Marina Lathouri and Diana Periton (London: Routledge, 2008), 75.

²⁶ Theodor Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 47, cited in Charles Rice, *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity* (London: Routledge, 2006), 108.

the picture window, which I discuss further in the following chapter. Insofar as it is an effort to remake the city in the image of the interior, and to remake the interior in the image of the individual subjectivity of its inhabitant, *flânerie* becomes a dream that alienation from the metropolis no longer occurs; a dream of a metropolis that preserves the sensory tracks and traces of the *flâneur* in the same way as his most intimate objects. Rather than subsuming those tracks and traces into a series of what Benjamin described as *Erlebnisse* – free-floating, sensory experiences that are “in principle discontinuous,”²⁷ circulating around the city without ever attaching themselves to any subject for any length of time.

The *flâneur*, then, in Rice’s formulation of Benjamin, traverses an interior by imprinting it with his objects and his sense-perceptions, in order to dream the metropolis as the same kind of space: a space where every object, every sensory moment, bears witness to his passage. Rice provides two basic accounts of how the *flâneur* might go about achieving this. Firstly, the *flâneur* must embrace the duality of his interior, the slippage between interior as image and interior as architectural constraint, to the point where the interior becomes little more than a screen for his thoughts, perceptions and imagination. Secondly, the *flâneur* must also be a collector, since, according to Benjamin, “the collector proves to be the true resident of interior...divesting things of their commodity character by taking possession of them.”²⁸ The *flâneur* collects sensory impressions from his walks through the city and takes them back to his private room, where he projects them against his walls and adds them to his most cherished objects: “Now, if we recollect that not only people and animals but also spirits and above all images can inhabit a place, then we have a tangible idea of what concerns the *flâneur* and of what he looks for. Namely, images, wherever they lodge.”²⁹

²⁷ Christoph Asendorf, *Batteries of Life: On The History of Things and their Perception in Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 6.

²⁸ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 19. For a discussion of Benjamin’s use of *Erlebnisse*, see Beatrice Hanssen, “Language and mimesis in Walter Benjamin’s work,” in Ferris (ed.), *Walter Benjamin*, 70.

²⁹ Walter Benjamin, “The Return of the *Flâneur*,” trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings, Volume 2: Part 1: 1927-1930*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2005), 264.

It is in this context that Rice draws particular attention to Benjamin's periodisation of the Parisian arcades. Although the arcades summarised Benjamin's thoughts on modernity in a variety of ways, they stand as a peculiarly eloquent epitome of the province of the *flâneur*. Even more so than the architecture of Le Corbusier, and the Parisian Exhibition Centre, they achieve a nexus between interior and public space, domesticity and urbanity, that makes them unrivalled for the kind of dream-work Benjamin describes. By contrast, Benjamin understands the emergence of the department store as the demise of the arcade and the demise of *flânerie*. Whereas the arcades left some space for perceptual and spatial heterogeneity, the emergent department store, with its rationalist commodified design, left no space for the *flâneur* to exempt objects from their use value, or extract subjects from consumers. It also left no space for the projection of interiority, refusing to offer itself up as a collaborative space in the dream-work of *flânerie*, as well as subverting the window mirror's potential for reverie: "Mirrored in the endless reflections of shop windows, the crowd...transforms into a spectacle. It sees itself walking and buying."³⁰ Similarly, the *flâneur's* privileged vantage point was disrupted by the architecture and layout of the department store. Whereas the arcades offered a variety of nooks and crannies from which the *flâneur* could experience the crowd as a mass, the panoptic sweep of the department store, with its focus on wide, open-plan floors, openly encouraged the crowd to recognise and constitute itself as a crowd, participating and competing in the business of consumption: "No longer able to distinguish himself from a mass now versed in perceiving and negotiating the space of the commodity, the *flâneur* is unable to dwell."³¹

For Benjamin, then, the emergence of the department store and decline of the arcade signals the decline of classical *flânerie*. However, as Rice notes, the emergence of the cinema not only coincided with the decline of arcade

³⁰ Esther Leslie, "Ruin and Rubble in the Arcades," in Hanssen (ed.), *Walter Benjamin*, 95. Leslie previously described this transmigration of the mirror window as "window-screens" that "reflect a glimpse of the self amongst endless commodity chains of finished products, with price tags, smiling beguilingly." *Walter Benjamin: Overpowering Conformism* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 104.

³¹ Rice, "Interior, arcade, cinema, metropolis," 81.

entertainment, but cinemas were frequently housed in arcades to mitigate against that decline.³² In *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map*, Guiliana Bruno argues that *flânerie* and cinema thus converged to create the “cinema situation”:

A step in the erratic trail that takes one from street to street, cinema inhabits *flânerie*...As perceptual modes, *flânerie* and cinema share the montage of images, the spatio-temporal juxtaposition, the obscuring of the mode of production and the “physiognomic” impact – the spectatorial reading of bodily signs. The dream web of film reception, with its geographical implantation, embodies *flânerie*'s mode of watching and its public dimension.³³

While Benjamin himself doesn't make an explicit connection between the cinemagoer and the *flâneur*, “The Work Of Art In The Age Of Mechanical Reproduction” argues that cinema inculcates a new mode of perception that is characterised by a heightened attention to “things which had heretofore floated along unnoticed in the broad stream of perception.”³⁴ Benjamin initially frames these “things” linguistically and psychoanalytically, connecting them to the psychopathological stuff of everyday life as described by Sigmund Freud, who “isolated and made analyzable” these “things” (235). This places film in an unrivalled position to analyse the tics, quirks and inflections of the voice and face that regularly pass unnoticed. However, Benjamin expands these previously unnoticeable things to the reticulations and nuances of the urban environment:

Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have locked us up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison world asunder by the dynamite of a tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go travelling...The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses (236-237).

³² Ibid., 83.

³³ Giuliana Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: The City Films of Elvira Notari* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 48.

³⁴ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 235.

Although this act is not explicitly defined or identified as *flânerie*, it is nevertheless an iteration, if a paradoxical iteration, of the *flânerie* outlined by Benjamin in *The Arcades Project*. Like *flânerie*, film allows the spectator to cast a perusing eye across the metropolis. However, this is also true, to some extent, of the *baudad* and the dandy – what makes it clear that this filmic perusal is specifically an act of *flânerie* is Benjamin’s description of it as an “unconscious optics.” If *flânerie* is a form of dream-work, then it is also a way of grafting the traces left by the unconscious on interior space onto the recesses of the city, a process that Beatrice Hanssen describes in terms of the “double experience” of:

...on the one hand, the dreaming idler’s *anamnestic intoxication*, as the flâneur was inundated with a flood of images, and, on the other hand, a gesture of fixation through which the cultural historian froze these images into an archive of anamnestic recollection. At the centre of this double experience lay the dialectical concept of (authentic) *boredom*, which was the outside layer of unconscious dreaming; for in the intoxicated state of wandering aimlessly through the streets, the flâneur turned the city into a landscape, or a topography of memory, through which he acquired a ‘felt knowing’ (*Gefuehltes Wissen*).³⁵

What complicates film’s relationship to this dialectic between anamnestic intoxication and anamnestic recollection is the distraction that Benjamin identifies as the main characteristic of film spectatorship. Whereas the *flâneur*’s attention is sufficiently relaxed to accommodate and welcome every unexpected object that presents itself, the cinemagoer’s attention is, according to Benjamin, too relaxed, to the point where he is unable to peruse the cityscape on the screen, but instead finds himself perused by that cityscape: “The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it he can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie screen he cannot do so.”³⁶ Whereas the *flâneur* engages in an act of voluntary self-abandonment, somewhat like the decision to fall asleep, the cinemagoer experiences a kind of forced self-abandonment, somewhat like being put to sleep. In that sense, cinema provides a paradoxically forced *flânerie*. On the one hand, it provides a more infinitesimal, and

³⁵ Beatrice Hanssen, “Physiognomy of a Flâneur: Walter Benjamin’s Peregrinations through Paris in Search of a New Imaginary,” in Hanssen (ed.), *Walter Benjamin*, 4. Hanssen does not italicise “flâneur.”

³⁶ Benjamin, “Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” 238.

infinitesimally elusive, series of urban vistas and objects than the *flâneur* could ever hope to achieve with his sensory apparatus alone. Moreover, the very pace and rapidity of film means that each spectator is likely to register a different iteration of this *flânerie*, a different iteration of this experience. However, the sensory shock of the film means that the viewer doesn't have the personal space, or the interiority, to produce the dialectic that is necessary for *flânerie*.

Thus, the issue with film, as Benjamin understands it, is that it doesn't provide sufficient space for the individual unconscious – it is too sensorily overwhelming to leave space for an interior into which the *flânerie* that it provides can be dialectically incorporated. It is therefore impossible to dream of the cinema in the same way that the *flâneur* dreams of a walk, just because the cinema already contains every dream, precludes dreaming. Whereas the *flâneur's* room – and especially the ideal *flâneur's* room, as envisaged in Le Corbusier's architecture and the crystal palace – is just distant enough, just private enough, for dreaming to intermingle with the city outside, there is too much of a sensory disparity, too much of a sensory divide, between the private interior and the cinema screen for the traces left by the individual subconscious on the interior to survive the collective unconscious aggressively and overwhelmingly forced upon the cinemagoer by that screen. By that logic, the cinema has more in common with the department store than the arcade – it is a space in which it becomes impossible for the *flâneur's* dissociation from the crowd to feel perceptually privileged because it is a space in which the crowd is forced to recognise and constitute itself as a crowd.³⁷

³⁷ King Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928; Beverly Hills: Boying, 2007, DVD), which commences with its protagonist glimpsing New York from a distance and at a scale commensurate to his individuality, only to find himself subsumed, by way of a deadening, mechanical job, into a maniacal cinema audience, might be understood as an allegory of Benjamin's anxieties regarding cinema's ability to collectivise and commodify *flânerie*. As Colin Shindler observes in *Hollywood in Crisis: Cinema and American Society 1929-1939* (London: Routledge, 1996), one of the most dramatic moments in this decline occurs "on the top floor of an open bus," presumably a descendent of the omnibuses that preoccupy Benjamin's discussions of *flânerie* in *The Arcades Project* (424, 433), from which the protagonist and his wife "see a man walking on the pavement, wearing on his back a large billboard advertising the wares of a local department store" (147).

Cinemagoing, in Benjamin's account, is therefore a paradoxical form of *flânerie*: *flânerie* without *flânerie*. However, if the sensory disparity between the interior and the cinema screen is too dramatic for *flânerie* to operate, there is another disparity that is more enabling, one that Benjamin only briefly touches on:

For the film, what matters primarily is that the actor represents himself to the public before the camera, rather than representing someone else...What matters is that the part is not acted for an audience, but for a mechanical contrivance – in the case of a sound film, for the two of them....³⁸

This short passage is one of Benjamin's few references to the actual space and shape of the cinema theatre and it centres around a duality that recalls the *flâneur's* dual constitution of the interior. As argued, the *flâneur* understands the interior as two distinct entities. Firstly, the interior is simply a mechanical, architectural concept – the mere inner surface of whatever building the *flâneur* happens to find himself within. However a critical component of *flânerie* also involves abstracting the interior from these architectural, mechanical coordinates and turning it into a repository of images, a place where images can be collected, stored and fitted to the contours of an individuated subconscious, much like the way a pair of slippers become worn with extensive use.

The dual nature of the cinema theatre as Benjamin describes it conforms to this model of the interior. On the one hand, the cinema theatre is a functional, mechanical space, where the actor or actress simply addresses the mechanical apparatus that has brought him or her into existence. However, the movie theatre is also an imagistic space, where the actor or actress addresses an audience that are invested in reducing the space to a repository of images. Now, while the images on the screen might be too insistent, at least initially, to leave space for the individual viewer's unconscious, this doesn't preclude the space of the *movie theatre itself* from functioning as a repository of images in the same way as the interiors and rooms that promote *flânerie*. If that repository of images

³⁸ Benjamin, "Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 229.

already existed as a kind of projection of the cityscape onto the walls, contours and imperfections that individuated the interior, then the inverse is also possible: a *flânerie* that operates as a dialectic between the cinema space and the cinema screen, rather than between the individuated interior and the cityscape. In this configuration, the *flâneur* is the figure who reclaims the cinema space imagistically, rediscovering in it a possibility for unconscious projection that leaves space for his own, individual unconscious in the face of the collective, amorphous unconscious spaces provided by the film. This iteration of the *flâneur* therefore performs an individuated, unconscious optics all of his own in attaching to the materiality of the cinematic venue, from which he embarks to peruse the cinematic screen, enacting what Friedberg describes as “a different concept of the space of the cinema – one that emphasizes the relation between the bodily space inhabited by the spectator and the visuality presented by the space of the screen.”³⁹

Clearly, this species of *flâneur* is different in kind from the *flâneur* that Benjamin elaborates in *The Arcades Project*. This is no longer a *flâneur* who operates at a dialectic between public and private space, but between spectatorial space and spectacle; a *flâneur* who is capable of creatively, ingeniously and even aggressively reclaiming not only the cinema, but the department store and any other space that seems to preclude just this species of private attachment, or that seems to resist being a repository of images-in-itself in favour of aggressively directing the eye and body towards a series of prescribed, commodified objects and images. Gleber describes the *flâneur*'s key task as the “redemption of visual reality,”⁴⁰ and what might be provisionally described as the cinephilic *flâneur* operates primarily by reclaiming the visual reality of spaces and objects that are intended to be invisible, or perhaps non-visible, designed simply as catalysts or pathways to a prescribed, commodified visuality, in what Miriam Paeslack

³⁹ Anne Friedberg, “Urban mobility and cinematic visuality: the screens of Los Angeles – endless cinema or private telematics,” *Journal of Visual Culture* 1:2 (2002), 187.

⁴⁰ Gleber, *Art of Taking a Walk*, 151.

describes as “‘counter-visualizations’ or ‘counter-narrations’ of the city’s text.”⁴¹ It is by refusing to refuse to ‘see’ the cinema itself as a repository of images, a canvas for dream-work, that the cinephilic *flâneur* manages to erect the dream-architecture required to truly dwell in the theatre, to collect its images and thereby transform it into an interior.

Gleber’s formulation of “the redemption of visual reality” takes its cues from Kracauer’s formulation of cinema as “the redemption of physical reality” – and Kracauer extends Benjamin’s thoughts on cinema’s perceptual challenges in a way that suggests a phenomenology of cinephilic *flânerie*. In the first section of *Theory Of Film*, Kracauer elaborates a series of subjects that are peculiarly amenable to cinematic representation and perception. The first and largest category of subjects are gathered under the heading of “things that remain unseen” and then divided into several subsections. The first of these more or less conforms to Benjamin’s account of cinema’s ability to extend the spectator’s perception, as Kracauer argues that cinema has a peculiar proclivity for “the small” and “the big” – objects whose scale doesn’t correlate with that of human perception and therefore require the cinematic devices of the close-up and wide shot to bring them into perceptibility. Kracauer then elaborates “the transient” – objects that move too rapidly or exist too briefly to be caught by anything other than the camera’s perceptual apparatus. Finally, he dovetails these two categories into the most inherently cinematic category of “things that remain unseen”: “blind spots of the mind – those objects and spaces that we are prevented from perceiving through ‘habit and prejudice.’”⁴²

These “blind spots of the mind” bear some resemblance to Benjamin’s “unconscious optics.” However, there is a critical difference from Benjamin. For Benjamin, the bind of this unconscious, cinematic optic is that it precludes *flânerie* by subsuming the perceptual apparatus of *flânerie* into itself. The cinema

⁴¹ Miriam Paeslack, “Subjective Topographies: Berlin in Post-Wall Photography,” in *Spatial Turns: Space, Place and Mobility in German Literary and Visual Culture*, ed. Jaimey Fisher and Barbara Mennel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 401.

⁴² Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 46-58.

screen may provide all the experiences that are peculiar to *flânerie*, but it does so in such a way as to distract the spectator from the possibility of independent, autonomous perusal. Kracauer, by contrast, stresses the repetitiveness and procedurality of cinema's attention to "blind spots of the mind" to suggest that cinema performs something like what Ian Bogost, in the context of cinema's transition to video gaming, has described as procedural rhetoric⁴³ – a form of rhetoric in which the subject is persuaded by a process or procedure. In fact, Bogost specifies that "because *flânerie* is fundamentally a passage through space, it bears much similarity to the configurative structure of procedural texts," and this connection between *flânerie* and procedurality is explored further in the following excursus.⁴⁴ According to Kracauer's procedural rhetoric, the cinema absorbs the processes of *flânerie*, but redistributes them to the *flâneur* in a heightened form, as evinced in one of his most striking thought-experiments:

Films make us undergo similar experiences a thousand times. They alienate our environment in exposing it. One ever-recurrent film scene runs as follows: Two or more people are conversing with each other. In the middle of their talk the camera, as if entirely indifferent to it, slowly pans through the room, inviting us to watch the faces of the listeners and various furniture pieces in a detached spirit...As the camera pans, curtains become eloquent and eyes tell a story of their own...How often do we not come across shots of street corners, buildings and landscapes with which we were acquainted all our life; we naturally recognise them and yet it as if they were virgin impressions emerging from the abyss of nearness.⁴⁵

Kracauer doesn't frame attention to "blind spots of the mind" and unconscious spaces as an isolated, privileged gift of *flânerie*, but as something that occurs "a thousand times," in an "ever-recurrent film scene" – sufficiently frequently, that is, to inculcate the same processes in the viewer. And that is exactly the trajectory described here, as Kracauer's chain of images suggests a viewer who, after endless trips to the movies, can emerge from the theatre into the street and see "corners, buildings and landscapes" as if for the first time. However, it is not

⁴³ Ian Bogost, *Persuasive Games* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 28-29.

⁴⁴ Ian Bogost, *Unit Operations: An Approach to Videogame Criticism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 75. I discuss the relationship between procedurality and *flânerie* in more detail in the following excursus.

⁴⁵ Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 55.

merely the case that the cinema imparts a procedural rhetoric of *flânerie* which the cinemagoer-*flâneur* enacts once they exit the theatre. What makes Kracauer's description of the tracking-shot so powerful is that it provides an instance of how the reader can enact the very form of cinephilic *flânerie* that it is describing while *in* the theatre. For if this "film scene" is "ever-recurrent," that isn't simply because it occurs in every film but because it describes a process that can be *enacted* in every film – namely, the eye's drift from an onscreen conversation to the "furniture" of the movie theatre, the "faces of the listeners" in the audience, the "curtains" around the screens and, finally, all the eyes in the audience that "tell a story of their own." Gleber notes that "the art of taking a walk introduces an aesthetics of movement that, more than any other artistic form, reveals an affinity with the long, extended tracking shots of a camera whose movement approaches and embraces the visual emanations of the exterior world."⁴⁶ However, if the tracking-shot is to procedurally inculcate *flânerie*, rather than merely absorb it, then the viewer needs to create their own tracking-shots within the theatre itself. It is the very willingness of the individual eye to become a camera in this way, to drift away from the screen and across the reticulations and nuances of the cinema theatre, that makes it clear that *flânerie* is operative.

Yet Kracauer's cinephilic *flânerie* is no less paradoxical than Benjamin's, even if it is more productive: according to his theory, the cinema inculcates *flânerie* by providing us, procedurally, with a series of techniques and exercises that we can use to direct our attention away from the screen. The bind of Benjamin's cinephilic *flânerie* is that it distracts us from *flânerie*; the promise of Kracauer's cinephilic *flânerie* is that it provides us with a series of tools for distracting ourselves. Kracauer's *flâneur* is always in a state of mild self-distraction, witnessing and enjoying his attention drift from the screen to the curtains, furniture and other audience members – but always in a way that is motivated by the techniques and apparatus of the screen. Kracauer's optimism is that the screen shows us how to become distracted from it.

⁴⁶ Gleber, *Art of Taking a Walk*, 152.

This renders the last chain of images in Kracauer's cinephilic description more figurative than might first appear: the "corners, buildings and landscapes" are as much the fabric of the cinematic theatre as of the world outside. And, in fact, the whole point of Kracauer's cinephilic *flânerie* is to collapse the distinction between the theatre and the world outside to the precise point of airy porosity that distinguished the ideal *flâneur* abodes described by Benjamin. In doing so, the theatre itself becomes subsumed into one of the key categories deployed throughout *Theory Of Film*, "the street," of which Kracauer writes:

The street in the extended sense of the word is not only the arena of fleeting impressions and chance encounters but a place where the flow of life is bound to assert itself...This flow casts its spell over the *flâneur* or even creates him. The *flâneur* is intoxicated with life in the street – life eternally dissolving the patterns which it is about to form. The medium's affinity for the flow of life would be enough to explain the attraction which the street has ever since exerted on the screen.⁴⁷

Kracauer describes the "street" as the ideal province of the *flâneur*, the ideal subject of cinema and "properly recorded...a virtually inexhaustible subject for the comprehension of modernity."⁴⁸ If, as suggested, the cinephilic *flâneur* interiorises cinema and uses it to cinematise the spaces most proximate to the screen, then he is simultaneously engaged in transforming the theatre itself into a street. This doesn't just mean that the theatre is understood as a physical extension or iteration of the street outside, but that it is an interiorised street, a dream of the street, functioning in a similar way to Benjamin's more privileged, private interior. Benjamin's *flâneur* was engaged in botanising on asphalt, but Kracauer's cinephilic *flâneur* botanises on celluloid. The cinematic apparatus allows the cinephilic *flâneur* to graft an imaginary, interiorised asphalt onto the reticulations of the theatre, from which he can journey forth to peruse the city, and dialectically intermingle it with that interiority. Kracauer understands this imaginary asphalt as a "disintegration" of the recognisably theatrical overtones

⁴⁷ Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 72.

⁴⁸ Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 112.

of the movie theatre in the name of a “display of pure externality”⁴⁹ that is specifically cinematic:

The movie theaters are faced with more urgent tasks than refining applied art. They will not fulfill their vocation – which is an aesthetic vocation only to the extent that it is in tune with its social vocation – until they cease to flirt with the theater and renounce their anxious efforts to restore a bygone culture. Rather, they should rid their offerings of all trappings that deprive film of its rights and must aim radically towards a kind of distraction that exposes disintegration instead of masking it.

Kracauer reconfigures the theatre as a disintegration of cinematic and urban spatiality, in what Henrik Reeh describes as his “double shift: he seeks to displace not only that which is observed, but also the way in which observation takes place, the point of view, in relation to the traditional urban commentary.”⁵⁰ In doing so, Kracauer prefigures current interest in attention economies in his vision of a distraction economy, revolving around “the self-articulation of the masses,”⁵¹ or at least an attention economy prescient that “attention always contained within itself the conditions for its own disintegration...it was haunted by the possibility of its own excess – which we all know so well whenever we try to look at or listen to any one thing for too long.”⁵² If an attention economy is premised on an excess of information, then a distraction economy is premised on an excess of boredom, specifically the “dialectical concept of (authentic) *boredom*” that Hanssen fused with the *flâneur*’s oscillation between anamnestic intoxication and anamnestic recollection. The optimism of Kracauer’s theory of cinema, then, is that it reopens the possibility of “extraordinary, radical boredom” by opening up a space and venue for productive “unfulfilment”:

⁴⁹ Siegfried Kracauer, “Cult of Distraction: On Berlin’s Picture Palaces,” in *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. and trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 328.

⁵⁰ Henrik Reeh, *Ornaments of the Metropolis: Siegfried Kracauer and Modern Urban Culture*, trans. John Irons (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006) 110.

⁵¹ Miriam Bratu Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 53.

⁵² Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 47.

In the evening one saunters through the streets, replete with an unfulfillment from which a fullness could sprout. Illuminated words glide by on the rooftops, and already one is banished from one's own emptiness into the alien *advertisement*. One's body takes root in the asphalt, and, together with the enlightening revelations of the illuminations, one's spirit – which is no longer one's own – roams ceaselessly out of the night and into the night... Should the spirit by chance return at some point, it soon takes its leave in order to allow itself to be cranked away in various guises in a *movie theater*... How could it resist these metamorphoses? The posters swoop into the empty space that the spirit itself would not mind pervading; they drag it in front of the silver screen, which is as barren as an emptied-out palazzo. And once the images begin to emerge one after another, there is nothing left in the world besides their evanescence. One forgets oneself in the process of gawking, and the huge dark hole is animated with the illusion of a life that belongs to no one...⁵³

Later in this essay, Kracauer describes the pleasure of boredom as that of rolling up into a dark ball and being reminded of one's insignificance.⁵⁴ While this passage presents the cinema screen as the culmination of those urban distractions that preclude boredom, the space around the screen – that is, the space of the movie theatre itself – briefly flickers, if darkness can be said to flicker, with the possibility of a genuinely boring experience. Not only is it a “huge dark hole,” but it is “a space that the spirit itself would not mind pervading” – sufficiently enticing to expand it to the luxurious co-ordinates of an “emptied-out palazzo.” As with Kracauer's account of the eye's drift across the theatre, this passage doesn't merely describe a process, but offers a procedural rhetoric for the reader – in this case, an example of how to achieve the “radical distraction” that not only “exposes disintegration, instead of masking it,” but exposes the limits that quotidian distraction places on boredom, in its explosive fragmentation of the cinematic theatre into so many repositories where boredom might dwell. In *Empty Moments*, Charney describes this radical distraction as drift, temporarily reverting to his own “creative line” to gesture towards drift's role as a “line of flight”⁵⁵ from a distraction economy:

Benjamin felt this boredom too.

⁵³ Siegfried Kracauer, “Boredom,” in Levin (ed.), *Mass Ornament*, 332.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 333.

⁵⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Continuum, 2004), 226.

You see it in the cracks of his writing: he talks about the constant, sudden change in a movie, about its shock effect, about how the mechanically reproduced work of art generates an infinity of copies, all the same, one after another.

When he says that the nonreproduced artwork has an aura, what he means is it's not boring.

The presence of the artwork is tied up to its nonboringness, and that package is called aura...

Paradoxically, the static artwork allows the viewer to drift, while the jumpy, shifty movie pins the viewer into a rut of presents, one after another, methodical and predictable.

The movie has to keep distracting your attention from the looming threat of boredom.

Re-presentation is boring.⁵⁶

Whereas distraction aims to divert “attention from the looming threat of boredom,” drift embraces the “re-presentation” of boredom by aiming to “re-present the experience of vacancy, the lived sensation of empty moments, the consequence and corollary of empty moments.”⁵⁷ If, as Charney suggests, a distraction economy is simultaneously an auratic economy – both distracted from the aura, and distracted in a never-ending attempt to recover the aura – then Kracauer’s metonymies of boredom can be understood as an attempt to elude the aura and gain some respite from auratic oppression.⁵⁸ Whereas, for

⁵⁶ Charney, *Empty Moments*, 119-20.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁸ In *Cinema and Experience*, Hansen observes that “Kracauer’s curiosity about contemporary realities made him drift...toward the proliferating sites, media and practices of consumption, including their shadow counterpart, the public yet ‘unseen’ sites of deprivation and misery” (44). Kracauer’s metonymic perception-experiments might be understood, more generally, as embodying this tendency towards drift, particularly evident in “Two Planes,” included in Levin (ed.), *Mass Ornament*: “Marseilles, a dazzling amphitheatre, rises around the rectangle of the old harbor. The three shores of the square paved with sea, whose depth cuts into the city, are lined with rows of façades, each one like the next. Across from the entrance to the bay, the Cannebière, the street of all streets, breaks into the square’s smooth luminescence, extending the harbor into the city’s interior. It is not the only connection between the soaring terraces and this monster of a square, from whose foundation the neighborhoods rise like the jets of a fountain. The churches point to the square as the vanishing point of all perspectives, and the still-virgin hills face it as well. Rarely has such an audience ever been assembled around an arena. If ocean liners were to fill the basin, their trails of smoke would drift to the most remote houses; if fireworks were to be set off over the plane, the city would be witness to the illumination” (37).

Benjamin, the cinema precludes the aura of the traditional art object, for Kracauer, the aura is “as much a product of overdetermination as it is one of underexposure...the aura of history’s vast refuse or debris, the snowy air reflecting the perpetual blizzard of media.”⁵⁹ Recognising that “the estrangement and apathy, the *boredom* that comes from information- and impression-overload in modern society, is constituted by the inability to recognise this auratic quality,”⁶⁰ Kracauer’s drift, and the cinephilic *flânerie* to which it corresponds, therefore involves embracing the theatre as a “potentially wasted space” over the auratic specificity of “certain texts” or “certain mode[s] of engagement” that might be consumed or enacted there:

As each present moment is remorselessly evacuated and deferred into the future, it opens up an empty space, an interval, that takes the place of a stable present. This potentially wasted space provides an opening to drift, to put the empty present to work not as a self-present identity or a self-present body, but as a drift, an ungovernable, mercurial activity that takes empty presence for granted while maneuvering within and around it. The experience that I call drift describes neither certain texts nor a certain mode of engagement but the general activity of living with the empty present, carrying it forward through time and space.⁶¹

As an instance of this “drift,” Kracauer’s procedural rhetoric simultaneously evokes an epistemology of distant reading, in which a “mode of engagement” with “certain texts” is jettisoned in favour of a “mercurial activity” that carries the “empty present” forward through time and space. While distant viewing, or drift-viewing, might involve “emptying” the individual filmic text of its specific content, it doesn’t involve emptying it of its presence: rather, distant viewing involves abstracting the individual filmic text to an “empty presence,” and then displacing that presence in order to “maneuver within and around it,” just as Morton argues that dark ecology can only progress by thwarting the metaphysics of presence that prioritises atmosphere, ambience and immersion. As a dark

⁵⁹ Miriam Bratu Hansen, introduction to *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, by Siegfried Kracauer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), xxx.

⁶⁰ Marco van Leeuwen, “The Digital Void: e-NNUI and experience,” in *Essays on Boredom and Modernity*, ed Barbara Dalle Pezze and Carlo Salzani (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 187.

⁶¹ Charney, *Empty Moments*, 7.

media ecologist, Kracauer proposes a relationship with the individual film that falls short of both immersion and alienation from immersion, in which the very conditions for immersion are “remorselessly” – and repeatedly – “evacuated and deferred.”

Cinephilia

This movement from cinema screen, to interiorisation of the theatre-cityscape, to *flânerie* of the actual cityscape, is the most straightforward version of the model of cinephilic *flânerie* opened up by Kracauer’s theory. There is, however, the possibility of a more complex iteration of cinephilic *flânerie*. In the section of *Theory Of Film* on “Blind Spots of the Mind,” Kracauer offers a second thought-experiment:

The third and last group of things normally unseen consists of phenomena which figure among the blind spots of the mind; habit and prejudice prevent us from noticing them. The role which cultural standards and traditions may play in these processes of elimination is drastically illustrated by a report on the reaction of African natives to a film made on the spot. After the screening the spectators, all of them still unacquainted with the medium, talked volubly about a chicken they allegedly had seen picking food in the mud. The film maker himself, entirely unaware of its presence, attended several performances without being able to detect it. Had it been dreamed up by the natives? Only by scanning his film foot by foot did he eventually succeed in tracing the chicken: it appeared for a fleeting moment somewhere in a corner of a picture and then vanished forever.⁶²

Unlike the seasoned spectators of the first thought-experiment, the “African natives” are entirely “unacquainted with the medium.” However, the fact that the “film was made on the spot” ensures an immediacy and specificity of the film to its target audience that migrates the anthropological focus on “African natives” to a techno-anthropological speculation on natives of cinema itself, in much the same way as Louis Lumière’s *The Photographical Congress Arrives in Lyon* depicts participants arriving in the morning at the conference at which it was screened

⁶² Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 53.

in the afternoon.⁶³ As such, this thought-experiment, like “the image of the trembling leaves” that Kracauer uses as a synecdoche for the Lumières’ experimental achievement, aims to elaborate the true natives of the “street” – and all the characteristics that Kracauer has just attributed to the street, including the focus on transience and refuse, are there in the image of the chicken bobbing its head in and out of the mud. This makes for two different levels of meaning. As “African natives,” the audience have simply seen something that the director has not seen. However, as cinema-natives, the audience have not only seen something different but, as Kracauer puts it, “dreamed” something different – they have imagined or dreamed something into the very fabric of the film. The fact that it takes the director such an extensive re-engagement with his own film to discover this object makes that sense of dreaming peculiarly tangible. If the director re-watches the film to find the chicken identified by the Africans, then he retraverses the film to find the chicken identified by the cinema-natives, fusing his eyes and feet to “scan his film foot by foot” until he finally encounters it.

Kracauer’s parable of the cinema-natives gestures towards a subject who is capable of extending the process of cinephilic *flânerie* back towards the screen itself. Certainly, he takes the screen as a cue to interiorise and cinematise the theatre itself into a street, using that as a springboard to encounter the actual physical street. However, the cinema-native, who it is now more convenient to label the *cinepheur*, also uses the theatre-street to re-encounter the street displayed on the screen, translating the interiorised and personalised city of the *flâneur* into the realm of cinematic infrastructure, and clarifying the cinematicity of the cityscape itself in the process. It is at this point that cinephilic *flânerie* becomes what I will shortly describe as cinetopic passage: like the traditional *flâneur*, the *cinepheur* is a dialectician, except in this case the dialectic between interior and street has been absorbed into the dialectic between theatre and screen.

⁶³ Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer, introduction to *The Silent Cinema Reader*, ed. Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer (London: Routledge, 2003), 2. *The Photographical Congress Arrives in Lyon*, directed by Louis Lumière (1895; Lyon: Image Entertainment, 2004), DVD.

It is important, at this stage, to distinguish the *cinepheur*, or practitioner of cinetopic passage, from the figure of the cinephile – or, rather, to consider how the cinephile’s particular skills and strategies are absorbed into those of the *cinepheur*. In *The Wind in the Trees*, Keathley defines the “cinephilic moment” as an intense and enduring attachment to a cinematic moment that is in excess of its intended significance.⁶⁴ For Keathley, this excess corresponds to Roland Barthes’ distinction between the *studium* and *punctum* of photographs.⁶⁵ For Barthes, the *studium* of a photograph is the sum total of its deliberately coded meanings, whereas the *punctum* of a photograph is what erupts out of the *studium* to provide the viewer with the intense, personal communion that defines the cinephilic moment: “The second element will break out (or punctuate) the *studium*. This time it is not I who seek it out (as I invest the field of the *studium* with my sovereign consciousness), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow and pierces me.”⁶⁶ As Keathley puts it, this dimension of the text is “objectively present, but only subjectively provocative.”⁶⁷ In *The Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes provides a comparable distinction between representation and figuration. Whereas “figuration is the way in which the erotic body appears in the text...necessary to the bliss of reading,”⁶⁸ representation is “*embarrassed* figuration, encumbered with other meanings than that of desire”: “That is what representation is: when nothing emerges, when nothing leaps out of the frame: of the picture, the book, the screen” (56-57). If representation corresponds to the *studium* of a text, and figuration corresponds to the *punctum* of a text, then the experience of the *punctum* is also one of bliss, or *jouissance*, rather than mere pleasure. Barthes defines bliss as a reclamation of kinaesthetic over visual experience, “abrasion” over visual cognition: “Thus, what I enjoy in a narrative is not directly its content or even its structure, but rather the abrasions I impose upon its fine surface; I

⁶⁴ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 32-33.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁶⁶ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), 26.

⁶⁷ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 24.

⁶⁸ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1975), 55.

read on, I skip, I look up, I dip in again” (7). Concomitantly, the cinephilic moment is that at which a figural *punctum* disrupts visual representation to produce a flash of kinaesthetic *jouissance*.

Keathley historicises the emergence of the cinephilic moment in terms of what Wolfgang Schivelbusch identifies as “panoramic perception,” a critical perceptual posture of modernity ushered in by the experience of the train window:

Panoramic perception, in contrast to traditional perception, no longer belonged to the same space as the perceived objects: the traveller saw the objects, landscapes etc. *through* the apparatus which moved him through the world. That machine and the motion it created became integrated into his visual perception: thus he could only see things in motion. That mobility of vision...became a prerequisite for the ‘normality’ of panoramic vision.⁶⁹

Schivelbusch draws an analogy between cinematic and panoramic perception, or between the cinema screen and the window of the train, in terms of the “juxtaposition of the most disparate images into one unit.”⁷⁰ This analogy was cemented by early silent cinema’s panoramic spectacles, in which “the ‘panoramic’ effect is doubled as the apparatuses involved include both the means of transportation and the cinema itself,”⁷¹ and which I discuss in the following chapter in terms of the remediation of the “phantom ride.” For Schivelbusch, the rapidity of cinematic transmission and rail transportation provided the viewer with the opportunity to imbue discrete details with the kinetic and kinaesthetic energy of the technological apparatus from which they were perceived. This had the effect of mitigating against the sensory division of labour inherent in both the rail window and the cinema screen – the prioritisation of visuality over every other sense – by enabling kinaesthetic, kinetic moments of communion with discrete visual phenomena.⁷² In doing so, it provided a counterpoint to what

⁶⁹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 64.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷¹ Tom Gunning, ““The Whole World Within Reach”: Travel Images Without Borders,” in *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel*, ed. Jeffrey Ruoff (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 37.

⁷² Schivelbusch, *Railway Journey*, 61.

Jonathan Crary has described as the tendencies of modernist “visual mass culture” towards a “new valuation of visual experience,” in which visual apprehension was reified and elevated above the other senses to “an unprecedented mobility and exchangeability, abstracted from any founding site or referent.”⁷³

This, for Keathley, is the essence of cinephilia – the moment at which the spectator experiences a communion with a discrete, fleeting cinematic moment in such a way as to reintegrate visuality back into an alienated sensorium; or, in Barthes’ terms, to transform the text into an “articulation of the body” that “we may find...more easily today at the cinema.”⁷⁴ As a result, cinephilic moments are generally, though not necessarily, bound up with movement on screen, especially the movement of the human body. Certainly, panoramic perception also lends itself to “a crucial realignment of subject and image” that, “through a regularization of vision and the subject’s relation to the screen, reasserts and institutionalizes the despatialization of subjectivity,”⁷⁵ producing what de Certeau describes as “travelling incarceration,” a “chiasm produced by the windowpane and the rail.”⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the cinephile’s efficient, standardised visual literacy is in fact what frees up a certain “perceptual energy” to dwell on these fleeting, discrete moments.⁷⁷ The cinephile is a figure with such a heightened sense of visual literacy and awareness that they grasp the visuality of the film in its totality, and then proceed to re-integrate visuality back into their wider sensorium through an excessive attachment to discrete moments.

For Keathley, the visceral, kinaesthetic and highly personal nature of the cinephilic moment means that it can only be properly expressed through anecdote – and he concludes with several cinephilic anecdotes of his own. Before moving on to these, it is useful to note some similarities and dissimilarities

⁷³ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 14.

⁷⁴ Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*, 66-67.

⁷⁵ Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 43-44.

⁷⁶ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 111-12.

⁷⁷ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 34.

between cinephilia and the model of cinephilic *flânerie* described. Firstly, both cinephilia and cinephilic *flânerie* involve a perusal of the screen, in which the rhythms of rambling and strolling are imparted to the eye. Similarly, both involve an attraction to discrete, fleeting moments in the cinematic texture – moments which are in excess of their representative capacity. Both, too, seize upon those moments as a way of re-integrating their sensorium, looping visuality back into an awareness of their own bodies. For the cinephile, however, the process stops there – this kinaesthetic self-consciousness is what signals the disruption of their alienation from modernity. For the cinephilic *flâneur*, however, this heightened bodily awareness doesn't simply occur in respect to the screen, but in respect to the environment within which the film is screened. For that reason, the cinephilic moment differs from the moment of what I call cinetopic passage insofar as it is a moment that condenses embodiment to the relationship between the viewer and the screen, or only deals with the sensuous nature of the screening environment in a lateral and secondary way, as will be discussed. By contrast, the cinetopic anecdote might be expected to focus equally on the viewer's attachment to a discrete moment and a discrete aspect of the screening space that curves itself around his or her perception at that particular moment. Similarly, whereas the cinephilic moment is typically associated with the movement of bodies and figures on screen, the cinetopic moment is more likely to be associated with topographical spatiality; the presence of spaces, rooms and objects that produce a kind of embodied, spatialised attachment that is immediately transplanted to the reticulations of the movie theatre. If the cinephile typically attaches to figures, the *cinéphœur* typically attaches to rooms.

In André Bazin's terms, then, the *cinéphœur* celebrates mixed cinema – and Bazin's anecdote about watching Louis Feuillade might be taken as a prototype of what will shortly be described as the cinetopic anecdote.⁷⁸ Similarly, while Barthes' comments on photography are suggestive of a cinephilic posture, his comments on cinema itself are more indicative of this cinetopic posture: here the

⁷⁸ André Bazin, "In Defense of Mixed Cinema," in *What Is Cinema? Volume 1*, ed. and trans. Hugh Gray, New Edn. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 58-60.

will to “fetishize not the image, but precisely what exceeds it” tends not be framed in terms of cinematic excess so much as infrastructural and topographical excess, “the texture of the sound, the hall, the darkness, the obscure mass of the other bodies, the rays of light, entering the theater, leaving the hall.”⁷⁹ Within that “obscure texture,” Kracauer’s drift becomes a kind of perpetual perceptual departure from the theatre to what will shortly be described as the cinematic heterotopia, but what Barthes describes as “cruising” – the “twilight reverie” that leads the *cinéphur* “from street to street, from poster to poster, finally burying himself in a dim, anonymous, indifferent cube where that festival of affects known as a film will be presented” and in which the city is relived as a dark object:

What does the “darkness” of the cinema mean? (Whenever I hear the word *cinema*, I can’t help thinking *hall*, rather than *film*). Not only is the dark the very substance of reverie...it is also the “color” of a diffused eroticism; by its human condensation, by its absence of worldiness (contrary to the cultural *appearance* that has to be put in at any “legitimate theater”), by the relaxation of postures (how many members of the cinema audience slide down into their seats as if into a bed, coats or feet thrown over the row in front!), the movie house (ordinary model) is a site of availability (even more than cruising), the inoccupation of bodies, which best defines modern eroticism – not that of advertising or striptease, but that of the big city.⁸⁰

Something of this difference between cinephile and *cinéphur*, and the latter’s “*eroticization of the place*”⁸¹ can be seen in the foci of Keathley’s representative cinephilic anecdotes. All five of these anecdotes focus on a privileged cinephilic moment, and use that moment as the starting point for a wider discussion of film history and phenomenology. However, of these five anecdotes, only two devote any space to the viewing conditions, contexts and spaces of that cinephilic moment. The first of these, a discussion of a moment from *The Searchers*,⁸² places that moment within the context of Keathley’s experience of early VHS

⁷⁹ Roland Barthes, “Leaving the Movie Theatre,” in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 349.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 346.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² *The Searchers*, directed by John Ford (1956; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007), DVD.

technologies.⁸³ There is certainly a sense that this cinephilic moment contains a whole technological milieu, but Keathley's description of this milieu is offered more in the spirit of an extrapolation or explanation of this cinephilic moment than as an integral part of the moment itself. The moment carries a technosphere with it, but not a sensuous attachment to a particular reticulation of that technosphere. It is only in the second cinephilic anecdote that Keathley starts to approach something closer to the cinetopic anecdote, the anecdote of the *cinepheur*. This particular cinephilic moment occurred during *Bonnie and Clyde*,⁸⁴ and is described thus:

My first viewing of *Bonnie and Clyde* was on the film's re-release in the early 1970s. I was probably about nine years old – much too young to be seeing it. I had been taken to the film – along with four older siblings, all in their early teens – by my college-aged brother, Tim, and his friend, Cathy Reed. I had heard all about the film's final massacre scene, and with the above-described shootout functioning as a preview, I was getting anxious. During the shootout, Cathy noticed my discomfort and offered to wait with me in the lobby until the film was over. Relieved, I accepted. It was for things like her extraordinary kindness and empathy that Cathy was a favourite of ours. We were always excited to see her driving down the street towards our house, and hers was an easy car to spot. The front license plate ironically sported her initials: CAR. This screening of *Bonnie and Clyde* was the last time any of us would ever see Cathy. Two weeks later, she was dead from meningitis.⁸⁵

From the outset, this anecdote has a more sensuous attention to the screening space and conditions under which the film was viewed than any of the other four. There is a very specific, detailed awareness of who was in the audience on the night of the film – and that awareness is heightened by the fact that Keathley was much younger than the people with whom he saw the film, as well as the intended audience itself. This disparity was clearly a large part of his experience of the film, both in anticipation and actuality, and seems to have created as much awe for the audience-space as for the film itself.

⁸³ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 143.

⁸⁴ *Bonnie and Clyde*, directed by Arthur Penn (1967; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2008), DVD.

⁸⁵ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 158.

This fusion of anticipation and experience is also responsible for the fascinating paradox at the heart of this particular cinephilic anecdote: the cinephilic moment is not attached to an experienced moment in the film. Or, rather, the cinephilic moment is distended in an unusual way. Shortly after, Keathley writes:

I did not see *Bonnie and Clyde* again for several years – until I was a teenager and could watch the film on video. When I did see it, it was the moment of Clyde being hit by the shotgun blast that provoked a *frisson* of involuntary recognition...But when I saw the film that second time, was I really remembering the moment of Clyde hit by the shotgun blast from the first screening when I was nine? It was about this point in the film that Cathy took me out to the lobby. Was that image of Cathy the final one I saw; was it the last memorable image I had from the film?⁸⁶

It is precisely this uncertainty about whether the moment in question is attached to a moment in the film or a moment that took place in the space surrounding the film that signifies a transition from a cinephilic moment to a moment of cinetopic passage. For the *cinepheur*, the moment of attachment to a discrete fragment of the cinematic texture is also the moment at which the discrete cinematicity of that texture breaks down. The *cinepheur* typically finds himself in exactly the same position as Keathley here: attached to a moment that could only be experienced as distinctively cinematic in retrospect. In fact, what Keathley experiences is not one moment of cinephilic passage, but two - or, rather, the constitutive dialectic of cinetopic passage, as he moves from attaching to a cinematic space because it had entirely absorbed a cinematic image, to attaching to a cinematic image because it had entirely absorbed a cinematic space. In his other four anecdotes, and throughout the book, Keathley emphasises the infinite repeatability of the cinephilic moment – it is defined partly by its incessant, irrational and uncanny ability to renew the sensorium: “It is always surprising this moment, this movement, always and without fail it takes me aback.”⁸⁷ However, there is such a radical collapse of anticipation and retrospection in the *Bonnie and Clyde* anecdote that it seems to defy repeatability.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 158.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 22, citing Lesley Stern, “I Think, Sebastian, Therefore, I...Somersault,” in *Paradoxa* 3, nos. 3-4 (1997), 348-66.

Keathley's anecdote, then, refers to a segment of the film that is never truly occupied in the same way that a properly cinephilic moment can be occupied: its elusiveness is of a different quality. It makes sense, then, that the object of Keathley's attachment finally settles on one of the components of the cinematic venue that is least conducive to occupation: the lobby. As the anecdote is structured, the lobby exists as a middle term in a metonymic chain that includes the cars in the film (the backdrop to the scene Keathley couldn't bear to watch), the lobby where Cathy escorted Keathley, the lobby itself, Cathy's own car and, finally, the number plate that "sport[ed] her initials: CAR." Furthermore, there is a clear analogy between the cinema lobby and the cars onscreen. Both provide a transitory space of refuge and danger: the cinema lobby is turned outwards to the street but also inwards to the world of the film that Keathley has just managed to escape. At the same time, both spaces are, by their transitory nature, impersonal. Yet, just as Cathy managed to personalise the impersonal, transitory space of the lobby, so her car registration plate fuses the generic designation of "car" with her own initials. The logic of the anecdote is that the lobby has become "LOBBY" in the same way that Cathy's car became "CAR." Earlier in *The Wind in the Trees*, Keathley draws on Charles Sanders Peirce to argue that the cinephilic moment can also be understood as that at which the indexicality,⁸⁸ rather than the iconicity or symbolism, of film as a medium is foregrounded. Here, the same process occurs, but the attachment is to a component of the theatrical infrastructure as much as the film itself. A chain of negotiations and perusals between the screen and the theatrical ecology means that one component of that ecology, the lobby, comes to have an indexical as well as a symbolic significance for Keathley. It is no longer merely the space between other spaces, or the representation of the transactions and negotiations required to enter a movie house; it has become imprinted with his initials in the same way that Cathy's number plate was imprinted with hers. Just as "that footprint that Robinson Crusoe found in the sand, and which has been stamped in the granite of fame,

⁸⁸ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 27.

was an Index to him that some creature was on his island,”⁸⁹ so Keathley’s anecdote functions as an elevation of Cathy herself, rather than a particular cinematic moment, to an indexical significance: “Every time I watch the moment of Clyde getting shot in the arm, I feel Cathy is still alive, just as this violence reminds me of her death.”⁹⁰ In the process, the lobby becomes “the setting for those who neither seek nor find the one who is always sought,”⁹¹ absorbing the cinephilic moment’s privileged “space that does not refer beyond itself, the aesthetic condition corresponding to it constitut[ing] itself as its own limit.”⁹²

Cinetopic Anecdotes

Keathley’s anecdote, then, bears several hallmarks of what I am describing as the anecdote of the *cinépheur*, or the cinetopic anecdote. Most notably, it subsumes the traditional cinephilic moment into a more general attachment to the interior of the movie theatre. The anecdote is, nevertheless, still organised around the primacy of the cinematic moment – it is an anecdote of cinetopic passage despite itself – and Keathley spends no time in his exegesis exploring or even articulating the implications of his attachment to the lobby, or the other specificities of the theatre in which he viewed the film. An extension of the tendencies of this anecdote, and a more complete, fully-formed anecdote of cinetopic passage, can be found in *The Remembered Film*, which explores the proliferation of what Burgin calls “sequence-images” in the media ecology:⁹³

The elements that constitute the sequence-image, mainly perceptions and recollections, emerge successively but not teleologically. The order in which they appear is insignificant (as in a rebus) and they present a configuration – ‘lexical, sporadic’ – that is more ‘object’ than narrative. What distinguishes the elements of such a configuration from their evanescent neighbours is that they seem somehow more ‘brilliant’...for all that unconscious fantasy may have a role in its production, the sequence-

⁸⁹ Charles Sanders Peirce, “Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmaticism,” in *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic*, ed. James Hoopes (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 252.

⁹⁰ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 149.

⁹¹ Siegfried Kracauer, “The Hotel Lobby,” in Levin (ed.), *Mass Ornament*, 175.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 177.

⁹³ Burgin, *Remembered Film*, 23.

image as such is neither daydream nor delusion. It is a *fact* – a transitory state of percepts of a ‘present moment’ seized in their association with past affects and meanings (21).

Invoking Foucault’s work on heterotopia, Burgin argues that “cinema” doesn’t simply designate the celluloid object, nor the theatrical infrastructure surrounding it, but the entire cinematic substance of everyday life, identifying the *flâneur* as the prototypical peruser of this cinematic heterotopia, and the sequence-image’s “state of percepts” as its foundational experiential unit: “What we may call the “cinematic heterotopia” is constituted across the variously virtual spaces in which we encounter displaced pieces of films: the Internet, the media and so on, but also the psychological space of a spectating subject that Baudelaire first identified as ‘a kaleidoscope equipped with consciousness’”(10).

Whereas Keathley’s privileged moment happens in the present, or a distended present, in which that moment can be guaranteed to produce the same jolt of *jouissance* over and over again, Burgin’s privileged moment operates in the temporal disjunction that characterises Keathley’s anecdote about *Bonnie and Clyde*. In order to illustrate these peculiarities of Burgin’s relationship to the remembered film image, as well as their implications for the *cinéphur* and for cinetopic passage, it is useful to focus upon a particularly extensive, multimodal anecdote that he provides. The first two parts of this anecdote are provided in *The Remembered Film* and revolve around two train journeys, taken some time apart. The second part is a multimedia installation and is referenced in the book, but only available in its entirety on DVD – specifically, on the Criterion Collection edition of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger’s 1944 film *A Canterbury Tale*.⁹⁴

The first part of Burgin’s anecdote involves a train journey taken from Paris to London:

⁹⁴ *A Canterbury Tale*, directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger (1944; London: The Criterion Collection, 2006), DVD.

Earlier, as I was waiting for the train to leave the Gare du Nord, a middle-aged couple had passed down the carriage in which I was sitting. Something in the woman's face brought to mind an image from a film. The previous night, seeking distraction from work, I had switched on the television. The channel I selected was passing in cursory review some films to be broadcast in weeks to come: a title and a few seconds of footage from each. No doubt there was some commentary *voix-off* but I had the mute on. A young woman, seen from behind, executes a perfect dive into a swimming pool; cut to the face of a middle-aged woman who (the edit tells me) has witnessed this. I read something like anxiety in her expression. The woman who had passed down the carriage had an anxious look. Now, as the train slices through the French countryside, I glimpse an arc of black tarmac flanked by trees on a green hillside. A white car is tracing the curve. This prompts the memory of a similar bend in a road, but now seen from the driver's seat of a car I had rented last summer in the South of France, where I was vacationing in a house with a swimming pool. My association to the glimpse of road seen from the train is followed by my recollection of the woman who had passed me in the carriage (as if the recollection were provoked by the perception directly, without the relay of the film image).⁹⁵

It is immediately clear that this is a very different kind of anecdote from that found in Keathley's account. Certainly, there is the same fixation on transitory, fleeting phenomena – but these are no longer confined to the cinematic object. Not only are the “arc of white tarmac” and the “white car” as vivid and memorable as the two images glimpsed on the television the previous night, but the connection between them, the way they are “edited” together, is just as memorable. The dichotomy between screen and theatre is dissolved, as Burgin's anecdote takes place away from both a screen and theatre. Instead, it takes place in a third space, ancillary to both – the space that Burgin has described as the cinematic heterotopia, literally aligned with the panoramic perception described by Schivelbusch and Keathley. Moreover, it is not directly motivated by an experience of a cinematic screen or theatre either, since Burgin witnessed these images on a television screen, in a hotel room.

However, the most drastic difference from Keathley's anecdote is that the fragments of film that are described here – “a young woman, seen from behind” and “the face of a middle-aged woman” – were not prioritised or fetishised at the

⁹⁵ Burgin, *Remembered Film*, 17-18.

moment at which they were viewed; they were viewed, by contrast, in the state of “cursory review” peculiar to the cinematic heterotopia. In fact, they precisely do not qualify as material for a cinephilic anecdote as Keathley understands it because that “cursory review” was actually enacted and enforced by the television station itself. The juxtaposition of the swimming pool and the old woman’s face was not a matter of *punctum* but of *studium*: it was a juxtaposition that was designed to be enticing and attractive in order to advertise the coming week’s film program. Nevertheless, Burgin’s experience doesn’t simply fall into the category of the non-cinephilic attractive moment as described by Keathley either, since he didn’t experience an attraction to these deliberately attractive and attractively juxtaposed images at the moment at which he was confronted with them. Rather, their attractive potential only returned some time after they had been viewed – completely unexpectedly, and apparently coincidentally. It is in the particular trajectory of that return that the rhythm and nature of this first component of Burgin’s anecdote lies.

The first part of Burgin’s mnemonic trajectory is simple enough: it is a matter of straightforward association. While on the train, he encounters a woman with an anxious look on her face: that reminds him of the last woman he saw with an anxious look on her face, on the television the previous night. However, the way in which the other half of that sequence-image – the girl diving into the pool – emerges is less clear. For one thing, it is unclear whether the woman on the train immediately conjured up *both* the woman on the television and the girl diving into the pool on the television, or whether the memory of that second image only became prominent in the chain of association that followed. This chain of association moves, as if randomly, from the conflation of woman-on-train and woman-on-screen to the vista apparent outside the window. It is here that Burgin exhibits something like the cinephilic attachment, and panoramic perception, described by Keathley, as he scans the landscape to isolate and fetishise “an arc of black tarmac flanked by trees...a white car...tracing the curve.” This image could stand as an objective correlative of panoramic, cinephilic perception itself – it is not merely a perception of something that is fleeting, but something whose movement reflects the perceiver’s own movement

that renders it fleeting. In cinephilic terms, and if we are to understand the train window as a cinema screen in the way that Keathley understands it, the curvaceous trajectory of the fusion of car and road is a reminder that cinephilic moments don't just exist because of the relentless mobility and movement of what is happening on the screen, but because of the relentless mobility and movement of the spectator's eye. The car and road combine into a kind of calligraphic imprint of the movement of Burgin's own eye across the screen.

Given that Burgin effectively witnesses his own eye traversing the landscape, or the route his eye takes in traversing the landscape, it is appropriate that the next part of his anecdote places him *in* this car, on this road, by way of another memory: "This prompts the memory of a similar bend in a road, but now seen from the driver's seat of a car I had rented last summer in the South of France." Burgin, then, has moved from an act of a panoramic perception, to witnessing his own panoramic perception, to actually inhabiting the trajectory of that panoramic perception. To return to Rice's formulation of Benjamin, it is as if Burgin has managed to transform the panoramic, cinephilic trajectory described by Keathley into an interior that can now be inhabited, if only in memory.

The final section of this part of Burgin's anecdote moves back to the swimming pool, as he notes that the summer spent behind the wheel of the car he is remembering was also one in which he was "vacationing in a house with a swimming pool." This is clearly the moment at which the "perfect dive into a swimming pool," the other half of the sequence-image, finds a way into Burgin's chain of associations, but it is notable that he never explicitly identifies this link – indeed, the only time we hear about the swimming pool is in the introduction to the anecdote, in the original description of the sequence-image. Instead, Burgin identifies this moment at which he recalls the swimming pool on his vacation as the moment at which he remembers the old woman on the train – the woman that he has only actually seen for the first time a few seconds ago: "My association to the glimpse of road seen from the train is followed by my recollection of the woman who had passed me in the carriage (as if the

recollection were provoked by the perception directly, without the relay of the film image).”

By reversing the chain of cinephilic association built up so far, Burgin’s anecdote concludes by beginning. Instead of a causal chain in which the woman on the train gives rise to a recollection of the woman in the film who, in another, subsidiary chain, gives rise to a recollection of the swimming pool in the film, it is now that subsidiary chain which gives rise to a recollection of the woman on the train. Instead of an object in the real world recalling an object in the cinematic world, an object in the real world has recalled an object in the real world – although the strangeness of terming the connection between two such proximate phenomena (the woman on the train and the road outside the window) “recollection” makes it more accurate to say that an element in the cinematic heterotopia has recalled another element in the cinematic heterotopia.

Still, the swimming pool remains unaccounted for – and, while it functions quite elegantly as a synecdoche for the all-encompassing, metonymic fluidity of the cinematic heterotopic medium into which Burgin finds himself flung, it takes the next two parts of this anecdote to draw out and cement its significance. The second part of the anecdote also occurs in *The Remembered Film*, and describes a second train journey, taken from London to Bristol. This part of the anecdote differs from the first in several ways. Firstly, it is much shorter and more concise. Secondly, it deals with fragments from films that appear to have been seen at cinemas, rather than on television. Moreover, Burgin is able to recall the names of those films – *Listen to Britain*⁹⁶ and *A Canterbury Tale* – as well as where he saw them, while it appears as if the fragments that he involuntarily recalls from these films were fragments that were meaningful or memorable to him at the time – so meaningful or memorable, in fact, that it’s not even quite clear how involuntary the recollections are. Certainly, they don’t have quite the same surprising or disarming effect as the recollections that burst in upon his consciousness in the first part of the anecdote. As a result, the causal chain in this

⁹⁶ *Listen to Britain*, directed by Humphrey Jennings (1942; London: Image Entertainment, 2002), DVD.

anecdote is, at first glance, clearer, and more akin to a recollection of the cinephilic moment as articulated by Keathley. Travelling to Bristol in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the United States, Burgin looks out the window of his train and recalls a similar image from Humphrey Jennings' *Listen to Britain*: "Looking out at some of the most pleasant countryside in England, I recalled *Listen to Britain*, a film that begins with a similarly pastoral scene in a time of threat. The film opens with images of treetops and cornfields moving in the wind. Then the song of birds is drowned as a flight of Spitfires moves overhead."⁹⁷

As occurs in Keathley's cinephilic anecdote, Burgin progresses to speculate on the significance of this privileged moment, suggesting that Jennings' vision of a war in which "the threat of violence is everywhere but appears nowhere" is commensurate with post-9/11 Britain, which "felt itself under siege for the first time in 60 years, with the difference that no one could now say to what extent the threat was real" (18). However, Burgin does not conclude his anecdote here - in fact, any tendency to linger on or fetishise those cinephilic "images of treetops and cornfields moving in the wind" is immediately "drowned" by a "flight of Spitfires" overhead. This conjunction of cinephilic attachment, drowning and the emergence of an incongruous and unexpected source of noise paves the way for the next moment in this anecdote, in which Burgin recalls a fragment from *A Canterbury Tale*:

A young woman in a light summer dress climbs a path onto the Downs above Canterbury. Emerging from a stand of trees she is suddenly confronted with a view of the Cathedral. The screen frames her face in close-up as she seems to hear ancient sounds on the wind: jingling harnesses, pipes and lutes. She turns her head swiftly left and right, as if looking for the source of the sounds - which abruptly stop as the close-up cuts to a long shot of her alone and small in the bright expanse of grassland. The young woman on the Downs experiences the unexpected return of an image from a common national history and 'hears' sounds from a shared past that haunts the hill (18-19).

⁹⁷ Burgin, *Remembered Film*, 19.

Shortly after this passage, Burgin connects the two train journeys as “a concatenation of images” in which “the ‘concatenation’ does not take a linear form. It might rather be compared to a rapidly arpeggiated musical chord, the individual notes of which, although sounded successively, vibrate together simultaneously” (21). With this description in mind, it is clear that the second part of this second anecdote has not simply complemented or extended but absorbed the first, meaning that although *Listen to Britain* and *A Canterbury Tale* are “sounded successively,” they “vibrate together simultaneously.” Figuratively, that conjunction of cinephilic attachment, drowning and the emergence of an unexpected or incongruous source of sound has been remediated in terms of the conjunction between the “stand of trees” that opens the anecdote and the “ancient sounds on the wind” that the protagonist from *A Canterbury Tale* momentarily hears. The third term, “drowning” has itself drowned in this new configuration, but that is because this is as much a reconfiguration of the diegetic and non-diegetic co-ordinates of the first part of the anecdote as a figurative reconfiguration; or, rather, it clarifies that the figural component of the anecdote lies precisely in the way in which it refigures diegetic and non-diegetic space.

In the first anecdote, there is a relatively traditional, recognisably cinephilic negotiation of diegetic and non-diegetic space. Burgin, as observer, is positioned at a sufficiently comfortable distance to appreciate “the images of treetops and cornfields blowing in the wind” as a cinephilic spectacle, regardless of whether it is experienced contemporaneously or historically, or whether it takes place in diegetic or non-diegetic space. In other words, he is appreciating the cinematic heterotopia, but still appreciating it in the spirit of Keathley’s cinephilic anecdote: there is a sense that he is still sufficiently detached or separate from this heterotopia to be able to observe it without fully participating in it. In Morton’s terms, he is still operating from within the confines of a traditional ecological or ecocritical reification of nature as ambience, even as his movement towards a space between diegesis and non-diegesis, and the asubjectivity of Denson’s diegetised camera, starts to morph his anecdote into an embodiment of a dark media ecology, a dark object.

Nevertheless, this segment of the anecdote gestures towards Burgin's subsequent, radical immersion in the heterotopia that he is describing. Whether "the treetops and cornfields blowing in the wind" are understood to refer to objects seen originally on the screen or objects now glimpsed through the window, Burgin's privileged relationship towards them as a spectator is drowned by the "flight of Spitfires" – and, accordingly, we are immediately taken out of the moment, as Burgin reverts to a more explanatory, impersonal register: "The twenty-minute black-and-white short, directed by Humphrey Jennings..." (93). Keathley's cinephilic anecdote depends on a sense of ownership on the part of the cinephilic spectator: "But even held in common with others, such details remain one's own, no doubt in large part because the initial encounter was a private one, even though it occurred in the public space of a darkened theater."⁹⁸

Similarly, there can be no doubt that this image of "treetops and cornfields" is privileged to Burgin in a way that bears some resemblance to the cinephilic moment. In fact, Burgin even includes a still of exactly this moment from *Listen to Britain* in his book. However, there is a sense that he is *unable* to dwell on the moment for any extended period of time – and that inability is to do with the way in which the moment has been abstracted from its original cinematic context into a broader cinematic heterotopia, such that it only exists between a memory of cinema and a real panoramic landscape. It is as if Burgin has, at the end of this anecdote, been so fully absorbed into it that it is no longer possible to tell it; it is only possible to live it, project it. At the conclusion of the chapter devoted to this anecdote, Burgin writes that:

Sometimes I feel that the only adequate way to approach the sequence-image is to write in such a way as to evoke its associative structure, which is to say 'poeticise'...It is in this perspective that the following chapters elaborate on some of the salient topics of this introduction: 'topics' both in the sense of themes to be written about, and in the sense of sites in a particular topography – that of the cinematic heterotopia.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 21.

⁹⁹ Burgin, *Remembered Film*, 28.

The moment at which the planes drown Burgin's cinephilic reverie can thus also be understood as the moment at which he loses the sense of detachment required to even construct an anecdote at all; that is, the moment at which he becomes completely and radically absorbed in the cinematic heterotopia, meaning that he cannot write an anecdote *about* that heterotopia, he can only write an anecdote *through it*. In that sense, Burgin has provided an anecdote in the most literal sense of a "thing unpublished" and, by extension, incapable of being published. It is at this point that the stumbling-block, or ellipsis, at the heart of the first part of his anecdote starts to make sense. In anecdotally recalling a causal connection between the woman on the television, the woman on the train, the vistas glimpsed out the train window, and, finally the swimming-pool seen on the window, Burgin was simultaneously negotiating an anecdote *about* these disparate objects and an anecdote *through* these disparate objects. In order to understand exactly how this negotiation takes place, it is necessary to return to the passage on *A Canterbury Tale*.

This passage is symptomatic of Burgin's whole anecdote, and the hinge around which his conception of anecdote hangs, coming, as it does, after his absorption into his anecdote that occurs in the section on *Listen to Britain*. For that reason, there is now absolutely no distance or detachment from the cinematic heterotopia that Burgin is experiencing – he is not describing it, but simply enacting it. Or, rather, to describe it is to enact it, meaning that his description of the young woman from *A Canterbury Tale* is indistinguishable from his description of himself. This combination, which might, for the moment, be termed Burgin-Canterbury, moves from "a stand of trees" to a "close-up" in which s/he is caught by an apprehension of "ancient sounds on the wind," "the unexpected return of an image from a common national history." Burgin then provides an image of this woman – and it is no coincidence that this is also the image on the front cover of the book, since the whole logic of his anecdote is that he has momentarily become this woman, become absorbed into her own reveries and passage. Accordingly, the next part of his reflection on *A Canterbury Tale* states that:

I had a particularly clear memory of the Kent landscape in which the woman stands. But it was the memory of something I had not seen in reality. No recollection is without consequence, and we may act on our memories....On the train to Bristol, wondering where to begin the video work I had been commissioned to make, I decided to look for the location in Kent where the scene from *A Canterbury Tale* had been shot, and make my own images of that site.¹⁰⁰

The beginning of this passage encapsulates the identification between Burgin and this woman, or, rather, the contradictions and tensions inherent in being Burgin-*Canterbury*. Burgin-*Canterbury* is temporally disparate: s/he “had” a clear memory of a landscape in which s/he “stands.” S/he is also spatially disparate: although s/he acknowledges that this landscape was not something s/he had seen in reality, s/he simultaneously affirms the absolute validity of that memory. Moreover, the whole logic of the passage is that s/he is standing in that lost landscape even as s/he admits to never having witnessed it. Burgin’s video project, then, emerges as a way of moving beyond the awkwardness and inadequacy of language in conveying this heterotopic identification and actually embodying and enacting it. In the language of Burgin’s comments about his project of “poeticisation,” this is the moment at which it becomes necessary to stop treating the disjunctions of the cinematic heterotopia as a topic to be discussed, and turn it into a topos to be inhabited. This is exactly the path taken by Keathley’s installation, *Listen to Britain*,¹⁰¹ which cements the cinetopic anecdote, or the anecdote of the *cinephaur*, as something that can only conclude with the actual physical construction, or at least the physical presentation, of an interior.

Before moving on to the last part of Burgin’s anecdote, however, which lies outside the book, and functions as a kind of paratextual supplement, it is necessary to revisit the first part of Burgin’s anecdote in the light of the second part. As the passage about *A Canterbury Tale* clarifies, one way in which a cinephilic anecdote can move into an anecdote of cinetopic passage is for the author to absorb themselves into the anecdote to such an extent that they

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰¹ Victor Burgin, *Listen to Britain* (Bristol, UK: Arnolfini Gallery, 2002), multimedia installation.

effectively become a fusion of themselves and the person in the cinematic fragment itself. Accordingly, an emergent anecdote of cinetopic passage, or an anecdote of cinetopic passage that is emergent from a more conventional cinephilic anecdote, is likely to be characterised by a perceptual confusion between what was seen by the author and what was seen by the figure that the author was describing. In that sense, something of the ellipsis of the first anecdote can be resolved by assuming a perceptual confusion, or overlap, between Burgin and the woman that he glimpses on the television. Labelling that particular perceptual complex Burgin-woman, the girl diving into the swimming pool becomes a peculiarly appropriate perceptual corollary to that complex. Like Burgin-woman, the girl diving into the swimming pool – or, rather, the moment at which the girl dives into the swimming pool – operates on two distinct perceptual planes. On the one hand, there is the kinetic image of the girl herself moving through the water. On the other hand, there is the image of the water itself, which becomes visible by virtue of her passage. While it might be exaggerating the situation to say that Burgin sees the girl, and the woman sees the water, or vice versa, there is a disparate perceptual complex confronted with a disparate perceptual object – and this, in turn, suggests that the “anxiety” that Burgin attributes both to himself and the woman, or, rather, to himself as Burgin-woman, is primarily a perceptual anxiety, as well as an anxiety about how to articulate this perceptual experience to himself by way of an anecdote. Among other things, this suggests that the cinephilic anecdote that Keathley describes is primarily an anecdote that the cinephile tells himself or herself to contextualise, canonise and cement the cinephilic moment. By contrast, the anecdote of cinetopic attachment dissolves the author into the substance of the anecdote at the very moment at which he or she attempts to recount it to himself or herself. The anecdote of cinetopic passage is not aimed at the author, nor is it necessarily aimed at a reader or viewer – rather, it is aimed at the cinematic heterotopia itself; it is an embrace of that heterotopia in the most radical form possible.

This perceptual confusion and conflation lies at the heart of Burgin’s 2001 multimedia installation, *Listen to Britain*. Although stills from this video are available online, the entire video is only available on the Criterion Collection’s

edition of *A Canterbury Tale*. There, it is accompanied by a written “introduction” from Burgin himself. This introduction reproduces part of the account of the two train journeys, while simultaneously adding a passage that is specific to the installation itself - or, rather, the Criterion Collection’s reproduction of it:

In the film, the camera shows the young woman climbing the hill. In my video, the camera follows the same path up the same hill, but shows what may be seen from the climber’s point of view. Again, the subsequent conversation on the hilltop is not seen, but is heard over a shot of the view from the spot where it takes place... The “clump of trees” that harbored the erotic idyll in a caravan is, again, photographed from the inside, from the subject position.¹⁰²

This is the last part of Burgin’s anecdote that can be articulated in written form. It is appropriate, then, that this excerpt does not partake of the speculative, reflective quality of Burgin’s account of the two train journeys, but instead opts for a procedural, descriptive register – an adumbration of what is involved logistically, in traversing and moving through the installation.

As far as the video component of the installation is concerned, it operates much as Burgin has described. At seven minutes long, it involves a loop between three discrete components. Firstly, there is a cinematic component – the image of the woman standing on the hill, which recurs four times per loop. Secondly, there is a digital component – Burgin’s own shots of the hill that the woman ascended, as well as shots of the surrounding landscape. As his own description attests, these digital images are sometimes overlaid with sonic material from the original film, and sometimes intercut with intertitles displaying fragments of dialogue from the original film. Finally, there is a photographic component – a panoramic photograph of the “clump” of trees that forms the film’s central erotic idyll, and which returns to haunt the woman in much the same way as the music she hears on the hill.

The installation, then, involves a complex mediation between Burgin’s perception, the woman’s perception, and the perception of the audience, as well

¹⁰² Victor Burgin, introduction to *Listen to Britain*, in *A Canterbury Tale*, disc 2.

as a complex mediation between film, video, photography – and, by implication, television, since this is all delivered via DVD. In doing so, it facilitates the “suture” that Robert Hobbs identifies as peculiar to multimedia installation art:

Suturing is not only a means by which a viewer identifies with a given work of art, it is the agency by which an onlooker is called into being as a subject so that he or she assumes a subjective role through it...We might think of this absence as analogous to a viewer’s wound or a break in identity which the subjectivity of a given work of art both catalyses and also helps to heal, even if only briefly.¹⁰³

Constructed out of images culled from a nation at war, and constructed for a time when that nation may be at war once again, Burgin’s installation represents a suture that “wounds” in order to “heal, if only briefly.” Unlike a written anecdote, which is forced to progress in a linear fashion, this third, installed anecdote operates on a loop, progressively dissolving and reconstituting itself, just as it creates a space in which the viewer’s independence from the celluloid object is progressively dissolved and reconstituted, and the celluloid object’s own independence from the cinematic heterotopia surrounding it is also dissolved and reconstituted. Like the written components of Burgin’s anecdote, it can only end by beginning. It is an installation that insists that the cinematic heterotopia is the real province of the *cinépheur*, thereby defining cinetopic passage as the drift from one media topos in the cinematic heterotopia to another. In that sense, Burgin has succeeded, in this part of his anecdote, in conveying topicality “in the sense of sites in a particular topography – that of the cinematic heterotopia.”

Post-Cinematic Passage, Post-Perceptual Passage

In *Post Cinematic Affect*, Steven Shaviro defines post-cinematic media in terms of four affective maps, or “diagrams,” each of which expand and disperse the ambit and co-ordinates of the cinematic heterotopia:

¹⁰³ Robert Hobbs, “Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology and Installation Art,” in *Installations, Mattress Factory 1990-1999*, ed. Michael Olijnyk, Claudia Giannini and Barbara Luderowski (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), 23.

The first diagram is that of Deleuze's "control society" ...characterized by perceptual modulations, dispersed and "flexible" modes of authority, ubiquitous networks, and the relentless branding and marketing of even the most 'inner aspects' of subjective experience....The second diagram marks out the delirious financial flows, often in the form of derivatives and other arcane instruments, that drive the globalized economy...The third diagram is that of our contemporary digital and post-cinematic "media ecology" (Fuller 2005), in which all activity is under surveillance from video cameras and microphones and in return video screens and speakers, moving images and synthesized sounds, are dispersed pretty much everywhere...Finally, the fourth diagram is that of what McKenzie Wark calls "gamespace," in which computer gaming "has colonized its rivals within the cultural realm, from the spectacle of cinema to the simulations of television" (Wark 2007, 7)¹⁰⁴

Shane Denson argues that the cumulative effect of these four zones of post-cinematic dispersal is a media ecology in which Burgin's odd space between diegesis and non-diegesis has become sufficiently commonplace to ensure that:

the narrowband subject-film relation, while not abolished, is now less central, situated within a larger domain that corresponds in part to the many screens and settings of consumption today, many of which compete with one another in real time. The movie screen no longer commands total attention but anticipates its remediation on TV and computer screens and, moreover, knows of its coexistence alongside smartphones, tablets, and social media, which may occupy viewers' perceptual, tactile, and affective attentions simultaneously with their "viewing" of a film.¹⁰⁵

This is the structuring principle of Angela Christlieb and Stephen Kijak's *Cinemanía*, which follows the daily routine of five of New York's most obsessive *cinepheurs*: Jack Angstrich, Eric Chadbourne, Bill Heidbreder, Harvey Schwartz and Roberta Hill. The film functions as a taxonomy of cinetopic habits, as well as a calibration of those habits against a post-cinematic media ecology, as each *cinepheur* embodies one of Shaviro's diagrams, as well as one of Foucault's strategies for rendering "the nexus of regularities that governs...dispersion."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ Denson, "Roundtable #2."

¹⁰⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2002), 53.

This taxonomy ensures that each *cinepheur* also exhibits a series of more specifically cinematic traits. Firstly, each *cinepheur* exhibits an attachment to a particular type or era of film. Secondly, each figure finds their passage driven by a constitutive absence that corresponds to their particular taste in film. Thirdly, each translates this absence into an attachment to a component of the screening space itself. By the time the film is over, the cinematic theatre doesn't feel like an interior so much as an entire city, a synecdoche for New York, with each cinephile staking out a particular kind of interior within that city, most of which, like *Garbo Talks*, conjure up a space between theatrical urban passage and the curated theatre, with the action revolving mainly around Film Forum and the Museum of Modern Art. Finally, each *cinepheur* collects in such a way as to attempt to both preserve their particular section of the screening space, and to celebrate everything about it that anarchically defies such preservation.

All these tendencies are crystallised in the *cinepheurs'* respective relationships with montage, and the ways in which montage ramifies in a post-cinematic and post-perceptual media ecology. In *Technologies and Utopias: The Cyberflâneur and the Experience of "Being Online,"* Maren Hartmann suggests that montage is as much a principle of *flânerie* as the tracking-shot, arguing that post-cinematic *flânerie*, or *cyberflânerie*, consummates the montage principle of Benjamin's "hyperlinked Arcades Project":¹⁰⁷ "Montage contrasts the individual elements for a new effect. In Benjamin, the writing style tries to adapt to the phenomenon, i.e. he described the modern, fluid, fragmented city in citations."¹⁰⁸ In fact, Benjamin himself observed that *The Arcades Project* "has to develop to the highest degree the art of citing without quotation marks. Its theory is intimately related to that of montage."¹⁰⁹ In Sontag's terms, this "art of citing without quotation marks" pertains to Benjamin's mastery of "conceptual tableaux...freeze-frame baroque." To extend Sontag's critique from the sentence to the paragraph, or rather the fragment, the individual entries in *The Arcades Project* are all "saturated with ideas as the surface of a baroque painting is jammed with movement." This

¹⁰⁷ Hartmann, Maren, *Technologies and Utopias: The Cyberflâneur and the Experience of "Being Online"* (Portland, OR: Nomos, 2004), 135.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁹ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 458.

tendency to juxtapose and gather disparate elements into a tableau in which “ideas are transcribed in extremis and the intellectual perspectives are vertiginous”¹¹⁰ is particularly clear in its more inchoate, less integrated form: “Two early drafts entitled ‘Arcades’ contain almost nothing but lists of curiosities, of which some have an affinity to kitsch while nearly all fall under the more comprehensive category of ‘bad taste.’”¹¹¹ Sontag suggests that this predisposition towards the assortment of things is inherent to the Saturnine melancholy of “a competent street-map reader who knows how to stray”:¹¹²

If this melancholy temperament is faithless to people, it has a good reason to be faithful to things. Fidelity lies in accumulating things – which appear, mostly, in the form of fragments or ruins. (“It is common practice in baroque literature to pile up fragments incessantly,” Benjamin writes.) Both the baroque and Surrealism, sensibilities with which Benjamin felt a strong affinity, see reality as things. Benjamin describes the baroque as a world of things (emblems, ruins) and spatialized ideas (“Allegories are, in the realm of thought, what ruins are in the realm of things”). The genius of Surrealism was to generalize with ebullient candor the baroque culture of ruins; to perceive that the nihilistic energies of the modern era make everything a ruin or a fragment – and therefore collectible.¹¹³

Kracauer also observes that “melancholy...favors self-estrangement, which on its part entails identification with all kinds of objects,”¹¹⁴ and in my second chapter I pursue the implications of this connection between melancholy, collection and drift in more detail. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that Benjamin draws a particular connection between the baroque and *flânerie* in *The Arcades Project*, by way of Siegfried Gideon’s argument that “every epoch would appear, by virtue of its inner disposition, to be chiefly engaged in unfolding a specific architectural problem: for the Gothic age, this is the cathedrals; for the Baroque, the palace.”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Sontag, “Sign of Saturn,” 398.

¹¹¹ Winifred Menninghaus, “On the ‘Vital Significance’ of Kitsch: Walter Benjamin’s Politics of ‘Bad Taste,’” in *Walter Benjamin and the Architecture of Modernity*, ed Andrew Benjamin and Charles Rice (Melbourne, AUS: Re-Press, 2009), 43.

¹¹² Sontag, “Sign of Saturn,” 387.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 392.

¹¹⁴ Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 17.

¹¹⁵ Siegfried Gideon, *Bauen in Frankreich*, p. 36, cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 406-7.

While Benjamin does refer to various historical palaces throughout *The Arcades Project*, the most frequently cited palaces are the Crystal Palace of the London Great Exhibition of 1850 and the Grand Palais of the Paris Great Exhibition of 1900,¹¹⁶ previously identified with the prototypical dwelling places of the *flâneur* and also evoked in Benjamin's 1929 essay on surrealism: "To live in a glass house is a revolutionary virtue par excellence."¹¹⁷ Benjamin's surreal baroque, then, "the first glance through the rain-blurred window of a new apartment into revolutionary experience,"¹¹⁸ is intimately bound up with the representative capacities and perceptual posture of the *flâneur*, specifically with a heterogeneity of perception that he identifies with "the colportage phenomenon of space":

The "colportage phenomenon of space" is the *flâneur's* basic experience. Inasmuch as this phenomenon also – from another angle – shows itself in the mid-nineteenth-century interior, it may not be amiss to suppose that the heyday of *flânerie* occur in this same period. Thanks to this phenomenon, everything potentially taking place in this one single room is perceived simultaneously. The space winks at the *flâneur*: what do you think may have gone on here?¹¹⁹

As a baroque organisation of space in which disparate elements are perceived simultaneously and heterogeneously, colportage is also the organising principle of the baroque *Wunderkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities, an "assemblage and montage of curiosities"¹²⁰ that, like Benjamin, interrogates "baroque language as a means of allegorically conveying meaning,"¹²¹ jettisoning Enlightenment discourses of rationality and hierarchy, "the classical space of disembodied

¹¹⁶ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 162, 165, 183-84, 188, 191-92, 541 (among others).

¹¹⁷ Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," trans. Edmund Jephcott, in Jennings, Eiland and Smith (eds.), *Selected Writings Vol. 2, Part 1*, 209.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹¹⁹ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 418-19.

¹²⁰ Barbara Maria Stafford, "The Visualization of Knowledge from the Enlightenment to Postmodernism," in *Good Looking: Essays on the Virtue of Images* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 34.

¹²¹ Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity* (New York: Sage Publications, 1994), 9.

optics and cogito,"¹²² in favour of the rhetorical singularity of "utterances, such as curses...[which] have a direct impact upon baroque personality."¹²³ In "'The Colportage Phenomenon of Space' and the Place of Montage in *The Arcades Project*," Brigid Doherty identifies this simultaneity with the experience "of being wrapped up and of glimpsing the historical past within the private space of the present"¹²⁴ – and the "*Wunderkammer* metaphor" has arguably experienced a return in the digital age's unprecedented access to the past's "enormity of textual and graphic information."¹²⁵ If, as Benjamin argues, "museums unquestionably belong to the dream houses of the collective,"¹²⁶ then the *Wunderkammer* not only informs "the interface metaphor for the experience of searching a museum in a networked environment,"¹²⁷ but the various afterlives of the Benjaminian dream house in a post-cinematic and incipient post-perceptual media ecology.

In "Nostalgia for a Digital Object," Vivian Sobchack argues that the critical difference between baroque and digital *Wunderkammera* lies in the transition from assertions of "homologies of shape and structure across a scale from the microscopic to the macrocosmic," "marked repeatedly by the recurrence of maps," to a "revelation of self-similarity across scale and structure" that suggests "a disconcerting and chaotic relativism, often invoking the vertiginous and nonhierarchical totality of 'infinite regress' and 'cosmic zooms.'" ¹²⁸ At some level, however, this vertiginous dissolution of a map culminates, rather than subverts, the principle of *The Arcades Project*, and its foundational moment of standing "on the street corner of a strange city in bad weather." Similarly, although this gestures towards the remediation of the *Wunderkammer* as a repository of dark objects – "disorderly and pretentious, dark, closed onto itself,

¹²² Anna Munster, *Materializing New Media: Embodiment in Information Aesthetics*, ann. ed. (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth, 2006), 7.

¹²³ Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Reason*, 9.

¹²⁴ Brigid Doherty, "'The Colportage Phenomenon of Space' and the Place of Montage in *The Arcades Project*," in Hanssen (ed.), *Walter Benjamin*, 162.

¹²⁵ Munster, *Materializing New Media*, 80.

¹²⁶ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 406.

¹²⁷ Munster, *Materializing New Media*, 80.

¹²⁸ Vivian Sobchack, "Nostalgia for a Digital Object: Regrets on the Quickening of QuickTime," in *Memory Bytes: History, Technology and Digital Culture*, ed. Lauren Rabinovitz and Abraham Geil (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 314.

mercilessly marked by the list of objects”¹²⁹ – that darkness is pre-empted by Benjamin’s self-presentation as that “ghastly cabinet of rare specimens down there, where the deepest shafts are reserved for the most day-to-day.”¹³⁰ As remediators of *flânerie* for a post-cinematic era and post-perceptual horizon, Christlieb and Kijak’s *cinepheurs* all attempt to construe or create their own *Wunderkammera* for mapping their various cinetopic passages and anecdotes.

Cinemanía

It is appropriate, then, that Christlieb and Kijak open *Cinemanía* with a series of interviews with the *cinepheurs*, intercut with a montage introduction to New York. This montage sequence replicates the central movement-image of *Garbo Talks*, discussed in the following excursus, as Christlieb and Kijak identify the camera with various spaces and vehicles of mass transit, in the tradition of the phantom ride, discussed in the following chapter. Commencing with the arrival of the Staten Island Ferry, this sequence progresses through shots taken on the subway and car tunnels, culminating with a tracking-shot following Jack Angstreich, the spokesman for the *cinepheurs*, into a theatre and to his seat. Apart from gesturing towards Jack’s peculiar proclivity for transitional theatrical spaces, this subsumption of physical movement into virtual spectacle sets the syntax for the opening section of the film, in which the *cinepheurs* are introduced by way of their passage from street to screen. In each case, the syntax of that passage differs in ways that are suggestive of their peculiar proclivities, and the interiors that they are trying to maintain or erect.

As the central and most articulate of the *cinepheurs* Jack also tends to be the most pervasive – he is the point of transit that gives the film its momentum and flow. He sees between two and five films per day – more than any of the other *cinepheurs* - since it is impossible for him to miss a film; the idea of a film playing while he is somewhere else is traumatic for him to contemplate, especially a film

¹²⁹ Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 210.

¹³⁰ Walter Benjamin, “One-way Street,” in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. J.A. Underwood (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 14.

drawn from or associated with classical Hollywood. In *Cinematic Flashes: Cinephilia and Classical Hollywood*, Rashna Wadia Williams argues that David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson's account of the classical Hollywood subject as a participator in a series of regulated, vertically integrated meanings¹³¹ is called into question by the the irregularities, eccentricities and incongruities that existed on the margins of the studio system and aesthetic:

Without wholly opposing this standardized view of Hollywood history...alternative practices were always at work within the studio system, and some of them can come into focus by following cinephiliac historiography. If anything, I see classical Hollywood as not just a standardized system with an unwavering style, for it was also a disjointed network of accidents, excesses and confusions.¹³²

In fact, this dialectic between standardisation and excess is exactly what constitutes cinephilia as Keathley defines it. By encouraging efficient, standardised, effortless visual literacy, the classical cinema frees up the perceptual energy of the spectator, thereby enabling cinephilia to operate. In that sense, Williams reiterates the genesis of Keathley's conception of cinephilia within the studio system. Nevertheless, this cinephilic identification is complicated by the relative disinterest that Christlieb and Kijak demonstrate in Jack's attachment to specific films. Not only is there no attention to his privileged moments of cinephilic attachment – it is unclear, in fact, whether he even experiences these moments – but there is hardly any detail about which specific films he prefers or loves. As stated, each of the *cinepheurs* find their cinetopic passage driven by a constitutive absence, or anxiety – and, if Jack's anxiety revolves around the missed film, then Christlieb and Kijak do very little to assuage that anxiety, or to suggest that it is capable of being assuaged, filming him in those transitory spaces in and around the screen in which the prospect of missing a film, or at least missing the beginning, is most tangible. The missed film thereby expands to an entire field, with Jack trying to avoid missing films that

¹³¹ David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 8.

¹³² Rashna Wadia Richards, *Cinematic Flashes: Cinephilia and Classical Hollywood* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 12.

have always already been missed, and to contain interiors that have always already moved passed the limits of containment, imbuing his anecdote with the metonymies of “a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point,” and associating it with the first of Shaviro’s diagrams – the diminution of the interior that Deleuze attributes to the “control society”:

We are in a generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of enclosure--prison, hospital, factory, school, family... although a common language for all these places exists, it is analogical. One the other hand, the different control mechanisms are inseparable variations...Enclosures are molds, distinct castings, but controls are a modulation, much like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point.¹³³

All the *cinephurs* in *Cinemanía* seek to renew and inscribe the disciplinary regimes of analog and analogical space in the face of an emergent regime of control. However, this tension between disciplined and controlled space – or, rather, between space itself and the “space of flows” that Deleuze identifies with the control society, and Shaviro with post-cinema¹³⁴ – is peculiarly pervasive for Jack, just because his cinetopic passage revolves around spaces of classical narrative attachment; spaces within the theatre that are designed to replicate the vertical integration of the classical studio sensorium. However, just as classical Hollywood narrative enables cinephilic distraction, so the classical theatre – here remediated as the curated theatre – enables cinetopic distraction: “The belief that classical narrative is invisible often accompanies an assumption that the spectator is passive. If the Hollywood film is a clear pane of glass, the audience can be visualized as a rapt onlooker...in classical narrative, the corridor may be winding, but it is never crooked.”¹³⁵ While Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson find

¹³³ Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” *October* 59 (1992), 3-4.

¹³⁴ Steven Shaviro, “Post-Continuity,” *The Pinocchio Theory* (blog), March 26, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/nrotjdp>. Manuel Castells originally formulated “the concept of the space of flows, which interacts with the traditional space of places, so that the new spatial structure associated with informationalism, is not placeless, but is made up of networks connecting places by information and communication flows.” “Informationalism, Networks and the Network Society,” in *The Network Society: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Manuel Castells (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2004), 11-12.

¹³⁵ Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson, *Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 36.

in the winding corridor a concise summary of the repetition with a difference that defines classical cinephilia, Christlieb and Kijak's direction, editing and cinematography transforms this into the crooked corridor of cinetopia – a transformation that crystallises their auteurist intentionality and discursivity. Although Jack is continually presented loitering in corridors and corridor-like spaces, Christlieb and Kijak's combination of labyrinthine compositions and dusky cinematography bleeds and blends corners, substances and surfaces, until these corridors migrate from classical purveyors of movement to post-cinematic repositories of time. Drawing on the Deleuzian “any-space-whatever” that Ronald Bogue associates with the post-televisual deployment of the corridor, Christlieb and Kijak's style “serves to depotentialize space... in all possible combinations of directions and assemblages,”¹³⁶ evoking and enacting the very dissolution of interiority and cinematicity that Jack's cinetopic anecdote attempts to disciplinarily reinstate.

If Jack's object of anxiety is the missed film, then Bill Heidbreder is obsessed with the inadequately viewed film. Whereas Jack aims to see every film that bears any relevance to classical Hollywood that is playing at any moment, Bill starts from a more prescribed, European program, centred on Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and then attempts to see theatrical screenings of every film in that program as many times as possible. As with Jack, Christlieb and Kijak take great care to place Bill against the full panorama of transitional spaces between the street and seat – but, in this case, there is no conception of passage *per se*. The fluid cinematography and colour scheme of the opening segment is replaced by a more mechanical montage, with the result that Bill doesn't move through the theatre so much as simply appear, fully-formed, in discrete spaces throughout the theatre. This ossifying stasis operates to identify Bill with the seat, or collapse street and seat; botanising on asphalt becomes synonymous with botanising on the warp and weave of the cinematic seat. As a result, Jack's efforts to inscribe the disciplinary principles of classical narration on an increasingly

¹³⁶ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature* (London: Routledge, 2003), 182. This description occurs in the context of a discussion of Samuel Beckett's televisual plays.

amorphous, control-driven, screenless milieu are replaced by Bill's efforts to instantiate the disciplinary principles of Fassbinderesque montage, specifically what Elsaesser describes as "a *trompe l'oeil* effect, achieved by foreshortening and suppressing... specific material instances."¹³⁷

This *trompe l'oeil* effect also foreshortens and suppresses passage, transforming Bill into a series of "specific material instances," rather than a fully materialised or corporeal spectatorial presence. That may explain why Bill is the most ergonomically obsessed of the four *cinephours*: his fixation with seeing the same films over and over again amounts to an obsession with the perfect synergy, or synaesthesia, between his body, the theatrical infrastructure, and the film itself, as evinced in his commitment to a constipating diet. Ostensibly, this ensures that he doesn't waste any time eating or defecating, but the pivotal role that the cinema seat plays in mediating this kinaesthetic fusion of theatre, body and film frames constipation more as a continual anticipation and awareness of the cinema toilet than an avoidance or rejection of it. In other words, Bill's object of cinetopic attachment isn't merely the cinema seat, but the heterotopic space opened up between the cinema seat and the cinema toilet seat, as well as, more generally, the possibilities of the cinema bathroom, a heterotopia within a heterotopia. In that sense, Bill's response to the emergence of a control infrastructure is to fall back upon the cinema bathroom as a last repository of both disciplinary regulation and regulative montage, as Christlieb and Kijak cubicle every space between street and screen, in an eccentric variation on "the representation of men in the most vulnerable of private spaces, the cinematic toilet."¹³⁸

This convergence of seat and toilet paves the way for Christlieb and Kijak's introduction of the two queerest *cinephours*, proponents of what Henry Jenkins has described as "convergence culture," "where old and new media collide,

¹³⁷ Thomas Elsaesser, *Fassbinder's Germany: History, Identity, Subject* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 150-52.

¹³⁸ Frances Pheasant-Kelly, "In the Men's Room: Death and Derision in Cinematic Toilets," in *Ladies and Gents: Public Toilets and Gender*, ed. Olga Gershenson and Barbara Penner (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2009), 196.

where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways.”¹³⁹ Convergence culture is optimistic about both the potential of new media and the longevity of older media – that is, the process of remediation – especially in the case of analog and digital technologies: “If the digital revolution paradigm presumed that new media would displace old media, the emerging convergence paradigm presumes that old and new media will interact in ever more complex ways.”¹⁴⁰ As convergers, the next two *cinéphores*, Harvey Schwartz and Eric Chadbourne, exhibit a more optimistic negotiation of cinematic and post-cinematic space, as well as a more elastic negotiation of discipline and control, than Jack and Bill. Where Bill’s splintering into so many montage components corresponds to the third of Shaviro’s diagrams, the delirious dispersal of framed moments across a post-cinematic media ecology, Harvey and Eric’s cinetopic passage speaks more to the space of “gameplay” articulated by McKenzie Wark:

Cinema...opens towards certain possibilities, an illumination of the dark corners of topography. For screen theorist Walter Benjamin, what is to be valued is the “optical unconscious,” cinema’s machinic vision of a world that is itself machined with a dense grid of lines. Cinema can expand or shrink space, extend or compress time, it can cut together images of diverse scales or forms – intimations of topology....Yet there is still a separation between those making the cinema and those watching it.¹⁴¹

Drawing on Benjamin’s attention to the ways in which cinema can enable the *flâneur* to reimagine the topography of the city as a personal topology, Wark suggests that the logical conclusion of this process is one in which the cinema viewer literally and continually reconstructs both the film and the city. It is in the figure of the gamer that Wark finds this remediated viewer, positioning him or her at the interface between console and multiplex. In an analysis of Benjamin’s own remediation of the Baudelairean *flâneur*, Beller identifies this interface as

¹³⁹ Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁴¹ McKenzie Wark, *Gamer Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), [61] (Wark removes page numbers and chapter headings from his book, instead structuring it as a series of numbered chunks of information).

the horizon of perceptual and affective labor that cinema demands from its citizens: "Such manufacturing of interfaces between bodies and machines requires labor from bodies and is productive of value – both cultural and economic."¹⁴² In the next chapter, the exploitative overtones of this formulation, and the way in which it envisages the *cinepheur* as a perceptual proletariat, will be complicated by Bruns' collapse of production and consumption into the grey economy of produsage. For the moment, however, it clarifies the next two *cinepheurs* as peculiarly committed perceptual laborers, and their heightened disorder as peculiarly attuned to the "productive disorder" of the Benjaminian collector.¹⁴³

In the case of Harvey, introduced first, the passage between street and screen is deflected into the passage between exhibition, consumption and production: he first appears wandering around an amorphous space poised between a cinema lobby, video store, museum and shop. Distending purchase and passage, this space is no longer specifically cinematic: it is only after we have been presented with comic books and a television in the background that cinema makes an appearance, and only then by way of a poster that signals Harvey's particular canon of taste, B-movies. At one level, this fascination with B-movies is a synecdoche for his perceived lack of discrimination by the other *cinepheurs*, both intra-cinematically, between what they consider to be canonical and non-canonical viewing, and inter-cinematically, in his apparent inability or unwillingness to distinguish cinema from any other media in his voracious fandom. As Jack puts it, "he's somebody who will see almost anything you put before him."¹⁴⁴ However, the accumulative economy of B-pictures also tends towards just this swathe of detritus, merchandise and memorabilia. In an exhaustive memoir of B-movie attendance, Jim Driscoll rephrases this swathe as a list of everything that could be bought for the price of a B-movie ticket: "And for that paltry fee, I would enjoy three full features, at least one cartoon, previews of coming attractions, and often the latest chapter of an exciting

¹⁴² Beller, *Cinematic Mode of Production*, 107.

¹⁴³ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 211.

¹⁴⁴ Christlieb and Kijak, *Cinemia*, 04:18.

Serial.”¹⁴⁵ Once collated in this way, the B-movie becomes multimodal, rather than cinematic, indiscriminately revelling in a variety of other media platforms. From that perspective, the multimodal heterogeneity of the B-movie experience is best understood as a vehicle for seriality, which Shane Denson presents, in its broadest manifestation, as “a central method by which modern media have sought to cope with their own transformations...including their initial emergences, their competitions with and distinctions from other newly emergent media, their internal diversifications and transitional periods, etc.”¹⁴⁶

Harvey’s fandom speaks to this serialistic compulsion and calibration: his interest is less in collecting or inhabiting film than in serialising it, integrating it into a collection of other media objects that gesture towards its various afterlives and remediations. This integration of cinema into a more general project of rehabilitating broad-spectrum media detritus means that, where Jack and Bill focus on the missed and inadequately seen film, Harvey’s cinetopic passage tends to revolve around the forgotten film, and around cinema itself as an increasingly forgotten, arcane and specialist medium. Where Jack and Bill are anxious to keep cinema alive, if only in their own bodies, Harvey starts from the premise that it has died and proceeds to serialise and fixate upon its redundancy.

Eric, introduced shortly after Harvey, moves away from the cinematic screen in a slightly different way. His fandom is less preoccupied with merchandise or memorabilia than with celebrities, especially classical Hollywood actresses. What might initially present as fixation with the disrespectfully screened film quickly migrates into a fixation with the disrespectfully disseminated actress. As a result, his opening passage doesn’t take place from street to screen, but from street to poster: a distended, ambient segment in which he wanders through Manhattan ends with his confrontation with a poster that, we later find out, is on the exterior of Film Forum. As the peculiar identification between Eric and Film Forum that emerges throughout the documentary might suggest, his attachment to the poster represents a wider attachment to cinematic fora, or cinematic

¹⁴⁵ Jim Driscoll, *Reflections of a “B”-Movie Junkie* (Sydney, AUS: Xlibris, 2008), 13.

¹⁴⁶ Denson, “Roundtable #2.”

community, as well as an anxiety about the improperly or disrespectfully constituted cinematic venue. Accordingly, his cinetopic passage takes place as an extended speculation on how his favourite actresses might ergonomise the images of themselves that are distributed across the spaces that he peruses. This effort to match the faces and bodies of his favourite actresses to the recesses and corridors of his favourite cinemas renders him the most collective and communal of the *cinepheurs*, as well as the most averse to multiplex distribution, fervently attaching to all those spaces in and around Film Forum that cement its position as part of a village culture, especially the noticeboard with posters, information and flyers relating to upcoming events.

It is this prioritisation of the heterogeneity of the noticeboard over the cinematic screen that signals Eric's affinity with Harvey, and their shared movement away from the more exclusively cinematic orientations of Jack and Bill. While their preoccupations can be regressive, retroactive and nostalgic, they find in their nostalgia a disjunction between cinema as a field and cinema as a screened experience that gestures towards the various afterlives of cinema. This makes way for the introduction of Roberta Hill, the most notorious, visible and demanding of the *cinepheurs*, whose proclivities cement the noticeboard as the field upon which this particular community of *cinepheurs* construct their cinetopic anecdotes. Given that Roberta is the most radically cinetopic – that is, the most radically collapsed into her own cinetopic anecdote – it makes sense to introduce her as the last term in the taxonomy of cinetopic anecdotes presented thus far, understood visually, by Christlieb and Kijak, as a taxonomy of noticeboard-*Wunderkammera* (Figures 2-7).¹⁴⁷

If each of the *cinepheurs'* collective proclivities addresses one of the post-cinematic diagrams outlined by Shaviro, then the compositions of their respective *Wunderkammera* – that is, the compositions of their cinetopic anecdotes – correspond to Foucault's four hypotheses of discursive formation, which might be labelled objective, syntactic, conceptual and thematic:

“statements different in form, and dispersed in time, form a group if they refer

¹⁴⁷ Christlieb and Kijak, *Cinemanía*, 02:17, 03:55, 04:31, 05:00, 5:21, 5:12.

to...one and the same object...their form and type of connection...permanent and coherent concepts...[or] the identity and persistence of themes.”¹⁴⁸

As the anchor of the documentary, Jack is presented both as the most objective of the *cinéphores* and the most attentive to the cinematic object. As a result, his cinetopic goal is the most straightforwardly quantitative – to see as many films as possible within a given pool of films – and his cinetopic passage converges on the same small group of cinematic objects, as evinced in the way Christlieb and Kijak choose to shoot his relationship to the noticeboard: detached and thoughtful, as well as prescient of its logical structure, argument and composition. By contrast, Christlieb and Kijak blur Bill’s face with a close-up of the noticeboard, transforming his observation and registration of it into just another of the basic syntactic units that his perspective isolates and fetishises. Compositionally, Bill’s desire to detach himself from the ebb and flow of the transitory spaces of the theatre and instantiate himself, montage-like, at discrete junctures along those passages, finds concise expression in this reduction of his passage to just another cinetopic unit, part of the syntax of theatre and noticeboard. In that sense, the transition from Jack’s *Wunderkammer* to Bill’s *Wunderkammer* reiterates the transition from the baroque *Wunderkammer* to the neoclassical museum. In particular, it speaks to that moment just before the museum was constituted *as* a museum, and was instead understood as a walk-in *Wunderkammer*, replete with ergonomic fixtures in which the collector or observer could suddenly and spontaneously appear as part of the syntax of the collection. In a discussion of UCL London’s Flaxman Gallery, an iconic “early prototype for the museum,” Christopher R. Marshall outlines the experience of the walk-in *Wunderkammer*:

About a kilometre away, in the home of Flaxman’s contemporary, the collector and architect John Soane (1753-1837), Flaxman’s work is placed into implicit contrast. In what is now the Soane Museum, Flaxman is set into a context with other works, objects, spatial and bodily arrangements that produce an individualized hermeneutic of looking. The walk-in *Wunderkammer* in the Soane Museum is driven by an idiosyncratic urge to play curiosities off against each other. Soane’s architecture and

¹⁴⁸ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 32-35.

installation invites the viewer to project beyond what is seen...cabinet doors...seem to open into the poché and imply that there were objects concealed within the walls themselves...The sources of light come from places beyond the viewer's reach, drawing them into the archaeological drama of the collection.¹⁴⁹

Bill's *Wunderkammer* orchestrates exactly this exhibition of "spatial and bodily arrangements," conjuring up a sculptural exhibition space in which every door, and even the walls themselves, seem to conceal a series of exotic projections from the viewer, dovetailing the phenomenology of the cinema foyer with the transition from baroque to neoclassical exhibition strategies to evoke an emergent curatorial neoclassicism. While this will become particularly resonant in the following chapter's discussion of the Criterion Collection, here it works to contour the "archaeological drama" that progresses through Harvey and Eric.

Just as Harvey's cinetopic proclivities mark a break from those of Jack and Bill, so his *Wunderkammer* is of a distinctly different kind. No longer relegated to the noticeboard, it fulfils and literalises the walk-in *Wunderkammer* presented in Bill's anecdote, as Christlieb and Kijak combine a mobile camera, Dutch angles and multiple planes of focus to utterly surround Harvey with the clutter and detritus that he fetishises. There is no longer a consistently or even conspicuously cinematic object here, just as there is no longer a consistent or conspicuous effort at spatial syntax. Rather, the objects that comprise Harvey's composition are connected conceptually – they are part of the cinematic heterotopia, part of the conceptual field of cinema, while not actually being cinematic objects *per se*. While Harvey and Eric's *Wunderkammera* are certainly similar, there is nonetheless a slight modulation between them, encapsulated in Foucault's modulation between conceptual and thematic unity:

Lastly, a fourth hypothesis to regroup the statements, describe their interconnexion and account for the unitary forms under which they are presented: the identity and persistence of themes. In 'sciences' like economics or biology, which are so controversial in character, so open to philosophical or ethical options, so exposed in certain cases to political

¹⁴⁹ Christopher R. Marshall, *Sculpture and the Museum* (London: Ashgate, 2011), 221.

manipulation, it is legitimate in the first instance to suppose that a certain thematic is capable of linking and animating a group of discourses, like an organism with its own needs, its own internal force, and its own capacity for survival.¹⁵⁰

As the example that Foucault gives from the sciences might suggest, thematic unity is a considerably broader entity than conceptual unity. In fact, thematic unity, by definition, encompasses conceptual disunity, since, by Foucault's account, it constitutes a subject by encompassing all of its internal tensions, contradictions and inconsistencies. In that sense, it is the most reparative of the four hypotheses of discursive formation, albeit its utterance indicates the failure of the previous three. Exactly why and how this hypothesis also fails is best illustrated by recourse to Eric's *Wunderkammera*. Unlike the other *cinepheurs*, Eric is never presented in a position of consistent spectatorship with respect to the noticeboard or *Wunderkammer*, since his cinetopic anecdote is considerably more reparative and utopian than theirs. Whereas they all attach to some component or iteration of the cinematic space – even Harvey's heterotopic promiscuity has its conceptual anchor in cinema – Eric's anecdote speaks to a desire to entirely reconfigure communal and collective space. While Eric might articulate this desire nostalgically, in his profound distrust for multiplex viewership, Christlieb and Kijak articulate it more productively, finding in the multiplicity of images required to capture the object of his anecdote a more inclusive, utopian iteration of the multiplex; or, rather, a new multiplex-VHS continuum, or videoplex.

As a result, Eric's *Wunderkammera* constitute an emergent videoplex, neither bound by the co-ordinates of classical multiplex spectatorship nor by those of classical VHS spectatorship. At the end of *Cinemanía*, the *cinepheurs* gather, in a traditional movie theatre, to watch the film that Christlieb and Kijak have made about them, in a post-cinematic continuation of *Man With a Movie Camera*. It is at moments like this that it becomes clear that the film's self-referentiality is no mere whim, since the very co-ordinates that Eric is attempting to articulate are there in Christlieb and Kijak's directorial style itself. It is only by inhabiting their

¹⁵⁰ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 39.

film that he is able to articulate this emergent videoplex, just as it is only at the film's completion that he is able to recognise it for the walk-in *Wunderkammer* that it is, due to several critical stylistic decisions on Christlieb and Kijak's part.

Firstly, and most conspicuously, *Cinemanía* is a film shot on digital stock. Not only do Christlieb and Kijak favour compositions and colour schemes that emphasise the slippery bleed and seep of digital technology, but the hand-held propinquity with which they follow, identify with and inhabit their characters – and, by extension, the venues that they constitute and inhabit – simply wouldn't make sense in an analog context. This may be the most fundamental reason why Eric needs – or, rather, why Christlieb and Kijak need to afford Eric – three separate versions of his *Wunderkammer*, since it is only in the transition from the yellow-green queasiness of the first, to the overexposed, mirrored light of the second, to the crude, violent contrasts between light and shadow of the third, that the true paucity and poetry of the digital apparatus, and Eric's fantasmatic videoplex, comes into play.

Secondly, *Cinemanía* very much emphasises the disjunction that will be made, in the following chapter, between DVDs and film. Despite having played at a number of prestigious festivals, this is a film that will, paradoxically, receive most of its viewership on DVD, or even through illegal torrenting. Thus, it falls into the emergent category of what the following chapter will understand as the straight-to-DVD genre – and Christlieb and Kijak enunciate this both in the chaptered compartmentalisation of their vision, and the confusion of diegesis and non-diegesis, especially diegetic and non-diegetic utterance, finding in the affective alternation between diegetic DVD content and non-diegetic “commentary” the pace and rhythm with which the *cinepheurs* coalesce around their respective hypotheses of discourse, only to find that discourse continually eluding them.

If the co-ordinates of this emergent videoplex are digital and DVD-centric, rather than analog and videocentric, then it makes more sense to describe it as a digiplex, or a DVDplex. As the attempt to articulate and inhabit the collective

possibilities of a nascent digiplex – or what will be described, in the following chapter, as a DVD parlour – Eric’s images gesture towards a dimensionally new mechanism for collating, collecting and aestheticising cinematic data. The metonymic extension of cinema to shoe production, combined with the dimensional free-fall of his poster display (centred, appropriately, on Woody Allen, whose voice all the *cinepheurs* seem to inhabit at one point or another), produces the third image, superficially similar to the old noticeboard, but glowing with a new representational, informational and aesthetic possibility.

It is this new *Wunderkammer* that Roberta’s cinetopic passage describes and enacts (Figure 8).¹⁵¹ Taken from an extended shot of Roberta’s curatorial programs being discarded, while Roberta lists all the festivals and screenings for which she requires programs, this *Wunderkammer* establishes Roberta’s peculiar cinetopic proclivity as *curatorial detritus*. Dovetailing Harvey’s fascination with merchandise and memorabilia with Eric’s obsession with communal and collective etiquette, Roberta’s need to have one hundred and fifty programs per screening speaks to a cinetopia structured around a transition in curatorial architecture from polite exclusivity to vernacular excess. On the one hand, this explains why it is that the *cinepheurs*, and Roberta as their queen, have chosen New York as their playground – in Raymond J. Haberski Jr.’s words, the curatorial culture embodied by Jonas Mekas and Daniel Talbot aimed to “turn the entire city, and then the country, into one large film society.”¹⁵² On the other hand, Roberta’s *Wunderkammer* frames the emergent DVD parlour as a voraciously curatorial space, and the digiplectic dialectic as an incorporation of a cavernous architecture of possible spectatorship into a proportionately and infinitesimally refined and nuanced process of self-curation. In that sense, Roberta’s project understands the DVD parlour as a new kind of distance from, and distant reading of, cinematic data, recalling Usai’s estimation that:

about one and a half billion hours of moving images were produced in the year 01999, twice the number made just a decade before. If that rate of

¹⁵¹ Christlieb and Kijak, *Cinemanía*, 6:22.

¹⁵² Raymond J. Haberski Jr., *Freedom To Offend: How New York Remade Film Culture* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2007), 110.

growth continues, three billion viewing hours of films will be made in 02006, and six billion in 02011...The meaning is clear. One and a half billion hours is already well beyond the capacity of any human: it translates into more than 171 000 viewing pictures in a calendar year.

It is this cusp between 01999 and 02006, or, alternatively, between 2002 and 02002, that Roberta is so anxious to occupy, tracing a “rate of growth” that leaves her physically exhausted, yet insatiable. As an attempt to distantly read cinematic data, her cinetopic passage and anecdote corresponds to the digital *Wunderkammer* outlined by Hubert Burda:

The principle of the new *wunderkammer* can also be seen in social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and the photo community Flickr. If Google is the *wunderkammer* for web searches, Facebook is the *wunderkammer* for the social network...curiosity chambers are increasingly becoming an abstract world of data, and the data is transformed back into images.¹⁵³

As with Eric and Harvey, this complicates Roberta’s tendencies towards nostalgia and retrogression: by the logic of her *Wunderkammer*, her refusal to watch video and television isn’t because they are too new, but rather because they are already too old. As a distant reading of data flow, this *Wunderkammer* finds its correlative in one of Christlieb and Kijak’s own cinetopic montages later in the film (Figure 9).¹⁵⁴ A topological palimpsest of curatorial spaces and objects, Roberta’s anecdote not only embodies the fate of cinetopic passage in a post-cinematic media ecology, but gestures towards the emergence of a new space of attachment. While the following excursus will historicise the emergence of this post-cinematic space in terms of the postmodern remediation of *flânerie*, the following chapter will frame this DVD parlour as a new dream house of the collective, composed less of individual theatres than distributed shelves and parlours, and populated primarily by the straight-to-DVD (STD) distribution and DVD passage that characterises Christlieb and Kijak’s film, finding in Roberta’s

¹⁵³ Hubert Burda, *The Digital Wunderkammer: 10 Chapters on the Iconic Turn* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2011), 76.

¹⁵⁴ Christlieb and Kijak, *Cinemanía*, 16:34.

remediated *Wunderkammer* the cinetopic epistemology of our time (Figures 10-11).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ "A Peek into Netflix Queues," *The New York Times* online, January 8, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/pdy8ho8>.

Excursus: The Postmodern *Cinepheur*

Flâneuserie

The transition from Keathley's anecdote to Burgin's anecdote suggests that the emergence of a cinetopic anecdote from a cinephilic anecdote is aligned with the development and transformation of the cinematic heterotopia in the later part of the twentieth century and the first part of the twenty-first century. In particular, it gestures towards a heterotopia that is less and less cinema-centric. In order to historicise the development of cinetopic passage in a post-cinematic and post-perceptual media ecology, it is therefore necessary to understand how *flânerie* has been affected by the rise of postmodernism. Friedberg argues that this is not a case of a straightforward transition from a modernist to postmodern *flâneur* so much as a "gradual and indistinct epistemological tear along the fabric of modernity, a change produced by the increasing cultural centrality of an integral feature of both cinematic and televisual apparatuses: a mobilized 'virtual' gaze."¹

For Friedberg, the mobilised gaze of modernity is that of the *flâneur* as elaborated by Baudelaire: "The Baudelairean observer was a (male) painter or a (male) poet – a *flâneur* – whose mobility through the urban landscape allowed him access to the public sphere of the streets and to the domestic realms of the home. He had a fluidity of social position, a mutable subjectivity" (29). However, Friedberg posits a second type of gaze – a virtual gaze, associated with such mimetic entertainment venues as the panorama and diorama, as well as with photographic and cinematic technologies. Friedberg notes that, for all his scopophilic attachment to the mobilized gaze of the *flâneur*, Baudelaire exhibited a scopophobic disdain for the photographic and proto-cinematic technologies that might render that gaze virtual, by capturing and fixing the fleeting, epiphanic moments integral to *flânerie* (30).

This distinction between mobilised and virtual gazes informs the emergence of the *flâneuse*. In Baudelaire's writing, there is a consistent personification of the

¹ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 2.

fleeting object of *flânerie*, in the form of the *flâneuse* - a woman who appears in the course of the *flâneur*'s passage across the metropolis, but is not explicitly attached to a male companion, nor identified as a prostitute: "As the gendered French noun designates, the *flâneur* was a male urban subject, endowed with a gaze at an elusive and almost unseen *flâneuse*. The *flâneur* could be an urban poet, whose movements through a newly configured urban space often transformed the female's presence into a textual homage" (33). Friedberg argues that, as the object of male *flânerie*, the *flâneuse* was associated with the virtuality that the *flâneur* was keen to disavow - an embodiment of the photographic technologies that Baudelaire perceived as inimical to the mobility of *flânerie* and the cinematic technologies that Benjamin perceived as periodically "shocking" the rhythm of *flânerie*. With the emergence of activities and spaces that provided women with a respectable pretext for mobility - notably shopping and the department store - the *flâneuse* was able to mobilise this virtuality, dissociating it from the mere displacement of a disavowed male virtuality. Friedberg therefore has a more reparative approach to the department store than Benjamin, suggesting that it only signalled the dissolution of *flânerie* by opening up unprecedented opportunities for *flâneuserie*: "The female *flâneur*, the *flâneuse*, was not possible until she was free to roam the city on her own...It wasn't until the closing decades of the century that the department store became a safe haven for unchaperoned women" (36). Whereas Benjamin understood the department store as a space in which the gaze was commodified and regulated in ways that were inimical to *flânerie*, Friedberg argues that the department store wasn't primarily concerned with commodities so much as "commodity-experiences," encouraging "shopping" as a sustained, quotidian activity, over "purchasing" as a discrete, needs-based act (55). As Burgin notes, this didn't necessarily mean that women were freed from the burden of spectacle, but that this spectacle could increasingly be co-opted for each other, and for themselves:

In the street, the crowd may momentarily open to allow a glimpse of a figure, a face, which is lost as quickly as it touches the erotic nerve. "Love at last sight," Benjamin called it. The department store offers its own perverse variation on this phenomenon by means of those fragile curtained spaces wherein women are invited to leave the throng of spectators in order themselves to become spectacle. Spectacle for

themselves, and for those strangers of their sex who may join them to undress, but spectacle also for the illicit gaze enticed by a gaping curtain.²

This crystallisation of virtual technologies – especially cinematic technologies – around the drift of commodity-experience culminates with the postmodern multiplex and mall:

The shopping mall developed as a site for combining the speculative activity of shopping with the mobilities of tourism: the shopping mall “multiplex” cinema epitomizes both in a virtual form. And, as a mobilized gaze becomes more and more virtual, the physical body becomes a more and more fluid site; in this “virtual mobility”, the actual body...becomes a veritable depot for departure and return. Hence, the changes in reception produced by multiplex cinemas, cable television and VCRs....³

For Friedberg, the components of simulacra and pastiche that Jameson has identified as symptomatic of postmodern aesthetics mean that the mall provides a greater panoply of virtual experiences than ever before. Specifically, the reticulated, illogical structures that Jameson identifies as characteristic of postmodern architecture⁴ mean that the conventional signifiers of pedestrian and consumer mobility – elevators, escalators, passageways – are abstracted from their physical signification and absorbed into incorporeal, virtual gazes.⁵ Friedberg’s *flâneuse* thus experiences the same dialectic between screen, multiplex and mall as the *cinéphur* experiences between screen, theatre and street, especially since, as Friedberg points out, one of the key characteristics of mall architecture is a tendency to provide some “compensatory escape from drab suburbia” by reclaiming and repackaging the modernist street as consumer spectacle.⁶

² Victor Burgin, “Seiburealism,” in *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 112.

³ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 110.

⁴ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 42-43.

⁵ Brian de Palma’s *Body Double* (1984; Los Angeles: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2006, DVD) frames the emergence of this virtual architecture in a procedural segment in which a woman is followed through a postmodern mall by a protagonist anxious to make her over in the image of several of Hitchcock’s key heroines; the film’s tagline is “You can’t always believe your eyes.”

⁶ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 113.

The late twentieth century *flâneuse* therefore continues to botanise on cinema in the manner described in the first chapter, but does so through the multiplex screen – and all the screens that are ancillary to it. In *Beyond The Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies and the Home*, Barbara Klinger argues that a tendency towards “parlor cinema” existed from the earliest days of cinema, and that the expansion of cinematic distribution technologies in the later part of the twentieth century was simultaneously a contraction of those technologies to this parlored space.⁷ While the following chapter will detail the emergence of a DVD parlour, Friedberg pre-empts it in her fusion of multiplex and video technology:

The shopping mall multiplex cinema extends the spectatorial *flânerie* of the VCR along both spatial and temporal axes. The multiplex positions its cinema screens in the spatial metonymy of a chain of adjacent shop windows; the temporal metonymy of “show times” is arrayed as if the multiplex is a series of contiguous VCRs...Multiplex, multiple screen cinemas have become spatially contiguous VCRs, offering a readily attainable panoply of other temporal moments, the not-now in the guise of the now.⁸

Friedberg argues that this fusion of multiplex and video forms part of a wider “epistemological tear” between cinematic and televisual viewing habits:

Cinematic and televisual spectatorship has been conventionally different: one goes to a specific film, but one watches (not a specific program but the apparatus) television. The staggering of screen times in a multiplex turns cinema-going into an activity more like watching television, providing the cinematic spectator with the absolute presence of the (almost always) available (141).

Friedberg identifies this VHS-multiplex, or videoplex, as the province of the postmodern *flâneuse*. Whereas the *flâneuse*, in her earlier, modernist incarnation, treated public spaces virtually, the consequence of postmodernism’s transformation of the body into a “veritable depot of departure and return” is that this virtual, mobilised gaze is increasingly internalised and privatised:

⁷ Barbara Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies and the Home* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 17.

⁸ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 141.

Although the social formations of modernity were increasingly mediated through images, this gaze was initially restricted to the public sphere...In postmodernity, the spatial and temporal displacements of a mobilized virtual gaze are now as much a part of the public sphere (in, for example, the shopping mall and multiplex cinema) as they are a part of the private (at home, with the television and VCR). The boundaries between public and private, already fragile in modernity, have now been more fully eroded (4).

“All I do is drift...”

One of the most striking efforts to constitute and articulate this videoplex can be found in Sidney Lumet’s 1984 film *Garbo Talks*. Frequently identified as “the creator of a standard for films about New York,”⁹ Lumet’s use of the city stretched from the 1950s to the 2010s and constitutes a history of passage, a series of distant readings, in which “events...born on the pavement” come to “only have an undifferentiated space as their location.”¹⁰ For the most part, these readings took place through “the apparatuses and institutions” of procedural, especially police procedural.¹¹ As Richard Aloysius Blake puts it, “working in the criminal justice system provides a splendid analog for living in New York,”¹² and, throughout most of Lumet’s New York films, narrative emerges from the moments at which procedure falls short, evoking what, in procedural management theory, is described as “the problem of procedural drift.”¹³ From that perspective, *Garbo Talks* is unique in Lumet’s filmography in that it is the only one of his New York films to refrain from narrativising this problem in terms of criminal justice. Instead, *Garbo Talks* is the film in which Lumet prioritises the affective dimension of procedural drift, the gradual distraction and jettisoning of procedure from outcome. Given Shaviro’s

⁹ Frank R. Cunningham, *Sidney Lumet: Film and Literary Vision* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 218.

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone Press, 1992), 124.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

¹² Blake, *Street Smart*, 88.

¹³ Gary Klein, *Streetlights and Shadows: Searching for the Keys to Adaptive Decision Making* (Cambridge, MA: Bradford Books, 2011), 21.

identification of proceduralism with instrumentality,¹⁴ the procedural drift of *Garbo Talks* plays as a late affective counterpart to Martin Heidegger's warning against the instrumentalisation of technology, in which technocratic procedural is gradually abstracted from its ends and goals, and attached to the "realm of revealing."¹⁵

Despite not featuring or mentioning a multiplex at all over the course of its narrative, *Garbo Talks* draws on this revelation-function to posit a connection between shopping, *flâneuserie* and VHS technologies that simultaneously elaborates and expands the other pole of the videoplex; like the multiplex, the film extends the "spectatorial *flânerie* of the VCR along both spatial and temporal axes." In that sense, it is a multiplex-within-a-film, a film that is prescient of, and concerned with allegorising, the theatrical conditions under which it might be viewed. Among other things, this suggests that the anecdote of cinetopic passage, and the way it negotiates between televisual and cinematic components of the cinematic heterotopia, is partly an anecdote of multiplex phenomenology. From that perspective, Burgin's *Listen to Britain* can be understood as a revision of classical cinema for an age in which the multiplex has become the dominant optic; or, alternatively, as an installation that creates a multiplex each time that it is installed, drawing a common denominator between installation and multiplex that will find its fusion in the architectural venue of the Criterion Collection.

Larry Grusin's screenplay for *Garbo Talks* revolves around Estelle Rolfe (Anne Bancroft), a 1960s radical who lives in New York and enjoys a close, if sometimes frustrating, relationship with her mild-mannered son Gilbert (Ron Silver). Estelle is an avid cinephile and, when she discovers that she has only six months to live, she charges Gilbert with her last request: to meet Greta Garbo. Garbo was residing in New York at the time, allowing Lumet to draw on his detailed knowledge of the city to devise a series of passages that explore the relationship

¹⁴ Steven Shaviro, "A Brief Remark on *Zero Dark Thirty*," *The Pinocchio Theory* (blog), January 18, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/mecasvb>.

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," trans. William Lovitt, in *Philosophical and Political Writings*, ed. Manfred Stassen (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003), 285.

between *flâneur* and *flâneuse*, cinephilic and cinetopic passage, at the end of the twentieth century, as well as evoking Garbo syntactically, by way of her own “long walks that made her part of New York’s landscape and mythology”:¹⁶

In her later years, Garbo stayed in New York nine months a year, rarely even going to the country...in the afternoon, she’d walk four miles, sometimes with a walker, but often alone. “A day without a walk was a day closer to dying,” a walker says...Sometimes, she’d just browse antiques and art stores...proprietors grumbled that she rarely bought...She never bought perfumes or deodorant, though she did pick up cloves of raw garlic, which she liked to eat for her health. Sometimes, the walks turned dangerous. “We have a customer,” she’d whisper to a companion when she knew she was being followed.¹⁷

Garbo herself referred to this process as “sort of drifting...mill[ing] around,” and it was this drifting that transformed her, for a time, into the object of every New York *flâneur*, as well as the model for every aspiring New York *flâneuse*:

Just catching a glimpse of Garbo “milling about” is still a thrilling event in the lives of most who do. A middle-aged lawyer who has an office on upper Madison Avenue was entranced on a recent evening to recognize Garbo standing in front of a small linen shop that was advertising a going-out-of-business sale. The lawyer, a loyal Garbo admirer since his college days, watched from a respectable distance as she gazed for some five minutes at the rather uninteresting display. He followed as she moved down the street, stopping here and there, window-shopping. Then he watched as she turned down a side street and strolled off into the night while he reluctantly hurried to catch his train to the suburbs. There he

¹⁶ Michael Gross, “Garbo’s Last Days,” *New York Magazine* 23: 20 (1990), 40. This tribute uncannily replicates many of the central topoi of *Garbo Talks*, both in the anecdotes that it recounts and in a beautiful, melancholy photo-essay that, composed of glimpses of Garbo amidst 1980s New York infrastructure, feels like a distillation of Lumet’s directorial vision. The article is preceded by a double page spread featuring an Ikea advertisement that promises to answer the question of “Why thousands will spend their Memorial Day vacation on the Jersey Turnpike”: “After all, you’re not really going to Elizabeth, you’re going to Sweden” (36-37). Shortly after, a review by Denby of Norman René’s *Longtime Companion* (1989; New York: MGM, 2001, DVD) suggests that “Manhattan and...Fire Island in the summer of 1981” were compromised by “the tepidity, the restraining good taste of so many productions put together by this outfit...whose films are shown on public television” (68-69).

¹⁷ Gross, “Garbo’s Last Days,” 45.

greeted his wife with, "Guess who I saw on the street today?" It happens all the time.¹⁸

Drawn from this cinetopic tradition at which the glimpse of Garbo merges into a heightened awareness of New York's cinematic infrastructure, it is useful to consider exactly what it means that Lumet was unable to secure Garbo to play herself. At one level, such a gesture would be redundant: according to the logic of the film, she is already there, somewhere, in the background, and should only be apprehended that way – as if the whole point of the film were to establish the conditions under which a glimpse of Garbo might unexpectedly and cinetopically occur. Still, the inability of the film to guarantee that glimpse within its own texturological urban infrastructure means that, at some level, it functions both as an allegory of its own failure, and a fantasy of its own completion, or, in Barthes' terms, an Event that continually dreams of reconstituting itself as an Idea:

Viewed as a transition the face of Garbo reconciles two iconographic ages, it assures the passage from awe to charm. As is well known, we are today at the other pole of this evolution: the face of Audrey Hepburn, for instance, is individualized, not only because of its peculiar thematics...but also because of her person, of an almost unique specification of the face, which has nothing of the essence left in it, but is constituted by an infinite complexity of morphological functions. As a language, Garbo's singularity was of the order of the concept, that of Audrey Hepburn is of the order of the substance. The face of Garbo is an Idea, that of Hepburn is an Event.¹⁹

Garbo Talks attempts to recapitulate the multifarious "passages from awe to charm" determined by the "sum of lines" that constitute Garbo. As a result, the three central actors in the film - Betty Comden, Anne Bancroft and Ron Silver – occupy a spectrum from conceptual to substantial faces. Comden, who plays Garbo, is barely seen. She doesn't appear until the last ten minutes, and isn't shot face-on until the last minute, where Lumet opts for a partly obscured long shot,

¹⁸ John Bainbridge, "The Great Garbo, Part III" *Life* 38:4 (1955), 122. A YouTube clip in which Edward Lozzi recounts an interview with Garbo contains an image of an unidentifiable news clipping with the headline: "Garbo: 'All I do in life is drift'" (Edward Lozzi, "Edward Lozzi Interviews Garbo," YouTube, September 12, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/le7dzsb>).

¹⁹ Roland Barthes, "The Face of Garbo," in *A Roland Barthes Reader*, ed. Susan Sontag (New York: Hill & Wang, 1983), 84.

rendering her synecdochially interchangeable with one of her most iconic musical numbers, “How Can You Describe a Face?” By contrast, Bancroft and Silver are frequently shot in close up, or extreme-close up. Bancroft alternates between her ability to convey what one blogger has recently described as “a statue in purity of expression” and “expert facial manipulations,”²⁰ while Lumet is more consistent in mining Silver for “manipulations,” continually placing him in situations that demand comic incredulity, surprise or disorientation.

In “Television in the Family Circle: The Popular Reception of a New Medium,” Lynn Spigel examines the way in which television’s promise of a new, substantial, face-to-face relationship with its audience absorbed the expressions, gazes and poses of the American family into “the face of a new and curious machine.”²¹ Similarly, in “The Face of Television,” Paul Frosh observes that television’s alternation between expressive and deictic faces works to individuate the viewer, offering them the illusion that the emotions and connotations delivered via the screen have been designed expressly for them.²² However, the inverse of Spigel and Frosh’s position also holds: namely, that the individuated emotive and connotative energy that the viewer provides for the television opens up the possibility of more substantial, individuated televisual faces, a “larger and more varied physiognomic repertoire.”²³ While the early 1980s were the point at which Bancroft started to cautiously remediate herself as a televisual actress, Silver’s subsequent career was almost entirely devoted to television. As a result, the progression from Comden to Silver can be understood as a progression from a high cinematic to televisual face, suggesting the emergence of a new multiplex-face, or multiplectical face, in which the affective power of the face as an “organ-carrying plate of nerves which has sacrificed most

²⁰ Whoiscliff, “The Home Stretch: Anne Bancroft in *Agnes of God*,” *Cliff’s Oscar Quest* (blog), January 23, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/k4djstv>.

²¹ Lynn Spigel, “Television in the Family Circle: The Popular Reception of a New Medium,” in Mellencamp (ed.), *Logics of Television*, 82.

²² Paul Frosh, “The Face of Television,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 625 (2009), 91.

²³ *Ibid.*, 92.

of its global mobility and which gathers or expresses in a free way all kinds of tiny local movements”²⁴ is gradually remediated as an any-face-whatever.

Just as Deleuze observes that the essence of Lumet’s procedural vision is a progressive undifferentiation of the cityscape to an any-space-whatever, so the absence of a conventional procedural thrust forces *Garbo Talks* to conflate any-space-whatevers and any-face-whatevers, drawing a common denominator between the sublime anonymity of the high cinematic face, and the new anonymity of an emergent multiple face. It is no coincidence that Comden’s brief passage is mystically and ethereally anonymous, or that Bancroft’s mobility is quickly subsumed into her disease, placing the burden upon Silver to facify and individuate the city, even as he seeks to deindividuate and abstract each face in it to that of Garbo. Deleuze identifies this tension with the moment at which “Greta Garbo’s voice stood out in the talkie,” becoming capable “not only of expressing the internal, personal change of the heroine as affective movement, but of bringing together to form a whole the past, the present and the future, crude intonations, amorous coolings, cold decisions in the present, reminders from memory.”²⁵ It is in this tension between “cold decisions in the present” and “reminders from memory” that Lumet’s *Garbo* finally “talks.” It is also in this tension that the film’s dissolutions and reconstitutions of the possibilities of cinetopic passage lie, and the remainder of this excursus will elaborate these passages, which represent a cinetopic paratext to those of *Cinemanía*.

First Passage

Garbo Talks’ first passage is introduced as a Deleuzian movement-image, in which the camera moves laterally and vertically at once, incorporating physical mobility into panoramic virtuality in the manner of *flâneuserie*.²⁶ Hurrying to

²⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 90.

²⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 231.

²⁶ This movement-image has been ascribed to Garbo’s own relationship with New York, both as a resident and in her films: “clean lines, high ceilings, art modern furnishings, magisterial lighting, and silk and brocade upholstery punctuated by lines and arrows (usually vertical in nature) correspond with the

work, Gilbert misses a bus, is unable to cross the street, has a cab stolen and, finally, has to resort to the subway system. Thereafter, his elevator wheels him up to his floor, out through a room of film reel and, finally, to the announcement that his office has been taken by a recently promoted accountant who got it because he was more image-conscious. This explanation turns out to be more literal than might at first appear, since Gilbert's new office is literally devoid of images. It is an absolutely blank space that can't be filled or satisfied by the few pithy ornaments that Gilbert carries from his old office – an interior that is peculiarly amenable to the kind of projection that Rice attributes to the *flâneur*.

This movement-image is narrativised shortly after, with the audience's introduction to Estelle. Having bailed Estelle out of jail for stealing a pair of lettuces as a protest against a department store's implementation of policies that restrict browsing, Gilbert accompanies her along a Midtown street. While walking past a building site, Estelle hears some construction workers several flights up wolf-whistle and make lewd comments to a young woman walking in front of her, at which point she ascends to their level, where she promptly and peremptorily tells them off for their behaviour. Significantly, Estelle's ascent doesn't involve any cessation or deceleration of movement. Rather, it redirects her movement – diagonally, as she climbs a short flight of stairs, and then vertically, as she ascends in the lift used by the workers, followed by Gilbert and the site's foreman, in which she paces on the spot. In this way, Estelle embodies the film's central-movement image: she becomes a montage sequence.

Like the *flâneur*, the workers are possessed of a certain mobility – in this case, a vertical or lateral mobility more than a horizontal mobility – and are simultaneously loathe to translate their gaze into a virtual register. They can only displace the virtual component of their gaze onto the gaze of the woman that forms the impetus for their wolf-whistle. In that sense, the young woman

dream of upward mobility as it is exemplified in such films as *The Single Standard* (1929), starring Greta Garbo." Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, "New York Class - Passing Onscreen in the 1930s," in *City That Never Sleeps: New York and the Filmic Imagination*, ed. Murray Pomerance (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 158-59.

that they have wolf-whistled at is the *flâneuse* that brings their *flânerie* into existence, as well as the repository of virtuality that allows their *flânerie* to retain the fiction of a purely mobilised gaze, rather than a gaze that is both mobilised and virtual. As Friedberg points out, the fact of the *flâneuse* looking back doesn't necessarily invalidate this tendency to project the inevitable virtuality of the *flâneur's* gaze onto her: in fact, that virtuality is dependent on precisely the fleeting, half-interested look that the young woman on the street gives the builders:

In another poem from *Les Fleurs du Mal*, the *flâneur* meets the gaze of a woman whose presence in urban space is equated with the lure of the commodity...the woman is almost a shop mannequin, whose gaze is made up of "borrowed power," seized, one assumes, from the lure of the luxury item in a shop window as if in a triangulated bid for seduction...But Baudelaire did not consider the power of the woman's gaze to the shop window – a gaze imbued with the power of choice and incorporation through purchase. It was as a consumer that the *flâneuse* was born.²⁷

It is the fact that Estelle intercepts the wolf-whistles, rather than the woman who was the object of the wolf-whistles, that cements the transition between the two distinct incarnations of the *flâneuse* in this passage. On the one hand, there is the *flâneuse* as the mere counterpart or object of the *flâneur*: a place where the virtual component of the *flâneur's* gaze can be projected, allowing the *flâneur* to enjoy a comfortable illusion of complete, panoramic mobility. On the other hand, the moment that the *flâneuse* becomes mobile herself, she incorporates this virtuality into a mobile-virtual gaze that thwarts the *flâneur's* projections of virtuality onto her, and so forces him to recognise the virtual component of his own gaze; that is, forces him to recognise a limit or circumscription to his mobility. This is precisely what happens in this scene: as Estelle confronts the construction workers, they become more and more motionless, while Lumet's consistent, even monotonous framing makes the audience more and more aware that their *flânerie*, for all its apparent omniscience from street level, is confined to one block, one level on that block, one fragment of that level. Yet it is at the very moment at which Estelle deflates the construction workers' mobility, that a

²⁷ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 34.

virtual omniscience opens up for them – or at least for the viewer, since this is the first moment in the film that we see anything like a panorama of New York. It is as if the panorama of the Hudson, and of cars in the distance, that emerges behind Estelle’s head is a kind of back-projection of her gaze, a virtual, epiphenomenal gaze that emerges precisely at the moment at which she halts her mobile passage towards the construction workers to confront them with their own virtual conceptions of her, the woman on the street and *flâneuserie*.

In this sense, this triangulation that Friedberg describes between a male observer, a female observer, and a shop window takes place as the triangulation between the builders, the young woman, and Estelle. The commodity-fetish that the builders extrapolate from the young woman is presumably that of the window she is gazing at – but it is Estelle herself who comes to fully embody the shop window. And, by embodying it, she confronts the workers with a *flâneuserie* that isn’t content to merely be the object or counterpart to their *flânerie*.

Second Passage

Estelle’s negotiation of stasis and vertical movement provides a segue into the second passage in the film. This commences immediately after the scene with the construction workers. Following Estelle’s encounter on the rooftop, Lumet cuts to Gilbert returning to his new office – now refurbished and interiorised – where he encounters a woman who introduces herself as his new secretary, Jane Mortimer (Catherine Hicks), performing calisthenic exercises while lying on the floor. These raise her to an orgasmic, transcendent pitch, in which she appears to be moving further towards something that Gilbert – and the audience – cannot see. A poster for the New York Science Museum on the wall behind her desk advertises it as “like a roller coaster in your mind,” and this simultaneously vertiginous and vertical movement is beautifully evoked by Lumet in his direction of Jane’s body, as well as his co-ordination of it with his own camera, which alternates between low angle and high angle shots to evoke an ascent that is simultaneously omnipresent and invisible to the audience.

It emerges over the course of the scene that these spectacular calisthenic exercises are actually part of Jane's training as an actress, accompanied by her repetition of the line: "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country." This line isn't taken from a cinematic or theatrical text, but is one of the earliest examples of "filler text," text that:

shares some characteristics of a real written text, but is random or otherwise generated. It may be used to display a sample of fonts, generate text for testing, or to spoof an e-mail spam filter. The process of using filler text is sometimes called Greeking, although the text itself may be nonsense, or largely Latin, as in Lorem ipsum.²⁸

Specifically, the phrase "now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country" was first used as a typing drill by secretarial instructor Charles E. Weller and subsequently documented in his book *The Early History of the Typewriter*: "We were then in the midst of an exciting political campaign, and it was then for the first time that the well known sentence was inaugurated."²⁹ Subsequently used to both teach and demonstrate touch typing, it is a quintessential phrase in the canon of secretarial education, but – critically – it is an outdated phrase, or at least on the verge of being outdated, just because it is so closely identified with the typewriter itself, which is on the verge of being replaced by the computer in the film's technological and social milieux.

In this way, Jane literally fills the space, through an exercise that not only corporealises "filler" text, but turns it into a transcendent, ecstatic and highly aestheticised object of contemplation. Moreover, that object is aestheticised precisely because it is historicised – it is as if Jane has discovered the phrase in a thrift store, on the verge of perishing in relevance, and rehabilitated it as a commodity-experience. This sense of an ecstatic upwards passage that is paradoxically fuelled by looking backwards, or looking into the past, culminates with the last and most bizarre item in Jane's calisthenic program. As she nears the end of her recitation of "Now is the time for all men..." she asks Gilbert to

²⁸ "Filler Text," Wikipedia, accessed July 5, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/7jec4gg>.

²⁹ Charles E. Weller, *The Early History of the Typewriter* (La Porte, IN: Chase E. Shepherd, 1918), 21.

place a champagne cork in her mouth, and then spits it out. However, this is no ordinary cork – it is, as she informs Gilbert, the cork from the first bottle of champagne she ever drank, and which she has kept with her ever since. If her calisthenics program is, metaphorically, equated with a champagne bottle opening, then it is a champagne bottle that opened in the distant past, her rehabilitation of her chosen text a fetishistic attachment to the last lingering bubbles.

It is at exactly this point that Lumet chooses to cut to the next scene, which calibrates Jane's passage against one that Estelle is performing – and the logic of the transition is that they are the same passage, fuelled by the same momentum. Just as Jane has treated the filler text as an object in a thrift shop, so we now see Estelle actually browsing in a thrift shop. Just as Jane has rehabilitated that text by way of a passage whose stasis comes from the tensile paradox of an ecstatic upwards mobility that is grounded in a return to discarded, past objects, so the front of the thrift shop window is organised around a gilt model of the Empire State Building flanked by a pair of ship models; petrified correlatives of the film's central movement-image. Finally, just as Jane's passage introduces cinema as an explicit term into the film's negotiation of virtual and mobilised passage, so the crowning glory of this thrift shop display is a framed photograph of Garbo.

After lingering out the front of the store for a brief period, Estelle enters and purchases the photograph, producing a disagreement about whether the photograph is taken from the set of *Grand Hotel* (the shopkeeper's claim)³⁰ or *Mata-Hari* (Estelle's claim).³¹ While it is impossible for the viewer not to implicitly trust Estelle's knowledge at this point, it is equally impossible not to be entranced and fixated by this prospect of a fusion of the two films, which brings this passage to a close. Both films present Garbo in her reclusive mode – and, more specifically, both films calibrate that against her more light-hearted or extroverted mode through the trope of dancing. In *Grand Hotel*, Garbo plays a

³⁰ *Grand Hotel*, directed by Edmund Goulding (1932; Beverly Hills, CA: Warner Home Video, 2004), DVD.

³¹ *Mata-Hari*, directed by George Fitzmaurice (1931; Beverly Hills, CA: Warner Home Video, 2005), DVD.

ballerina who has retreated into a depression that sees her confined to her room: “I want to be alone.” In *Mata-Hari*, Garbo plays an active dancer, but one who has retreated into a world of espionage and secrecy that threatens to destroy the very audiences that she performs for – a world of secrecy that is no less austere or cloistered than that of *Grand Hotel*. If both films present Garbo in retreat from dance, or from extroverted, stimulated movement of any kind, then they do so against two dramatically different milieux: *Grand Hotel* is set, in its entirety, within the hotel of the title, whereas *Mata-Hari* is positively globe-trotting by comparison, or at least in its implications. In other words, *Mata-Hari* prioritises Garbo’s mobilised gaze – both in her career on stage and in her career as a spy, her body is in continual, frenetic motion, even if it is in the name of a deep reclusiveness and austerity. By contrast, *Grand Hotel* prioritises Garbo’s virtual gaze – despite rarely leaving her room, she is deeply attuned to the operations of the hotel, but, for her as for the audience, that hotel exists as a largely virtual space, a panoptic, panoramic miniature of the city.

By the end of this passage in the film, then, Garbo personifies the mobilised-virtual gaze of *flâneuserie*, or at least the tensile paradoxes and contradictions between mobile and virtual gazes. In Deleuze’s terms, she has become a mirror-image, “actual and virtual at the same time”: “It is as if an image in a mirror, a photo or a postcard came to life, assumed independence and passed into the actual, even if this meant that the actual image returned into the mirror and resumed its place in the postcard or photo, following a double movement of liberation and capture.”³² In *Deleuze on Cinema*, Ronald Bogue identifies the mirror-image’s “double movement of liberation and capture” with Garbo’s face:

When we see Garbo’s mirror reflection...her virtual reflection is the actual image before us. Perhaps we see the back of her head as well as her reflected image, but to see “the real Garbo” from the same vantage as she appears in the reflected image requires a reverse shot directly focused on her face...The “actual” Garbo image and her virtual reflection, thus, must succeed one another in time...An exchange of virtual and actual has taken

³² Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 67.

place, and the sequence of direct shot and reflection shot constitutes a circuit of exchange, a back-and-forth passage.³³

In *Garbo Talks*, dancing functions as a synecdoche for this “circuit and exchange” and “back-and-forth passage from image to image,” as well as in *Grand Hotel* and *Mata-Hari*: in both films, Garbo searches for a way to negotiate some kind of virtual mobility with respect to the more corporeal mobility of dancing. In *Grand Hotel*, she retreats to a virtual component of a virtual space, reliving her memories of dancing as a virtual spectacle, a projection against the wall of her room; in *Mata-Hari* she retreats into a virtual space even as she is dancing, and finds a place for virtuality within the warp and weave of her mobility. In both films, too, this negotiation is figured between speech and silence, the cusp at which Garbo talks - especially in *Grand Hotel*, where the centrality of the concentric lobby imbues her with “the silence that abstracts from the differentiating word and compels one downward into the equality of the encounter with the nothing, an equality that a voice resounding through space would disturb.”³⁴ Just as the panorama of New York appears to emerge, epiphenomenally and virtually, from the back of Estelle’s head, so Lumet evokes a cinetopic cityscape continually emerging from “the back of [Garbo’s] head, as well as her reflected image.”

Third Passage

After a brief interlude, in which Estelle is told that she has terminal cancer and begs Gilbert to gain her an audience with Garbo, Lumet quickly returns to his more ambient, passage-driven approach. Gilbert hires a celebrity photographer, Angelo Dokakis, who leads him to Garbo’s apartment, where they wait outside for what appears to be several weeks, hoping that she will make an appearance. These scenes are intercut with depictions of Estelle listening to a portable radio on earphones in her hospital room, frenetically dancing along to what she hears. The negotiation of mobilised and virtual gazes, and tension between *flânerie* and *flâneuserie*, that was apparent in Estelle’s confrontation with the builders is

³³ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2003), 122.

³⁴ Kracauer, “Hotel Lobby,” 181.

developed further during this period of apparent stasis. For, although Gilbert and Angelo are static, their stasis starts to take on something of the rhythm and quality of *flânerie*, insofar as they are taking a *flâneuse*, the brief, fleeting glimpse of a female urban traveller, as their object: “Even if you see her, she’ll disappear the moment she sees you...she’s totally inaccessible.”³⁵ However, unlike the *flâneur*, their gaze is more virtual than mobile – they are not traversing the metropolis, but staking out a particular part of it, spending days, even weeks, waiting in almost unbearable boredom and tension for the *flâneuse* to emerge. In that sense, they are occupying a position halfway between that of the *flâneur* and the *flâneuse*, using *flânerie* to drift them into the current of Garbo’s *flâneuserie*.

After several weeks, Gilbert has paid Angelo so much money to wait outside Garbo’s apartment that he and his wife Lisa (Carrie Fisher) are starting to drift into debt. Gilbert doesn’t escape this bind in which he finds himself by choosing *flânerie* or *flâneuserie*; rather, he commits himself to each in an even more pronounced way. Firstly, he takes a second job in order to cover his and Lisa’s expenses. This job requires him to start work in the afternoon, meaning that he has to come to work much earlier in the morning, all of which serves to orient his sleep cycle in the afternoon-nocturnal direction of the *flâneur*. However, just as significantly, this new job is as a deliverer for Fraser-Jones. This is the department store that Estelle was imprisoned for protesting against in the opening part of the film – a space that has been established as a potential venue for recovering the *flâneuse*’s perusal of perishable commodity-experiences. Gilbert is motivated to get this specific job because he notices that a Fraser-Jones deliverer is regularly granted access to Garbo’s apartments.

While Gilbert may not have chosen to become a *flâneuse per se* in this passage, he has nevertheless moved beyond being a straightforward combination of *flâneur* and *flâneuse*: he has rechannelled his *flânerie* in such a way that he has become the very venue in which *flâneuserie* occurs, in a startling transformation and reversal of the assumptions of Baudelaire’s *flânerie*, in which *flâneuserie* was merely the venue within which the *flâneur* operated. Moreover, he has only

³⁵ Lumet, *Garbo Talks*, 45:09.

reclaimed the mobile gaze of the *flâneur* to extend it into the mobile virtual gaze of the *flâneuse*: as an embodiment of the department-store, he also stands as an embodiment of its sight-lines and virtual panoramas and displays, which are emphasised by Lumet in a series of long-shots of the interior of the store, all of which, perhaps appropriately at this point in the film, exclusively feature women. Nevertheless, the limitations of this virtual omniscience are bound up in the fact that, for all his efforts, he is unable to get a glimpse of Garbo: when he rides the elevator up to her apartment, he is greeted by a servant who takes the parcels from him and informs him that her mistress – she won't even refer to her as Garbo – is out of town. Clarifying the elevator as the province of the film's negotiation between *flâneur* and *flâneuse*, and a cipher for its central movement-image, this suggests that Gilbert's identification with the *flâneuse* hasn't quite reached the point of virtuality that it will later in the film, where he will be able to conjure Garbo out of the very detritus he has used to find her.

Fourth Passage

It is with the film's fourth passage that Gilbert starts to actively construe himself as a *flâneuse*. Following a discussion with Jane about the significance of cross-dressing in Shakespearean drama, Gilbert takes a ferry out to Fire Island, one of Garbo's reputed haunts, and the location of her beach house. As soon as he boards the ferry, he strikes up a rapport with a gay man who is also travelling to Fire Island. At one level, this is a familiar figure in Lumet's body of work – the tendency of his New York films to construe the city as a camp economy, in which objects are continually recycled and revalued, finds its counterpart in figures of camp agency. However, the presence of this character also has specific implications for Gilbert's consummation of *flâneuserie*, transforming it into a kind of miniature coming-out narrative embedded within the wider texture of the film. Gilbert meets Bernie Whitlock (Harvey Fierstein) on the ferry to Fire Island, quickly slipping into the conversational drift and distraction that Bernie says he's hoping to find.

Over the course of their conversation, Gilbert tells Bernie that he hasn't come to Fire Island to cruise for sex, or gay companionship, but to pursue Garbo. However, according to the film's logic of fandom, there is a very clear continuity between those activities; or, more concisely, between cruising and the nexus between *flânerie* and *flâneuserie* at which Gilbert is now operating. Edmund White, in *The Flâneur*, has observed this continuity in his own cruising life:

To be gay and cruise is perhaps an extension of the *flâneur's* very essence, or at least its most successful application. With one crucial difference: the *flâneur's* promenades are meant to be useless, deprived of any goal beyond the pleasure of merely circulating. Of course, a gay man's *sorties* may end up going unrewarded, but he doesn't set out with that aesthetic disinterestedness – unless sex itself is seen to be pure: artistic and pointless.³⁶

Although White labels this *flânerie*, the whole logic of *flânerie* depends on a penetrating male gaze and a penetrated object that is at odds with the radical interpenetration of gazes, the willingness to be both purveyor and recipient of a gaze, that takes place here. In its own way, this is a version of the mobilised virtual gaze outlined by Friedberg as the province of *flâneuserie*: mobile, clearly, because it is continually, restlessly drifting in the manner typical of conventional *flânerie*; virtual, because of its willingness, at all times, to become the object of another gaze, to experience mobility vicariously and virtually through the ambit of that second gaze. In his first novel, *Forgetting Elena*, White sets a series of cruising experiences against the backdrop of an “allegorized version of Fire Island,”³⁷ whose ecology is suffused with a “gauze” that “catches on the branches” and “might drift silently to Earth and smother me in its mesh.”³⁸ Morton describes this “mesh” as the key object of dark ecology:

The mesh must be made of very interesting material indeed. It isn't “organic,” in the sense of form fitting function. William Wordsworth

³⁶ Edmund White, *The Flâneur: A Stroll Through the Paradoxes of Paris* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 145.

³⁷ David Bergman, *The Violet Hour: The Violet Quill and the Making of Gay Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 138.

³⁸ Edmund White, *Forgetting Elena, and Nocturnes for the King of Naples* (London: Pan Books, 1984), 33.

wanted to show how the organic world was “fitted” to the mind and vice versa. The theory of evolution, the basis of the ecological thought, does use words such as “fittest” and “adaptation,” but it doesn’t imply that bald heads exist because of piles of filth...Natural selection isn’t about “decorum” or an organic “fit”...The mesh consists of infinite connections and infinitesimal differences. Few would argue that a single evolutionary change isn’t minute. Scale is infinite in both directions: infinite in size and infinite in detail.³⁹

Drawing on the anti-functionalist evolutionary theory of Stephen Jay Gould, Morton suggests that the true infinity and infinitesimality of the mesh can only be grasped by discarding the supposed “fitness” of all things to each other. From this perspective, cruising is the *sine qua non* of dark ecology: a communion with nature that takes place precisely by virtue of the celebration of acts that defy conventional notions of what fits where, or what is fit, both biologically and culturally. The peculiar status of Fire Island as both an epicentre of cruising culture, and a plethora of cinetopic “gauzes” suggest a locus in which the dark ecology of cruising morphs into the dark media ecology of cruising. In the next chapter, the “fisting optic” of Wakefield Poole’s *Boys in the Sand*⁴⁰ will be explored in terms of this conjunction between the extreme affinity of the eye for cinetopic infinity and infinitesimality and the extreme disaffinity of certain body parts for each other. For the moment, however, it is useful to note that Gilbert’s arrival at Fire Island partakes of a queer tradition of arrival narratives, or rather arriving narratives, in which the metaphorical apprehension of the moment of arrival at Fire Island is offset by the metonymic apprehension of Fire Island as a continual state of arriving at a continually receding sensory and technological horizon - as if its well-documented instances of longshore drift, which infinitesimally and infinitely extend the island, were also applicable to its media ecology.⁴¹ David Bergman periodises these arriving-narratives in terms of Fire Island’s pre-liberation heyday in the 1960s and 1970s, segueing them into his own late arriving-narrative, in which arriving segues back into arrival:

³⁹ Morton, *Ecological Thought*, 30.

⁴⁰ *Boys in the Sand*, directed by Wakefield Poole (1971; New York: TLA Releasing, 2002), DVD.

⁴¹ “Robert Moses State Park/Fire Island National Seashore,” United States Geological Survey, accessed July 5, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/nlbnkr3>.

I didn't visit Fire Island when I was growing up in New York or later in my twenties...I've only gone once (when I was well past forty) and even then I brought along a friend...My own arrival and entrance into the harbor is far more sedate. I'm struck, once the engine is cut, by how quiet Fire Island is. No one shouts, no one raises his voice. Even the gulls cry *sotto voce*....but of course I have arrived on a Monday, the slowest day of the week, and also some twenty years after its heyday when the social critic Albert Goldman proclaimed Fire Island the future of America.⁴²

As with the arriving-narratives that he describes, Bergman's account opens with a metaphorical, mystifying apprehension of arrival, to the extent that he was compelled to delay arrival for twenty years. However, the peculiar melancholy of his account is that when he does finally plan to arrive, he simply arrives. The continual process of arriving has receded into the past; or, rather, the receding horizon that drove that arriving has become historical as much as sensory, as the anticipation of an ever-more unbelievable swathe of sensory and aesthetic experience is fused with the contemplation of an ever-more historicised media ecology. Among other things, this makes for a post-cruising anecdote, in which the dialectic between penetration and interpenetration is detached from sexual pleasure and instead turned into a certain aesthetic stance with respect to the past - Bergman doesn't cruise into the harbor, he just drifts there.

Something of this post-cruising aesthetic is evident in the conversational dynamic that takes place during Gilbert and Bernie's passage, which, while not exactly commensurate with Bergman's, occurs against the decline that he chronicles, deflecting consummation into conversation in a late, melancholy revision of screwball innuendo. For that reason, it feels like the first proper conversation in the film - virtually every other interaction has involved Gilbert receiving or delivering instructions and information. This conversational rapport is highlighted by Lumet through a conspicuous slackening of pace: this is the slowest passage, or movement, that has yet occurred in the film, once again recalling the loose drift of *Boys in the Sand*, in something like barefoot *flâneuserie* - and in his review of the film, Denby notes that "for decades, the Broadway theater was filled with repressed young men like Gilbert who saved themselves

⁴² Bergman, *Violet Hour*, 138.

by doing something 'wild' (like walking without their shoes and socks in Washington Square Park)."⁴³ As Gilbert and Bernie amble on the sand dunes, the boardwalk, and then, finally, the beach outside Garbo's house, a different kind of passage opens up, a movement from botanising on asphalt to botanising on sand and water. For it emerges that Bernie once glimpsed Garbo himself while cruising Fire Island - and Gilbert's subsumption into that ordinary moment of *flâneuserie* culminates with him being led, by Bernie, to Garbo's house and, in turn, to the fleeting glimpse of Garbo that he catches once he's scoured the property, as she prowls a boat out to her private sea plane, and takes off for New York, subsuming the film's vertical-lateral movement image into a cruise that departs from itself, as cruising departs Fire Island; a cinetopic post-cruise.

Fifth Passage

Having returned from Fire Island, Gilbert finds his wife Lisa leaving him: she claims that his efforts to find Garbo are starting to ruin her lifestyle. Up until this point, his apartment has been depicted from a fixed point of view, approaching something like the single camera set-up of a conventional sitcom. It is therefore a perceptual and ontological shock to see the apartment from the opposite perspective, as we find ourselves gazing at the wall that was previously identified with the audience's gaze. In a reversal of the rupture of the fourth wall, the wall that we always assumed was not there, or somehow porously continuous with our gaze, is demonstrated to be an actual, physical wall. Not only does this reversal allow the audience to see Gilbert's television for the first time, but it cements the identification of that television with the scene's point of view; or, rather, identifies the television's point of view with the way in which the audience's point of view has been reified and dismantled by the change in perspectives described, meaning that, when Gilbert sits down to watch television, he is already, at some level, in it: the television has become ambient.

⁴³ David Denby, "Garbo Talks: Movie Review," *New York Magazine* 17: 42 (1984), 138.

Anna McCarthy argues that ambient television – television broadcast in public places – clarifies a number of functions that television has within the home. Among these functions one of the most primary or pressing is that of waiting: the infrastructural presence of televisions in waiting rooms clarifies how much our domestic experience of television is designed to forestall and cope with the amount of waiting that takes place in our living rooms. Gilbert’s position at this stage in the film recalls this systemic, diachronic use of “television as a time-warping companion within the waiting area, an environmental distraction that somehow changes the overall affective experience of being there.”⁴⁴ This clarifies why the reverse shot of the television is so surprising, since, despite the serendipity of various televisual images that have parsed the narrative, there is no VCR technology present – and this absence is so conspicuous as to associate it with the object of Gilbert’s waiting. It is appropriate, then, that Lumet follows the establishing shot of Gilbert sitting in front of the television with a pan that effectively takes in all his passages in the film so far; a consummation or final destination of the film’s movement-image. This pan starts with the television, and then moves down along the television cord. To a contemporary audience, the destination of this pan might logically be a VCR or similar device, but Lumet abstracts the trajectory of the cord, aligning it with the movement-image that has driven Gilbert’s passage throughout the film. Accordingly, the tracking-shot moves away from the cord, and up onto the bench that, in every other depiction of Gilbert’s apartment, has been used as part of the explicitly televisual framing of the kitchen space: it is as if the tracking-shot has taken us inside the television, or a space that is ancillary or complementary to the television.

This ancillary space, within Gilbert’s kitchen alcove, is then collapsed into his quest for Garbo, as the camera pans across a series of newspapers which contain headlines and advertisements that are pertinent to his search, such as “Professional and Amateurs pursue clues to the State’s ancient history,” amidst various pieces of filler text. Finally, the camera alights on a full-page advertisement for a Greta Garbo retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. The

⁴⁴ Anna McCarthy, *Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 197.

main photograph on this advertisement is the famous still from *Queen Christina*⁴⁵ that concluded the opening credits and was spectrally remediated in the fleeting glimpse of Garbo across Fire Island's waters. In a continuation of the tracking-shot – or integration of the tracking-shot into montage rhythm in the manner characteristic of the movement-image - Lumet cuts to Gilbert at the Museum of Modern Art watching a screening of *Ninotchka*.⁴⁶ The search for Garbo – and, ultimately, the *flâneuserie* that has helped crystallise that search – has become equated with an ancillary or complementary space to television that, in this panning shot, is equated with emergent VCR technology. Given that VCR technology is, as Friedberg has noted, a kind of despatialised, detemporalised multiplex, the film's attempt to narrativise VCR technology as *flâneuserie* is tantamount to a cinetopic anecdote about multiplex attendance. As argued in the previous chapter, the cinetopic anecdote does not merely describe a component of the cinematic heterotopia, but instantiates it. From that perspective, the absence of explicit references to both VCR and multiplex technology in *Garbo Talks* has a straightforward explanation: the film is attempting to actually construct, or install, a videoplex, rather than merely describe one. As in *Cinemanía*, the curated space – and the Museum of Modern Art specifically – is presented both as a cipher for this emergent heterotopic videoplex and a retreat from it; a space that gestures towards a multiplicity of curatorial autonomy that is both familiar and new, like the spectacle of Garbo laughing that hangs over it.

At the Museum of Modern Art screening, Gilbert receives a tipoff that Elizabeth Rennick, an aging actress starring in a production of *Romeo and Juliet* in the outdoor theatre at Central Park, might have some information. As argued, Benjamin's *flâneur* elaborates a space that is the nexus between private and public, urban and natural, interior and exterior – and the outdoor theatre at Central Park corresponds exactly to this nexus, as well as representing another iteration of the videoplex iterated by the Museum of Modern Art. While walking with Gilbert and Jane through the park, Elizabeth suggests that Gilbert is most

⁴⁵ *Queen Christina*, directed by Rouben Mamoulian (1933; Beverly Hills, CA: Warner Home Video, 2005), DVD.

⁴⁶ *Ninotchka*, directed by Ernst Lubitsch (1939; Beverly Hills, CA: Warner Home Video, 2005), DVD.

likely to find Garbo at a local flea market – which he does. At one level, this market is presented as a late version of Benjamin’s arcades: it is a space in which one can peruse and browse endlessly for discarded commodity-experiences. However, it is also a space in which the seller has a privileged gaze as well: a virtual mobility, composed of the panorama of passers-by and purchasers, many of whom look as antiquated and musty as the objects that they are buying. In that sense, the distinction between buying and selling is collapsed into a mode of browsing that has more in common with the amorphous shopping of the department store: the flea market plays like a department store turned inside out. It is, in that sense, a consummation and exhaustion of *flâneuserie*, and a cognate to the mall: if the film’s vision of the Museum of Modern Art theatre was its strategy for creatively refashioning the multiplex within which it might eventually be seen, then the film’s vision of the flea market is its strategy for creatively refashioning the mall within which that multiplex might be found.

When Gilbert finally sees Garbo and approaches her, they are both browsing the gardening stand; the ferns, flowers and plants that form the porous space of the *flâneur’s* city, and the Central Park theatre, are now transformed into the perishable, precious goods that form of the object of the *flâneuse’s* browsing, recalling the *flâneuserie* that led Estelle to object to the overpriced lettuce in the first part of the film. When Gilbert approaches Garbo, he tells her of his mother’s condition and of her love for her – which he admits may be greater than her love for him – as well as her final request. Throughout this scene, Lumet withholds Garbo’s face, refusing to provide the fleeting or transcendent glimpse of it that could reduce her *flâneuserie* to a mere object for Gilbert’s gaze, and therefore reduce Gilbert’s *flâneuserie* to a more conventionally Baudelairean *flânerie* in the process. In fact, although Gilbert is talking, the entire visual logic of the scene dictates that Garbo is actually perusing him, and that he – and, by extension, Estelle, perishing in hospital – has become one of the perishable commodity-experiences structuring her *flâneuserie*.

A Postmodern Cinetopic Anecdote

Garbo agrees quite abruptly to visit Estelle in hospital, leading to the concluding cinetopic anecdote of the film. Although Gilbert and Jane glimpse Garbo's face while walking in Central Park in the coda which follows, she is still shot from behind for the majority of this scene, which takes place as a monologue on Estelle's part. Estelle recounts the history of her life, setting it against the backdrop of the evolution of Garbo's career: each of Garbo's major films is poetically connected to a discrete moment in Estelle's childhood, courtship, marriage, divorce and parenthood. As her monologue progresses, however, she increasingly confuses the details of her life with those of Garbo's, culminating with her account, to Gilbert, of all the things that Garbo supposedly told her, but which it seems more likely are refracted versions of things Estelle told Garbo about herself. If this is the moment in the film at which Garbo talks, then it is only through the refractions of the cinetopic anecdote, and that tension between "decisions in the present" and "reminders from memory" that Deleuze gathers around Garbo's first sound film (and first film set in New York), *Anna Christie*.⁴⁷

The kernel of Estelle's cinetopic anecdote is her first, formative encounter with Garbo:

It's easy being Estelle Garbo when you're on the balcony of the Loews Pitkin in the dark – nobody could see my double chin and my huge bust – not like yours, nice. I shouldn't have been eating a corned beef sandwich anyway. I was a fat kid, I needed to lose weight, but show me anything from a delicatessen, especially corned beef. You had me in the palm of your hands. Every time you moved, I sighed. You walked from one end of the room to the other. It was as if your feet never touched the ground. Wanda and I saw every movie you ever made. She thought I loved you because I had big feet too. It's true. I wore size ten, and I was only going on twelve years old.⁴⁸

True to the fashion of the cinetopic anecdote, this excerpt from Estelle's monologue not only fails to identify or extract a single, privileged moment from

⁴⁷ *Anna Christie*, directed by Clarence Brown (1930; Beverly Hills, CA: Warner Home Video, 2005), DVD.

⁴⁸ Lumet, *Garbo Talks*, 01:28:58.

the film – “every movement” generates a sigh – but fails to individuate the Garbo film itself in the manner that would make such an extraction meaningful. Instead, Estelle’s projection of herself into Garbo is contingent on her attachment to “the balcony of the Loews Pitkin in the dark.” The Loews Pitkin theatre opened in 1929 and was one of the most extravagant silent movie palaces of its time, contributing to the rage for “atmospheric theatres” that characterised movie-going of the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁹ Designed to “give moviegoers the illusion that they were sitting in an elegant outdoor garden”⁵⁰ or other outdoor location, atmospheric theatres were particularly program-driven, and their architecture was designed to imbue every screening with the breathlessness of an intricately curated opening-night (76, 182). These atmospheric and curatorial imperatives coalesced around the “faux balcony” (76) which, in Estelle’s anecdote, represents the culmination of the videoplectic co-ordinates of the Museum of Modern Art theatre and outdoor theatre in Central Park.

If Estelle’s balcony is able to culminate an emergent videoplex by way of an antiquated atmospheric space, it is because this was precisely the strategy of the original multiplex architects, who started by converting balconies into second, subsidiary screens.⁵¹ In fact, strictly speaking, the first multiplex was opened by James Edwards, in 1937, who extended his Alhambra Theatre in Los Angeles into the next door storefront, literalising the *flâneuse’s* conflation of botanising on cinema and botanising on shop windows as the foundational multiplectical gesture.⁵² While the opening of the AMC Parkway Twin in Kansas in 1963 ushered in an era in which the balcony was the primary object of multiplectical

⁴⁹ Terry Pristin, “Loew’s Pitkin, Former Movie Palace in Brooklyn, Gets a New Life,” *The New York Times* online, September 28, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/n3t84r2>. The company changed its name from Loew’s to Loews in 1969, when it was acquired by the Tisch Brothers. Jay P. Pederson, *International Directory of Company Histories* (Farmington Hills, MI: St. James Press, 2000), 325.

⁵⁰ Dave Kenney, *Twin Cities Picture Show: A Century of Moviegoing* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2007), 76.

⁵¹ Ross Melnick, *Cinema Treasures: A New Look at Classic Movie Theatres* (Minneapolis, MN: MBI, 2004), 138.

⁵² C. Crouch, “The Many Births of the Multiplex,” *Cinelog* (blog), June 27, 2009, <http://tinyurl.com/lnasdwy>.

transformation, this fusion of storefront and balcony – as well as its metonymic continuity with Los Angeles – haunts Estelle’s account of the Loews Pitkin, which, along with the entire Loews chain, was purchased by the Los Angeles-based Tri-Star Entertainment⁵³ and finally merged into AMC,⁵⁴ pioneers not only of the first multiplex, but the first megaplex, in the mid-1990s. Nevertheless, the Loews Pitkin would remain an anachronism in both the Tri-Star and AMC empires: never rehabilitated as a multiplex, or even as a twin cinema, it was temporarily transformed into a church in the 1970s, and finally became a discount department store, before closing and falling into abandonment, only to be finally subdivided and converted into a combination of school and retail space in 2010, in a return of the multiplex to a repressed for an age in which even the multiplex seems on the verge of extinction as a viable cinematic venue.

A synecdoche for the entire film, Estelle’s cinetopic anecdote thus enacts and participates in a complex narrative whereby it can only be screened, or properly understood, at precisely this fleeting *flâneuserie* between a vanished storefront and an emergent multiplex. In that sense, it is a film made for a venue that no longer exists, or that can only exist by virtue of the existence of the film itself. In his accounts of shooting on location in New York, Lumet frames his “reservation” of vast segments of the city for the future as a restoration of this kind:

Each film requires a different individual visual approach. This city has an infinity of neighborhoods; it’s impossible to exhaust them all. There are entire neighborhoods that I am holding in reserve for future films. For example, I used the docks in *A View From The Bridge*, but there weren’t really enough exterior shots to explore them in depth. Yet they’re a fascinating place, an incredible place, even if the boat traffic is no longer what it used to be...Furthermore, New York is a city that is perpetually changing, that is constantly being demolished and rebuilt. For *Prince of the City* we shot all over the city....All together, we had one hundred and thirty-one film locations. We were always on the move, like an army with

⁵³ “COMPANY NEWS; Tri-Star Planning Loews Expansion,” *The New York Times* online, May 29, 1987, <http://tinyurl.com/mezk2lv>.

⁵⁴ Orlin Wagner, “AMC closes acquisition of Loews Cineplex,” *USA Today* online, January 26, 2006, <http://tinyurl.com/nlah6e5>.

fifty-four trucks. The logistical maneuvers were worthy of World War II combat strategy.⁵⁵

While Lumet's project has a restorative element, it falls under the category of reparative nostalgia elaborated by Boym: instead of attempting "to rebuild the mythical place called home,"⁵⁶ it sets itself the task of rebuilding an entity that can never be rebuilt, subsuming itself into the cycle of "demolition and rebuilding" that constitutes the city. Throughout Lumet's career, this focus on New York has generally been framed oppositionally, as a simultaneous comment on the constrictions of living and working in Los Angeles – and Lumet's distinction between New York and Los Angeles took two basic forms. On the one hand, there was what might be described as a neorealist objection, in which New York offered a realism, a continuity between botanising on celluloid and botanising on asphalt, unavailable in Hollywood: "One of the reasons I prefer working in New York is that real actors work as extras."⁵⁷ On the other hand, Los Angeles was seen as a repository of contaminating televisual technologies: "New York is live, not on tape. I'd rather run a Chock Full O'Nuts in New York than a studio in Hollywood." Combined, these registers produced a distant reading of the two cities in which television and, by extension, video tape, precluded the kind of botanising in Los Angeles that might be found in New York: "In Hollywood, actors learn to act from watching television. In New York, people learn to act by walking down the street."⁵⁸ Yet precisely the gesture of *Garbo Talks* is to complicate this dichotomy via the emergence of a videoplectic space that extends New York to Los Angeles, the Loews Pitkin to the Tri-Star and AMC empires, and doesn't preclude botanising so much as open up a new postmodern botanical space. As a critical threshold between modernist and post-cinematic

⁵⁵ Michael Ciment and Sidney Lumet, "A Conversation with Sidney Lumet," in *Sidney Lumet: Interviews*, ed. Joanna E. Rapf (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 86.

⁵⁶ Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, 49-50.

⁵⁷ Sidney Lumet, *Making Movies* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 113.

⁵⁸ Both these quotations exist in various apocryphal venues on the internet, most notably in the quotations page of Sidney Lumet's imdb profile. It is perhaps appropriate that one of the only printed texts in which they appear to have been collated is Gil Reavill and Mark S. Wexler, *Hollywood and the best of Los Angeles* (New York: Compass, 1994), 63.

and post-perceptual media ecologies, this suggests that post-cinematic and post-perceptual cinetopic passage is conveniently thematised in terms of the different cinetopic sensibilities of New York and Los Angeles. Accordingly, my next chapter focuses on their intermingling by way of the grey space of Toronto, and the grey economies of informal cinematic distribution and consumption that are one of the key hallmarks of post-cinematic and post-perceptual moviegoing.

Chapter 2: The Post-Cinematic *Cinepheur*

Collection

In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin identifies the collection with the anecdote: “The true method of making things present is to represent them in our space (not to represent ourselves in their space). (The collector does just this, and so does the anecdote).”¹ This “method of making things present” by “representing them in our space” is elaborated by a passage that Benjamin cites from August Strindberg:

Extinct nature: the shell shop in the arcades. In “The Pilot’s Trials,” Strindberg tells of an “arcade with brightly lit shops.” “Then he went on into the arcade...There was every possible kind of shop, but not a soul to be seen, either behind or before the counters. After a while, he stopped in front of a big window in which there was a whole display of shells. As the door was open, he went in. From floor to ceiling there were rows of shells of every kind, collected from all the seas of the world. No one was in, but there was a ring of tobacco smoke in the air...So he began his walk again, following the blue and white carpet. The passage wasn’t straight but winding, so that you could never see the end of it; and there were always fresh shops there, but no people; and the shopkeepers were not to be seen.”²

At various points throughout *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin notes the nineteenth century obsession with the domestic interior, likening it to a sea organism nesting within its shell.³ Within that context, a store full of shells is figuratively equivalent to a panorama of interiors – the panorama available to the *flâneur* in his continual interiorisation and domestication of the city, encountered, appropriately, in an arcade, the *flâneur*’s natural dwelling or shelling place. This panorama of interiors serves to de-interiorise the shop and arcade, denuding them of their most likely dwellers, shopkeepers, and transforming them into spaces of endless, aqueous possibility for the *flâneur*.

¹ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 206.

² Strindberg, *Märchen* (Munich and Berlin, 1917), pp. 52-53, 59, cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 205.

³ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 220-221.

Critically, this possibility for *flânerie* is not opened up by any shop display but by a collection of antiquated objects that demonstrates to the *flâneur* the rich array of interiors that his passage may encompass. This suggests a further connection between *flânerie* and collection:

Property and possession belong to the tactical sphere. Collectors are people with a tactical instinct; their experience teaches them that when they capture a strange city, the smallest antique shop can be a fortress, the most remote stationery store a key possession. How many cities have revealed themselves to me in the marches I undertook in the pursuit of books!⁴

Although Benjamin identifies collection as the tactical counterpart to *flânerie*, the mode of passage alluded to here is not *flânerie per se*. Instead, it is a mode of passage that is inter-urban rather than intra-urban, preoccupied with diasporic movement between cities rather than intimate movement within cities. It is presumably this diasporic quality that leads Benjamin to associate collection with dispersal: "Perhaps the most deeply hidden motive of the person who collects can be described in this way: he takes up the struggle against dispersion. Right from the start, the great collector is struck by the confusion, by the scatter, in which the things of the world are found."⁵ Foucault argues that heterotopias similarly emerge to deal with "scatter" by creating spaces that function as a "perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time" (such as the museum and archive) and spaces that function by presenting time in its most "fleeting, transitory and precarious aspect" (such as fairgrounds). In fact, Foucault argues, heterotopias usually perform both functions at once, although one of these two presentations of time is likely to be foregrounded.⁶ The collector is drawn to this heterotopic overdetermination of objects, transforming them into miniature spaces in which time both indefinitely accumulates and flashes out in all its transitory singularity. It is this tension between stability and instability, between containing and releasing time, that ensures that collecting is an indefinite process:

⁴ Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting," in Arendt (ed.) and Zohn (trans.) *Illuminations*, 63.

⁵ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 211.

⁶ Foucault, "Other Spaces," 26.

...in every collector lies an allegorist, and in every allegorist a collector. As far as the collector is concerned, his collection is never complete; for let him discover just a single piece missing, and everything he's collected remains a patchwork, which is what things are for allegory from the beginning. On the other hand, the allegorist – for whom objects only represent keywords in a secret dictionary which will make known their meanings to the initiated – precisely the allegorist can never have enough of things.⁷

In this passage, Benjamin expands the two different timeframes within which the collected object exists into two types of utterance that can be made about the collected object. Just as the collected object functions both as a repository of synchronic and diachronic time, so the collector's discourse oscillates between allegory and another type of discourse: a discourse that Benjamin's earlier comments have associated with the anecdote. It is this dialectic between anecdotal specificity and allegorical generality that drives the discourse of the collector. Moreover, the tension between allegory and anecdote corresponds to the tension between disinterestedness and participation that distinguishes the cinephilic anecdote from the cinetopic anecdote. The collection, as Benjamin understands it, always quivers at the verge of granting the collector allegorical autonomy, the sense of completion that would allow him to stand back from it, understand it, and finally discard it. This, however, never happens, since the practical impossibility of any one collection containing the world's dispersal means that even the slightest disruption of the collection's integrity, even the slightest intrusion of the outside world into the interior that it has created, means that the collector is immediately and traumatically absorbed into each component's corporeality, specificity and singularity. Benjamin describes this strange combination of comfort and trauma – effectively that of a marine organism that sheds its shell as it grows – as “productive disorder,” connecting it to Marcel Proust's “canon of *mémoire involuntaire*,” or involuntary memory:

A sort of productive disorder is the canon of the *mémoire involuntaire*, as it is the canon of the collector. “And I had already lived long enough so that, for more than one of the human beings with whom I had come in

⁷ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 211.

contact, I found in antipodal regions of my past memories another being to complete the picture...In much the same way, when an art lover is shown a panel of an altar screen, he remembers in what church, museum and private collection the other panels are dispersed (likewise, he finally succeeds, by following the catalogue of art sales or frequenting antique shops, in finding the mate to the object he possesses and thereby completing the pair, and so can reconstruct in his mind the predella and the entire altar"...The *mémoire volontaire*, on the other hand, is a registry providing the object with a classificatory number behind which it disappears. "So now we've been there." ("I've had an experience"). How the scatter of allegorical properties (the patchwork) relates to this creative disorder is a question calling for further study.⁸

Benjamin deploys Proust to extend the tension between anecdotal and allegorical temporality to that between voluntary and involuntary memory: like the allegory, voluntary memory denies the corporeal singularity of the object, providing it with "a classificatory number behind which it disappears." Benjamin is less specific about the intersection between anecdotal utterance and involuntary memory – presumably something akin to the fusion of Proust's memory of the art screen and Burgin's involuntary memory of the images from his hotel television. In both cases, there is a sense that the collector is less concerned with the moment of acquisition than the memory of the moment of acquisition. For, as "I've had an experience" might suggest, the Benjaminian collector is above all experientially acquisitive, just as the Benjaminian *flâneur* collects experiences of the cityscape and stores them in his fantasmatic interior.

It is this collapse of collection into recollection that defines the Benjaminian collector, as well as the Benjaminian anecdote of collection. In fact, the allegory of collection and anecdote of collection might be further distinguished in this way: whereas the allegory of collection is keen to minimise the distance between the purchase and experience of the artwork, or to contain the experience within the purchase, the anecdote of collection finds itself drifting away from consciously collated and catalogued memories of purchase towards acquisitive moments that were perhaps not even registered as such while they were occurring. It is exactly this curious sense of unregistered experiential acquisition

⁸ Marcel Proust, *Le Temps retrouvé* (Paris), vol. 2, p. 158, cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 211.

that characterised Burgin's anecdote, as well as its temporal disjunctions and confusions. It is also this disjunction between tangible, financial purchase and distributed, experiential acquisition that translates *flânerie* into the realm of *flâneuserie* elaborated by Friedberg and enacted by *Garbo Talks*.

If collecting involves a heightened attention to the disjunction between purchase and acquisition, then the collector like the *flâneuse*, is also in a privileged position with respect to the disjunction between commodity and commodity-experience, or between objects and commodities. Throughout *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin identifies collection as symptomatic of industrialised production and society, albeit in a curious way. On the one hand, the collector's commitment to indefinite accumulation embodies Marx's observation that "All the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by the simple alienation of all these senses, the sense of *having*..."⁹ At that level, the collector identifies with capitalist, bourgeois conceptions of private property. This identification is complicated, however, by two other complimentary quotes from Marx that are included under Benjamin's collations on collection:

"Private property has made us so stupid and inert that an object is ours only when we *have* it." "All the physical and intellectual senses...have been replaced by the simple alienation of all these senses, the sense of having."¹⁰

"Private property has made us so stupid and inert that an object is *ours* only when we have it, when it exists as capital for us, or when...we *use* it."¹¹

The first quote expands the initial fragment, but only for the sake of rephrasing it in the second quote, leading to a slippery space between having and using that concisely summarises what Benjamin articulates in "Unpacking My Library" as "a

⁹ Karl Marx, *Der historische Materialismus* (Leipzig), vol. 1, p. 300 ("Nationalökonomie und Philosophie"), cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 209.

¹⁰ Hugo Fischer, *Karl Marx und sein Verhältnis zu Staat und Wirtschaft* (Jena, 1932), p. 64, cited in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 210.

¹¹ Karl Marx, *Der historische Materialismus*, in *Die Frühschriften*, ed. Landshut and Mayer (Leipzig 1932), vol. 1, p. 299 ("Nationalökonomie und Philosophie"), in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 209.

very mysterious relationship to ownership.” For, although the collector might identify with the infinite accumulation of objects, he does so by virtue of his fascination with the precise moment at which objects lose their use-value, building “a relationship with objects which does not emphasise their functional, utilitarian value – that is, their usefulness – but studies and loves them as the scene, the stage of their fate.”¹²

The heterotopic temporality of the collected object can thus be understood in terms of the object’s relationship to commodification: the collector is torn between the transitory use-value that flashes out from the object and marks it as a commodity, or as something that once was a commodity, and the subsequent, indefinite accumulation of uselessness that brings it back from the world of commodities to the world of objects. In this inversion of commodity fetishism, the supererogatory gleam of a commodity can only be enjoyed retrospectively and allegorically, in terms of the fascination it *might* have held, in much the same way that Benjamin was entranced by the mysterious appeal of snow-globes to an earlier generation: “Broken-down matter: the elevation of the commodity to the status of allegory. Allegory and the fetish character of the commodity.”¹³

Just as Friedberg argues that the *flâneuse*’s passage culminates with the postmodern videoplex, so she suggests that the *flâneuse*’s collection of commodity-experiences culminates with an unprecedented access to film, and an unprecedented opportunity to devise a distant reading of filmic history:

On a recent search, for example, in response to the enquiry “*passage couvert*,” a list of every film in the collection containing images of a Parisian *passage* appeared on the computer’s video screen. With the push of a button, these images can be “called up.” As if in a scene from *Alphaville* a robot arm in the mezzanine “library” searches, finds and pulls the requested title from a shelf, inserts it mechanically into a VCR that is, in turn, connected to the individual monitor. Once the film appears on the video screen, it can be played at various speeds of playback, freeze frame

¹² Benjamin, “Unpacking My Library,” 60.

¹³ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 207.

or reverse. At the push of a button you are not “present at the making of history,” but you have, instead, the history of cinema at your fingertips.¹⁴

For Jameson, this movement from history to historicity enables a peculiarly postmodern tendency towards canonisation, comparison and listology, in which the ability to form and recognise contiguities “at the push of a button” allows conversations about collection to take on an unprecedented “figuration...of a deeper comparison between the modes of production themselves, which confront and judge each other by way of the individual contact between reader and text.”¹⁵ Over the following chapter, I consider the fate of this freeze-frame postmodernism in the wake of a post-cinematic media ecology and in the light of an incipient post-perceptual media ecology, drawing on the “Criterion securities” that Thomson lambasts¹⁶ to gesture towards the way in which collection has come to express a “deeper comparison” between straight-to-video and straight-to-DVD distribution. I also consider the way in which these grey modes of production “confront and judge each other by way of the individual contact” between *cinephaur* and film, using the Criterion release of Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Salò, or The 120 Days of Sodom* as a case study and object of distant viewing.

STV Passage, STD Passage

In 2000, Gary Indiana contributed a volume on Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Salò, or The 120 Days of Sodom* to the British Film Institute’s Modern Classics series. Subsequently redacted and included in the Criterion Collection DVD release, it opens with an extended anecdote:

I was twenty-seven when I first saw Pasolini’s *Salò*. I worked nights at the popcorn concession of the Westland Twins, a Laemmle theatre in Westwood specialising in foreign films of the ‘mature romance’ variety. A friend managed The Pico, an art cinema in the Fairfax District. It was autumn, 1977. I got off work at 10:30. I usually drove home to Los Angeles, stopping at The Pico, where *Salò* ran that season as a midnight movie. (Actually, I think it was an eleven o’clock midnight movie). That’s

¹⁴ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 182.

¹⁵ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 301.

¹⁶ Thomson, “American Movies.”

how I happened to see this film, or parts of it, almost every night for two months.¹⁷

Despite dominating this opening paragraph, it is by no means clear that *Salò* is the object of Indiana's anecdote in any conventionally cinephilic way. The passage is driven by a series of near-misses, or near-congruences, from the fine distinction between "mature romance" and "art cinema," to the syntax of small differences between The Westland Twins, located on West Pico Boulevard, and The Pico, located on Westwood Boulevard, now the Landmark Theatre. These culminate with the temporal disjunction within which Indiana managed to see both the entire film and "parts of it": the "eleven o'clock midnight movie." Within this disjunction, Indiana conspicuously fails to take the cinephilic cue to identify or describe a privileged moment in the film:

I have a terribly spotty memory. This has served me pretty well as a writer, since I have to fill the yawning gaps between what I truly remember with whatever my imagination suggests 'must have happened.' I remember that melancholy period of my life in time-stained flickers, a slide show of faces and landscapes across a paling light. I was twenty-seven, but I think of myself then as 'pre-conscious.' The world was just beginning to emerge as something separate from the muck of my private anxieties.¹⁸

Distributed across this heterotopic "slide show of faces and landscapes," *Salò* only manifests itself as a ghostly, implicit middle term "between what I truly remember [and] whatever my imagination suggests 'must have happened.'" As a result, the moment of cinephilic attachment is displaced from the substance of the film to the infrastructural cinematicity of Indiana's life at that time. Not only does this indicate a cinetopic rather than a cinephilic anecdote, but it designates "the tremendous nostalgia for a history I didn't possess" as the peculiar melancholy of the *cinepheur*, operating even more powerfully here, in anecdote, than it did at a time when Indiana was supposedly more amenable to its charms. In *Theory of Film*, Kracauer provides a more extensive description of this cinetopic melancholy:

¹⁷ Gary Indiana, *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

Now melancholy as an inner disposition not only makes elegiac objects seem attractive, but carries still another, more important identification: it favors self-estrangement, which on its part entails identification with all kinds of objects. The dejected individual is likely to lose himself in the incidental configurations of his environment, absorbing them with a disinterested intensity no longer determined by his previous preferences. His is a kind of receptivity which resembles that of Proust's photographer cast in the role of a stranger...A recurrent film sequence runs as follows: the melancholy character is strolling about aimlessly: as he proceeds, his changing surroundings take shape in the form of numerous juxtaposed shots of house façades, neon lights, stray passers-by, and the like. It is inevitable that the audience should trace their seemingly unmotivated emergence to his dejection and the alienation in its wake.¹⁹

In the last part of this passage, Kracauer provides another of his cinetopic procedurals, conflating audience, spectator and city in the uncertain referent of "their": is it the emergence of the "house façades, neon lights, stray passers by and the like" that can be traced to this melancholy character's strolling, or the emergence of the audience itself? In that ambiguity lies the dissolution of subject and object that constitutes both the cinematic heterotopia and cinetopic anecdote, as well as the "disinterested intensity" that represents the peculiar melancholy of the *cinépheur*. In *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, Žižek stages this combination of disinterest and intensity in terms of the libidinal economy of masochism, specifically the manner in which "the very kernel of the masochist's being is externalized in the staged game towards which he maintains his constant distance."²⁰ Similarly, Indiana turns to masochistic nightlife as the object of his cinetopic melancholy:

One of the few places where you could get a drink after a certain hour was a Silver Lake bar called The Headquarters, an S&M club where police impersonators in uniform mingled with dowdier slaves and masters in dog collars and trouserless chaps. (Leather had had its major effulgence much earlier in Los Angeles, celebrated in the classic fistfucking porno, *LA Plays Itself*, and in movies by Wakefield Poole. By the late 70s, the hardcore raunch scene was more happening in New York and San Francisco). There were also the One Way, The Detour and The Spike, a

¹⁹ Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 17.

²⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* (London: Verso, 2006), 92.

constellation of more conventional gay bars at the nether end of East Hollywood.²¹

If the masochistic scene – remediated through New York’s posteriority in another gesture of nostalgic drift – provides the tools with which Indiana can disperse this heterotopia across his body, then “fist-fucking” is presented as the moment at which it coalesces around a provisional interior, a synecdoche for the “atmosphere of suffocation and suspense”²² that, for Deleuze, characterises masochistic literature generally. Within this “chiaroscuro where the only things that emerge are suspended gestures” (34), *Salò* itself is suspended, transformed into a series of freeze-frames, a fetish that enables the masochist’s “escape into the world of dreams...an ideal which is itself suspended in fantasy” (32-33):

So – what precise form did sexual activity assume in Eden? In the practice of homosexual fist-fucking...[the] organ, precisely, is not the phallus (as in ‘normal’ anal intercourse), but the fist (hand), the organ par excellence not of spontaneous pleasure but of instrumental activity, of work and exploration. In this precise sense, fist-fucking is Edenic, it is the closest we can get to what sex was like before the fall: what enters me is not the phallus but a pre-phallic partial object, a hand...²³

Not only do Žižek’s observations speak to the Edenic ambivalence of Indiana’s East Hollywood, but they draw out the insatiable collection of sexual and cinematic experience that pervades the remainder of the anecdote as the search for a partial object. Cruising the same twilit, transitory zone as collector and *cinéphur*, Indiana’s anecdote subordinates “spontaneous pleasure” to the instrumentality and infrastructurality that Žižek describes; the combination of “work and exploration” that absorbs every romantic utterance, no matter how ecstatic or transcendent, into its own accumulative navigation, or navigable accumulation, of “what sex [and presumably cinema] was like before the fall.” This analogy between the passive instrumentality of the fisted subject and that of the film spectator is particularly evident in Indiana’s cinematic description of the

²¹ Indiana, *Salò*, 7.

²² Gilles Deleuze, *Masochism*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 25.

²³ Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 2009), 16.

Headquarters, inflected through the moment in William Friedkin's *Cruising*²⁴ in which an innocent suspect is "beaten up at police headquarters by an immense black policeman dressed only in a cowboy hat,"²⁵ and exemplifying Christopher Stanley's argument that "the event of the mark encompasses the memory of the ecstasy of pain as opposed to the fear of pain and suggests an opposition to the body politic in which the body becomes a site/space of the heterotopia, that which is beyond the name, that which is the 'time out of mind' of internal desire."²⁶

However, along with evoking the "time out of mind" of the eleven o'clock/midnight screening, the full range of passages conquered and consummated between eleven and eleven o'clock, Indiana's anecdote also makes reference to a specific film – *LA Plays Itself* – locating it within two competing frames of reference.²⁷ On the one hand, *LA Plays Itself* falls into the pornographic genre of "fistfucking" films, catered towards a specific and resilient niche demographic. On the other hand, Indiana's association of *LA Plays Itself* with the oeuvre of art pornographer Wakefield Poole gestures towards the wider, more liberally minded demographic of the Golden Age of pornographic cinema, which Poole's iconic 1972 feature *Boys in the Sand* ushered in.²⁸ Just as the second Golden Age of pornographic cinema, the "art porn" movement of the late 1990s and early 2000s, corresponded to widespread DVD ownership – and, therefore, to a domestic spectatorship that countered theatrical censorship – so the trajectory of the first Golden Age traces the passage from cinematic to VHS technologies.

²⁴ *Cruising*, directed by William Friedkin (1980; Beverly Hills, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007), DVD. If Indiana's approach to *Cruising* is reflective and diasporic, a restorative and individualist approach can be found in *Interior. Leather Bar*, directed by James Franco and Travis Mathews (2013. Burbank, CA), Film.

²⁵ Robin Wood, "The Incoherent Text: Narrative in the 70s," in *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 64.

²⁶ Christopher Stanley, *Urban Excess and the Law: Capital, Culture and Desire* (London: Routledge, 1996), 186.

²⁷ *LA Plays Itself*, directed by Fred Halsted (1972, Los Angeles), Film. Although Halsted doesn't place periods in "LA," for the remainder of this thesis I will abbreviate the city to "L.A." (since "LA" conventionally designates Louisiana).

²⁸ Jack Stevenson, "From the Bedroom to the Bijou: A Secret History Of American Gay Sex Cinema," in *Fleshpot: Cinema's Sexual Myth Makers and Taboo Breakers*, ed. Jack Stevenson (Manchester, UK: Critical Vision, 2000), 113-14.

In *Shadow Economies of Cinema*, Ramon Lobato characterises the STV, or straight-to-video, revolution of the late 1970s and early 1980s as an attempt to reclaim exploitative subject-matter from mainstream theatrical distribution:

Studio directors of the late 1970s were becoming increasingly open to sex, violence, swearing and other racy content, and as a result the mainstream film industry was felt to be encroaching further and further on territory that used to belong to genres associated with B-producers, such as Blaxploitation, soft porn and monster movies. What was left of the exploitation industry needed to find a new market niche, and a lot of it ended up in STV.²⁹

Indiana's anecdote can only be fully grasped when set against the crystallisation of this "new market niche." Los Angeles, as he describes it, is inhabited by all the people left behind by this niche – all the spectacles and subcultures that were just a little too exploitative to be exploited, in turn, by the lure of New York, where this Golden Age tended to be centred. From that perspective, *Salò* forms part of the exploitative decay of Indiana's chiaroscurist milieu: a mere "crumble" of cinema, it is increasingly fragmented and out of place in an emergent STV world. At the same time, however, *Salò* represents exactly this openness to an artistically sanctioned pornography – it was, after all, playing in an "art cinema." Torn between Los Angeles and New York, between a decaying cinematic culture and an emergent STV culture, *Salò* is positioned as the partial object of Indiana's cinetopic anecdote – and, like any collectible or partial object, it can never be entirely grasped as a discrete fragment, nor as a unified totality.

This pre-lapsarian fusion of pre-STD and pre-STV milieux means that Indiana's anecdote is characterised by what Lobato describes as the "STV aesthetic," or anti-aesthetic, as much as by its cinematic flourish:

It is often said that in STV you're 'on your way up or on your way down,' a quip which alludes to its function as both a breeding and dumping ground. For some actors, STV is a self-enclosed field in which careers can

²⁹ Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema*, 23.

be built and maintained, while for others it functions as a springboard, temporary refuge, or final destination (25).

This “breeding and dumping ground,” in which all existence takes place as a “springboard, temporary refuge, or final destination” is precisely the backdrop against which Indiana’s narrative takes place, just as Lobato’s description suggests that the STV aesthetic is characterised by a peculiar confusion of diegesis and non-diegesis that precludes the disinterestedness necessary for traditional aesthetic consciousness; or, rather, transforms it into the “disinterested intensity” of Kracauer’s cinetopic melancholy. Leaving, for the moment, the convergence of what Lobato terms the “tainted” STV aesthetic and the diegetised camera of the post-cinematic ecology – that is, the emergence of a straight-to-DVD, or STD milieu, to be discussed shortly – it is worth noting the extent to which this diegetic confusion conflates aesthetic and industrial registers. Writing of the circulation of cinematic goods within informal economies, of which the STV market is a prime example, Lobato observes that “Texts in informal circulation accumulate interference – additions, subtractions, inflections, distractions – as they move through space and time...Informally distributed texts are typically consumed in the home or in social spaces beyond the cinema, and usually in a state of distraction” (45). If the STV object bears traces of the industrial conditions of its production and infrastructural conditions of its distribution (and perhaps even exhibition), then the STV aesthetic engenders a state of sustained distraction in the face of industrial and infrastructural data.³⁰

Not only does this update Kracauer’s account of the eye’s distracted drift from screen to curtains, but it simultaneously contracts and expands the field of distraction. Gathering this peripatetic elasticity into the suggestion that “STV may be to cinema what long forgotten detective novels are to literature,” Lobato

³⁰ Benjamin articulates this attention to the industrial trace as an ethical act and a reclamation of “human nature”: “On the theory of the trace. Practice is eliminated from the productive process by machinery. In the process of administration, something analogous happens with heightened organisation. Knowledge of human nature, such as the senior employee could acquire through practice, ceases to be decisive.” (*Arcades Project*, 227).

draws on Moretti to posit STV distribution as a “slaughterhouse of cinema,” a repository of potential distant readings and potent, imminent unforgettings:

Let’s take some of Moretti’s ideas and see how they can help us to understand the STV market...As we have seen, STV movies make up the ‘invisible’ bulk of global production activity. STV also has the lowest discursive status of any kind of film, being ineligible for Oscar nominations and most other markers of institutional recognition. The parallels between STV and the forgotten popular fiction texts that Moretti describes are quite clear. What, then, is cinema studies to do with this other 99 per cent?³¹

As a first step towards answering this question, Lobato conjures up an *STV noir*, oppressed less by cinematographic claustrophobia than by the crushing exigency and functionality of its generically recognisable spaces: “Likewise, the numerous STV films shot in Toronto are easy to spot – there is a ubiquitous cloudy sky. This is another quirk of production: the muted Ontario light lends many of these films a uniform greyness, and shorter shooting schedules mean crews cannot wait around for sunny days” (25). Conflating this evocative description with Lobato’s observation on the constitutive and deliberate “mediocrity” of the STV aesthetic (34) produces a renovated *film gris*, a term that Thom Andersen has coined for those late, usually leftist, *film noirs*, that are peculiarly concerned with explicating and critiquing the conditions of their production.³² Accordingly, Indiana’s anecdote turns towards late *noir* to gesture towards *STV gris*:

During the day, I worked at Legal Aid in Watts. A dispiriting job. I dealt with seriously damaged, desperately poor people who lived in rotting bungalows where rats routinely fell through crumbling ceilings into their breakfast cereal. I lived in a somewhat sinister apartment hotel on Wilshire (The Bryson, where Stephen Frears shot *The Grifters* many years later, simulating its mid-70s desuetude – when I lived there, Fred MacMurray was the silent partner in the building’s ownership) full of insomniacs, drifters, madmen, a kind of Chelsea West: the night clerk was a preoperative transsexual named Stephanie.³³

³¹ Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema*, 33.

³² Thom Andersen, “Red Hollywood,” in *Literature and the Visual Arts in Contemporary Society*, ed. Suzanne Ferguson and Barbara Groseclose (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1985), 183.

³³ Indiana, *Salò*, 8.

As Indiana periodises it, the late 1970s stands as a midpoint between the flourishing of *noir* and its nostalgic reappropriation as *neo-noir*, part of a wider drift from history to historicity, Chelsea to “Chelsea West,” and conflation of cinematic and architectural nostalgia, that has become inextricably associated with Fredric Jameson’s “nostalgia mode” - “what in film has come to be called *la mode rétro*, or nostalgia film: the past as fashion plate and glossy image.”³⁴

Diasporic Intimacy

While an iteration of Jameson’s “nostalgia for the present” is certainly at play here, his “glossiness” doesn’t speak to the full range of Indiana’s architectural and cinematic citation. In fact, precisely what makes the anecdote distinctive is the way in which Indiana transforms the Bryson into something other than a nostalgia film, drawing upon what Boym describes as “diasporic intimacy”:

Diasporic intimacy can be approached only through indirection and intimation, through stories and secrets...It is spoken of in a foreign language that reveals the inadequacies of translation. Diasporic intimacy does not promise an unmediated emotional fusion, but only a precarious affection – no less deep, yet aware of its transience. In contrast to the utopian images of intimacy as transparency, authenticity and ultimate belonging, diasporic intimacy is dystopic by definition; it is rooted in the suspicion of a single home, in shared longing without belonging.³⁵

Although Boym understands intimacy primarily as an interpersonal category, it can also be understood as a relationship between persons, objects and images, or between objects and images – especially in a media ecology characterised by “an expanded, indiscriminately articulated plenum of images that exceed capture in the form of photographic or perceptual ‘objects,’” producing a “thoroughgoing disconnection of contemporary images from human perceptibility...toward an expanded (no longer visual or even perceptual) field of material affect.”³⁶ This milieu of post-visual, post-perceptual “material affect” is inimical to what Boym

³⁴ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 118.

³⁵ Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, 252.

³⁶ Shane Denson, “Crazy Cameras, Disconnected Images, and the Post-Perceptual Mediation of Post-Cinematic Affect: Abstract,” *Initiative Für Interdisziplinäre Medienforschung* (blog), January 18, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/kkzfkpq>.

defines, by contrast, as individualist intimacy. This brand of intimacy promotes “transparency and ultimate belonging” between people, objects and images, promulgating “a seductive tyranny that promise[s] warmth, authentic disclosure and boundless closeness.” This tyranny, Boym argues, has damaged “the public sphere and sociability” as well as the potentially diasporic “worldliness” of the metropolis itself, through the restorative nostalgic “cult of the ‘family home.’”³⁷

Like the subjects of diasporic intimacy, STV objects, and the subjects that they create, are transnational, multilingual, and connected to each other in precarious, flexible ways. As diasporic subjects, STV objects bear marks of their passage and encourage other STV subject-objects to bear witness and contribute to those marks in turn, including, presumably, cinematic subject-objects. As stated, Indiana understands this tension between cinematic and STV subject-objects in terms of the tension between *LA Plays Itself* and *Boys on the Side*. While these were both released as films, rather than STV objects, their remediation as straight-to-DVD, or straight-to-digital objects, is suggestive both of the complex nostalgic dialogue taking place in Indiana’s anecdote and its implications for a post-cinematic milieu. Available, if rare, as torrents and DVDs, both films have been appropriated on YouTube in ways that gesture towards the continuity between the STV object and the STD object – and it will be these appropriations that form the object of my study. In each case, the YouTube appropriation identifies the preface to their respective fisting scenes – that is, the site of contention between cinematic and STV exploitation – with a particular syntactic unit of DVD passage. Whereas the excerpt from *LA Plays Itself* is appropriated by Youtube user Twact as a self-contained, self-consciously literary “chapter,”³⁸ *Boys in the Sand* is edited by YouTube user Rebecca Cooper in such a way as to transform the nuances and rhythms of directorial commentary into a cinetopic anecdote.³⁹

³⁷ Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, 253.

³⁸ Twact, “L.A. Plays Itself,” YouTube, June 24, 2008, <http://tinyurl.com/pmoqetk>.

³⁹ Rebecca Cooper, “Boys in the Sand (Narrative Cut),” YouTube, September 28, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/pw2vyfm>.

Phantom Rides

Twact's excerpt from *LA Plays Itself* is already nostalgic, fusing a recollection of a fisting encounter with a recreation of the cruising that prefaced it. Shot as pornographic beat poetry, it features extracts from an explicit novel "found on the back of a Greyhound bus" read over a hand-held, or rather car-held, elaboration of East Hollywood. This progresses from freeway to backstreets, just as the film itself progresses from outer Los Angeles to Hollywood, reiterating "the continuing influences of the rural road" on 1970s freeway construction, and the impact of "rural parkway building activities, a means of penetrating the dreary grayness of the city with sylvan ribbons" on 1970s freeway affect.⁴⁰ Excerpted as it is, this grey-on-grey redemption of "dreary grayness" through Greyhound mobility falls into the YouTube remediation of the "phantom ride," as elaborated by Patrick Keiller in "Phantom Rides: The Railway and Early Film." A popular genre during the early years of silent cinema, Keiller argues that the phantom ride allowed audiences to vicariously experience the *frisson* of new mobile technologies.⁴¹ These were frequently associated with public transport technology, but not necessarily – a shot at the beginning of Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike*, in which the camera is attached to a crane, would arguably fall into the same category.⁴² As the latter might suggest, most phantom rides identified the camera with the mechanical apparatus they were exploring. Phantom rides thereby provoked logistical ingenuity and wonder as much as aesthetic ingenuity and wonder, elaborating all the ways in which a camera might be attached to another mechanical object – and, by extension, all the ways in which cinema might become more completely integrated into other urban technologies. As remediations of the phantom ride, these YouTube clips fall into what Teresa

⁴⁰ Joseph F.C. DiMento and Cliff Ellis, *Changing Lanes: Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 44, 36. I treat the terms "freeway" and "highway" as synonymous. For a more detailed account of their semantic history and ambiguity, see David Brodsky, *L.A. Freeway: An Appreciative Essay* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 4.

⁴¹ Patrick Keiller, "Phantom Rides: The Railway and Early Film," in *The Railway and Modernity: Time, Space and the Machine Ensemble*, ed. Matthew Beaumont and Michael J. Freeman (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 75.

⁴² *Strike*, directed by Sergei Eisenstein (1925; Moscow, USSR: Kino International, 2011), DVD.

Rizzo has identified as the general tendency of new media to repurpose silent cinematic modes and genres for a new digital spectatorship and sensibility.⁴³

This logistical wonder and ingenuity has had multiple iterations since the silent era.⁴⁴ However, the phantom ride, and its fascination with the corporeal incorporation of camera mobility into the substance of everyday life, is peculiarly amenable to a post-cinematic media ecology, in which, to recall the fourth of Shaviro's diagrams, "all activity is under surveillance from video cameras and microphones, and in return video screens and speakers, moving images and synthesized sounds, are dispersed pretty much everywhere."⁴⁵ In fact, this synthetic dispersal constitutes the phantom ride venue articulated by Gunning:

The vanishing point, the fixed convergence of classical perspective, its point of coherence, becomes in the phantom ride a point of constant transformation and instability...Instead of the point where things vanish, the far distance becomes the point of entrance into visibility. Our point of view, as stand-ins for the camera, becomes the point at which everything converges and disappears, reworking the traditional scheme of perspective.⁴⁶

Leaving, for the moment, the broader question of how the lineage of phantom rides corresponds to the emergence of Denson's post-perceptual ecology – the movement from the "fixed convergence of classical perspective" to a convergence culture – it is clear that the remediation of Halsted's film in this context constitutes a complex and ambivalent nostalgic gesture. Specifically, it suggests that the point of Halsted's exercise – or, more precisely, the point of Twact's appropriation of Halsted's exercise – is not an orienting, stabilising, domesticated continuity between past and present. Rather, this is nostalgia

⁴³ Teresa Rizzo, "YouTube: The New Cinema of Attractions," *Scan: Journal of Media Arts Culture* 5:1 (2008), <http://tinyurl.com/nbt9zoe>.

⁴⁴ Lauren Rabinovitz includes a genealogy of pre-cinematic and post-cinematic "travel ride films" in "From *Hale's Tours* to *Star Tours*: Virtual Voyages, Travel Ride Films and The Delirium of the Hyper-Real," in Ruoff (ed.), *Virtual Voyages*, 43.

⁴⁵ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 6.

⁴⁶ Tom Gunning, "Landscape and the Fantasy of Moving Pictures: Early Cinema's Phantom Rides," in *Cinema and Landscape*, eds. Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner (Bristol, UK: Intellect Ltd., 2010), 59.

whose ostensible “point of coherence” in fact ramifies as a “point of constant transformation and instability,” just as “the distant past,” the point at which things are supposed to “vanish,” increasingly ramifies as the “point of entrance into visibility” – and it is this paradoxical point of visibility that constitutes the film’s aesthetic of cruising. Shot from the window of a moving car, the objects of cruising are infrastructural as much as erotic; rent boys and male escorts are collapsed into an East Hollywood performative infrastructure that poetically coalesces around a billboard advertising Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg’s *Performance*,⁴⁷ “where the underground meets the underworld.” Charting out this space between underground and underworld – with fisting as its synecdoche – Halsted eroticises the eye’s drift from a spectacle of ostensible centrality to the venue within which it is rehearsed and performed. If there is a movement-image to his film, it serves to embody and actualise this drift. At the very moment at which it does so, however, it ceases to be legible as a movement-image, displacing the vanishing-point of drift with the “constant instability and transformation” of the phantom ride. As a result, the eye’s drift from spectacle to venue is both consummated and disrupted by a venue that is itself in constant drift.

In Deleuzian terms, the phantom ride’s negotiation and consummation of drift represents one of those sites where the movement-image is sufficiently distilled to gesture towards its implosion into the time-image, in which:

The past co-exists with the present that it has been; the past is preserved in itself, as past in general (non-chronological); at each moment time splits itself into present and past, present that passes and past which is preserved...it is we who are internal to time, not the other way around....Time is not the interior in us, but just the opposite, the interiority in which we are, in which we move, live and change.⁴⁸

Halsted’s evocation of cruising takes place at exactly this paradoxical juncture between movement-image and time-image. It therefore stands as one of the

⁴⁷ *Performance*, directed by Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg (1970; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007), DVD.

⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 80.

“crystals of time” that Deleuze associates with such transitory figures as Jean-Luc Godard, Welles and Hitchcock – and it is *Vertigo* that provides the clearest precedent for Halsted’s curious brand of ambient aimlessness. Conjoining Deleuze’s insistence that we approach film *as* philosophy, rather than as a mere application or even embodiment of philosophy,⁴⁹ with his observation that “immanence is the vertigo of philosophy,”⁵⁰ Patricia Pisters offers a peripatetic reading in which *Vertigo*’s own peripatetic stands as the immanence of film-philosophy, the moment in film at which the transcendental imperatives of the movement-image start to give way to the immanent imperatives of the time-image. If, then, “*Vertigo* is the Hitchcock film that most clearly permits both a transcendental and immanent reading of the subject,”⁵¹ the YouTube remediation of the phantom ride can be understood as an attempt to conjure up a drift between movement and temporality that speaks to a post-cinematic media ecology.

From that perspective, Twact’s appropriation and reclamation forms part of a complex stylistic narrative, culminating with the peculiarly temporalised, immobile phantom ride subgenres that have emerged on YouTube – or, as Patricia Pisters’ location of Hitchcock within the Deleuzian canon might suggest, the various afterlives that *Vertigo* has taken on within the YouTube ecology. Just as Douglas A. Cunningham has argued that a *Vertigo* heritage trail would need to trace a movement from surface streets to pastoral freeways, thereby using the freeway to recover the pastoral in the heart of the city,⁵² so Twact’s reclamation speaks to the YouTube remediation of pastoral freeway affect as phantom ride, as well as the fact that, “disengaged from their surroundings,” freeways have

⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 8.

⁵⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 1992), 80.

⁵¹ Patricia Pisters, *The Matrix of Film Culture: Working with Deleuze in Film Theory* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 33.

⁵² Douglas A. Cunningham, “Mapping/Marking Cinephilia: The Case for a *Vertigo* Heritage Trail,” in *The San Francisco of Alfred Hitchcock’s Vertigo: Place, Pilgrimage and Commemoration*, ed. Douglas A. Cunningham (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 297-98.

become “more like railroads than vehicular roads.”⁵³ This YouTube subgenre frequently combines sped-up movement with imagery from digital tracking devices to provide a cinematic corollary to the GPS device. As films shot from the perspective of GPS devices, or apostrophic utterances of the device itself, these integrations of cameras into the navigational apparatus of the car gesture towards a phantom ride in which the camera is no longer attached to the materiality of physical transport, but to the duration of informational transport, diasporising and interiorising the freeway. Frequently shot at dusk, or at night, and rehearsing “unimpeded movement through the urban ambient” within suburban, exurban and rural spaces, these clips remediate the technological evolution of “full-scale highway technology” itself, “developed in rural areas, where, free of urban obstructions, highway engineers could master the science of designing roadways for efficient motor vehicle movement.”⁵⁴

The spectacle of the post-perceptual phantom ride, then, is oriented around navigational machinery as much as urban panoramas, relocating panoramic perception to what is occurring *within* the car, in a post-cinematic revision of *Out of the Past*.⁵⁵ In fact, many YouTube phantom rides signal their remediative strategy in terms of what James Naremore describes as “a paradoxical, Möbius-strip relationship between the past and the present – an eternal round of ‘noirness’ that has no particular beginning or end.”⁵⁶ Not only does this eternal return of *noirness* find its natural counterpart in the circularity of the YouTube phantom ride, but in the way those phantom rides co-opt the increasingly

⁵³ Mitchell Schwarzer, *Zoomscope: Architecture in Motion and Media* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 99.

⁵⁴ DiMento and Ellis, *Changing Lanes*, 213.

⁵⁵ *Out of the Past*, directed by Jacques Tourneur (1947; New York: Turner Home Entertainment, 2004), DVD.

⁵⁶ James Naremore, *More than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 195. Naremore does not italicise “noir.” Two prominent YouTube freeway auteurs are FreewayJim and FreewayAndrew – see, for example, FreewayJim’s “Atlanta GA Freeways: Buckhead to the Airport at Night,” June 3, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/pswsq32>. The convergence of post-perceptual phantom ride and diegetised camera is particularly clear in the film clip accompanying Tim Hecker and Daniel Lopatin’s single “Intrusions,” released in 2012 and uploaded by Software at “Tim Hecker & Daniel Lopatin – Intrusions [OFFICIAL SINGLE],” November 8, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/nfg7v4w>.

nostalgic, *noir*-oriented register of interactive gaming. Given the indiscriminate and aesthetically disinterested nature of most of these gaming rides – “LA Noire Secret Car Location – Phantom Corsaire” is a guide to cheats and short cuts that just happens to use the language of phantom rides⁵⁷ – this proliferation of mediocre *YouTube noir* ramifies as a post-cinematic iteration of the *STV gris* that suffuses Indiana’s anecdote, light years away from the cultivated syncretism of *noir*, post-cinema and gaming technologies that characterises such recent adaptations as, say, *Sin City* or *300*.⁵⁸

Less phantom ride than platform ride, this emergent YouTube passage provides some affective insight into those paradoxes and tensions of diasporic intimacy that ensure that the indiscriminate, anonymous cruising of Halsted’s film is both more intimate and less disinterested than the leafy, chambered passages of Poole’s. More specifically, if Twact’s remediation of *LA Plays Itself* positions Halsted as a middle term between *STV gris* and *Youtube noir*, then Rebecca Cooper’s YouTube appropriation of *Boys in the Sand* posts a lineage between *STV gris* and what might be described as *YouTube soleil*, recalling D.K. Holm’s foundational comments on the remediative tendencies of *soleil* itself:

On its surface, film *soleil* is a simple reversal of film noir – night becomes day, city becomes country, lush love becomes raw and hate-filled sex. Tighter “indie” style shooting budgets that require “closet drama” size casts and simple sets, a flood of neophyte directors on the market, and fluctuations in shooting practices all combined with a reaction to the Reagan 1980s, to give rise to film *soleil*.⁵⁹

Here, as elsewhere in his account, Holm only ostensibly presents *film soleil* as a “simple reversal” of *film noir* – or, rather, presents this ostensibility as what in fact constitutes *film soleil*, deploying the Reaganesque closet as a trope for thinking through *film soleil*’s anxiety to present itself as a mere “outside” to *noir*’s

⁵⁷ MercenaryRandoms, “LA Noire Secret Car Location – Phantom Corsaire,” YouTube, June 1, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/nuc5m22>.

⁵⁸ *Sin City*, directed by Frank Miller and Robert Rodriguez (2005; New York: Miramax Lionsgate, 2005), DVD. *300*, directed by Zack Snyder (2007; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007), DVD.

⁵⁹ D.K. Holm, *Film Soleil* (Harpender, UK: Oldcastle, 2005), 14.

“inside.” In the following chapter, I consider the relationship between cinephilia, cinetopic passage and the closet, but for the moment it is sufficient to note that Rebecca Cooper’s version of *Boys in the Sand* corresponds to just this cinephilic anxiety about cinetopic interiorisation and anecdote; namely, an anxiety to insist that any attachment to a cinetopic interior is nevertheless gathered under the rubric of a cinephilic “outside”: “We shot this at six in the morning, so it’s heavily shadowed, a lot of leaf patterns on the ground. We don’t know much about this character, as he is walking, but what I wanted to suggest is that...gay people seem to do a lot of walking, they have patience, so they’ll walk a mile...”⁶⁰

Boys in the Sand

In contrast to the loose ambience of *LA Plays Itself*, *Boys in the Sand* follows a classical, three-act structure, actually naming its acts Bayside, Poolside, Inside. As this might suggest, the film progressively emphasises privacy, individuality and introspection, revolving around the monadic opacity of a protagonist about whom we “don’t know much” (2:30). This deliberate mystification of individuation (as opposed to the relative disinterest in individuation that typifies the clip from *LA Plays Itself*) induces Poole to deflect the interiority of his protagonists onto the surrounding landscape. As a result, the film’s commitment to interiority is arguably clearest in the least “interior” or individuated space: the Fire Island brush elaborated in “Bayside.” This forms a symmetrical counterpoint to the fisting scene that concludes the film, in “Inside,” whose reification of unimaginable, traumatic and sublime interiority and introspection forms another point of contrast to the molten, diasporic negotiation between underworld and underground that characterises the fisting in *LA Plays Itself*. As a result, the extensive, lyrical attention to the wind in the trees of Fire Island become something of an abstraction and aestheticisation of the fisted subject (2:44, 3:27, 3:36) (Figures 12-14).

As stated, Keathley understands the cinephilic moment as a reminder that the eye is embodied, re-integrating it back into a sensorium neglected by

⁶⁰ Rebecca Cooper, “Boys in the Sand,” 2:07.

modernity's slavish commitment to visual stimulation and subjugation. From that perspective, Poole's fisting optic both culminates and exhausts cinephilia, establishing a synaptic link between eye and anus that transforms the embodied eye into something that becomes too pleasurable, or crosses the line into displeasure; after all, the logical conclusion of the embodied eye is an eye that is forced to experience the manifold topographies and discomforts of cinema seats. As a result, while Poole's aesthetic prioritises both the cinephilic moment, and an individuated, lyrical approach to fisting that is somewhat at odds with Halsted's vision, it nevertheless also translates Foucault's designation of fisting as a "limit-experience" into the register of cinematic attachment: the film stands as a limit cinephilic experience, the cusp at which cinephilia starts to migrate into cinetopic passage.⁶¹ It is at this point that the modulations made by Rebecca Cooper become most interventionist. In part, these are responses to YouTube's content policy, which necessitates blocking out all pornographic sections of the film. However, Rebecca Cooper transforms this from a restrictive to a creative gesture by doubling, overlapping and blurring the image. Although this ostensibly removes the titillating content, it serves to multiply and kaleidoscope the cinephilic breathlessness of Poole's vision, often capturing the moment just before or after a sex act in a Lumière-like web of wind, light and trees, as well as commencing with the same stretch of boardwalk glimpsed in *Garbo Talks* (Figures 15-17).⁶²

This Lumière-esque pornography coincides with Poole's confession that: "Since this was my first film, I wasn't sure what to do, so I had this part of the film on automatic eye, the magic eye where it adjusted your aperture...We did everything we could to change the colour, but just this one little section is in this...Kodachrome."⁶³ As the moment at which Poole's eye is dissolved into the "automatic" eye of the camera, this inadvertent patch of Kodachrome represents the cinephilic apex of the film. Allen Carlson has argued that Kodachrome's

⁶¹ For a discussion of Foucault's conception of "limit-experiences" and their specific relation to fisting, see James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 268-69.

⁶² Rebecca Cooper, "Boys in the Sand," 1:07, 2:14, 2:30.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3:38.

peculiar combination of portability and colour resolution makes it an ideal vehicle for fixing cinephilic moments in such proto-cinematic archives as the postcard, prospect and panorama.⁶⁴ Reimagining *Boys in the Sand* as a series of such prospects, by way of a wipe that emulates the blue-sensitive, outermost layer of the Kodachrome emulsification profile, user Jtatgfp finds, in YouTube, a renewal of “those discursive norms not inherent to institutionalized cinema after 1915” (Figures 18-20).⁶⁵ Prior to this moment in Rebecca Edwards’ appropriation, Poole’s voice, with its auteurist assurance and sensibility, has been identified with the images seen on screen; it has had the quality of a voiceover, rather than a commentary. At this point, however, Poole is relegated to non-diegetic space, ceding his auteurism to the camera’s “automatic eye,” and opening up a space between voice and image. Concomitantly, Rebecca Edwards proceeds with his or her own Kodachromatic wipe, in the form of fleeting fragments of the sex act nestled amidst the cinephilic texture of the clip (Figure 21).⁶⁶

If *Boys in the Sand* doesn’t blend nostalgic and cinetopic passage in quite the same way as *LA Plays Itself*, then it does offer itself up as a cinephilic limit-object, an opportunity for cinetopic rearrangement, the canvas for somebody else’s cinetopic anecdote. Indeed, Poole’s very first comment makes exactly this invitation. Spoken over a credit sequence in which the names of his cast members appear on sand, only to be washed out by the tide, he observes that his name was too long to be credited in this way, inviting the viewer to peruse the out-takes of his attempts to write it.⁶⁷ This is exactly the cue that Rebecca

⁶⁴ Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2002), 32.

⁶⁵ Jtatgfp, “Remastering Wakefield Poole’s “Boys in the Sand” – Before and After,” YouTube, July 17, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/qbhr7mz>, 0:07, 0:34, 0:35, 0:36. André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning, “Early Cinema as a Challenge to Film History,” in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 369. For the emulsive properties of Kodachrome, see Graham Saxby, *The Science of Imaging: An Introduction* (Florence, KY: Taylor & Francis, 2001), 105.

⁶⁶ Rebecca Cooper, “Boys in the Sand,” 4:22.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 0:11.

Edwards takes up, timing the nostalgic disjunction between Poole and his signature at exactly the moment at which s/he inhabits and transforms it.

Both films thus exhibit a tension between diasporic and individualist intimacy. However, whereas *LA Plays Itself* approaches this tension from the diasporic angle, establishing fisting as a cinetopic anecdote, *Boys in the Sand* approaches it from the individualist angle, establishing fisting as a limit-experience, both sexually and cinephilically, that offers the film itself as an object for the viewer's own cinetopic appropriation. In pornographic terms, *LA Plays Itself* is cinetopically dominant, whereas *Boys in the Sand* is cinetopically submissive. This, in turn, means that they respectively embody each side of the Bergsonian crystal of time: *LA Plays Itself* collapses the sexual act into the crystal of cruising, a "present that passes," whereas *Boys in the Sand* collapses the sexual act into a "past that is preserved" above and beyond the privileged nostalgic apparatus and eye of the director. If the cinematic heterotopia, or cinetopia, is, like other heterotopias, "a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which...all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted,"⁶⁸ then *Boys in the Sand* and *LA Plays Itself* correspond, respectively, to the two poles of queer utopia outlined by José Esteban Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia*: "One requires a utopian hermeneutic to see an already operative principle of hope that hums in the...work. The other text, the manifesto, does another type of performative work; it *does* utopia."⁶⁹ In both cases, the YouTube remediator exhibits a "longing" that is "neither a nostalgic wish nor a passing fascination" with the "interior in who we are," but "the impetus for a queerworld"⁷⁰ couched within the interiority of Bergsonian duration. This removal from the "nostalgic wish" opens up space for the emergence of what Eric Savoy describes as "queer nostalgia" – a form of nostalgia that "recuperates the cultural and familial origins of the self, but is governed by the paradox between

⁶⁸ Foucault, "Other Spaces," 24.

⁶⁹ José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 26.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

absence and a desire for presence, between reading one's nonexistence and recognizing the implications of one's positioning, one's coming-to-be."⁷¹

Reflective Nostalgia

Despite being articulated primarily in terms of LGBT subcultures, Savoy's notion of queerness is as much a matter of mnemonic as of sexual identification – what Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed describe as the “de-generation” of queer mnemonics⁷² – and resonates with Boym's account of reflective nostalgia:

Reflective nostalgia does not pretend to rebuild the mythical place called home; it is 'enamored of distance, not of the referent itself.' This type of nostalgic narrative is ironic, inconclusive and fragmentary...aware of the gap between identity and resemblance; the home is in ruins, or, on the contrary, has just been renovated and gentrified beyond recognition...We don't need a computer to get access to the virtualities of our imagination; reflective nostalgia has a capacity to awaken multiple planes of consciousness.⁷³

For Boym, reflective nostalgia corresponds to diasporic intimacy, whereas restorative or reparative nostalgia, with its drive towards “reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland,” corresponds to individualist intimacy (49). However, the distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia can also be understood in terms of the distinction between cinephilia and cinetopic passage, or between the cinephile and *cinepheur*. Cinephilia, like restorative nostalgia, is homely: as stated, the cinephilic moment can be guaranteed to produce the same response every time it is watched, or even every time it is recalled. By definition, then, to experience a cinephilic moment is to restore the first moment at which it was experienced. By contrast, cinetopic passage, like reflective memory, is more constructive: as Burgin's anecdote

⁷¹ Eric Savoy, “That Ain't All She Ain't: Doris Day and Queer Performativity,” in *Out Takes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film*, ed. Ellis Hanson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 177.

⁷² Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed, *If Memory Serves: Gay Men, AIDS and the Promise of the Queer Past* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 39.

⁷³ Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, 50.

suggests, it preoccupies itself with heterotopic homelessness, or the inherent unhomelieness of heterotopia. This doesn't mean that there is no nostalgic impulse *per se*, but that the drive towards restoring past spaces is deflected into a continual, creative and anecdotal reappropriation of present spaces.

As his description of the Bryson Hotel might suggest, Indiana's anecdote is keen to exhibit its cinetopic credentials and intentions by participating in this queered, reflective nostalgia. In fact, Indiana's account suggests renovative nostalgia as a middle ground between reflective and restorative nostalgia, as evinced in the central paradox of the anecdote; namely, that it is anxious to nostalgically reconstruct a space that has only become an object of nostalgia in the first place by virtue of its refusal to reconstruct the nostalgic overtones it might be expected to possess to a 1970s clientele; Fred MacMurray, after all, chose to remain silent partner. As an exercise in what might tentatively be termed cinetopic nostalgia, however, Indiana's account is curiously incomplete, or, rather, too complete. Concluding with an account of how *Salò* formed a summative 'crumble' of this period, it seems to leave little room for the crumble, detritus and apparatus of the cinetopic anecdote itself. As argued, the cinematic anecdote works by constructing a synecdoche for the cinematic heterotopia, or a microcosmic heterotopia, a point of incommensurability between a written artifact and an embodiment or enactment of all the things that can't or won't be written. In that sense, Indiana offers a cinetopic anecdote without a properly cinetopic object; or, alternatively, a gesture of reflective nostalgia that hasn't yet settled on a sufficiently diasporic object of intimacy. If, as Boym argues, cinema represents the renovative cusp at which individuality and the metropolis, reflective and restorative nostalgia, come into contact (38-39), then the cinematised hotel of Indiana's account might be understood as a similar site of contention that remains unresolved even as the anecdote appears to achieve resolution.

To some extent, this cinetopic object was provided by the subsequent release of Thom Andersen's film *Los Angeles Plays Itself*.⁷⁴ Not only does this film take its name from *LA Plays Itself* – perhaps explaining Andersen's notorious contempt for the abbreviation of Los Angeles to L.A. as an anxiety of influence⁷⁵ – but it situates Halsted's film within a feature film that simultaneously functions as a cinetopic anecdote. Composed entirely of footage of Los Angeles and found footage from films depicting Los Angeles, and accompanied by Andersen's reflections – voiced by actor Encke King – on how and why those clips respect or betray his conception of the city, *Los Angeles Plays Itself* involves Andersen refashioning cinematic depictions of the city into a series of venues from which its heterotopic passages can be mapped and imagined. As a result, the particular sequence of films – and there are several hundred – is significant, finding in the syntax of Andersen's Los Angeles the syntax of emergent DVD passage.

The excerpt from *LA Plays Itself* falls towards the end of the film, in the section designated as "The City as Character." Unlike Twact, Andersen chooses a series of clips from throughout the film, using them to illustrate how it "recapitulates the loss of Eden, moving from the idyllic rural canyons to the already mean streets of Hollywood. As the landscape becomes more urban, the sex gets rougher."⁷⁶ This diasporic, freeway-driven rural-urban migration forms the central anecdote of the film, and is frequently used by Andersen himself as a synecdoche for it:

Let me start with an anecdote, if I could. A week or two ago...a friend of mine said "Los Angeles looks like it was a lot more fun in those days." I said "It was." I'm not sure that's true, but that's how I feel. It's changed a lot since then, for better or worse. But there was, back then, in the late Sixties and early Seventies, more of an interplay between city and country than there is today, and I think that was one of the attractions of the city throughout the first two-thirds, three-fourths of the 20th century. It was a city that was very much in touch with nature, with the mountains, with the landscape, the ocean. Now that's become much more the privilege of the upper classes, it's less accessible to most people. So when I talk about Warhol's movie, or Fred Halsted's movie, or Maya Deren's movie, and how

⁷⁴ *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, directed by Thom Andersen (2003: Los Angeles), Film.

⁷⁵ Steve Erickson, "The Reality of Film: Thom Andersen on 'Los Angeles Plays Itself,'" *Indiewire*, July 27, 2004, <http://tinyurl.com/podu2cm>.

⁷⁶ Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 1:38:57.

they paint Los Angeles as a kind of countryside, that to me is a mythology that was real.⁷⁷

The Warhol movie in question here is the 1963 experimental feature *Tarzan and Jane Regained...Sort Of*,⁷⁸ which Andersen inserts immediately before the excerpt from *LA Plays Itself*, and condenses to its utopian, atavistic vision of the Watts Towers, built by construction worker Sam Rodia between 1921 and 1954 from a vast array of infrastructural detritus: “For Warhol, Hollywood formulas represented an innocence that could be regained, only sort of...but Sam Rodia’s towers in Watts were a bit of paradise not yet lost. In the early 60s, the Watts Towers were the world’s most accessible, user-friendly civic monument.”⁷⁹ As a vernacular assemblage of a miniature city, the Watts Towers also form a synecdoche for Andersen’s own aspiration to “an accessible, user-friendly civic monument.” Built in the 1920s from much the same infrastructural detritus as *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, they were canonised as part of the Los Angeles cityscape by the late 1950s, and saved from freeway deconstruction in the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁸⁰ This triumph of Watts over the freeway system forms the backdrop to both Warhol’s vision and Andersen’s appropriation of it. As has been discussed, however, the emergent freeway system, tested and elaborated in exurban and rural areas, already contained a promise of Edenic renewal – and this was particularly true of Los Angeles.

In “LA Freeway: An Appreciative Essay,” David Brodsky frames the emergence of the Los Angeles freeway system as the gradual distribution and expansion of a national park across embankments, slopes and greenbelts. This provided local flora and fauna with a series of oases from the desert climate, and provoked a renewed aesthetic apprehension of nature for the city’s citizens, for whom

⁷⁷ Andrew Tracy, “Bringing It Back: An Interview with Thom Andersen,” *Reverse Shot*, 2004, <http://tinyurl.com/3cguet>.

⁷⁸ *Tarzan and Jane Regained...Sort Of*, directed by Andy Warhol (1963: New York), Film.

⁷⁹ Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 1:37:08.

⁸⁰ Sarah Schrank, “Picturing the Watts Towers: The Art and Politics of an Urban Landmark,” in *Reading California: Art, Image and Identity 1900-2000*, eds. Stephanie Barron, Sherri Bernstein and Ilene Susan Fort (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 376-77.

“driving a landscaped freeway [became] one of the best (or at least most regular) escapes...into an urban preserve of open space and greenery.”⁸¹ Unlike a natural park, these spaces were all man-made – but, according to Brodsky, Los Angeles is peculiar among American cities for the strength of its fantasy that “all its features, whether flora, fauna or freeway, have had to be imported because it is built on a desert where nothing grows naturally.” Paradoxically, this makes it “only natural” that “panoramas of freeway interchanges should rank with long stretches of white beach” (46). Moreover, it suggests that such panoramas don’t merely provide access to nature, but enact, aestheticise and consummate the “architectonic landscape” of Los Angeles itself, aesthetically incomplete without this freeway optic:

Los Angeles has few of the cramped freeway structures that mar densely settled cities like San Francisco or Boston. As a result, the freeway rarely obscures the scenery by creating a visual barricade. More often than not, by rising above the sea of one- and two-storey buildings, freeways open up new vistas of the cityscape...Not only does the freeway shelter nature, but, when viewed from a distance it takes on a naturalistic quality of its own. Sitting in the revolving bar atop downtown’s Bonaventure Hotel, one views the freeway as one might watch the waves crashing on a beach, the traffic moving with an almost natural ebb and flow. Perhaps the ultimate testimony to the pleasure of watching the traffic flow is the McDonald’s restaurant in east Los Angeles whose picture windows overlook the San Bernardino freeway. Countless office buildings and apartments enjoy similar views (49).

In this passage, Los Angeles’ deterministic drive towards architectonics is presented as a movement from cinephilic rapture to cinetopic involvement, by way of three distinct interfaces. The first is the windscreen that separates the “new vistas of the cityscape” from the freeway-liberated driver. The second is the bank of windows at the top of the Bonaventure Hotel, part of what Jameson describes as a “glass skin” that “achieves a peculiar and placeless dissociation of the Bonaventure from its neighbourhood,” culminating with the Bona Vista Lounge, “in which, seated, you are again passively rotated about and offered a contemplative spectacle of the city itself, now transformed into its own images

⁸¹ Brodsky, *L.A. Freeway*, 48-49.

by the glass window through which you view it.”⁸² Just as Jameson argues that the aim of the Bonaventure Hotel is to elide any sense of an entrance that might distinguish its spaces from the rest of the city by interiorising them – or, rather, by exteriorising the city – so Brodsky’s deployment of the Bonaventure in the name of freeway architectonics speaks to a freeway without onramps or offramps, or at least a city in which onramps and offramps increasingly fail to signify spatially, as meaningful points of entry and exit, and are instead absorbed into the insular texture and theatrical infrastructure of the freeway itself:

Subjects exhibited little ability to locate a freeway onramp from numerous contextual clues, such as traffic patterns or the presence of high-rise buildings; they usually waited for explicit freeway signs or sight of the highway itself. This contradiction in the role of the freeway as urban image in Los Angeles – overwhelmingly important on one hand and almost invisible on the other – points to a paradox in the metropolitan environment...an underlying duality based on competing senses of orientation.⁸³

Picture Windows, Picture Windscreens

This “paradox in the metropolitan environment” is encapsulated in the final interface that Brodsky elaborates, between the East Hollywood McDonalds and the San Bernardino Freeway; or, rather, his deployment of the “picture window” as a trope for this final perceptual interface – a trope that Lynn Spigel has argued was “by far the central element used to create an illusion of the outside world in the early years of television”⁸⁴ and Friedberg has associated with the remediated “virtual window” of the digital era.⁸⁵ A window that gives the impression of not being a window, whether by virtue of size, framing or clarity of glass, the picture window does not fabricate the outside world’s existence in the manner, say, of a prospect or panorama, but the outside world’s presence. Identifying this

⁸² Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 42-43.

⁸³ Brodsky, *L.A. Freeway*, 24.

⁸⁴ Lynn Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 32.

⁸⁵ Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 103.

fabrication as “an evolving vernacular element serving an expansion of the visual field since the 1800s,” Sandy Isenstadt observes that:

It would be hard not to extend this critique to the present day, casting picture windows as a harbinger of spectacle, a little like a car’s windshield and a lot like television: hidden technologies – under the hood, offscreen, or behind the hedge – allow distant objects or events to be experienced near-at-hand, without physical or even intellectual exertion, and sometimes even without actual distance... Whatever the formal innovations of landscape architects, seeing landscapes through picture windows must be counted as one of the ways in which the landscape became modern. A kind of inhabitable camera, the picture window filtered radiant energy to form images of the good life.⁸⁶

Identifying “distance” and “hidden technologies” as the two objects of the picture window’s virtual gaze, Isenstadt identifies that gaze with the emergence of distant technologies and media. Where Spiegel specifies that the picture window served to naturalise, domesticate and interiorise television, Isenstadt considers it a voracious “harbinger” and domesticator of “all new technologies,” including those glimpsed through a “car’s windshield” – and this was certainly the case for Friedberg, whose preface informs the reader that her entire project came about as a result of the “synoptic vistas” glimpsed through such picture windscreens:

This book is a product of its context, both historical and geographical. In 1985, its author moved from New York City, the quintessential *modern* city (Capital of the Twentieth Century) to Los Angeles, the quintessential *post-modern* city (Capital of the Twenty-First). Living in Southern California, one learns rapidly about machines that mobilize the gaze; the lessons of the everyday are learned through an automobile windshield.

⁸⁶ Sandy Isenstadt, “The Rise and Fall of the Picture Window,” in *Housing and Dwelling: Perspectives on Modern Domestic Architecture*, ed. Barbara Miller Lane (London: Routledge, 2006), 304. The transition from suburban melodrama to suburban horror might be understood in terms of this moment at which the picture window segues into the spectacle of which it is a harbinger, transforming the cinematic picture window into something more than “a little like a car’s windshield and a lot like television.” This dawning vision of everything “under the hood, offscreen or behind the hedge” might conveniently be bookended by the networked taxi-windows of Nicholas Ray’s *Bigger Than Life* (1956; Los Angeles: The Criterion Collection, 2010, DVD) and the “inhabitable cameras” of John Carpenter’s *Halloween* (1978; Los Angeles: Anchor Bay, 2007, DVD), which culminate with the vertiginous Point Reyes lighthouse used in *The Fog* (1980; Greenwich, CT: MGM, 2005, DVD), a proto-digital walk-in picture window.

Although it resonates most immediately with Benjamin's "Capital of the Nineteenth-Century," Friedberg's capitalisation of "Century" also forms part of a prefatory, infrastructural narrative that witnesses her progression from "epiphanic" apprehension of the Westwood Freeway to "apocalyptic" anticipation of the completion of the Century Freeway. As with Benjamin's "apocalyptic interior – a complement, as it were of the bourgeois interior,"⁸⁷ this is apocalypticism configured around transfiguration as much as destruction – specifically, the transfiguration of the crepuscular space of the drive-in theatre into the diurnal, "everyday" availability of the drive-through multiplex:

On a previous trip to Los Angeles, I had to leave a Westwood movie theater in the middle of a film in order to feed a parking meter. On that particular afternoon, as I emerged from the theater's dark comfort, balancing the price of a movie ticket against the price of a parking ticket, I realized some basic things about spectatorship. I had been watching the garish color "remake" of Jean-Luc Godard's 1959 *Breathless*. Richard Gere was a warped transubstantiation of Jean-Paul Belmondo; the film made a twisted return to the Godard of the New Wave – a time travel of reference. Out in the glaring sun of Westwood Boulevard, I was hit with the epiphanic force of the obvious. Cinema spectatorship was not only a radical metaphor for the windshield, it was a unique form of time travel; parking was a necessary physical prerequisite for such imaginary mobilities of *flânerie*.⁸⁸

In fact, there had already been a garish remake of *Breathless*⁸⁹ for an American market – *Bonnie and Clyde*, whose adaptive homage was approved by Godard himself, by way of François Truffaut, shortly before the film debuted.⁹⁰ If *Bonnie and Clyde* found its initial audience in drive-in theatres, then the convergence of Jim McBride's revisionist remake⁹¹ and Friedberg's cinetopic recreation enacts a drive-in venue that is no longer hampered by daylight or other atmospheric conditions, but messianically extends the "daylight containment

⁸⁷ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 225.

⁸⁸ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, xi.

⁸⁹ *Breathless*, directed by Jean-Luc Godard (1960; Paris: The Criterion Collection, 2007), DVD.

⁹⁰ Mark Harris, *Scenes From A Revolution: The Birth of the New Hollywood* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2008), 64.

⁹¹ *Breathless*, directed by Jim McBride (1983; Los Angeles: MGM, 2000), DVD.

screen” whose “arrival was heralded as imminent in the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s.”⁹² Just as the most elaborate drive-ins expanded to contain many of the amenities that would be absorbed into the postmodern mall, subsisted on the mobility of freeway toll gates, and contracted to the flea markets that Lumet’s *Garbo* browsed as spectral videoplex,⁹³ so Friedberg envisages a drive-through theatre as the venue and object of her research, in which the moment of emerging from “dark comfort” into “glaring sun” is looped to the passage between “the price of a movie ticket” and “the price of a parking ticket” – what she has elsewhere described as negotiating “the *materiality* and *mobility* of the driver – the need to *park* the *vehicle* – in order to reach the *immateriality* and *stasis* of the spectatorial experience.”⁹⁴

Friedberg’s *Bonnie and Clyde* thus makes for an instructive comparison with Keathley’s *Bonnie and Clyde*. Among other things, it suggests that Keathley’s cinephilic conflation of windscreen and lobby might be understood as a nascent cinetopic enactment of drive-in spectatorship, just as Keathley’s opening attention to the “car racing forward, Clyde being thrown perpendicularly away” might be subsumed into the wider cinetopic movement from “Platte City, Iowa” to the “field” in which *Bonnie and Clyde* find brief respite.⁹⁵ In fact, this field – Dexfield Park, in northern Iowa – was itself something of a nascent drive-in:

⁹² Kerry Segrave, *Drive-In Theaters: A History From Their Inception in 1933*, 2nd Edn. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), 126.

⁹³ One of the most extensive drive-ins (and subsequent flea markets) was the All-Weather Drive-In Theater in Copaque, New York. A mall and multiplex before its time, “this movie mecca offer[ed] its patrons many unusual features: an amusement park and playground for the kids; a cafeteria where you can fill up on hot dogs, pizzas or a real meal; an air-conditioned indoor theater for rainy evenings; even a trackless train to transport the cash customers from one attraction to another.” Its “admissions gate, like a highway toll booth, automatically register[ed] each car as it passe[d] through.” “Million-Dollar Drive-In Offers Films, Fun and Food,” in *Popular Science* 171:3 (1957), 119-20. In *The American Drive-In Movie Theater* (Redondo Beach, CA: Crestline, 2013, Rev. Edn.), Don Sanders and Susan Sanders observe that many such drive-ins started to merge into flea markets while they were still partially operative (125).

⁹⁴ Friedberg, “Urban mobility and cinematic visuality,” 201.

⁹⁵ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 147.

Dexfield Park...had once been a popular gathering place, opened in 1915 and featured carnival rides, softball diamonds, a dance hall, a massive swimming pool, and lots of wooded areas for picknicking and camping. But the Depression had left few who could afford admission, and the Park closed in early 1933. By the time the Barrow Gang arrived six months later, the abandoned park's green acres still attracted lovers, local berry pickers and occasional indigent campers.⁹⁶

Arriving at the park just as it was poised to decline as a site of entertainment, Bonnie and Clyde revived it by attracting a crowd of hundreds to their most visceral showdown, and performing that showdown while continuously driving, at least in Arthur Penn's version: "The gang members struggle back into their car and attempt an escape, but they can only buzz in circles, randomly, while the posse fires at will."⁹⁷ In this drive-in theatre without a theatre, they became both a new mode of mass entertainment and its first customers, converging their last real stand with the nascent entertainment space within which its images and imaginary would eventually be disseminated, and transforming a refusal to park, an insistence on parking as an indefinite, transitive act, into the most urgent and dramatic gesture possible. As this might suggest, if parking is a "necessary prerequisite" to Friedberg's "imaginary mobilities of *flânerie*," then *flânerie* crystallises into *flâneuserie* at this moment at which parking, like shopping, becomes transitive, dissociated from any concrete or terminal acquisition. It is this discovery that acquiring a park is in fact "a form of erotic foreplay" to the "more fulfilling pleasures" of seeking a park⁹⁸ that opens up the multiplectically "synoptic vistas" of Friedberg's windscreen, the most transfigurative of which is the Century Freeway, a Benjaminian "wish-image" in which "the collective seeks to both overcome and transfigure the immaturity of the social product":⁹⁹

The new and the old interpenetrate in fantastic fashion. This interpenetration derives its fantastic character, above all, from the fact that what is old in the current of social development never clearly stands out from what is new, while the latter, in an effort to disengage from the antiquated, regenerates archaic, primordial elements. The utopian

⁹⁶ Jeff Guinn, *Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 219.

⁹⁷ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 147.

⁹⁸ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 123.

⁹⁹ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 4.

elements which accompany the emergence of the new always reach back to the primal past. In the dream in which each epoch entertains images of its successor, the latter appears wedded to elements of primal history.¹⁰⁰

For Brodsky, this is precisely the function of the freeway, which gestures towards new media horizons by awakening primal, architectonic relationships with landscape and space. For Brodsky, too, the Century Freeway holds a privileged place among this architectonic dreamscape: not only is it presented as the dream-threshold that is the incomplete and possibly never-to-be-completed freeway, but of all the incomplete freeways that he elaborates, it has the most complicated “primal” construction history, as well as the only “freeway flow”¹⁰¹ that might significantly impact upon that of the San Bernardino freeway, and the synoptic vistas of the East Los Angeles McDonald’s picture windcreens. As Figures 22-25 suggest, this architectonic dreamscape is peculiarly amenable to remediation at the hands of Google Street View, arguably the new media horizon that most consummates and culminates Brodsky’s cinetopic anecdote.¹⁰²

Street Views

In Reyner Banham’s terms, Google Street View is an autopic medium: it conceives of the street “in its totality” as “a single comprehensible place, a coherent state of mind, a complete way of life”¹⁰³ in a strikingly post-cinematic

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 893.

¹⁰¹ Brodsky, *L.A. Freeway*, 9.

¹⁰² Although Brodsky does not specify exactly which McDonalds he means, this is the only McDonalds in East Los Angeles that commands a view of the San Bernardino – and the fact that its vantage point is so striking (the intersection of the San Bernardino Freeway, Long Beach Freeway and El Monte Freeway) and its picture windows are so pronounced suggests that this is the venue cited. Further information can be found at the official site: “Restaurant #3100, 1617 North Eastern Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90063,” McDonald’s Corporation, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/m5kkynl>. The following images are taken from “1617 N Eastern Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90063, USA,” Google Maps/Google Street View, accessed July 9, 2013 [Google does not provide discrete URLs for map images, but the Google Map/Google Street View site can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/87wyjpz>].

¹⁰³ Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, 2nd Edn (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 195.

revision of Kracauer's street as a "center of fleeting impressions."¹⁰⁴ Insofar as its axial sight-lines reiterate the ubiquitous passage of the Google Street Car, it dovetails the phenomenologies of street and freeway into a single movement, making for a medium that is peculiarly attuned to the fact that "Los Angeles is hard to get right, maybe because traditional public space has been largely occupied by the quasi-private space of moving vehicles. It's elusive, just beyond the reach of an image."¹⁰⁵ As an attentiveness to just this elusion at which the "traditional public space" of the street becomes the "quasi-private space" of the freeway, Google Street View stands as a remediated corollary to the offramp – and it is on an offramp that Banham has his own epiphany that "coming off the freeway is coming in from outdoors. A domestic or sociable journey in Los Angeles does not end so much at the door of one's destination as at the off-ramp of the freeway."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 195.

¹⁰⁵ Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 12:17.

¹⁰⁶ Banham, *Four Ecologies*, 195. Neil Burger's *Limitless* (2011; West Hollywood, CA: 20th Century Fox, 2011, DVD) narrativises this perceptual offramp by way of a protagonist who takes a drug that allows him to use 100% of his brain. Among other things, this fuses his perception with that of Google Street View, as Burger models his editing on the distinctive dissolves of the Google Street Camera. This perhaps explains the film's unusual perceptual juncture between two-dimensional and three-dimensional cinema: the Google Street dissolve depends on a combination of regular and 3D cameras to ensure that the two-dimensional images are mapped onto a roughly polygonal model of the environment from which they are drawn (Mark Cummins, "Google Street View – Soon in 3D?", *Educating Silicon* (blog), April 18, 2008, <http://tinyurl.com/9cwcdz>), while some Google Street View images are already available in 3D, albeit in an anaglyphic, rather than polarised form, once again positioning Burger's film as a transition to more contemporary and cutting-edge 3D technologies ("Google Maps Street View: Now There Is A 3D Option?," *Itech and Gadget Diary* (blog), accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/y1k96ka>). One of the first objects to be made available in 3D was Stonehenge, in a renewal of Benjamin's "primal" energies, the glyph within the analoglyph (Chris, "Google Maps in Anaglyph," *Anaglyph* (blog), April 6, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/on55nu2>), while this three-dimensionality has witnessed perhaps its most vertiginous, sublime incarnation to date in the first Street View of a skyscraper (Adario Strange, "Google Street View Maps First Skyscraper, Dubai's Burj-Khalifa," *PC Mag* online, June 24, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/n7xu45r>). In "The Vertical Flâneur: Narratorial Tradecraft in the Colonial Metropolis," Paul K. Saint-Amour, drawing on the same edition of *The Arcades Project*, observes that Benjamin describes his magnum opus "as climbing towards just this sort of panoramic overview, one rung at a time – as a serendipitous and vertical flânerie through the archive-city, toward a final aerial

Now, while Brodsky's account of Los Angeles freeways doesn't explicitly prioritise the offramp, his McDonald's anecdote is how a cinetopic anecdote might look at its most radical: devoid of any specific cinematic reference, it nevertheless "eroticises the space" of the offramp in the way that Barthes attributes to leaving the cinema.¹⁰⁷ For what this Google Street View makes clear is that the view from the East Los Angeles McDonald's is not entirely unmediated: not only is there a bank of trees between the restaurant and the freeway, but the curve of the drive-through intervenes. Similarly, as the Google Map makes clear, this drive-through reiterates the movement-image of the offramp: to purchase a drive-through meal from the freeway is to effectively experience the offramp again, "letting oneself be experienced *twice over*, by the image and its surroundings."¹⁰⁸ While it is not clear whether the bank of trees was significant or even existent thirty years ago, drive-through services had become more or less standard in McDonalds restaurants by the 1980s,¹⁰⁹ especially in Los Angeles, "a logical place for the drive-in concept."¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, whether or not the trees and drive-through were present at the time is not exactly the point. If Brodsky's anecdote is simultaneously an anecdote about drive-through perception, it is an anecdote that requires the sensibility and technology of Google Street View to bring its contours into proper relief: as Moretti observes of the role of maps in distant reading, "in order to see this pattern, we must first extract it from the narrative flow" – or freeway flow – "and the only way to do so is with a map."¹¹¹

vista: "How this work was written: rung by rung, according as chance would offer a narrow foothold, and always like someone who scales dangerous heights and never allows himself a moment to look around, for fear of becoming dizzy (but also because he would save for the end the full force of the panorama opening out to him). (AP 460)." (In *Joyce, Benjamin and Magical Urbanism*, ed. Maurizia Boscagli and Enda Duffy (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 226).

¹⁰⁷ Barthes, "Leaving the Movie Theater," 346.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 349.

¹⁰⁹ William Kaszynski, *The American Highway: The History and Culture of Roads in the United States*, Reprint (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012), 196.

¹¹⁰ Richard W. Longstreth, *The Drive-In, The Supermarket and the Transformation of Commercial Space in Los Angeles 1914-1941* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 123.

¹¹¹ Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 39

Leaving the ontological and phenomenological implications of morphing a Google Map into a Google Street View – “the last zoom layer on the map”¹¹² – to the Google Wind in the trees, discussed presently, it is clear that Google Street View inculcates something like an object-oriented autology, in which Banham’s iconic observation that he learned to drive in order to practice a dark ecology of Los Angeles “in the original”¹¹³ can be sequelled for a post-cinematic, post-perceptual injunction to think as if we were cars; a posture that Bogost describes as “ontographic” and describes in terms of the affinity between the “unfamiliar repeleteness present in a modern automobile” and the “exploded-view drawing,”¹¹⁴ a useful analogy for a cartographic revolution that has, in its way, exploded the prison-world of classical cinematic constriction with the dynamite of a hundredth-second between one Google Street View frame and the next.

Nevertheless, just as the *cinépheur* subsumes the explosive disintegrations of Benjaminian cinema into Kracauer’s reconfiguration of the cinetopic venue around “a distraction that exposes disintegration instead of masking it,” so Brodsky’s – and Banham’s – autological, drive-through phenomenology doesn’t merely reiterate the movement of the offramp, but interiorises it to those “ground-level streets [that] count no more than the front drive of the house.” And it is from this space between front drive and interior that Brodsky evokes a shimmering dialectic between picture windscreen and drive-through window that is simultaneously the very glissando of Google Street View, belying the paucity and functionality of the “shell” that the actual structure of the building provides: “Fantasy of the hamburger kind is too often a compensation for the poverty of the building behind or under it, or for the hard-nosed rationalism of the market economy, and this division between the rational, functional shell and the fantastic garnish has become more apparent as the years have passed.”¹¹⁵

¹¹² “Google Street View Hits Antarctica,” *BBC News* online, October 1, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/246kpqe>.

¹¹³ Banham, *Four Ecologies*, 5.

¹¹⁴ Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or What It’s Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 51-52.

¹¹⁵ Banham, *Four Ecologies*, 100.

It is perhaps appropriate, then, that the Google Street View version of the East Avenue McDonald's does not allow us to enter the drive-through. Instead, clicking on the drive-through – the red pin on the first of the following three figures – takes us immediately to the San Bernardino Freeway itself, from which we can only orient ourselves by turning around and gazing back up at the McDonalds, and its picture window. Clicking on the drive-through forces us, once again, to ascend the offramp. In the hands of Google Street View, Brodsky's cinetopic anecdote thus becomes a veritable eternal return of offramp and drive-through (Figures 26-28), a elusion of both “the price of a movie ticket and the price of a parking ticket” into the “siderational” movement of the Google Street View blind spot, as if to conjure up the experience of being blasted astrally and “horizontally by the car...the power museum that America has become for the whole world.”¹¹⁶

It is debatable whether this blind spot constitutes a post-perceptual iteration of Steve Mann's “McVeillance” – the “ratio of surveillance to sousveillance” wherever spaces “install...surveillance camers while simultaneously prohibiting people from having or using their own cameras”¹¹⁷ – or, more reparatively, an instance of what Mitchell Schwarzer describes as “zoomscapes,” vistas that “encourage us to imagine just what is beyond the frame, the parts of buildings that might come into view or remain unseen.”¹¹⁸ Perhaps the most accurate designation is a McVeillant ecology in which sousveillance outweighs

¹¹⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *America*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1988), 27.

¹¹⁷ Steve Mann, “McVeillance,” *Eyetaip* (blog), October 10, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/qfd3no8>.

¹¹⁸ Schwarzer, *Zoomscape*, 23. Schwarzer differs from most other theorists cited in identifying New York, rather than Los Angeles, as the epicentre of freeway affect and sublimity, “because no other North American city is as dense as New York,” meaning that “the construction of limited-access highways through urban neighborhoods has not been as disruptive in other places.” However, he notes that for this very reason New York is less conducive to the particular pleasures of the picture windscreen, or freeway picture window: “For a while during the 1980s and 1990s, some of the window openings on empty buildings were covered by painted wooden panels (provided by the city government) of puffy clouds and blue sky. But nobody was fooled; the Cross-Bronx Expressway was not picturesque, not even for an instant” (102).

surveillance, or a siderated zoomscape, subsuming the archive of Google Street View and its ancillary technologies into a new “power museum,” itself powered by the extension of Google Street View to Museum View, in the first major incursion of the Google Street Camera into indoor space.¹¹⁹

Conflating the Google Street View windscreen with the display case of the museum produces something like Google historicism, in which it is not the object in the glass case, but the case itself, that “still radiates a tiny quantum of cultural energy.”¹²⁰ Accordingly, the most recent development in the Google post-cinematic empire – Google Glass – emerges out of the Google X Think Tank’s attempt to fully autonomise the automobile, thereby discorrelating the picture windscreen from the user/driver’s sensorium, and transforming the windscreen itself into a syntactic or formal device that only functions paradoxically and anachronistically, in the same way as the “digitally simulated lens flare.”¹²¹ One of the most extensive documentations of this can be found at Google’s “Self-Driving Car Test: Steve Mahan,” where a 95% blind subject does his daily chores in an autonomous car, culminating with his visit to a drive-through; a concise vision of the phantom ride in the wake of Google and YouTube perception.¹²² Not only do associations between Google Glass and the windscreen abound, but speculations that the Google Windscreen may be imminent,¹²³ as well as contemplations of the way in which the Google Glass camera might take us even further towards a Kino-Eye, in what *Variety* posits as the next major step in cinematic eye contact since Errol Morris’ *Interrotron*: “A key aspect of Glass for professional filmmakers is that the camera sits about an inch to the side of the

¹¹⁹ Jonathan Siegel, “Google Lat Long: Street View takes you inside museums around the world,” *Google Maps* (blog), February 1, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/kz6ucec>.

¹²⁰ Stephen Greenblatt, “Resonance and Wonder,” in *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*, New Edn. (London: Routledge, 2007), 218.

¹²¹ Hayley Tsukayama, “Google’s Project Glass engineers: Who are they?” *The Washington Post* online, April 6, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/laamxyg>; Denson, “Crazy Cameras.”

¹²² Google, “Self-Driving Car Test: Steve Mahan,” YouTube, March 28, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/7xcsg56>.

¹²³ Jack Purcher, “Google Patent Reveals Vision for Google “Glass” Technology Extended to Windshield, Telescopes & Beyond,” *Patent Bolt* (blog), May 3, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/n3khaat>.

eyeball, simulating eye contact in a way most video cameras can't."¹²⁴ On their official site, Google provide some examples of this cartographic cusp (Figures 29-32), as well as a video detailing "how it feels," which, commencing with the ascent of a hot-air balloon, positions Google Glass as the latest installment in a genealogy of spectacular and scientific pursuits that announce themselves at the vertiginous cusp between lateral and aerial spatial apprehension, perhaps explaining why "Take me to the Eiffel Tower" has become one of Google Glass' flagship commands: "What more brilliant centerpiece for it than a structure that turned its back on the ownership of land – that occupied unowned and previously useless space, the sky itself? In becoming a huge vertical extrusion of a tiny patch of the earth's surface, it would demonstrate the power of *process*. Anyone could buy land, but only *la France moderne* could undertake the conquest of the air."¹²⁵

If the logical conclusion of this convergence of Google Street View and Google Museum – and, more generally, the logical conclusion of transforming Google Street View into an interiorising device, in the manner of Benjaminian *flânerie* – is a walk-in, citywide museum, then what we are witnessing is a revival of the Benjaminian museum, under the sign of *flâneuserie*. That also means a revival of

¹²⁴ Kevin Kelleher, "How Much Could Google Glass Change the Way People Consume Content?" *Variety* online, July 17, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/kv5bpvl>.

¹²⁵ Robert Hughes, *The Shock of The New*, Rev. Edn. (New York: Knopf, 1991), 10; "Google Glass – How It Feels," Google, accessed July 21, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/bza2w2g>, 1:05-1:12. Clint Eastwood's *Space Cowboys* (2000; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2010, DVD) performs a similar movement-image: revolving around the pilots who were discharged when the space race was handed over from the air force to NASA, it is affectively poised at the cusp between air force exploration and space exploration. As in the Google Glass clip, every lateral movement has a buoyancy that seems destined to carry it above the clouds (at one point, Eastwood steers a car in the jetstream of a rocket), while the exhilarating freefalls of outer space start right at the horizon, in a crystallisation of the vertical horizon, or verticon, that always lurks around the fringes of Eastwood's widescreen visions – most pointedly in his other Cold War masterpieces, *The Eiger Sanction* (1975; Universal City, CA: Universal Studios, 1998, DVD) and *Firefox* (1982; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2010), but prototypically in *Play Misty For Me* (1971; Universal City, CA: Universal Studios, 2001, DVD), discussed presently.

the dream house,¹²⁶ spurred by a new iteration of “the glass architecture of the future Benjamin often refers to.”¹²⁷ While this formulation will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, Andersen’s film provides a concise instance of the *Wunderkammera* this dream-museum might contain (Figures 33-38), best grasped in sequence – or, rather, as a sequence-image, “neither image nor image sequence...belong[ing] neither to film nor to photography theory as currently defined”;¹²⁸ a collection of partial vistas, “just beyond reach of an image.”¹²⁹

Infrastructuralism

For Andersen, the first two structures in this sequence-image constitute a dialectic that determines the *Wunderkammera* to follow: whereas the “McDonald’s in the City of Industry is never open to the public,” reserved exclusively for use as a film set, “Mr Blanding’s dream house, fictionally located in the woods of Connecticut, has been preserved as an administration building at Malibu Creek State Park.” However, whereas the Industry McDonald’s is “real without being actual,” the residue of Mr. Blanding’s dream house is “ideal without being abstract,” conjoining them into what might be described, after Deleuze, as the infrastructuralist aesthetic and tendencies of Anderson’s vision:

Every structure is an infrastructure, a microstructure. In a certain way, they are not actual. What is actual is that in which the structure is incarnated or rather as what the structure constitutes in its incarnation. But in itself, it is neither actual nor fictional, neither real nor possible. Jakobson poses the problem of the status of the phoneme, which is not to be confused with any actual letter, syllable or sound, no more than it is a fiction, or an associated image (Jakobson and Halle 1963 [1956]). Perhaps the word “virtuality” would precisely designate the mode of the structure or the object of theory, on the condition that we eliminate any vagueness

¹²⁶ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 406: “Museums unquestionably belong to the dream houses of the collective. In considering them, one would want to emphasise the dialectic by which they come into contact, on the one hand, with scientific research and, on the other hand, with ‘the dreamy tide of bad taste.’”

¹²⁷ Rolf Tiedemann, “Dialectics at a Standstill: Approaches to the *Passagen-Werk*,” in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 933.

¹²⁸ Burgin, *Remembered Film*, 27.

¹²⁹ Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 10:18, 11:24, 12:39, 12:44, 12:56, 4:34, 4:42.

about the word. For the virtual has a reality that is proper to it, but that does not merge with any actual reality, any present or past actuality. The virtual has an ideality that is proper to it, but that does not merge with any possible image, any abstract idea. We will say of structure: *real without being actual, ideal without being abstract*.¹³⁰

If the infrastructural *Wunderkammera* – that is, the cinetopic anecdotes – that Andersen chooses to elaborate and expand upon this infrastructuralist dialectic engage with “the reality that is proper” to Deleuze’s conception of virtuality, then it is by virtue of their remediation of one of the key rhetorical postures of the *Wunderkammer* – the “fold,” which, Anna Munster argues, allows “historically and conceptually different times to touch each other by following their lines of connection and development” in order to enact the structures of feeling peculiar to “living the discontinuities and connections of digital sensory experience.”¹³¹ Appropriately, Munster also derives her conception of the fold from Deleuze, whose identification of it with “the secret of things, as focus, cryptography, or even as the determination of the indeterminate by means of ambiguous signs”¹³² will become particularly pertinent to the becoming-secret of *House of Cards*, but is relevant here in terms of the “ambiguous signs” that constitute the central objects of Andersen’s *Wunderkammera*, as well as how they gesture towards their *gestalt* in “the specific mode of perception induced by the Watts Towers.”¹³³

While this is quite clear from the fortuitous, epiphanic and, above all, cinematic conjunctions of infrastructure that occur in the first three of the *Wunderkammera* displayed above, it is crystallised in the final two, which, occurring towards the beginning of the film, deconstruct the location shot in their attention to the transitory infrastructural phenomena – especially signage –

¹³⁰ Gilles Deleuze, “How Do We Recognize Structuralism?” in *Desert Islands: and Other Texts 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Mike Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e): 2004), 178.

¹³¹ Munster, *Materializing New Media*, 8.

¹³² Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Continuum, 2006), 23.

¹³³ Paul A. Harris, “To See with the Mind and Think through the Eye: Deleuze, Folding Architecture and Simon Rodia’s Watts Towers,” in *Deleuze and Space*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 56.

that revolve around the perennial Los Angeles movie shoot ecology, in something like the transitory apprehensions and pleasures of Google Street View. In Paul Virilio's terms, these *Wunderkammera* are dromographic in their perennial "wait for the coming of what abides: the trees that file past on the screen of the windscreen,"¹³⁴ not merely describing but enacting the "possibilities of engagement" in this new city-museum: "If panoramic perception resembles a linear stroll past pictures in a museum, dromoscopic perception is more like an imaginative leap into the perspectival space of one of those pictures. If panoramic perception turns buildings into objects of distanced reflection, dromoscopic perception approaches the built world through possibilities of engagement...always pursuing a distant horizon."¹³⁵ While this certainly lends

¹³⁴ Paul Virilio, *Negative Horizon: An Essay in Dromoscopy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2008), 115. At their most visceral, Virilio's vistas evoke a kind of apocalyptic horror – and while this is not exactly the register of *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, it is encapsulated in Clint Eastwood's directorial debut, *Play Misty For Me*. Eastwood only agreed to direct this thriller about a disc jockey stalked by an obsessive fan on the condition that the location was changed from Los Angeles to Carmel-by-the-Sea, but the film is inextricably a Los Angeles narrative, insofar as it is set across the breadth of the windscreen, which Eastwood expands, elasticises and transforms into a two-way medium, creating something like the first horror film to truly glimpse and grasp the horror of being observed by somebody while on the phone to them. And, in fact, this abstraction of Los Angeles to the windscreen means that Carmel can simultaneously function as a kind of objective correlative to the picture windscreen/drive-through window, transformed, in Eastwood's hands, into a repository of dreamy, glassy vistas, as well as the foundational instance of his dromoscopic sublime, chilling in its suggestion that "the hate and extreme horror of what is close...is merely the indirect and politically unperceived consequences of the logistical capacities that reach the extremities of the world without delay" (Virilio, *Negative Horizon*, 190). Hence Eastwood's replacement of conventional suspense and shock with unbelievable, expansive vistas that "simply wait for the coming of what abides" – often a face that, with a slight shift in light, is horrifically revealed to have *always been there* – as well as the trembling cusp between a glassy, Californian wave and a global, telecommunicative wave that rarefies horror to the "negative horizon," or dromoscopic horizon, that would suffuse his subsequent verticons. In other words, a vision of his home town as a dark media ecology, a point of unexpected resonance and frequency, pitched along the same dark coastal ecology as Carpenter's *The Fog* ("By Carmel, he wanted to marry me"), as if to remediate Carmel's association with the moment "at which ecology acquired disciplinary coherence in the 1920s" (Sharon E. Kingsland, *The Evolution of American Ecology 1890-2000* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 125).

¹³⁵ Schwarzer, *Zoomscape*, 99.

itself to the cryptographic “secret history of the city”¹³⁶ that Deleuze describes, it is even more pronounced in Andersen’s subsequent film, *Get Out of the Car*,¹³⁷ which began:

as simply a study of weather-worn billboards around Los Angeles. The title was *Outdoor Advertising*. I’ve loved these billboards with their abstract and semi-abstract patterns since I was a teenager, and I would sometimes take photographs of them, but I resisted the idea of putting them in a film because ‘it had been done,’ notably in still photographs by Walker Evans and Aaron Siskind. An interest in decayed signs had become a commonplace in contemporary art...beautiful or funny things that most people would overlook, things that I would probably overlook if I hadn’t been searching for them. It happened that many of these things were also outdoor advertisements, from custom-made neon signs to whimsical sculptures to mural-like paintings that cover the walls of restaurants, grocery stores, and auto repair shops.¹³⁸

Suffused with “the little triumphs and awkward intensities” of Los Angeles’ “character,” this commentary opens with Andersen speaking about Los Angeles in much the same way as Sontag does about camp, with “a deep sympathy, modified by revulsion,” drawing on camp’s fascination with “the process of aging or deterioration” to “arouse the necessary sympathy”¹³⁹ for his project – or, rather, to subsume his project into that “process of aging,” since what emerges from this commentary is that the process of shooting and scouting the film was at least as significant as the final product. From that perspective, Andersen’s oeuvre perhaps belongs with that of the drive-through film, the most recent and radical iteration of the drive-in experience – also known as the guerilla drive-in – in which films are projected more or less spontaneously onto components of urban infrastructure glimpsed in transit – bridge pillars and warehouses in particular¹⁴⁰ – in a zoomscape in which the post-cinematic screen is continually

¹³⁶ Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 2:11:55.

¹³⁷ *Get Out of the Car*, directed by Thom Andersen (2010: Los Angeles), Film.

¹³⁸ Thom Andersen, “*Get Out of the Car: A Commentary*,” in *Urban Cinematics: Understanding Urban Phenomena through the Moving Image*, ed. François Penz and Andong Lu (Bristol, UK: Intellect Ltd., 2011), 55-57.

¹³⁹ Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp,” in *Sontag Reader*, 119, 105, 113.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, the website of MobMov: The Drive-In That Drives In (<http://tinyurl.com/l5wz5h>), which, as of July 25, 2013, is “driven by 20 904 members in 350 mobs from 35 nations across the globe.”

“emerging into squares, as if circulating in some vast vascular system that it has no wish to block.”¹⁴¹

Schwarzer identifies the city symphony of the 1920s as the genesis of this zoomscape,¹⁴² and Andersen also refers to *Get Out Of The Car* as “a proper Los Angeles city symphony film,” albeit whose point of departure is the infrastructural phoneme – inframe – that Deleuze gestures towards:

In the early stages of work on the film, I planned to use simple background ambient sound, a kind of ‘street tone’ for each shot that would do no more than differentiate one space from another. It came into my mind that I can still remember hearing certain songs in certain places even fifty years later... These random juxtapositions of sounds and places are one of the great joys of modern life and of city life in particular. The cinema is the only art that can recreate these experiences and their emotional resonance.¹⁴³

This cusp between ambience and punctuated ambience – what Morton might describe as a symphonic ecology without a symphony – corresponds to Andersen’s cusp between reflective and restorative nostalgia, which he terms “militant nostalgia,” enjoining the *cinéphur* to “Change the past, it needs it. Remember the words of Walter Benjamin I quote in the film: even the dead will not be safe. Restore what can be restored, like the Watts Towers. Rebuild what must be rebuilt.”¹⁴⁴ The quote from Benjamin is taken from his “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” and arrives on the heels of his observation that: “As flowers turn toward the sun, by dint of a secret heliotropism the past strives to turn toward that sun which is rising in the sky of history. A historical materialist must be aware of this most inconspicuous of transformations.”¹⁴⁵ In *The Four Ecologies*, Banham designates Los Angeles as a heliotropic assemblage that “looks naturally towards the Sunset, which can be stunningly handsome... [it]

¹⁴¹ Françoise Sagan, *With Fondest Regards*, trans. Christine Donougher (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1985), 67, cited in Schwarzer, *Zoomscape*, 99.

¹⁴² Schwarzer, *Zoomscape*, 215.

¹⁴³ Andersen, “Commentary,” 68.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁴⁵ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in Arendt (ed.) and Zohn (trans.), *Illuminations*, 255.

named one of its great boulevards after that famous evening view.” Nevertheless, even “if the eye follows the sun westward, migration cannot,” meaning that Los Angeles is ultimately where people “stop going west” – the limit at which “the strength and nature of this westward flow” is redirected from a heliotropism into a more general phototropism.¹⁴⁶ Biologically speaking, tropisms – movements of plants, or the vascular tissue of Schwarzer’s zoomscape – are usually mapped retrospectively, as a record of “that sun which is rising in the sky of history.” In both controlled and uncontrolled conditions, the comparative study of tropisms therefore involves inducing environmental factors – and botanist and historian of science Craig W. Whippo has observed parallels between the history of phototropic enquiry and that of inductive reasoning.¹⁴⁷ By that logic, the prospect of a subjectivity considering its own tropisms – what I will shortly describe as tropic mapping – is necessarily a paradoxical and retrospective gesture, encapsulated in Benjamin’s cinetopic injunction “to experience the present as waking world, a world to which that dream we name the past refers in truth. To pass through and carry out *what has been* in remembering the dream.”¹⁴⁸

If passage through Los Angeles partakes of this cinetropic dream, then Andersen’s infrastructuralism constitutes an application of phototropic analysis to a specifically cinematic ecology – a process that Garrett Stewart suggests:

...may be taken to name all those lateral movements of ongoing cinematic record that cling to, linger over, and then disengage from serial photographic images in cinema’s own procedural difference from them. The effect is sometimes to rehearse the retention and release of single images on cinema’s own wheeling track. It is against this play between moving camera and still photographic image that the alternative case of photogrammatic disclosure, the freeze-frame, will then come into sharper relief, arresting camerawork and narrative agency at once, canceling the cinematic in deference to the sheerly filmic.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Banham, *Four Ecologies*, 6

¹⁴⁷ Whippo, Craig W. “Phototropism: Bending towards Enlightenment.” *The Plant Cell* 18:5 (2006), 1110.

¹⁴⁸ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 389.

¹⁴⁹ Garrett Stewart, *Between Film and Screen: Modernism’s Photo Synthesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 9.

“Canceling the cinematic” designation of “L.A.” in deference to the “sheerly filmic” co-ordinates of “Los Angeles,” *Los Angeles Plays Itself* updates this “lateral movement” for a new kind of “procedural difference” – between cinema and post-cinema, rather than photography and cinema, transforming photogrammatic disclosure into cinemagrammatic disclosure that “clings to, lingers over and then disengages” from serial cinematic images in the name of a medium that is as anxious to dissociate itself from cinema as Andersen is to dissociate its subject: “But if you’re like me and you identify more with the city of Los Angeles than with the movie industry, it’s hard not to resent the idea of Hollywood, the idea of the movies as standing apart from and above the city.”¹⁵⁰ In its suggestion that Los Angeles can only be glimpsed as a post-cinematic city – or, rather, its ambition to be the foundational post-cinematic depiction of Los Angeles – Andersen’s film is also an embodiment of the “freeze-frame baroque” of Benjamin’s sentences: precisely the point of the film is that images of Los Angeles “do not entail,” meaning that an optic commensurate to the city instead needs to treat each image “in extremis,” as if it were “the first, or the last.”

In “Cinnemonics versus Digitime,” Stewart observes that “the logic of a searchable database (and satellite download) like that of Google Earth” is a reconfiguration of “screen spectacle’s cosmic zoom” into the “electrographic mechanism of stealth targeting.”¹⁵¹ Insofar as *Los Angeles Plays Itself* anticipates the post-cinematic reconfiguration of the zoomscape embodied by the rise of Google geographies, its effort to evoke a city that exists “just beyond reach of an image” corresponds to this electrographic stealth – and electrographic architecture, “a combination of artificial light and graphic art that can even comprise a whole building” is identified by Banham as one of the key redirections and deflections of Los Angeles’ thwarted phototropism.¹⁵² For Banham, the key electrographic artifact is the Los Angeles Power and Water Building, “a brilliant

¹⁵⁰ Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 15:05.

¹⁵¹ Garrett Stewart, “Cinnemonics versus Digitime,” in *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze’s Film Philosophy*, ed. D.N. Rodowick (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota University Press, 2010), 350.

¹⁵² Banham, *Four Ecologies*, 114-15.

cube of diamond-cool light riding above the lesser lights of downtown” that is “the only gesture of public architecture that matches the style and scale of the city.”¹⁵³ For Andersen, too, the Water and Power Building is a critical influence – both via Pat O’Neill’s experimental film *Water and Power*, a key touchstone for *Get Out of The Car*,¹⁵⁴ and for the Department’s role in *Chinatown*, which Andersen identifies as the key moment at which films about Los Angeles become “period films, set in the past or in the future. They would replace a public history with a secret history.”¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the Water and Power Building is only an intermediary between *Los Angeles Plays Itself* and its most striking synecdoche, or microcity: the Watts Towers. Placed by Banham in a genealogy that reaches back to the electrographic “illuminated needles capping [the] cinemas” of Indiana’s “Westwood Village,”¹⁵⁶ the Watts Towers were determined, above all, by Rodia’s compulsive “inner necessity” to “build towards the sun,”¹⁵⁷ specifically his fascination with “tile chips, broken bottles (especially if their glass was tinted), sea shells and anything else that might reflect the Los Angeles sun,”¹⁵⁸ which reimagined electrographic colourism as vernacular architecture: “The towers and birdbaths and fountains and decorated posts and bright oddments and household colours, the green of 7-up bottles and blue of Milk of Magnesia.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ Ibid., 116.

¹⁵⁴ *Water and Power*, directed by Pat O’Neill (1989: Los Angeles), Film; Andersen, “Commentary,” 55.

¹⁵⁵ *Chinatown*, directed by Roman Polanski (1974; Hollywood, CA: Paramount, 1999), DVD; Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 1:51:50.

¹⁵⁶ Banham, *Four Ecologies*, 116.

¹⁵⁷ Sarah Schrank, “*Nuestro Pueblo*: The Spatial and Cultural Politics of Los Angeles’ Watts Towers,” in *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics and Everyday Life*, ed. Gyan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 283.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Kostelanetz, *A Dictionary of the Avant-Gardes*, 2nd Ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), 523. As an alternative to this recalibration of phototropism as electrographics, Mike Davis posits Los Angeles’ movement, in the 1980s, towards the “rising sun” of Japanese investment as a tropism. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London: Verso, 2006), 137.

¹⁵⁹ Don DeLillo, *Underworld: A Novel* (New York: Scribner, 1998), 276.

Folding Architecture

In “Deleuze, Folding Architecture and Simon Rodia’s Watts Towers,” Paul A. Harris observes that the integration of Deleuzian theory into architecture – especially the Deleuzian fold – often operates on a top-down principle, subordinating the actual construction of buildings to planning and generating graphics. In doing so, it constitutes a distant reading of architecture, or constitutes architecture as a tool for distantly reading space: “Folding architecture, then, may be said to engage in the invention of architectural diagrams – abstract diagrams in Deleuze’s sense as opposed to diagrams in the sense of architectural plans. In virtualising the actual, it remains limited in the plane on which it actualises – that of, primarily, the space of computational design.”¹⁶⁰ However, Harris argues, the Watts Towers stand as an unparalleled example of “bottom-up” Deleuzian architecture – a distant reading of “an astonishing heterogeneity of materials” that “elude or exceed attempts to classify or define them.” Simultaneously a graph, a map and a tree – “a thirty-eight foot spire, a ship, a cactus garden” (52) – the Watts Towers find in their conflation of distant viewing with its object, their pulverised infrastructure that reads its *own* pulverisation, a repository of post-perceptual media before its time – or, rather, find in that “supple, mobile and endless” post-perceptibility a revelation that “There *is* no Watts Towers; there are only Watts Towers yet to come” (58):

On a perceptual level, the sheer profusion of detail gives the site an almost active physical presence. The structures saturate the eye with colours and textures and lines and patterns, so that the roving eye takes in more than the still mind can process. One is immersed in an aleatory, combinatoric world of elements in constant reconfiguration. This perception overload allows for a play on the conceptual level – as if, because they never crystallise as a single perceived entity, distinctly seen and captured by the eye, they continually take on different conceptual shapes and stimulate different lines of thought. Percept and concept, sight and insight, become indiscernible, to the extent that the Towers entrain one *to see with the mind and think through the eye* (57).

¹⁶⁰ Harris, “Folding Architecture,” 51.

As one of these Watts Towers yet to come, Andersen's effort to "see with the mind and think through the eye" converges post-cinematic, infrastructuralist and distant readings of Los Angeles, conjuring up a city, or cities, that "never crystallise as a single perceived entity, distinctly seen and captured by the eye." As with the Watts Towers, the object of Andersen's vision is infrastructural, torn between the spectacles of "jagged hunks of harsh, heavy materials" and "concentric rings...curvilinear forms" (53). However, the Watts Towers suggest a deeper, more inherent connection between infrastructuralism and distant reading. For, just as distant reading posits that every text is simultaneously a locus of "units that are much smaller or much larger than the text," so infrastructuralism insists that every structure is simultaneously "both an infrastructure and a microstructure," part of a wider "architecture of symbolic assemblage":

The way in which the functional and symbolic parts of the hamburger platter have been discriminated, separated and displayed is a fair analogue for the design of most of the buildings in which they are sold. No nonsense about integrated design, every part conceived in separate isolation and made the most of; the architecture of symbolic assemblage. But it was not always so; the earlier architecture of commercial fantasy of the city tended to yield primacy to a single symbolic form or *Gestalt* into which everything had to be fitted.¹⁶¹

From an infrastructuralist perspective, this *gestalt* is meaningful precisely insofar as it is a necessary middle term between discrimination and display – specifically, between the discrimination of ingredients that compose the individual hamburger recipe or type and the venues within which hamburgers are eventually displayed; "genres and systems." Taking seriously Banham's suggestion that "like film, the hamburger is a non-Californian invention that achieved a kind of symbolic apotheosis in Los Angeles,"¹⁶² Andersen's insistence on the mismatch between the "non-Californian invention" of film and the Los Angeles cityscape gestures towards a distant, specifically infrastructuralist reading of cinema in which what counts is no longer the individual film, but the connection between microstructures and infrastructures, between buildings in

¹⁶¹ Banham, *Four Ecologies*, 93-94.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 93.

the film and the building within which we encounter the film – or, in Denson’s post-perceptual formulation, “the world of the screen and the screen’s place in our world.” In Andersen’s hands, the Watts Towers don’t simply become a pragmatic corrective to the vagaries of Deleuzian architectural theory, but instead collapse the distinction between theory and practice into produsage, such that to produce folding architecture is to extract cinematicity from infrastructure in an instance of the affective labor that Shaviro associates with the post-cinematic and the attention economy that Beller associates with the cinematic – as if the transition between these two media ecologies were primarily a certain affective modulation in our attention and attachment to urban space.

Metronormativity

Something of this affective modulation can be found in what Jodi Dean describes as the “links and windows” of the blog post, in which “drive as montage indicates how media tactics of resistance such as mash-ups and remixes are already captured; not only do they contribute to the ever-circulating flow, amplifying the intensity of the very fragments they seek critically to recombine, but in presuming the efficacy of a politics of meaning they displace attention from the fact that the multiple elements of our contemporary media ecology are already fragments and parts ready for recombination.”¹⁶³ In fact, this ever-circulating recombination is evident in the most recent of Google’s cartographic innovations, as well as its most literal windscreen: Google Wind, a real-time meteorological map that applies the lateral syntax of Google Street View to the aerial syntax of Google Maps, producing something like an unzoomscape in the process (Figures 39-40).¹⁶⁴

As this footage of New York and Los Angeles might suggest, the Google Wind in the trees offers a more impressionistic, embodied experience than Google Street

¹⁶³ Jodi Dean, *Blog Theory: Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2010), 104.

¹⁶⁴ These two images were taken from the Google Wind Map (<http://tinyurl.com/6o34s72>) on July 14, 2013 at 8:35pm EST.

View. Not only does the map lack clear co-ordinates, but it is presented in a continual state of flux. Moreover, the zoom and scroll functions are both quite rudimentary, meaning that clicking or moving what appears to be the same point on the screen produces a different result each time. This makes for a map that yearns to be touched, rather than clicked – and so feels anachronistic on anything other than a touchscreen (and a little anachronistic even there) – a tendency that becomes more pronounced as the scale reaches the lower cloud layer, the closest the user can zoom. As a result, the only reliable function is the unzoom function, which doesn't simply unzoom the user one scale back (or allow the user to determine the degree of unzoom), as occurs in Google Maps, but promptly returns him or her to the most general, atmospheric perspective.

While Google Street View leaves a space, or at least the possibility of a space, for the user to recombine its fragments into a trajectory of their own, this is less clear with Google Wind. Instead, we are presented with what Frederick A. De Armas describes as the “simple magic” of “transformative ekphrasis” - a “wind instrument” that, like Benjamin’s map blown to bits on a street corner, is “not only true, dramatic and transformative, but also combinatory.”¹⁶⁵ As ekphrasis that transforms its object, it becomes a tropic testament to that transformation, forcing the user to continually unzoom in order to map a process that is constituted by that unzooming. While such an object might contain all combinatory possibilities, it nevertheless gestures towards “the combinatory element as a way to introduce an allegorical element to the ekphrasis”¹⁶⁶ – or, in Benjaminian terms, translates the ekphrastic tension between capturing and being captured by the wind into the tension between allegorist and collector.

That this can also be understood as a tension between New York and Los Angeles’ cinematic imaginaries is eloquently explicated in a more direct instance of the “blog window” that prompted Dean’s original critique; or, rather, a recent blogging trend that involves “capturing” the location of films, but only to

¹⁶⁵ Frederick A. De Armas, “Simple Magic: Ekphrasis from Antiquity to the Age of Cervantes,” in *Ekphrasis in the Age of Cervantes*, ed. Frederick A. De Armas (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2005), 23.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

“displace attention from the fact” that those locations were always “already fragments and parts ready for recombination.” A prominent example can be found at *Scouting NY*, the blog of Nick Carr, one of New York’s major location scouts. While Carr’s day-to-day labour involves constituting and gathering locations for films, his affective, post-cinematic labour involves deconstructing films into the sequences of location shots that they originally were – or, rather, still are. Carr frequently dovetails the extraction of cinematicity with Google Maps and Street View – both are used as an ancillary to virtually every image – in much the same way as Google’s own “glass architecture of the future,” which he rediscovers in the most retro-futuristic glasshouse on the Manhattan skyline.¹⁶⁷ While the blog does detail some of the logistics of Carr’s day-to-day labour, as well as offering professional advice to other location scouts, it more often functions as a site of supplemental, affective labour – a way of dealing with vistas that are merely glimpsed on official location scouts, expanding their import to films and urban spaces experienced incidentally, collectively and cinetopically.

In *A Berlin Childhood*, Benjamin reflects that “not to find one’s way in a city may well be uninteresting and banal...But to lose oneself in a city – as one loses oneself in a forest – this calls for quite a different schooling”¹⁶⁸ For the most part, Carr’s post-cinematic labour involves this movement from not finding his way to losing his way – one of his fundraising initiatives involves manufacturing bumper stickers announcing that “The best way to find something new is to get lost.” These are designed to finance his first feature film, but the absence of any information about that film, or anything resembling a pitch, suggests that it is precisely the virtual mobility of the bumper sticker itself – a driving accessory sold by a site that virtualises “drive as montage” – that constitutes this new iteration of the “film.” It is also this virtual mobility that allows the site’s cinematic geography to extend well beyond the East Coast. In particular, Carr often dwells on the shared cinematic virtuality of New York and Los Angeles,

¹⁶⁷ Nick Carr, “Is this George Jetson’s New York City Apartment?” *Scouting NY* (blog), August 14, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/8ct9vxg>.

¹⁶⁸ Walter Benjamin, “Berlin Chronicle,” trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings Volume 2, Part 1*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Gary Smith and Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2005), 598.

most pointedly in a recent post, “New York Noir: The Filming Locations of *Pickup on South Street*,” which opens with him recounting that “The other day, a Netflix movie showed up in my mail that, for the life of me, I couldn’t remember adding. What the heck was *Pickup on South Street*?”¹⁶⁹ While the following chapter will deal with the modularities of the Netflix queue in more detail, it is sufficient here to observe that the restoration of the serendipity of the unscheduled, incidentally encountered film prompts Carr to retrace and remediate *Pickup on South Street*’s own cinetopic trajectory: a pickpocket’s unwitting circulation of a piece of highly contested microfilm around the city; that is, the protagonist’s (or perhaps more accurately the actor’s) distribution of a film he inhabits, but never watches.

Immediately, this poses a quandary, since, despite being set in New York, the majority of the film was shot on Los Angeles sound stages. Accordingly, Carr separates the film into sound stages and location shots and recapitulates the trajectory of the latter, culminating with the fictional, heterotopic space of “66 South Street” (Figures 41-44), poised halfway between a house and a ship – or, rather, a ship whose “floating part of space, a placeless place” is on the verge of vanishing, producing a narrative in which “dreams dry up, adventure is replaced by espionage and privateers by the police.”¹⁷⁰ In an effort to renew those heterotopic dreams – or to continue Fuller’s renewal – Carr hypothesises the location of the ship-house by implanting panoramic perception *within* the image, reimagining its window as a picture window in another instance of Naremore’s “Möbius-strip relationship between the past and the present – an eternal round of ‘noirness’ that has no particular beginning or end.” Commenting on the last photograph, Carr writes that he “will now forever think these rotting posts once supported” 66 South Street, even as they continue to support his heterotopic picture window; while their use-value may not have been altered, their exchange-value has been co-opted into a new post-cinematicity.

¹⁶⁹ Nick Carr, “New York Noir: The Filming Locations of *Pickup on South Street*,” *Scouting NY* (blog), November 19, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/lxs3leh>; *Pickup on South Street*, directed by Samuel Fuller (1953; Century City, CA: The Criterion Collection, 2004), DVD.

¹⁷⁰ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 27.

Shaviro argues, in *Connected*, that this peculiar reification of exchange-value typifies the post-cinematic network society, even as “what’s missing is *more than information*: the qualitative dimension of experience or the continuum of analog space in between all those ones and zeroes.”¹⁷¹ What renews “the continuum of analog space” in Carr’s vision is something akin to a post-cinematic camp, suggesting that “the commodity’s status as an object with some undisclosed feature of its historical moment of production that might be revealed in its movement through exchange might...be, at least sometimes, the fact of its having been shaped by some anomalous labor and laborer...at this point camp emerges as an expression of such unconcealed efforts.”¹⁷² Certainly, scouting the cinematic past blurs the analog continuum with the anomalous continuum, rediscovering objects and vistas whose exchangeability with the film has not exhausted their meaning or function; or, alternatively, whose designation as so much cinematic detritus does not prevent their camp remediation under a new sign of post-cinematic exchange, which both explicates and subtly, if lovingly, parodies, “the affectively necessary labor of camp that resides where one senses that the film image has diverted from *narrative* expectations”¹⁷³ – a diversion extended here both to a physical trajectory and a collection of partial vistas.

Accordingly, Carr follows this remediated picture-window with a window that functions as the basic unit of this infrastructuralist camp. Locating one of the film’s establishing shots at 400 Broome Street, he exclaims that “It blows my mind that they went to such lengths for such a minor shot that could have easily been cheated literally anywhere.” This attraction to the minor shot is the closest Carr’s cinetopic passage comes to something like a privileged cinephilic moment, but the proximity to his previous insertion of a picture window, the “lengths” he himself has gone to locate an image, turns the fleeting glimpse of 400 Broome Street into a cinetopic anecdote continuous with his own, rather than a cinephilic fragment whose supposed integration into the texture of the film would make its extraction meaningful. In Eve Kosofsky’s Sedgwick’s terms, Carr’s response to

¹⁷¹ Shaviro, *Connected*, 249.

¹⁷² Matthew Tinkcom, *Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 8.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 28.

the window constitutes a moment of camp-recognition: “What if the right audience for this were exactly *me*?”¹⁷⁴ As a unit of infrastructural camp, the minor shot conjures up a hermeneutic that is preoccupied with the labors and epiphanies of minor cinema – in Deleuze’s terms, a cinema that stutters, in which “saying is doing,” and in which place names and the place have become entirely fused.¹⁷⁵ Accordingly, the climax of Carr’s account comes with a fusion, or at least confusion, of location shot and set, in the form of a streetscape that appears to have been shot on location in New York but that in fact turns out to be shot in Los Angeles – “the final shot I was having trouble figuring out – the one that made me decide to track down the locations in the first place, in which the female protagonist Candy attempts to deliver the microfilm, not realizing she’s been pickpocketed.” Appropriately, the co-ordinate that allows Carr to recognise this continuity between Los Angeles and New York is a TWA outlet, initially identified by way of an “ad for something called The Super Constellation, which turns out to be a type of TWA flight.”

In *Homo Touristicus: The Evolution of Travel from Greek Spas to Space Tourism*, William Chalmers identifies the TWA Super Constellation as the progenitor of a new kind of dispersed, bicoastal sexuality that, in turn, prompted United Airlines to “begin offering *men-only* ‘Executive flights’ between Chicago and New York,” Chicago being the point at which the TWA Constellation stopped to refuel on westbound flights.¹⁷⁶ While Carr’s narrative certainly partakes of what Scott Herring has described as queer infrastructure, a “mythos of coastal and urbanized connection for many U.S.-based queers,” and a collapse of “coastal cities” into trajectories that “signify the supposed freedom of queer urbanity,” it refrains from what Herring identifies as the attendant danger of metronormative, “subcultural standardization” that commodified queer life to a

¹⁷⁴ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 2nd Edn. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 156.

¹⁷⁵ Gilles Deleuze, “He Stuttered,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), 107.

¹⁷⁶ William Chalmers, *Homo Touristicus: The Evolution of Travel from Greek Spas to Space Tourism* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2011), 181.

“desirable destination.”¹⁷⁷ Instead, Carr distends and virtualises the space between the two coasts, just as he queers the space between cinema and its object, sublating each infrastructural object and passage into a reminder that “it’s not only in film that this is true” – and, as Burgin argues, “something analogous can be found in those signs that occasionally display a product on display in a department store...as if the object were rendered more real by having had its electronic image float before the assembled eyes of millions of viewers.”¹⁷⁸ On the one hand, this post-cinematic department store subsumes Carr’s *flâneuserie* into a genealogy of fascination with the intersection, the space between corners and coasts – a city of angles, or, as in the case of an analogous blog, a city of commons¹⁷⁹ – just as his most recent post at the time of writing elaborates the Bronx’s Harding Park, whose infinitesimally narrowing streets force him into an apprehension of “the only desert in New York City,” as well a discovery of Cape Cod’s vertiginous bicoastality within the co-ordinates of the Hudson.¹⁸⁰ However, precisely the point of Burgin’s account is that this is a department store on the verge of becoming something other, just as the passage traced by the microfilm in *Pickup on South Street* is not merely geographical but perceptual, a contestation between consumerist and communal sensoria.

In that sense, Carr’s supplemental, post-cinematic labor traces out Baudrillard’s migration of department store to drugstore: “If the department store offers the fairground spectacle of commodities, the drugstore presents the subtle recitation of consumption, the whole ‘art’ of which consists in playing on the ambiguity of the sign in objects, and sublimating their status as things of use and as

¹⁷⁷ Scott Herring, *Another Country: Queer Anti-Urbanism* (New York: NYU Press, 2010), 162, 165.

¹⁷⁸ Burgin, “Brecciated Time,” in *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 229.

¹⁷⁹ Richard Howe, *New York In Plain Sight: The Manhattan Street Corners* (blog), accessed July 20, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/qyutu2z>. Howe describes this ongoing “photographic survey of everyday life on Manhattan’s great commons – its streets and sidewalks” as an attention to and application of “the material constants of the *longue durée*” as well an attempt to provide “a far more persuasive account of the look and feel of Manhattan at street level than the roughly ten foot elevation of Google’s mid-street van-top imaging technology.”

¹⁸⁰ Nick Carr, “The Strangest Neighborhood in New York City,” *Scouting NY* (blog), July 30, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/kyz2k38>.

commodities in a play upon ‘ambience.’”¹⁸¹ As this play upon ambience – the “systematic atmospheric” that both consummate and offer a site of resistance to “the phenomenology of consumption” (29)– might suggest, the drugstore paradigm signifies a movement towards a dark ecology; specifically, towards the curatorial neoclassicism outlined in the previous chapter, now generalised to what Baudrillard calls a “neo-culture, in which there is no longer any difference between a delicatessen and an art gallery,” (28) or at least a neo-cinema, a media ecology in which every cinematic gesture, attribute and inflexion has been laid over with a new classicism, and the cinematicity of everyday life has been resolutely classicised. Insofar as neoclassicism involves a studied unforgetting of the classical, Carr’s most distilled cinetopic anecdote traverses a Manhattan-cinema-turned-Rite Aid (Figures 45-47),¹⁸² invoking the classical *pharmakon* as an agent of a great unforgetting that “remedies not memory but only recollection, such that through this glossing...it is not strictly necessary...to unfreeze the freeze-frame, to start the film.”¹⁸³ Of course, precisely what is lacking from this reconfigured nostalgia is the individual film – but, then again, “if, between the very small and the very large, the text itself disappears, well, it is one of those cases when one can justifiably say, Less is more.”

City of Angles

This moment “in the design processes of folding architecture” at which “the surface of things becomes cinema” not only serves, in Denson’s terms, to discorrelate the analogy between eye and camera, but insists that “Our brain is not the seat of a neuronal cinema that reproduces the world; rather, our

¹⁸¹ Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 28.

¹⁸² Nick Carr, “Hidden in a Rite Aid, Ghosts of an Old Movie Theater,” *Scouting NY* (blog), March 3, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/ylnj5ow>.

¹⁸³ Michael Naas, “Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Question of Community,” in *Interrogating the Tradition: Hermeneutics and the History of Philosophy*, ed. Charles E. Scott and John Sallis (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 12

perceptions are inscribed on the surfaces of things, as images among images.”¹⁸⁴ Within this context, Andersen’s militant nostalgic injunction to “rebuild what has to be rebuilt” amounts to a paradoxical impulse to reshoot every single film that he includes in his documentary to fit the co-ordinates of a post-cinematic Los Angeles that can only be glimpsed by experiencing them all in tandem. In his review of *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, Indiana admits to a partial, provisional identification with this impulse:

Andersen’s prolonged lament...strikes a nerve [but] it would have been nice if he’d included, besides footage from lousy movies, some documentation of extrafilmic devastations of the urban landscape to support his belief that L.A. is, or at least was, a pretty special place...alternatively, he could have heightened the venerable landmarks that remain.¹⁸⁵

While broadly identifying with Andersen’s nostalgia for “a pretty special place,” Indiana chides him for not sufficiently integrating the “extrafilmic” into his essay; that is, for not sufficiently articulating his cinetopic anecdote. In that sense, and despite broad similarities in panoramic and diasporic co-ordinates, Indiana is keen to distinguish his reflective anecdote about Los Angeles from Andersen’s tendencies towards restorative nostalgia. However, as argued, the difference between Indiana and Andersen is not reducible to that between reflective and restorative nostalgia. While Andersen’s film may be made under the sign of restorative nostalgia, it nevertheless enacts the vernacular architecture of reflective nostalgia, or at least occupies the same tensile space between reflective and restorative nostalgia that Boym attributes to the cinema, in its negotiation of “paradise not yet lost” and “paradise that could be regained, sort of”¹⁸⁶ - with the critical qualification, once again, that it is post-cinematic. For, not only was *Los Angeles Plays Itself* only shown at a select few festivals and curated screenings before being distributed on DVD – and so experienced, by most viewers, as a STD release – but it exists on the fringes of DVD spectatorship as

¹⁸⁴ Bernard Cache, *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories*, ed. Michael Speaks, trans. Anne Boyman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 2.

¹⁸⁵ Gary Indiana, “City of Angles: Gary Indiana on *Los Angeles Plays Itself*,” *Artforum* 42:9 (2004), 36.

¹⁸⁶ Boym, *Future of Nostalgia*, 33.

well, due to the ambiguous legality of its uncleared images. In that sense, it perhaps makes most sense as a YouTube object, where it is also available in its entirety, part of what Lobato describes as the grey economy of cinema, “distribution circuits situated between the formal and informal realms, in a grey zone of semi-legality.”¹⁸⁷ In other words *Los Angeles Plays Itself* occupies the same grey fringes of criminality as *LA Plays Itself* – and it is this greyness that most entrances and frustrates Indiana’s response to the film:

Perhaps the most jejeune assertion Andersen makes occurs in an emphatic contrast between “films shot in New York” and “films shot in Los Angeles.” To his way of thinking, any film shot in New York, any scene, “announces itself” as part of New York: a place of clear-cut outlines, well-focused streets and buildings, absent the eternal haze of LA’s smog. But this is flagrantly ridiculous: A great majority of Hollywood films depicting New York are shot in Los Angeles or Toronto, New York merely serving to supply some of the external shots.¹⁸⁸

Although Indiana also takes issue with the false dichotomy between films shot in Los Angeles and films shot in New York, his response is not an argument for the idiosyncratic localism of Los Angeles cinema – if anything, that is the approach on Andersen’s part that he is critiquing. Rather, he argues that the anonymity that Andersen bemoans in Los Angeles cinema – especially in films that take place against some of Indiana’s most cherished “crumble”¹⁸⁹ – is just as present in New York cinema, and perhaps more present for not being explicitly identified as such. Taking his cues from his industrial namesake, and distinguishing Los Angeles as shooting location from Los Angeles as architectonic wish-image, Indiana intimates that “the eternal haze of L.A. smog” – or the haziness of the term “L.A.” itself, pointedly contrasted to Andersen’s “Los Angeles” – is what constitutes the film industry, especially the *gris* fringes of the film industry, as his reference to Toronto might suggest.

As Indiana frames it, then, *Los Angeles Plays Itself* is a conflicted *gris* artifact: *gris* in its marginal content, production and distribution, as well as in the way in

¹⁸⁷ Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema*, 95.

¹⁸⁸ Indiana, “City of Angles,” 36.

¹⁸⁹ Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 13:22.

which it embodies Andersen's own designation of *gris* as a urbanised attention to the material conditions of cinematic production, yet inexplicably committed to a restorative narrative that displaces and devalues precisely the exploitative detritus of Indiana's own *gris* Eden. If Andersen's Watts Towers is the last great "accessible, user-friendly civic monument," a synecdoche for Edendale, the originary moment of symbiosis between Los Angeles and the movies that "somehow got lost between Echo Park and Cedar Lake,"¹⁹⁰ then Indiana's Watts Towers is a "place where I dealt with seriously damaged, desperately poor people who lived in rotting bungalows where rats routinely fell through crumbling ceilings into their breakfast cereal." In this way, Indiana attempts to evoke a crumbling, diasporic structure that is truer to the post-cinematic DVD medium and passage within which Andersen's is couched; in what will be presented as the logic of the Criterion Collection, Indiana suggests that he never saw *Saló* as a film, but instead navigated it as a DVD. Whatever tendencies towards a more linear, restorative nostalgia Indiana might residually harbour are relegated to "the constellation of conventional gay bars at the nether end of West Hollywood" – and even they enact this movement from One Way, to Detour, to Spike. In fixating on the metonymic "haze of L.A. smog," Indiana doesn't merely draw an analogy between STD passage and Los Angeles passage, but finds, in the very DVD syntax that Andersen refuses to fully embrace, a distant reading of STD passage itself, and the cinetopic fulfilment of his own anecdote of Los Angeles self-play.

Producersage

In order to grasp exactly how this affinity for STD passage contextualises Indiana's subsequent contribution to the Criterion Collection release of *Saló*, it is necessary to briefly turn from STD passage to DVD passage, and from distribution to navigation. As the DVD remediation examined so far might suggest, DVD phenomenology aims to consummate the cinetopic anecdote: every time we curate a series of scenes, moments or extras from the DVD apparatus – in effect, every time we *don't* simply and straightforwardly watch the DVD as if it

¹⁹⁰ Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 14:00.

were being screened in a theatrical venue – we enact an anecdote of cinetopic passage. This suggests that earlier DVDs, with their obligatory advertising segments, are not really DVDs, or have not fully embraced the peculiarities of the medium, instead replicating the linearities of the theatrical-VHS continuum. Gordon Hull frames this as a disjoint between DVD attachment and Digital Rights Management technologies:

Other aspects of my phenomenological experience in fact directly contradict the message communicated in the DRM-ought. First, everyday experience is saturated with examples of successful avoidance of copyright owners' wishes. Even without taking into account the vast amount of infringing material readily available online, at least some uses of IP that content owners presumably do not like, such as critical reviews and parodies, are clearly both legally and morally permissible. Why, therefore, should the owner control where I watch a DVD, if she is not allowed to stop me from making fun of it? Second, and at a more general level, other artifacts can generally be repurposed, such that even if I know that the maker of the artifact does not intend that I use it in a particular way, or that the maker of the artifact would object to my using it in that way, I experience the freedom to do so anyway.¹⁹¹

Segueing the DRM restrictions bound up with DVD trailers into a more timely reflection on the DRM restrictions bound up with region-coding, Hull articulates DRM as antithetical to the individual's right to passage. By contradefinition, then, DVD phenomenology becomes synonymous with passage, initially between films, as Hull makes a case for watching purchased films anywhere, any place, and at any time, but gradually within films, as an act of creative repurposing. The vast swathe of cinematic appropriation available online has long been noted as an evolution and complication of fan culture, but the novelty of Hull's argument is to suggest that this late proliferation of cinetopic anecdote is impossible without a world saturated with the phenomenological possibilities of DVD passage. More generally, there is a suggestion, in this article, that *any* violation of copyright law – at least any violation made in the name of creative repurposing, juxtaposition and passage – is simultaneously a manifesto for the supremacy of the DVD. While the peculiar ethical, collectible and cinetopic dimensions of torrenting are

¹⁹¹ Gordon Hull, "Coding the Dictatorship of "the They": A Phenomenological Critique of Digital Rights Management," in *Ethics and Phenomenology*, eds. Mark Sanders and J. Jeremy Wisniewski (New York: Lexington Books, 2012), 205.

beyond the scope of this thesis – or, rather, a kind of limit-case to this thesis, a starting-point for future investigation – this manifesto does further differentiate the cinema from the DVD, suggesting, as it does, that while torrenting may mean the end of cinema, it means the continuation and fruition of the DVD. From that perspective, torrenting is best understood as a third term in a wider conflict between cinematic and DVD technologies. Indeed, not only do dedicated torrenters often have extensive DVD collections, but their habits indicate a protectiveness of and commitment to DVD phenomenology. Bruns notes that “tendencies can...be observed in some BitTorrent communities dedicated to the sharing of television shows, which make available recordings of episodes almost immediately after their first broadcast on the show’s home network, but remove such torrents if and when official DVD and other commercial releases are published.”¹⁹² As stated, Bruns designates this cusp between production and consumption as *produsage*, which is:

...fundamentally based on an approach which deconstructs larger overall tasks into a more granular set of distributed problems, and therefore in the first place generates a series of individual, incomplete artifacts which require further assembly before becoming usable and useful as a whole. As a result, information and knowledge as generated through *produsage* processes is itself distributed and inherently incomplete...those engaging in and with *produsage* and its artifacts require enhanced capacities to combine, disassemble and recombine these specific artifacts in their pursuit of personal understanding.¹⁹³

As Bruns defines it, *produsage* stands as a late capitalist renovation of collection, recalling Benjamin’s suggestion that the indefinite accumulation of collection follows the indefinite accumulation of capital. According to Bruns, that two-pronged accumulation of collection and production has now dovetailed into Lobato’s grey economy, such that to participate in the productive sphere of any late capitalist society is simultaneously to become a talented collector. If DVD phenomenology corresponds to and individuates the peculiar flexibilities of the grey economy, with its focus on *produsage* over production, then any DVD collection that is anxious to take full advantage of the medium is faced with a

¹⁹² Bruns, *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life*, 248.

¹⁹³ Bruns, “Beyond Difference,” 140.

paradox, or quandary: how does a DVD franchise operate legitimately and profitably but still remain true to the inherent greyness of DVD passage and produsage, and its constitutive position on the margins of criminality?

The Criterion Collection

The Criterion Collection is sufficiently voluminous to offer several solutions to this question: as the early inclusion of Michael Bay between Yasujiro Ozu and Lawrence Olivier might suggest, it is a post-continuous collection, embodying in its very structure what Shaviro describes as Bay's commitment to "a flurry of cuts calibrated not in relation to each other or to the action, but instead suggesting a vast busyness."¹⁹⁴ Founded in 1984, the Criterion Collection initially offered a variety of mainstream titles on Laserdisc, as well as several early versions of the DVD. With the increasing centrality of the DVD in the late 1990s, Criterion increasingly turned its attention towards foreign and obscure titles, while retaining the occasional mainstream release. Starting with the release of *Grand Illusion* in 1999,¹⁹⁵ Criterion started to explicitly construe its releases as a collection, as well as emphasising the curatorial materiality of the DVD product, and devoting more and more attention to cover design and scholarly commentary, whether on the DVD itself or in accompanying booklets. However, for the purposes of this argument, and its particular focus on *Salò*, it will be useful to understand the Criterion Collection synecdochially as an attention to the greyness of pornographic cinema; or, rather, pornological cinema, "because its erotic language cannot be reduced to the elementary functions of ordering and describing,"¹⁹⁶ as it places reputedly contaminated and contagious films into circulation, and strives to open up informal passages for viewers in countries where they happen to be banned, unrestored, or not generally available.

¹⁹⁴ Shaviro, "Post-Continuity."

¹⁹⁵ *Grand Illusion*, directed by Jean Renoir (1937; Paris: The Criterion Collection, 1999), DVD.

¹⁹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Masochism*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 17-18.

In that sense, the challenge of the Criterion Collection revolves around how to constitute its pornological canon without “ordering or describing it”; that is, without compromising its STD *gris*. Lobato asks a similar question about the STV object: “If nothing else, taking seriously the audiovisual excess that is STV can help us to think of cinema in a different way – as something other than a genealogy of great directors, or a signifying system, or a set of psychic effects, but rather, as an industrial field that exceeds knowable limits.”¹⁹⁷ These “knowable limits” are, of course, the co-ordinates of Jameson’s conception of cognitive mapping, but Lobato’s examination doesn’t consider this option. Nevertheless, a cognitive map of the field of STV releases is suggested by his observation that “a STV film is doomed to failure if it cannot fit easily into one particular section of the video store.”¹⁹⁸ The closest Lobato himself comes to articulating a map is in his consideration of Chris Anderson’s “long tail theory” – a “new economic model for the media and entertainment industries”¹⁹⁹ which, applied to the STV ecology, dictates that “if consumers are provided with appropriate search tools and access to a catalogue unfettered by warehousing restraints, they will end up renting more obscure titles than they would be willing or able to at your local Blockbuster.”²⁰⁰ While observing that STV releases don’t behave in a way typical of Anderson’s “long-term” texts, Lobato ascribes this failure, somewhat amorphously, to consumer irrationality, rather than the infrastructural attachment suggested by his earlier reference to the intimate connection between STV and the video “section.” When dovetailed with the ancillary spaces of the warehouse and Blockbuster store, this suggests a more material way to map STV objects: in terms of the actual spaces within which they are displayed. For, if there is any continuity within the multifarious world of STV phenomenology, it is presumably not within the realm of production, consumption, or even distribution, but display: at some point, these objects have to be understood in a physical, syntactic relationship to each other, and other objects: “Sometimes people buy STV movies because they are placed

¹⁹⁷ Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema*, 35.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 25

¹⁹⁹ Chris Anderson, “The Long Tail,” *Wired* 12 (10), 2004, <http://tinyurl.com/5m3o6>.

²⁰⁰ Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema* 35-36.

strategically near the checkout of discount stores, or because they have seen every other movie on the shelf at Blockbuster” (35).

If the cognitive map of the STV object is, in that sense, the STV shelf, then the remediation of STV technologies as STD technologies suggests the ancillary presence of a new, STD shelf, as well as a post-cognitive approach to mapping the shelf. Deploying the shelf in the context of a digital ecology, Brian Massumi observes that:

Something is rotten on the shelf of spatial-experience theory. Cognitive maps, built on the visual basis of generic three-dimensional forms in Euclidean geometrical configurations, aren't all that they are advertised to be. As a general explanation of orientation, they are past their 'use by' date. The way we orient is more like a tropism (tendency plus habit) than a cognition (visual form plus configuration).²⁰¹

If something is rotten on the shelf of spatial-experience theory, then something is also rotten in the spatial experience of the shelf – and Massumi suggests that this rot is sufficiently pervasive to require a transformation of cognitive mapping into tropic mapping; that is, an understanding of the shelf as a flexible, organic entity, rather than a static, impersonal object. As Massumi's references to advertising and use-by dates might suggest, most elaborations of this “virtual shelf” have occurred in the realm of marketing and business management, where they comment on the way in which this virtual space frees up real estate capital and redirects it towards advertising and the rapid turnover of perishable goods, enabling a new kind of proximity between consumer and product in the process; or, rather, collapsing consumer and product into the process of produsage.²⁰² By transferring this marketing terminology into the realm of media theory, Massumi gestures towards a wider alteration of the milieu within which shelves are located – specifically, an increasingly distended, diffuse, distributed space

²⁰¹ Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 180.

²⁰² See, for example, the discussion of “telepresence” in Hairong Li, Terry Daugherty and Frank Biocca, “Impact of 3-D Advertising on Product Knowledge, Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Presence,” in *Advertising, Promotion and New Media*, ed. Maria R. Stafford and Ronald J. Faber (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 150.

between ownership and experience, rental and purchase, production and produsage.

DVD Parlours

For the moment, however, it suffices to hold back from this wider space of shelves in favour of the local clusters of shelves that form media microclimates, or DVD parlours, within it. In fact, the Criterion Collection can be understood as a heterotopic instantiation of this space of shelves, or dream house, meaning that the question of *Salò*'s remediation becomes the question of exactly how the collection articulates its pornological DVD parlour within its wider dream house. In order to grasp this dynamic between parlour and dream house, it is important to recognise that what distinguishes the Criterion Collection, above all, is a reticulated, nuanced continuum between the film and the wider cinematic heterotopia – a continuum that enjoins the viewer to produse in order to fully participate in the range of meanings afforded by the product and, in produsing, to celebrate and consummate the DVD phenomenology it encapsulates.

At the most concrete end of this continuum, the Criterion consumer is presented with the disc. Critically, this is not the same thing as being presented with the film, as the Criterion mission statement makes clear:

Every time we start work on a film, we track down the best available film elements in the world, use state-of-the-art telecine equipment and a select few colorists capable of meeting our rigorous standard, then take time during the film-to-video digital transfer to create the most pristine possible image and sound. Whenever possible, we work with directors and cinematographers to ensure that the look of our releases does justice to their intentions. Our supplements enable viewers to appreciate Criterion films in context, through audio commentaries by filmmakers and scholars, restored director's cuts, deleted scenes, documentaries, shooting scripts, early shorts and storyboards.²⁰³

²⁰³ "About Criterion," The Criterion Collection online, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/otjdymk>.

The inclusion of “director’s cuts” in the supplemental list is somewhat redundant, as the logic of this statement dictates that every film released by Criterion is a director’s cut, even if it is a film for which a director’s cut is widely available. Even when a director or cinematographer cannot be consulted, the statement suggests that Criterion spectatorship is still truer to their intentions than cinematic spectatorship, if only because it is superlatively possessed of “the best available film elements in the world” and “the most pristine possible image and sound.” If the register of this passage were not quite so hyperbolic, it would comfortably partake of the restorative or reparative nostalgia Boym describes. It is clear, however, that neither restoration nor recreation is sufficient to describe the Criterion mission: according to this statement, a film *has not been seen* before it is released on Criterion. This disrupts the linear, historical and hierarchical relationship between cinematic and DVD technologies that might make such restorative nostalgia meaningful: at no point does the Criterion Collection nostalgically insist that cinema precedes the DVD. Instead, there is a suggestion that these objects were *always* DVD objects, and had to wait, patiently, through all the years of cinematic dissemination, before they could really be seen as they were supposed to be seen. In part, this collapse of cinematic and DVD timelines represents Criterion’s own technological innovations and experimentations – one of the first companies to explore DVD technology, it was distributing a primitive digital disc, positioned somewhere between the laserdisc, CD and CD-ROM, as early as the mid-1980s.²⁰⁴ However, it is also inherent to the DVD object itself, and the way in which it breaks or disrupts the vertical relationship between cinema and the VHS object. Accordingly, the mission statement is just as keen to insist, if more implicitly, that the DVD isn’t simply a later iteration of the VHS, and that while STD release may be analogous in some respects to STV release, it is nevertheless fundamentally different in kind in its teleological priority to cinema.

²⁰⁴ “Criterion FAQs,” The Criterion Collection online, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/6v9eaa>.

From that perspective, the ancillary items on the disc – director’s commentary, documentaries, deleted scenes – only “restore” the context of the film in a paradoxical way. By suffusing the viewer’s spectatorship with the film’s historical context, they don’t simply recuperate so much as reinvent that context as a DVD milieu – once again, there is a refusal to admit that these aesthetic objects were ever anything other than DVDs. This confluence of polite and vernacular architecture forms a heterotopic paratext that balloons out from the disc, moving from the booklet and cover art that accompanies it; to the formal spaces of the Criterion website, such as the mission statement; to the informal, casual spaces of the Criterion website, including a variety of blogs, themselves distributed along a continuum from formal and promotional to informal and communal; to the Criterion consumer’s ‘MyCriterion’ account; and, finally, to a series of Criterion chat rooms and spaces that are only distantly monitored by the Criterion umbrella. Moreover, the centrality of the disc itself is heterotopically skewed by the presence of multiple Criterion screening platforms, including a Hulu channel and a YouTube channel. These are used for both previewing and renting as well as a series of intermittent promotional and communal gestures, including, most recently, a free screening of every Criterion film on Hulu over a forty-eight hour period.²⁰⁵

The Criterion Collection, then, elegantly fails to position the consumer at any stable or consistent site of consumption, thereby opening up the manifold greyness of produsage. How exactly, this overlaps with the greyness of pornography, and of *Saló* in particular, is suggested by a conversation on “The 3rd Annual Criterion Porno Thread,” which opens with a discussion of the viability of *Deep Throat* for a Criterion release:²⁰⁶

A select few hardcore films, notably BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR and DEEP THROAT have managed to grey that line between porn and "regular film"; Any hardcore pornography that has grossed anywhere from 100 to 600

²⁰⁵ “Watch the Criterion Collection films online,” Hulu, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/awt4ffz>.

²⁰⁶ “The 3rd Annual Criterion Porno Thread,” Criterion Forum, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/oltj3xw>; *Deep Throat*, directed by Gerard Damiano (1972; New York: Momentum Pictures, 2005), DVD.

million dollars seems to fit well in a 'continuing series of important classic and contemporary films,' and, as far as I can tell, no one is scrambling to get the rights to a DEEP THROAT DVD.²⁰⁷

As the thread progresses, the speculations on the pragmatic and logistical issues involved in releasing *Deep Throat* as a Criterion disc gives way to a series of more general speculations on the zone between art and pornography, as well as those titles that might be amenable to being seen for the first time as a DVD:

I'd love for Criterion to release a disc of *L.A. Plays Itself*. I wonder if it and Halsted's *Sextool* are still the only hardcore films in the MoMA permanent collection. Casey Donovan's only worthwhile early feature, *Boys in the Sand* is already out in The Wakefield Poole Collection. He is in Metzger's *Score*, which would be a good Criterion disc, especially since the characters reference Michael Powell. What I'd really like is for Criterion to wrestle away from Strand Releasing the original film elements for *Pink Narcissus* and to give it a proper transfer and some contextualization. Strand really fucked up their own DVD release of it and they didn't even bother to create any special features involving the creator of the film.²⁰⁸

Reprising the exact pornological co-ordinates of Indiana's anecdote, user Matt envisages *LA Plays Itself* and *Boys in the Sand* as Archers features, drawing on James Bidgood's own interest in Powell²⁰⁹ to present *Pink Narcissus* as an approximation of what it might be like to view the Powell canon, for the first time, through the Criterion franchise. Not only does this rehearse the same venue as Burgin's anecdote of Powellian reappropriation but it converges his fascination with the cinetopically recalled film fragment with the diasporic intimacy and reflective nostalgia of the Criterion pornological object. As the thread continues, this focus narrows even further, revolving around the pornographic and pornological ramifications of several specific sex acts, especially fisting:

²⁰⁷ Toiletduck!, comment on "Criterion Porno Thread," August 19, 2005. Toiletduck! previously posted this comment on the "Eclipse Thread" (Criterion Forum, accessed July 9, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/m5hswlj>) on November 2, 2004.

²⁰⁸ Matt, comment on "Criterion Porno Thread," August 23, 2005.

²⁰⁹ Sean Fredric Edgecomb, "Camping out with James Bidgood: The Auteur of *Pink Narcissus* Tells All," *Bright Lights Film Journal* 52 (2006), <http://tinyurl.com/pk3ec5h>.

SELF CORRECTION: LA has the fisting scene (which is cut from the video). Sex Garage attracted the notoriety because of a scene with a truck's exhaust pipe... I think Halsted understood the completely abstract essence of the ultra SM/Fetish/Fisting scene and whether by chance or fortune LA's visual style seems to reflect this. Halsted was of course a pornstar turned director, which has continued to happen with some frequency in gay porn. Kirsten Bjorn, many many others.²¹⁰

Like Andersen, user David Hare understands *LA Plays Itself* as an embodiment of the “completely abstract essence” of L.A.’s “visual style.” However, whereas Andersen framed fisting in terms of L.A.’s decline – the nadir of L.A.’s movement from diasporic Eden to centralised wasteland – David Hare understands it as a synecdoche for L.A.’s capacity for self-reinvention and re-evaluation. Opening with a “SELF CORRECTION,” and concluding with a nod in the direction of actor-turned-auteurs (and several of the contributors to the thread suggest that they have some kind of background in the pornographic industry that they are anxious to position on the Criterion continuum), the post designates fisting as the self-play, the infinite, flexible, unbelievable extension that allows Los Angeles to constitute and reconstitute itself. In that sense, the post is a response to *Los Angeles Plays Itself* as much as to *LA Plays Itself*, construing the chatroom itself as the space within which this reflexive play and reflective nostalgia can occur, the queer infrastructure bridging East Coast and West Coast pornography, perhaps explaining why the register occasionally approaches that of virtual sex. As a result, not only does a desire emerge, over the course of the thread, to renovate pornography as a Criterion genre, but the thread becomes a place where this renewed pornography is projected and enacted. Rhetorically, this finds expression in a peculiar proclivity for curatorial and citational hyperlinking, in an attempt to constitute Criterion pornology in the interstices and inadequacies of non-Criterion pornographic experience, converging the thread with what Lobato identifies as the canonising tendencies of the linking site:

Linking sites perform an essential service for internet users. By indexing all content, formal and informal, they are doing something that mainstream search companies are increasingly unwilling to do – provide

²¹⁰ David Hare, comment on “Criterion Porno Thread,” August 15, 2006.

uncensored access to the web's online video content...A good linking site is like a video store owner, offering recommendations for the customer who's not sure what they want to watch.²¹¹

However, the thread simultaneously enacts a series of thought-experiments, in which users speculate on how their favourite or fetishised pornographic moments might appear as Criterion objects:

Currently, I put in a bid for the (nonfist/non SM range) of Raging Stallion the co. that manages my avatar. Two recent titles, *Manhattan* (not the Allen) and *Arabesque* (not the Donen) even sort of replicate the "real" Criterion windowboxing disaster with opening sequences in 1.78 and then move into 4:3. Lighting, casting and choreography (not to mention macquillage, wardrobe and props) more exemplary than standard issue. Only problem lies the predictable direction of exSM/FF regulars like Chris Rush and Ben Leon whose idea of mise en scene is more than three camera positions for insert shots or double pen shots. (In my youth we used to call these "two in a tube," during the era of minis and Tubes.)²¹²

While the connections between Woody Allen's *Manhattan* and Ben Leon's *Manhattan*, and between Stanley Donen's *Arabesque* and Chris Ward's *Arabesque* might seem somewhat whimsical,²¹³ this argument for Criterion continuity is implied by the Raging Stallion franchise itself, which provides previews of both features on their website. The preview for *Manhattan* is a short video, which, as might be expected, features several hardcore sex scenes. However, not only does it devote a significant amount of time to the Manhattan-montage that characterises Allen's vision, but it ascribes to it the same syntactic role, as can be seen in the progression of one of its many bridging sequences (Figures 48-50).²¹⁴

Unlike *Manhattan*, the preview for *Arabesque* is presented as a written description of the film's content. While this is also largely pornographic, it opens with an even more conspicuous bid for credibility: "*Arabesque* emerges from the

²¹¹ Lobato, *Shadow Economies of Cinema*, 101.

²¹² David Hare, comment on "Criterion Porno Thread," August 17, 2006.

²¹³ *Manhattan*, directed by Woody Allen (1979; New York: MGM, 2000), DVD; *Arabesque*, directed by Stanley Donen (1966; Universal City, CA: Universal Studios, 2011), DVD.

²¹⁴ *Manhattan*, directed by Ben Leon (2006; San Francisco: Raging Stallion, 2006), streamed at <http://tinyurl.com/pmwwcccd>.

silent films of Rudolph Valentino, starting in black and white and quickly turning into a lush, colorful photoplay.”²¹⁵ In terms of film history, this continuity between Valentino and Donen corresponds to the figure of Walter Wanger, producer of both *The Sheik* and a stillborn version of what became *Funny Face*.²¹⁶ Whether or not this pun is intended, and whether or not it is intended by David Hare or Raging Stallion studios is unclear. What is clear is that this reimagination of hardcore pornography is not simply the whim or peculiarity of David Hare; rather, the Criterion thread allows him to speak on behalf of all the genres considered to be disposable by cinema, but prime for DVD rediscovery.

More specifically, as a pornographic-cinetopic complex encompassing films made about New York and the intervening desert by an East Coast pornographic studio, it encapsulates the queer bicoastality of Herring’s vision – a bicoastality that, Jack Fritscher argues, was the constitutive cinetopic anecdote surrounding *Saló*’s release, the microstructure and infrastructure that enabled its various structural critiques to emerge, as it were, spectrally and epiphenomenally. Infrastructurally, Fritscher positions *Saló* as a continuum between the East Village theatre where he originally saw it, and its West Coast dissemination.²¹⁷ More literally, Fritscher uses the film as a synecdoche for the perceived disparity between East and West coastlines – the lessons that might implicitly be learned from Fire Island as a corrective to “the censorious legislating away of Los Angeles’ nude beaches.”²¹⁸ If this suggests that *Saló* is best seen on a beach, in

²¹⁵ *Arabesque*, directed by Chris Ward (2006; San Francisco: Raging Stallion, 2006), streamed from <http://tinyurl.com/nqml4yv>. The descriptions are taken from the same location.

²¹⁶ Kathleen Riley, *The Astaires: Fred & Adele* (New York: Oxford University Press USA, 2012), 115; *The Sheik*, directed by George Melford (1921; Hollywood, CA: Image Entertainment, 2002), DVD; *Funny Face*, directed by Stanley Donen (1957; Hollywood, CA: Paramount, 2011), DVD.

²¹⁷ Jack Fritscher, “Toward an Understanding of *Saló*,” in *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness* Drummer, ed. Mark Henry (San Francisco, CA: Palm Drive Publishing, 2010), 604. The chapter includes Fritscher’s original review of the film, published in *Drummer* 20 (1978), 66-67, and a contemporary reflection written specifically for the anthology; the two poles of Fritscher’s cinetopic anecdote.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

something like a prototype of the Archipelago cinema,²¹⁹ then that is because, micro-structurally, Fritscher collapses the film into the micro-coordinates of the coast where Pasolini was murdered, in a cinetopic anecdote that, like Indiana's, requires the passage of some thirty years for its reflective nostalgia to ramify:

On a brilliant spring day, March 22, 2006, Mark Henry and I, having taken rooms at the Hotel Quirinale in Rome, set out from Piramide Station on the Roma-Lido railway for a day trip to Ostia, making pilgrimage to lay roses near the beach where Pasolini was killed thirty years before on November 2, 1975. In our camera bag we carried from home in San Francisco a copy of Pasolini's *Roman Poems* translated by Lawrence Ferlinghetti at City Lights Books. Outside the train window, huge quadrangles of apartments gave way to tenement slums, and at EUR Magliana Station to the large white cube of Mussolini's Palazzo della Civita del Lavoro, and then to the suburbs of trackside country villages Pasolini had satirized with Terence Stamp in *Teorema* (1968).

Outside the tiny deserted station, we climbed the pedestrian overpass, and through the pine trees saw Ostia Antica spread out before us: a once busy city abandoned in ruins. In its maze of empty streets, grass and ivy covered the brick outcroppings of Roman baths, merchant warehouses, Agrippa's theater, and ancient restaurants with inlaid floors of intricate black-and-white mosaics. It is a wild place where young men easily prowls at night...We were alone; it was only the second day of spring and the summer tourist buses had not yet arrived. As if left behind centuries ago, gentle but wary dogs, the unpetted kind, the cruising kind who had gone back to nature, watched us making our way through the ruins. Had their eyes seen Pasolini?...Over our heads, huge jetliners roared in low over tall Corinthian columns to land one after the other at the new port, Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino Airport.

In the way that the abandoned West Side maritime piers along the Hudson River in New York became an equally abandoned orgy of industrial-strength outdoor sex in the 1970s, Ostia smacks of its own pagan roots as a port town filled with laborers, sailors, slaves and prostitutes. On the very night that Pasolini was killed, the dilapidated piers, and the jeopardy of trucks parked near Keller's leather bar in the West Village, were jammed with a thousand men, including *Drummer* readers and pickpockets and assassins, doing the same thing he was.²²⁰

²¹⁹ In *Aesthetic Modernism and Masculinity in Fascist Italy* (London: Routledge, 2012), John Champagne suggests that beaches were a critical locus in critiques of fascist heteronormativity, "opportunities for fantastic contemplation" (92).

²²⁰ Fritscher, "Understanding of *Salo*," 601-02.

In essence, Fritscher's anecdote describes the same migration from Los Angeles to New York as Indiana's. While there is a detour by way of San Francisco – where *Drummer* magazine relocated after increasing homophobic vitriol was directed towards its Los Angeles residence, in a truncated instance of Indiana's "migration of the scene westwards" – the more pervasive detour is by way of *Saló*. While this latter detour also constitutes the hinge of Indiana's anecdote, the infrastructural co-ordinates are somewhat different: the freeway network has been replaced with the labyrinthine footpaths of Ostia. Opening with "the train window," a gesture of classical, cinephilic panoramic perception that quickly segues into a cinetopic attachment to the micro-structures that populate Pasolini's urban and semi-urban universe – "Mussolini's Palazzo, trackside country villages" – Fritscher gathers this cinetopic anecdote into a literal panoramic vantage point – the "pedestrian overpass" – whose breadth is nevertheless immediately subsumed and fractallated into the labyrinthine, mosaic crystal of cruising. Leaving the space between the "cruising kind" of dogs and low-flying aircraft to the discussion of Liberace Plaza in my conclusion, the arrival back at New York's "maritime piers" by way of Ostia's "pagan roots" evokes an "industrial-strength" queer infrastructure which doesn't merely open up a dialogue between coastal queer metropolises but condenses them to the heightened queerness of a port town, an urban passage in which every movement ends up at a coastline, or beach. In his discussion of New York in *Cruising Utopia*, Muñoz notes a long tradition in "the North American queer imagination" in which "The Brooklyn Bridge and crossing the river, arguably both ways, represents the possibility of queer transport, leaving the here and now for a then and there"²²¹ – but the import of Fritscher and Indiana's anecdotes is that queer infrastructural attachment involves treating every object as a bridge, portal or space that can only be mapped tropically once it has been traversed; a departure for a place, an infrastructure, that doesn't exist yet.

As a cinetopic object, then, *Saló* was not necessarily viewed in a discrete way, but gradually folded into infrastructure in the manner of both Fritscher and Indiana, "a slide show of faces and landscapes across a paling light" that, like the cinetopic

²²¹ Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 189.

objects of *Cinemanía*, and of Bill in particular, was something you sat in, drove in, as much as something you watched. And, as Stephen Barber notes, this exploitation of “the anally resonant eye of the film lens”²²² not only produced a cinetopic corollary to Poole’s cinephilic fisting optic, but worked to fold Pasolini’s death into the very substance and infrastructure of the film. At one level, this served to naturalise censorship, suggesting that this film was never meant to be seen, just as Pasolini’s death might be relegated to “a ghoulishly appropriate, prophetic coda of his career.”²²³ But, as the undeadness of Pasolini’s death in Fritscher’s account might suggest, the centrality of Indiana’s cinetopic anecdote in the Criterion release of the film works more to suggest that Pasolini himself deliberately made a film that was never meant to be seen – or, at least, never meant to be seen by him, or never meant to be seen as cinema. For, just as “Pasolini believed that fascism never abandoned the political stage in Italy,”²²⁴ so the Criterion Collection refuses to acknowledge cinema’s supremacy, or cinema’s canons. At the very least, cinema’s canons are disrupted by Criterion’s disregard for cinema’s supposed supremacy. As a result, it fulfils the aesthetic and intellectual aspirations of all those cinematic productions labelled “not” cinema – not restoratively, by recovering them *as* cinema, but reflectively, by embracing what never made them cinema. All Criterion films, in that sense, are part of the great unviewed, just as the great unviewed consists of STD objects – objects that David Hare condenses to the standardisation of letterboxing, or windowboxing, that Criterion has made one of the hallmarks of its approach, literalised in the Netflix innovations discussed in the next chapter.²²⁵ If Criterion has a peculiar proclivity for reflecting upon non-cinema, then the Criterion narrative is one of texts that wait, whether patiently or anxiously, to be letterboxed and enveloped –

²²² Stephen Barber, “The Last Film, the Last Book: Pasolini and Sade,” in *From the Arthouse to the Grindhouse: Highbrow and Lowbrow Transgression in Cinema’s First Century*, ed. John Cline and Robert G. Weiner (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 100.

²²³ Giuseppe Zigaina, *Pasolini: Between Enigma and Prophecy* (Roseville, MN: Exile Press, 1992), viii.

²²⁴ Antonios Vadolas, *The Perversions of Fascism* (London: Karnac Books, 2009), 59.

²²⁵ Criterion online, “FAQs.” For Criterion’s poetics of letterboxing, see “Spellbinding Shots from *Letter Never Sent*,” The Criterion Collection online, March 14, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/nubwr9s>.

an expanded and renewed Criterion for Collection, a way of imbuing texts with the collectibility and collectivity that cinema denied them: “Aren’t there some prod companies right now whose ‘standards’ – at least technical standards – are high and refined enough to be considered amongst the ‘criterion’ of porn?”²²⁶

²²⁶ David Hare, comment on “Criterion Porno Thread,” August 17, 2006.

Chapter 3: The Post-Perceptual *Cinepheur*

Dream Houses of the Collective

Thus far, the *flâneur* has been understood as a largely solitary figure. However, if, as Benjamin argues, the *flâneur* is the optical counterpart to the collector, then the *flâneur* presumably also takes certain bourgeois conceptions of property, ownership and privacy to their dialectical limits. Specifically, Benjamin suggests that, by transforming every interstice of the city into a private interior, the *flâneur* imbues every private interior with the collective passage of city spaces:

Streets are the dwelling place of the collective. The collective is an eternally unquiet, agitated being that – in the space between the building fronts – experiences, learns, understands and invents as much as individuals do within the privacy of their own four walls. For this collective, glossy enameled shop signs are a wall decoration; walls...are its writing desk, newspaper stands its libraries, mailboxes its bronze busts, benches its bedroom furniture, and the café terrace is the balcony from which it looks down on its household...Among these latter, the arcade was the drawing room. More than anywhere else, the street reveals itself in the arcade as the furnished and familiar interior of the masses.¹

Benjamin describes these collectivisations of the *flâneur's* dream-space as dream houses of the collective, and includes “arcades, winter gardens, panoramas, factories, wax museums, casinos [and] railway stations” among them (405). As the dialectic cusp between bourgeois individuality and socialist collectivity, these are all heterotopic spaces, caught between individualist and collectivist chronotopes, space-time discontinua. Drawing an analogy between the city and the body politic, Benjamin articulates these spaces in terms of the “concrete zones of consciousness” that occur between dreaming and waking, conditioned:

...by every conceivable level of wakefulness within all possible centers. The situation of consciousness as patterned and checkered by sleep and waking need only be transferred from the individual to the collective...And so long as they preserve this unconscious, amorphous dream configuration, they are as much natural processes as digestion, breathing and the like. They stand in the cycle of the eternally selfsame,

¹ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 423.

until the collective seizes upon them in politics and history emerges (389-90).

While the Criterion Collection is certainly committed to this dream house, these chronotopic disjunctions are distilled even further in another post-cinematic infrastructure: Netflix. Since starting as an online rental company in 1997, Netflix has expanded to encompass various kinds of online activity, from streaming to social networking to original content, and takes place at the cusp between STD and STI, or straight-to-internet delivery. However, not only does the postal system remain central to its operations, but the DVD, and STD delivery, is increasingly folded into postal delivery, even as Netflix expands its operations to consider deliveries that promise to eclipse both the DVD and postal system. This revivification of the postal network at the hands of digital technologies is part of what allows Netflix to inhabit the same wish-image (or wishlist) as the architectonic freeways of the last chapter, in which “the emergence of the new” reaches back “to elements of primal history.” If, as Mikhail Bakhtin suggests, “the chronotope of meeting fulfills architectonic functions,” then here the meeting of chronotopes is what fulfills architectonic functions, imbuing the infrastructure of Netflix itself with “an opening, sometimes a culmination, even... a denouement.”² In the process, the acts of ordering, arranging and returning Netflix films form a cinetopic anecdote that “regenerates archaic, primordial elements,” satirised in a recent episode of *Portlandia*,³ a sketch show set in and around Portland, Oregon that takes the quaintness of new media, and the chronotropia of remediation, as its comic signature (a running joke involves a rustic, artisan food organisation rehabilitating the foyer of *Cinetopia*, one of central Portland’s few multiplexes).

In this sketch, the acts of ordering, arranging and returning a Netflix film are personified and narrativised in terms of an “archaic, primordial” curse.⁴ Carrie

² Mikhail Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982), 98.

³ *Portlandia*, created by Fred Armisen, Carrie Brownstein and Jonathan Krisel (New York: IFC, 2011-present), television series.

⁴ “Cool Wedding,” season 2, episode 3 of Armisen, Brownstein and Krisel, *Portlandia*, January 20, 2012.

(Carrie Brownstein) hires out *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*⁵ because her postman, Fred (Fred Armisen) has recommended it. When she's unable to get through it, he forces her to watch it before he will deliver any more discs: "This is the only way out. This is not going back. This goes through your DVD player, and then it goes back."⁶ Finally, when Carrie watches and returns it, she finds herself transformed into the postman, doomed to shoulder the burden of distribution until somebody else rents out the film. By the time the curse is set, however, most of its work has been done, since Carrie's movement towards watching the film is framed as a gradual assimilation to its expressionist universe, by way of an exacerbation and exaggeration of her domestic, suburban home. In its reification of something like a Netflix interior, this exaggeration centres on the various locations in which the disc is placed, producing an expressionism of the shelf, twisting and contorting its ostensible linearity into peaks of rapturous "optic music" that mark its "utter withdrawal from the outside world."⁷ Nevertheless, it is only once she has received the curse that Carrie can properly map its progress, just as it is only once she has incorporated the disc into her mobile shelf that she can grasp the co-ordinates of its mobility, its movement around her house – and this tropism of the shelf, or what might be termed a tropic shelf, derives from Netflix's two most innovative structural signatures.

On the one hand, the "dynamic queue," in which a user prioritises a series of titles, and is sent them only approximately in that order, means that, unless the user is obsessively checking their online account, and not even necessarily then, there is no absolute certainty of what DVD will be in the envelope when it arrives.⁸ Similarly, Netflix's "predictive algorithm" means that the user can be presented with a selection of DVDs that not only reflects their tastes, but reflects them at any one time. This innovation was so successful that it spawned a short-

⁵ *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, directed by Robert Wiene (1920; Potsdam, DE: Kino Video, 2004), DVD.

⁶ "Cool Wedding," 17:07.

⁷ Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, Rev. Edn. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 68.

⁸ "Approach for renting items to customers: Netflix patent," *Espacenet*, March 13, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/pnarpnr>.

lived competition to equal or improve it, until privacy laws intervened.⁹ Given the Netflix policy of never renting more than three discs out at a time, this means that rentophiles don't receive a fully-formed shelf so much as a standing wave of DVDs whose crest is only ever two to three discs, calculated on the basis of research that determines, among other things, how users review old and recent films differently, and how reviews change at different times of the day and week. As the *Portlandia* sketch suggests, this convergence of shelf and queue produces a peculiar kind of "anticipation, which in a real or palpable way extends" the sequential arrangement of items "beyond itself, superposing one moment upon the next, in a way that is not just thought but also bodily felt as a yearning, tending or tropism" – a "forward-projection" that Massumi describes as "possibilization,"¹⁰ and that the *Portlandia* sketch makes an effort to map.

Tropic Mapping

In 2010, the *New York Times* published a series of maps depicting the geographical distribution of Netflix queues (Figures 51-55).¹¹ Although these involved several cities in the United States, those in New York and Los Angeles tend to be the most evocative, if only because they have, historically, operated as the infrastructural and urban lens through which distant readings of cinema tend to take place, cities most likely to play and possibilise themselves. In the map of New York, neighbourhoods are defined in terms of the top 10 Netflix titles on their queues. Released at the very end of 2008, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*¹² still commands the city, for reasons that will be discussed shortly. Before that, however, it is useful to examine the second configuration of the map, which examines the city on a film-by-film basis, shading and mapping from grey to light yellow to dark red, with grey signifying those areas with negligible interest in the film in question, in a visualisation of Benjamin's "idea of setting out the sphere of life – *bios* – graphically on a map":

⁹ Netflix Prize Forum, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/nbkk9c>.

¹⁰ Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 91.

¹¹ "Peek Into Netflix Queues." All maps are taken from this webpage.

¹² *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, directed by David Fincher (2008; Hollywood, CA: Paramount, 2009), DVD.

First, I envisaged an ordinary map, but now I would incline to a general staff's map of a city center, if such a thing existed. Doubtless it does now, because of ignorance of the theater of future wars. I have evolved a system of signs, and on the gray backgrounds of such maps they would make a colorful show if I clearly marked the houses of my friends and girlfriends, the assembly halls of various collectives, from the "debating chambers" of the Youth Movement to the gathering places of Communist youth, the hotel and brothel rooms that I knew for one night, the decisive benches in the Tiergarten, the ways to different schools and the graves that I saw filled, the sites of prestigious cafes whose long-forgotten names daily crossed our lips, the tennis courts where empty apartment blocks stand today, and the halls emblazoned with gold and stucco that the terrors of dancing classes made almost the equal of gymnasiums.¹³

In Giorgio Agamben's terms, to map the "sphere of life," or "*bios*," is to pinpoint the transition between the demands of the city (*bios*) and the demands of the domestic home (*zoe*), a "threshold in which life is both inside and outside the juridical order...this threshold is the place of sovereignty."¹⁴ Accordingly, Benjamin's map performs the double function of detailing the domestic-urban thresholds that populated his childhood, and then elevating them to the temporal threshold between the domesticity of childhood and his adult self. Given that the Tiergarten in which Benjamin learned to "lose one's way" is presented as "decisive" in this trajectory, the suggestion is of a map which doesn't merely document spatial and temporal thresholds but is folded into them, such that to read it pre-emptively, as a guide to where to go, is meaningless. Instead, it can only be read as a map that is sufficiently outdated to disorientate, a retrospective embodiment of a new horizon of spatio-temporal thresholds. In that sense, it crystallises Benjamin's originary map, blown into pieces on street corners, as a tropic map; a map of total infrastructure that, as a synecdoche for the dream house of the collective, can only be known upon awakening: "In the fields with which we are concerned here, knowledge comes only in lightning flashes. The text is the long roll of thunder that follows."¹⁵ As the

¹³ Benjamin, "Berlin Chronicle," 596-97.

¹⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 27.

¹⁵ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 852.

map for *Tropic Thunder* (Figure 51) might suggest,¹⁶ the Netflix queue maps similarly defy being read in any kind of predictive or orientating way; rather, they require the viewer to “pass through them,” and “carry out *what has been* in remembering the dream.” To this end, the combination of warm hues, gradated measurements and small catchment areas allows the Netflix maps to breathe, possibilise passage, in much the same way as a meteorological map, while movement between maps takes on the tropic momentum and diasporic intimacy of the virtual shelf.

As tropic, diasporic maps, these images all provide – literally – distant readings of the films in question, interpreting them en masse, from a satellite perspective. As the distant reading of *Twilight* (Figure 52) might suggest,¹⁷ their respective tropisms take place at those twilit, “concrete states between sleep and waking” that Benjamin describes - not so much the zones in which people watch Netflix releases as the zones in which they order them, or in which they arrange and dream of shelf-queues, recalling Benjamin’s definition of *flânerie* as the attempt to catch the evening “in the net of the afternoon...the *flâneur* in planning.” In that sense, the *Twilight* map stands as a post-cinematic diagram of Benjamin’s account of chronotropic mapping:

...just as the sleeper...sets out on this macrocosmic journey through his own body, and the noises and feelings of his insides....generate, in the extravagantly heightened inner awareness of the sleeper, illusion or dream imagery which translates and accounts for them, so likewise for the dreaming collective which, through the arcades, communes with its own insides.¹⁸

Like *Twilight*, *Bedtime Stories*,¹⁹ another film included in the maps (Figures 53-54), centres on a character whose development is arrested, and who is forced to return to or remain in youth; a hotel handyman, played by Adam Sandler, who

¹⁶ *Tropic Thunder*, directed by Ben Stiller (2008; Universal City, CA: Dreamworks Video, 2008), DVD.

¹⁷ *Twilight*, directed by Catherine Hardwicke (2008; Universal City, CA: Summit Entertainment, 2009), DVD.

¹⁸ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 389.

¹⁹ *Bedtime Stories*, directed by Adam Shankman (2008; Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2009), DVD.

suddenly finds his dreams turning into films, producing a collapse of cinematic and heterotopic infrastructure – all these dream-films play out in his carnivalesque hotel – that extended to the film’s own promotional apparatus: “The film’s Chicago publicist, a really nice guy, announced that any movie critic attending the critics’ screening in pajamas would be presented with free popcorn and a soft drink. How could he have known that the 7:30 p.m. screening would take place during a snowstorm on the coldest night of this winter?”²⁰ In New York, this collapse of cinematic and heterotopic infrastructure corresponds to a sharp distinction between inner city and suburban infrastructure; in Los Angeles, it corresponds to a gradual, indistinguishable threshold between inner city and suburban infrastructure; in New York, this maps a vision of the suburbs dreaming of the inner city, in Los Angeles, the inner city dreaming of its imminent and immanent suburbanisation; in both cases, a dream-threshold between urban and suburban passage that sees New York and Los Angeles dreaming of each other, not only by way of the grey economies that lie between them in Indiana’s account, but the bicoastal co-ordinates of Herring’s queer infrastructure. Giving the lie to Hannah Arendt’s dichotomy between suburbia and *flânerie* in the introduction to *Illuminations*,²¹ and recalling Kracauer’s foundational cinematic moment of being thrilled by “an ordinary suburban street, filled with lights and shadows,”²² this inter-urban dreaming not only recapitulates the diasporic passages of the collector-wanderer, but encapsulates what Benjamin, in one of his few applications of *flânerie* to an emergent suburban milieu, describes as “threshold magic”:

Threshold magic. At the entrance to the skating rink, to the pub, to the tennis court, to resort locations: penates. The hen that lays the golden praline-eggs, the machine that stamps our name on nameplates, slot machines...oddly such machines don’t flourish in the city but rather are a component of excursion sites, of beer gardens in the suburbs. And when, in search of a little greenery, one heads for these places on a Sunday afternoon, one is turning as well to the mysterious thresholds. Of course,

²⁰ Roger Ebert, “*Bedtime Stories*: Movie Review,” *The Chicago Sun-Times* online, December 23, 2008, <http://tinyurl.com/qcd4fn3>.

²¹ Hannah Arendt, introduction to Arendt and Zohn, *Illuminations*, 21.

²² Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, xi.

this same magic prevails more covertly in the interior of the bourgeois dwelling.²³

As these film-maps of *Bedtime Stories* might suggest, the suburbs aren't the location of Benjamin's threshold magic *per se*: rather, it is the nexus, interface and momentum between inner city and suburbs that constitutes this threshold magic. Given that Benjamin also identifies this threshold magic within the classical "bourgeois dwelling," a form of suburban passage emerges in which bourgeois insularity is exteriorised, eviscerated and transplanted onto the movement between city and suburbs, anticipating the great *flâneuses* of suburban horror. Containing the dream-passages that sprawl around them, in something like a post-cinematic recapitulation of the suburban migration of the great city-films of the 1920s – the movement, say, from *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* to *People on Sunday*²⁴ – these film-maps clarify threshold-magic's role in "the terror that reigns across the apartment...when it starts up with the slight tremor of the receding image and announces another to come" (88).

In that sense, the film-maps of *Bedtime Stories* rhetorically open the dialectic drama of the dream house: the "unending variety of concrete states of consciousness...within all possible centers" (389) – or, to borrow a term from Bachelard, a distributed network of "centers of daydream" – that constitutes the patterning and checkering position of the Netflix queue-maps, as well as the vague suburban horror of the comment threads that they spawned, discussed presently.²⁵ Appropriately, those maps often occur at the cinetopic nexus between spectacle and infrastructure, dwelling on films that themselves dwell on emergent or remediated spaces within which cinematic and post-cinematic commodities mingle, especially the migration of inner-city department store (*Confessions of a Shopaholic*) into suburban mall (*Paul Blart: Mall Cop*), conjoined

²³ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 214.

²⁴ *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, directed by Walter Ruttmann (1927; Berlin: Image Entertainment, 2012), DVD; *People on Sunday*, directed by Curt Siodmak and Robert Siodmak (1930; Berlin: The Criterion Collection, 2011), DVD.

²⁵ Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, 17.

with the infrastructure left in that migration's wake (*Ghost Town*).²⁶ In doing so, they fuse the spaces from which dream-work increasingly embarks with dream-work itself, turning Benjamin's grey map into a map of total infrastructure, culminating with the most popular title at the time of mapping, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (Figure 55).

One of the ways in which Benjamin articulates the dialectic atemporality of the dream house is that it can only be understood by growing younger.²⁷ Had Benjamin himself grown younger – had he become Benjamin Button or, more distantly, the petrified becoming-younger of *Twilight* and *Bedtime Stories* – he would perhaps have found in this distribution of himself across Manhattan not merely a reclamation of reflective nostalgia from F. Scott Fitzgerald's typically restorative mode, but the very epitome of the tropic process by which a map is organically incorporated into its object, suggesting that while “the twentieth-century, with its porosity and transparency” may have “put an end to dwelling in the old sense,” it has not done away with the obsessive “casings” of the nineteenth century dream house, but simply remediated them across postmodern, post-cinematic and now post-perceptual *Wunderkammera* of “pocket watches, slippers, egg cups, thermometers, playing cards” (221).

House of Cards

In early 2013, Netflix aestheticised and articulated this iteration of the dream house by way of a remake of the BBC miniseries *House of Cards*.²⁸ Released in 1990, 1993 and 1995, this miniseries only received a VHS release one year after its first installment. As a result, it already requires some adjustment for a STD milieu, in which the televised broadcast frequently struggles to keep up with the

²⁶ *Confessions of a Shopaholic*, directed by P.J. Hogan (2009; Burbank, CA: Touchstone Home Entertainment, 2009), DVD; *Paul Blart: Mall Cop*, directed by Steve Carr (2009; Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2009), DVD; *Ghost Town*, directed by David Koepp (2008; Hollywood, CA: Warner Brothers, 2008), DVD.

²⁷ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 390.

²⁸ *House of Cards*, created by Andrew Davies and Michael Dobbs (1990-95; London: BBC Home Entertainment, 2013), DVD.

DVD release, let alone torrented leaks, collapsing an older televisual spectatorship into “just one of the new forms of subjectivity that are emerging in a world of just-in-time production, precarious labor and neoliberal techniques of quantification and management.”²⁹ In fact, just-in-time production is often framed in terms of precisely the dissolution of the shelf to a standing wave of partial objects that defines the Netflix dream house, “the assembling, configuration and fabrication of products when they are not readily available on the shelf.”³⁰ Accordingly, “just in time” is a common prefix and hashtag on the Netflix twitter account.³¹ However, this model doesn’t only apply to the relationship between new releases on different platforms: the Criterion Collection partakes of the same logic via its extensive Hulu account, which makes segments of its dream-shelf available for short periods, “just in time for Halloween,” “just in time for Valentine’s Day,” “just in time for the Super Bowl.”³²

As this might suggest, part of what distinguishes this new iteration of the dream house is the extent to which it is susceptible and even compatible with the very conditions of “precarious labor” against which it might constitute itself as a site of resistance or contemplation. This is no surprise: Benjamin presents the dream house as dialectically as any of his other formulations, suggesting that, as capitalism progresses, the dream house can only expand to the dream city as the collective refines its ability “to pass through and carry out *what has been* in remembering the dream.” In a distant prophecy of produsage, Benjamin understands the citizen of the dream house – that is, the *cinepheur* – as possessed of a twilit, fantasmatic passage through capital that becomes more

²⁹ Steven Shaviro, “More on post-continuity & post-cinematic affect,” *The Pinocchio Theory* (blog), October 12, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/padnnt5>.

³⁰ T.C. Cheng and Susan Podolsky, *Just-In-Time Manufacturing: An Introduction* (Heidelberg, DE: Springer, 1996), 80.

³¹ Netflix US, Twitter, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/py7ltsh>. See also Ebert’s parodic tweet, “Why does Netflix always seem to stop working just in time for a holiday?” (Twitter, January 1, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/owubsap>).

³² “What’s Happening on Hulu – From the Current – The Criterion Collection,” Hulu, October 26, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/pt2q9t8>. My personal experience is that the Criterion site only indirectly or obliquely announces these Hulu events, such that I only tend to arrive at them just-in-time to catch the last few hours of the window.

entranced and participatory as awakening draws closer. The Netflix remake of *House of Cards* enacts precisely this ambivalence, dialectically progressing STD delivery, and what might be termed its aesthetic of just-in-time labor, into an entirely new medium in the process. Although the first “season” follows a nominal DVD logic and syntax – twelve “episodes,” each with their own arc and climax, separated by opening and closing sequences – it has been released as a single entity, only available on the Netflix platform. While it may eventually be available as a DVD release, it currently stands as an unparalleled instance of an STD release without a DVD – an STI, or straight-to-internet release – clarifying that, for some time, STD release, and DVD spectatorship, has been increasingly jettisoned and abstracted from the DVD object itself; the DVD has become a structure of feeling that has eclipsed its material basis. It is no coincidence, then, that *House of Cards* coincides with the moment at which streaming and downloading finds itself “breaching the £1bn barrier,”³³ nor that it revisits an older series to crystallise and converge earlier distribution modes.

The Fifth Wall

Like the BBC series, *House of Cards* revolves around a disgruntled parliamentary whip. In the BBC version, this is Francis Urquhart, a Machiavellian politician who schemes to become leader of the conservative party and, from there, Prime Minister of Britain. In the American version, Francis Urquhart becomes Frank Underwood, who seeks revenge on his Democrat colleagues after being passed over for Secretary of State. Despite this migration from conservative to liberal milieu, discussed shortly, both series permit the protagonist to address the camera directly, meaning that the two lead actors – Ian Richardson and Kevin Spacey – are peculiarly identified with their respective roles. Richardson’s address is theatrical, drawn from his extensive experience and reputation as a stage actor in breaking the fourth wall. While Spacey’s is also theatrical, it is inflected not only through the rise of documentary style television drama in the 2000s, but through a second, more recent wave of diegetised televisual cameras.

³³ Matt Warman, “CD and DVD sales plunge as downloads surge to £1billion,” *The Telegraph* online, January 2, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/owuav7q>.

Denson identifies this second wave with series like *Breaking Bad* that don't explicitly thematise or account for this diegeticisation, but it is even more noticeable in the late work, or second wave, of long-running docudramas like *The Office*, in which the camera's presence has become more and more abstracted from the presence of people operating and monitoring it, even or especially as the characters address it.³⁴ It makes more sense, then, to describe *House of Cards* as breaking the fifth wall, or, rather, conflating the three main registers in which a fifth wall has been theorised and formulated – as the wall between televisual and non-televisual space,³⁵ as the “semi-porous wall membrane that stands between audience members” during a play or film³⁶ and, most recently, in Shakespearean studies, as the wall that prevents the shared produsage of practitioners and scholars.³⁷ This latter deployment of the fifth wall was a touchstone for Spacey's performance of Richard III, which immediately preceded the series³⁸ and which, directed by Sam Mendes, was already a revision of the direct address and open secret of *American Beauty*: “The garage is in the process of becoming LESTER's sanctuary...spread across a card table. The SHELVES that Lester tore through earlier have been dismantled, leaving a blank wall.”³⁹

Critically, in both series, the direct address to camera doesn't mitigate the surprise and suspense the audience feels with respect to the protagonist's

³⁴ Denson, “Roundtable Discussion #2.” *The Office*, created by Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant, developed by Greg Daniels (Philadelphia, PA: NBC, 2005-2013), television series; *Breaking Bad*, created by Vince Gilligan (New York: AMC, 2008-2013), television series.

³⁵ Andreas Fickers, “The Emergence of Television as a Conservative Media Revolution: Historicising a Process of Remediation in the Post-war Western Europe Mass Media Ensemble,” *Journal of Modern European History* 10:1 (2012), 49.

³⁶ G. Davenport, S. Agamanolis, B. Barry, B. Bradley, and K. Brooks, *Synergistic storyscape and constructionist cinematic sharing*, *IBM Systems Journal* 39:3/4 (2000), 468.

³⁷ Lynnette Hunter and Peter Lichtenfels, *Shakespeare and the Stage: The Fifth Wall Only* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2005), 5.

³⁸ Aaron Grunfeld, “Shakespeare Notebook: *Richard III*,” *The Fifth Wall* (blog), January 27, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/oalhp9m>.

³⁹ Alan Ball and Sam Mendes, *American Beauty: The Shooting Script* (New York: Newmarket, 1999), 48; *American Beauty*, directed by Sam Mendes (1999; Universal City, CA: Warner Brothers, 2000), DVD.

scheming. If anything, the apparent transparency of Francis and Frank serves to make them appear more elusive, as well as identifying the “blank wall” of their address with the “rhetorical secret” operative in closet epistemologies:

The formal logic of the closet appears to be one in which acts of secrecy and disclosure opposed each other, for to keep a secret refuses to reveal it. Yet, upon closer examination of the disclosure that equates “homosexuality” and “secrecy,” we learn that this is not at all the case. Rather, secrecy and disclosure are fully compatible, even necessarily so...The closet, its trope of secrecy/disclosure, cannot be understood as pure knowledge, but rather, must be implicated in historically situated power relations. How does the rhetorical secret disguise these insidious functions? How does it convince us that disclosure is simply a matter of exchanging information about oneself? How does it appear so innocently?⁴⁰

These last three questions were the dramatic field upon which the BBC series played out, perhaps explaining why Richardson was, in its aftermath, suddenly identified as gay, despite having a wife, children and a history of public heterosexuality. Of course, these are no guarantees of heterosexuality – in fact, Grindstaff’s point is that their apparent disclosures of heterosexuality are compatible, even necessary for the closet to operate – but there is nevertheless an unusual modulation in the reception of Richardson in the wake of the series, from being cast in his first gay role, between the first and second seasons, to the rediscovery and revisionism of his earlier theatrical work as a closet: “The splendid RSC production [of *Richard II*] that toured America, directed by John Barton, alternated two excellent actors, Ian Richardson and Richard Pasco, as Bolingbroke and Richard. Depending on which actor you saw as Richard, the king was either gay or straight.”⁴¹

As the identification of Richardson with a Richard who was “either gay or straight” might suggest, this attribution of homosexuality reflected the eloquence with which *House of Cards* translated rhetorical secrecy into the language of

⁴⁰ Davin Allen Grindstaff, *Rhetorical Secrets: Mapping Gay Identity and Queer Resistance in Contemporary America* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 27.

⁴¹ Paul Barry, *A Lifetime with Shakespeare: Notes from an American Director of All 38 Plays* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), 138.

political rhetoric: it might be said that the very eloquence of its articulation of a closet epistemology revolved around the fact that no discrete closet was articulated. In the case of the American remake, this dovetails with the supposedly open secret of Kevin Spacey's homosexuality. Drawing on D.A. Miller, Grindstaff observes that the very notion of a publicly kept secret is what constitutes rhetorical secrecy – “in continuing to keep my secret, I have already rather *given it away*” – evoking “the double bind of a secrecy that must always be maintained in the face of a secret that everybody already knows.”⁴² As a result, speculation on whether *House of Cards* would confirm that “Kevin Spacey Has A Secret”⁴³ was somewhat misplaced; if anything, it could only attempt to aestheticise a secret that had already been lost, secrecy that failed to signify.⁴⁴

In *Publicity's Secret*, Jodi Dean articulates this secret as the field upon which democratic politics accommodates itself to technocratic accumulation:

I look at publicity's limit – the secret. My concern is not with the contents of secrets or the proper determination of what should be made public. Rather, my concern involves what this “making public” means with respect to the function of the secret within a logic of publicity. I argued that democratic politics has been formatted within a dynamic of concealment and disclosure, through a primary opposition between what is hidden and what is revealed. The ideal of a public typically posited in Enlightenment-based theories of democracy relies on the secret as its disavowed basis. The secret, in other words, is the fundamental limit point of democratic validity. Publicity requires the secret.⁴⁵

As an attempt to aestheticise the field of technocratic accumulation encapsulated in the *Times* queue maps, *House of Cards* articulates this “fundamental limit point of democratic validity” as the horizon of the dream house. Although it is somewhat archaic to speak of “the first two episodes” of such an object, it is a

⁴² D.A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 194-95.

⁴³ Tom Junod, “Kevin Spacey?” my mom said. ‘I hear he’s...’” *Esquire* 128:4 (1997), 66.

⁴⁴ Laura Bennett, “Kevin Spacey's Leading-Man Problem,” *New Republic* online, February 5, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/a7mf8fe>.

⁴⁵ Jodi Dean, *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 16.

useful and perhaps inevitable shorthand for those moments at which the structure of feeling peculiar to this new mode of release emerges. If anything, it is precisely this lag between vocabulary and phenomenology that signals the emergence of this structure of feeling – and, in that sense, the attempt to episodise the amorphous space of the first two hours of the narrative is not unlike Jameson’s effort to find a vocabulary for walking into the Bonaventure:

I am proposing the notion that we are here in the presence of something like a mutation in built space itself. My implication is that we ourselves, the human subjects who happen into this new space, have not kept pace with that evolution; there has been a mutation in the object unaccompanied as yet by any equivalent mutation in the subject. We do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace, as I will call it, in part because our perceptual habits were formed in that older kind of space I have called the space of high modernism. The newer architecture therefore...stands as something like an imperative to grow new organs, to expand our sensorium and our body to some new, yet unimaginable, perhaps ultimately impossible dimensions.⁴⁶

While theorists have applied this anecdote of phenomenological passage to other built postmodern spaces,⁴⁷ Jameson’s deployment of hyperspace as a tentative trajectory for this postmodern dissolution of spatiality suggests that his re-enacted passage from modernist to postmodern architecture is best continued by way of the passage from postmodern to post-perceptual architecture; or, rather, folding architecture, since, like the Watts Towers, *House of Cards* is a structure that represents “the development of more pliant, complex and heterogeneous forms of architectural practice – with architectural practice supple enough to be formed by what is outside or external to them, yet resilient enough to retain their coherence as architecture.”⁴⁸ In fact, the distinction between HBO and Netflix models of television might also be understood in terms of Harris’ distinction between deconstructive and folding architecture:

⁴⁶ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 38-39.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Russell Daylight’s Jamesonian reading of Penrith Plaza, Sydney, in “The Language of Postmodern Space,” *Philament* 12 (2008), 1.

⁴⁸ Michael Speaks, “Preface: Folding Toward a New Architecture,” in Cache, *Earth Moves*, xv.

The deconstructive logic uses conceptual means to disrupt perceptual habits: deconstructionists induce conflicts between structural design and a site's topography, or between a building's axes of symmetry and the space of rectilinear convention. In contrast to deconstruction, folding favours linkage over aporia. Folding architecture creates continuities between site and structure, implementing conceptual designs that entrain perception to follow patterns that connect outside and inside, both physically and psychologically.⁴⁹

If HBO's "More than television" disrupts "perceptual habits" with high "conceptual means," the Netflix model, like the Watts Towers, disrupts conceptual habits with perceptual means. Whereas, in Denson's terms, the HBO model seeks to consciously imagine and promulgate media change, the Netflix model is prescient of the fact that "if...our capacity to imagine media change is itself mediated through a changing media-technological environment, then certain aspects of media change must be categorically immune to imagination," situating itself at the "anthropotechnical interface" of "proprioceptive and visceral sensibilities"⁵⁰ – or of Benjamin's wish-images, which seek to overcome the "immaturity of the social product" through primal and primordial means.

Reviews of the series tend to respond at this proprioceptive level, describing it, variously, as "multilayered and sometimes utterly disorienting,"⁵¹ "confusing...[with] no idea how much time the 13 episodes spanned"⁵² and "suuuuper confusing when you watch the last episode first."⁵³ Such statements tend to revolve around the temporality of the show and are most prominent on informal review platforms, or at least platforms that aren't specifically affiliated with television reviews: the above selection charts a passage from a general online news source, to a comment on an informal, personal site, to a personal

⁴⁹ Harris, "Folding Architecture," 37.

⁵⁰ Shane Denson, "On NOT Imagining Media Change," *Initiative Für Interdisziplinäre Medienforschung* (blog), June 1, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/myjncrx>.

⁵¹ Justin M. McGee, "Netflix delivers with House of Cards," *The Patriot*, February 13, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/nv8xnhq>.

⁵² Dustin Rowles, "'House of Cards' Review: The Show Is a Success, But What About the Strategy?," *Pajiba*, February 4, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/ofvpywx>. Lyla, comment 2 on Rowles, "House of Cards."

⁵³ Rachel Specter, "Tweet: *House of Cards*," Twitter, February 20, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/nddxy59>.

Twitter account. If these sites are peculiarly susceptible to the new temporality and structure of feeling, brought about by this STI release, it is because it dovetails with the peculiar temporality of communicative media itself, especially in its attempt to “episodise” or “eventalise” the unmediated flow of data and information. Drawing on Lauren Berlant’s observation that “Facebook is about calibrating the difficulty of knowing the important event...trying...to eventalize the mood, the inclination, the thing that just happened – the episodic nature of existence,”⁵⁴ Dean observes that “a tweet...marks the mundane by expressing it, by breaking it out of one flow of experience and introducing it to another.” As an attempt to draw out “a singular moment among many such moments,” the tweet mirrors both the *House of Cards* viewer’s efforts to create “an affective flow and mark divergences from it,”⁵⁵ as well as suggesting that the relationship between viewers – the second iteration of the fifth wall – partakes of the “community without community”⁵⁶ that Dean attributes to twitter phenomenology. Clive Thompson describes this phenomenology as a kind of “social proprioception” that, by imparting “a subliminal sense of orientation,” gives “a group of people a sense of itself, making possible weird, fantastic feats of coordination” and translating Guillory’s problematisation of community and association into a digital ecology.⁵⁷ Accordingly, there is an organic, phenomenological link between the series and Twitter, as evinced in the *#HouseofCards* Twitter account, which replicates the warp and weave of political Twitter feeds.

Glitch

If this phenomenology of twitter atemporality – updated to what user audreyallison, in response to Rachel Specter’s “suuuuper confusing” experience, describes as “Netflix glitch”⁵⁸ – is peculiarly prominent in the first part of the series, it is by virtue of David Fincher’s involvement as director and executive

⁵⁴ Lauren Berlant, “Faceless book,” *Supervalent Thought* (blog), December 25, 2007, <http://tinyurl.com/prz8rh6>.

⁵⁵ Dean, *Blog Theory*, 98.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵⁷ Clive Thompson, “How Twitter Creates a Social Sixth Sense,” *Wired* 15:07 (2007), <http://tinyurl.com/2np4um>.

⁵⁸ Audrey Wauchope, comment on Rachel Specter, “Tweet,” February 20, 2013.

producer. In their seminal outline of the emergent aesthetic category of “glitch,” Hugh S. Manon and Daniel Temkin identify Fincher as the prominent contemporary purveyor of cinematic glitch. Characterising glitch as any sustained artistic or technological endeavour that “disrupts the data behind a digital representation in such a way that its simulation of analog can no longer remain covert,” Manon and Temkin observe that “The artwork that accompanies the soundtrack CD for *The Social Network* (David Fincher, 2010) features glitch stills that would not look out of place in the Flickr Glitch Art Pool.”⁵⁹ Critically, this glitch zone that Manon and Temkin attribute to Fincher is not exclusively cinematic, but rather an uneasy conjunction of cinema, photography and music: the space between the film and the soundtrack, imagined, via Flickr, as an instance of the “*wunderkammer* of the social network” that Hubert Burda associates with this social network in particular. In *Post Cinematic Affect*, Shaviro observes that “We now live in the midst of an *audiovisual continuum*. With so many different articulations of sounds and images, and with digital transcoding as the common basis for all of them, it no longer makes sense to posit a global opposition between the audible and visible.”⁶⁰ Dovetailing this post-cinematic continuum with glitch’s commitment to “crystalline fragmentation” of “the “bleeding” or “warmth” perceivable “in some forms of analog distortion,”⁶¹ Fincher’s directorial vision occupies the cusp between post-cinematic and post-perceptual affect, or between the post-cinematic and post-perceptual glitch.

While this gaseous, mercurial dissolution of the very “bleed” or “warmth” that previously seemed to signal the limits of perception, limits that have long since receded, is clear throughout all Fincher’s work, this aesthetic has been particularly prominent from *Fight Club* onwards – it might be said that his earlier work provides the analog canvas for this glitchscape, which has correlated more concretely with a series of *Wunderkammera* in the opening sequences of *Fight*

⁵⁹ Hugh S. Manon and Daniel Temkin, “Notes on Glitch,” *World Picture Journal* 6 (2011), <http://tinyurl.com/leen7e3>.

⁶⁰ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 134.

⁶¹ Manon and Temkin, “Notes on Glitch”.

Club than any moment since.⁶² While *Zodiac*'s revisionist account of postmodern space and *The Social Network*'s social networks are also clear precedents for *House of Cards*, and the very centrality of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* in the *Times* queues implies more than a coincidental affinity with Netflix phenomenology, these tendencies are most pronounced in Fincher's remake of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.⁶³ Confirming Simon Reynolds' observation that "the *avant-garde* has become the *arrière-garde*"⁶⁴ – that it is precisely the remake, or revision, that forms the locus of aesthetic originality in our contemporary media ecology – Fincher's version, based it is on the bestselling novel by Stieg Larsson, is faced with the same essential narrative bind as the Swedish film;⁶⁵ namely, that the narrative requires an investigative procedural to be conducted, in its near entirety, from a laptop. Although this laptop is situated in a tiny hut on a remote Swedish island, it nevertheless picks up an excellent internet signal. Despite the abundance of atmospheric Scandinavian backdrops, then, there is very little necessity for the investigative duo to leave their desks and actually experience these landscapes, or allow the audience to experience them.

Whereas the Swedish version deals with this by a half-hearted insistence on evocative establishing shots, on the one hand, and frenetic micro-procedural montage on the other, Fincher does away with any pretence to operating outside of cyberspace, instead finding in the snowy wilds of Sweden a natural counterpart to the metallic, greasy palette of *The Social Network*, turning the paradoxical status of the cabin – utterly isolated, yet completely connected – into a synecdoche for the "community without community" of social media, which

⁶² *Fight Club*, directed by David Fincher (1999; Century City, CA: 20th Century Fox, 2002), DVD.

⁶³ *Zodiac*, directed by David Fincher (2007; Hollywood, CA: Warner Brothers, 2007), DVD; *The Social Network*, directed by David Fincher (2010; Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2011), DVD; *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*, directed by David Fincher (2011; Beverly Hills, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2012), DVD.

⁶⁴ Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addition to Its Own Past* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), xx.

⁶⁵ *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*, directed by Niels Arden Oplev (2009; Copenhagen: Music Box Films Home Entertainment, 2010), DVD.

accordingly yields some of the most critical forensic and narrative information; the dimness of a midnight sun, a darkness that means that it never gets fully dark. In that sense, Fincher discovers the origins of cyberspace in Sweden in much the same way that Mark Fisher, in a review of the Junior Boys' electronica album *So This Is Goodbye*,⁶⁶ discovers the origins of cyberspace in Canada, rephrasing Boym's concepts of restorative and reflective nostalgia in terms of nostalgia and nomadalgia, a travel-sickness that complicates homesickness:

So This Is Goodbye is a response to the cyberspatial commonplace that, with the net, even the most remote spot can be connected up (and also: that such connection often amounts to a communion of lonely souls). Hence the impression that, if Sinatra's 'When No-one Cares' was an unanswered call from the heartless heart of the Big Apple, then the Junior Boys' version has been phoned-in down a digital line from the edge of Lake Ontario. (Is it accidental that the term 'cyberspace' was invented by a Canadian?) *So this is Goodbye* is a very *travel sick* record. It expresses what we might call *nomadalgia*. Nomadalgia, the sickness *of* travel, would be a complement to, not the opposite of, the sickness *for* home, nostalgia.⁶⁷

While Fisher may be analysing an electronic group, rather than a film, the import of Shaviro's audiovisual continuum is that cyberspace, or at least the post-cinematic, electronic "space of flows," dictates that these discrete categories ramify less and less – and this is particularly evident in the role played by music in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Firstly, and most noticeably, the film opens with what can only be described as a post-cinematic music clip, a warping, protean electronic interface that insists upon its ability to "generate its own space... in a perpetual present, even though the video is prerecorded."⁶⁸ On the one hand, this dovetails the peculiar phenomenology of the film with that of Twitter's own ambivalent temporality – like this opening clip, Twitter presents us with a perpetual real time, even or especially when the events described have actually passed. It is by emphasising and enacting the perpetuity of this real time through its ambivalent temporal structure that *House of Cards* so astutely

⁶⁶ Junior Boys, *So This Is Goodbye*, Domino, WIGCD178, 2006, Compact Disc.

⁶⁷ Mark Fisher, "Nomadalgia: The Junior Boys' modernist MOR," *k-punk* (blog), March 4, 2006, <http://tinyurl.com/nztjg4>.

⁶⁸ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 16.

subsumes itself into Twitter time – and, if *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is positioned halfway between Facebook and Twitter, then *House of Cards* is Fincher’s twitter masterpiece; Twitter stands in the same relation to *House of Cards* as Facebook did to *The Social Network*. Hence the series’ tendency to relate fragmentary morsels of textual communication as actual text over the top of the screen, in a rhetorical emulation of the Twitter messages that are sometimes overlaid on live broadcasts, as if to evoke the way that affective-informational labour overwhelms and subsumes the information upon which it depends.

Something of this subsumption is anticipated in the fact that the soundtrack ushered in by the opening of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is longer than the film itself; the “opening” of the film is something more akin to the overture to a piece of music than the first scene of a recognisably visual medium. This reversal of the hierarchical relationship between film and score is an indication of the presence of a post-cinematic ecology, as well as the necessity of tropic mapping in response to that ecology: listening to the soundtrack, after having seen the film, is in effect to map out the space that the film was expanding to fill, but in a way that is impossible while watching the film itself. Just as musicals often make more sense, or signify more richly, when the spectator has acquainted themselves with the songs beforehand, so *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* demands to be seen only after the soundtrack has been felt across the entire body. Not only does this suggest that the modernist subordination of kinaesthetics to optics has been fully subverted – and so indicates a milieu in which classical cinophilia fails to signify – but it segues post-cinema into post-perception. At least, this is the rhetorical effect of creating a film that is not primarily intended to be seen, or distributing an artifact that is not primarily visual, within a venue overwhelmingly associated with visual spectatorship – although, of course, this is no longer a film designed to be seen in a theatre. Like *House of Cards*, it is an object designed to be seen in the very process of its constitution, as it is being downloaded, or streamed; ideally, in the future, as a straight-to-neuron release. Plugging the spectator in from the opening sequence, Fincher places visuality itself in a paratextual position, dovetailing panoramic

perception with paratextual perception, or paratextual post-perception, and gesturing towards the emergence of a post-perceptual *cinepheur*.

Becoming-Secret

In order to move towards this recent iteration of the *cinepheur*, it is necessary to consider exactly what implications post-perceptual affect might have for Grindstaff and Dean's conception of the rhetorical secret, and its inextricability from *House of Cards*. In an analysis of *Fight Club* as the first digital work in Fincher's canon, as well as a harbinger of the network society, Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen describe its deployment of the secret as "rhizomatic," connecting it to Deleuze and Guattari's transformation of the dichotomy between macro and micro into that between molar and molecular.⁶⁹ This supple space between molar and molecular is a useful shorthand for Fincher's gaseous, mercurial aesthetic, as well as the aesthetic experience of streaming itself, in which an object constitutes and reconstitutes itself, filling a frame in all directions, to form what industry reviewers are increasingly referring to as molecular television, or at least a "molecular understanding of user data."⁷⁰ However, the deployment of Deleuze and Guattari in the name of the secret also suggests an alternative to that articulated by Dean, as well as a more reparative approach to *House of Cards*' post-perceptual dream house: "The secret is not at all an immobilized or static notion. Only becomings are secrets; the secret has a becoming."⁷¹ According to Deleuze and Guattari, the "immobilized" or "static" secret – that is, the secret with a discernible, stable and discoverable object – is already an "aesthetic or literary application" that "misses the secret *in* an author, as well as the secret *of* an author" (604). The becoming-secret dissolves the distinction between theory and aesthetic application, in the same way that it dissolves the distinction between the object and form of a secret; rather, its very

⁶⁹ Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, "Enjoy your fight! *Fight Club* as a Symptom of the Network Society," Lancaster, UK: Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, 2001, <http://tinyurl.com/p3u3e3z>.

⁷⁰ David Carr, "Giving Viewers What They Want," *The New York Times* online, February 24, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/ndlos5e>.

⁷¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 317.

secret is of a constitutive inextricability of theory and aesthetic application, akin to the distinction between film as applied philosophy and film *as* philosophy that Deleuze outlines in the introduction to *Cinema 1*:

The secret, as secret, must now acquire its own form. The secret is elevated from a finite content to the infinite form of secrecy. This is the point at which the secret attains absolute imperceptibility, instead of being linked to a whole interplay of relative perceptions and reactions. We go from a content that is well defined, localized and linked to the past, to the a priori general form of a nonlocalizable something that has happened...an eminently virile paranoid form...The more the secret is made into a structuring, organizing form, the thinner and more ubiquitous it becomes, the more its content becomes molecular, at the same time as its form dissolves (318).

Essentially a manifesto for post-perceptual aesthetics, this account clarifies the becoming-secret as the limit-point that marks the “absolute imperceptibility” of Fincher’s directorial style, as well as the specific horizons of perceptibility in each of his films. As his movement towards post-perception has become more pronounced in his later films, so the becoming-secret has itself become more prominent, or more conspicuously secret in those films, as well as more distinctive from conventional narrative suspense based on temporary withholding of information, or conventional narrative subversion based on permanent withholding of information. Rather, cognition is subordinated to perception in the manner of folding architecture, meaning that it is less a case of, say, it being impossible to pin down the Zodiac killer, or it being impossible to decide whether Mark Zuckerberg really was a plagiarist, than it being imperceptible, partly because, in both cases, the answer doesn’t lie in a series of discrete facts that are unavailable to the viewer, but in a proliferation of Big Data that discorrelates with the basic perceptual input and apparatus of the viewer. From that perspective, Fincher’s Zodiac killer is a figure who transforms evidence into data, and cognitive mapping into tropic mapping, standing in

relation to Zuckerberg's empire of Big Data in much the same way that, for Bonitzer, "*The Man Who Knew Too Much* is already, in filigree, *Psycho*."⁷²

This tension between the rhetorical secret and the becoming-secret – a tension that, Grindstaff argues, has the potential to transform the rhetorical secret into a site of radical resistance – is the arena within which *House of Cards* enacts its new medium. More specifically, this tension makes itself felt in the charismatic centrality of Frank/Spacey and how it is qualified or complicated by the presence of Claire, Frank's wife, played by Robin Wright. According to Dean, the impact of technocratic accumulation has been to transform "individuality itself" into "a glitch, a nonquantifiable contingency that could only hurt efficient resolution of those technical matters that presented themselves."⁷³ The result of this transformation is to conflate infrastructural and individual utterance:

New media present themselves for and as a democratic public. They present themselves *for* a democratic public in their eager offering of information, access and opportunity. They present themselves *as* a democratic public when the very fact of networked communications comes to mean democratization, when expansions in the infrastructure of the information society are assumed to be enactments of a demos. As the surfeit of secrets attests, however, the expansion and intensification of communication and entertainment networks yield not democracy but something else entirely – communicative capitalism.⁷⁴

Over the course of this thesis, the cinetopic anecdote has been associated with the very trajectory that Dean describes here: the attachment to entertainment infrastructure, the collapse of the ostensible locus or focus of entertainment into that infrastructural venue and, finally, the creative embodiment, re-enactment or reconstruction of that venue. Although creative reconstruction depends on creative deconstruction, there is nevertheless a sense in which communicative capitalism, as Dean envisages it, represents a kind of limit-state for the cinetopic anecdote, and the dream houses that emerge from it. Alternatively, there is a

⁷² Pascal Bonitzer, "The Skin and the Straw," In *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Lacan...But Were Afraid To Ask Hitchcock*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1992), 179.

⁷³ Dean, *Publicity's Secret*, 92.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

sense in which the very process of creative deconstruction and reconstruction – that is, of produsage – is not only contained by Dean’s conception of communicative capitalism, but is part of what gives it such force. As an enactment of and query into this culmination of late cinetopic passage, *House of Cards* exhibits quite an unusual and ambivalent relationship to produsage. In fact, the constitutive ambivalence of produsage makes it difficult to articulate whether it is the first series to fully embrace produsage, or the first series to wage full-scale war on produsage, by incorporating it to such an extent that it is transformed into product, reinstating the prior dichotomy between production and consumption. In either case, it is clear that its novelty, as a medium, turns on a paradox. On the one hand, it is *all there*, all available from the moment of its inception: once again, it is unclear whether this is a perfection or rejection of just-in-time labor. However, at the same time, it is devoid of the produsage apparatus of a DVD, or even the ghostly produsage apparatus of an episode ripped from a DVD. For consumers accessing it via the Netflix platform, this makes for a disarming navigational experience, which can be approximated by imagining how a DVD might play if it were stripped back to the linearities of a VHS object, but then dematerialised and streamed; it is, in that sense, as much an adaptation and transformation of the televisual/VHS dialectic of the original series as of its ostensible content. For users who cannot access the Netflix platform, however, this is a series that both demands and defies produsage. As of April 2013, it is literally unavailable for legal purchase anywhere other than on the Netflix site. Not only does this mean that a citizen without an American ISP has to torrent it to watch it, but it also reduces the quality of torrents, since they are being ripped from an object that has already been uploaded as a file, rather than from a DVD. The experience of watching a torrented, or prodused, segment of the series is thus even more constrictive, in one sense, than that of watching it on the site, the increase in glitchy accumulation serving to capture the phenomenology of an utterly distant, analog mode of televisual viewing; the quality of images from a torrented *House of Cards* episode and a VHS tape of the BBC version are not especially different in quality.

Whether or not this gesture is an invitation and injunction to produsage in, say, the manner of DVD region codes, or whether it is a full-scale assault on produsage remains unresolved, and is perhaps unresolvable. What is clearer is that it produces an immense navigational anxiety and tropic disorientation on the part of the spectator. If, as this thesis is positing, Jameson's postmodern movement through the Bonaventure is best updated by way of the post-perceptual movement through the folding architecture typified by *House of Cards*, then what we are experiencing is a digital iteration of what Jameson identifies as an increasing, late capitalist tendency to passivise passage:

We know in any case that recent architectural theory has begun to borrow from narrative analysis in other fields and to attempt to see our physical trajectories through such buildings as virtual narratives or stories, as dynamic paths and narrative paradigms which we as visitors are asked to fulfill and to complete with our own bodies and movements. In the Bonaventure, however, we find a dialectical heightening of this process: it seems to me that the escalators and elevators here henceforth replace movement but also, and above all, designate themselves as new reflexive signs and emblems of movement proper...Here, the narrative stroll has been underscored, symbolized, reified, and replaced by a transportation machine which becomes the allegorical signifier of that older promenade we are no longer allowed to conduct on our own: and this is a dialectic intensification of the autoreferentiality of all modern culture, which tends to turn upon itself and designate its own cultural production as its content.⁷⁵

Making a Difference

Translated into the language and architecture of communicative capitalism, this thwarted passage speaks to a regime in which communicative technology itself has become autoreferential. As a result, what might be described as the communicative stroll, or the produsage promenade, is, with a series like *House of Cards*, "underscored, reified and replaced by a transportation machine" that ostensibly gives us everything we could get from browsing and contributing to a DVD on our own, as well as everything we could get from browsing and contributing to a Twitter feed about election results on our own. When fused with the charismatic economy of the series, this communicative economy makes

⁷⁵ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 42.

for an odd viewing experience. In the first two “episodes” Underwood’s charisma oscillates between a glitch, an exception, an outing, and an embodiment of everything from which it is supposedly excepted. Cumulatively, this has the effect of calcifying charisma; for all his supposed availability and intimacy, Spacey frequently takes on the architectural charisma of an Ayn Rand protagonist – and, as might be expected, the series has had its share of Randian criticism.⁷⁶ This, however, doesn’t preclude affective attachment to the series, since Spacey’s alternation between individuality and embodiment, between a glitch in the system and the system, embodies what John Sculley identifies as the magnetic flexibility of third wave technocratic accumulation:⁷⁷

Characteristic	Second Wave	Third Wave
Organization	Hierarchy	Network
Focus	Institution	Individual
Style	Structured	Flexible
Strength	Stability	Change
Mission	Goals/strategic plan	Identity/values
Expectations	Security	Personal growth
Status	Title and rank	Making a difference
Resource	Cash	Information

Writing in the late 1980s, Sculley’s model has been updated to include a fourth wave that revolves around the “integration of all dimensions of life and responsibility for the whole,” as well as an updated version of his schema:

Second Wave – We are separate and must compete.

Third Wave – We are connected and must cooperate.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Edward Cline, “House of Cards: No Heroes, Only Various Shades of Villainy and Corruption,” *Capitalism Magazine*, February 27, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/opnzpqr>.

⁷⁷ John Sculley, *Odyssey: Pepsi to Apple...A Journey of Adventure, Ideas and the Future* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 58.

Fourth Wave – We are one and choose to cocreate.⁷⁸

Effectively a manifesto for the incorporation of produsage into the corporate mission statement – that is, an incorporation of produsage-as-product, or a reincorporation of product - the wording and structure of this manifesto differentiates it from that of Sculley's: instead of a table that requires us to navigate and comprehend it, we are presented with a series of statements that ostensibly provide a more casual, conversational access to the information at hand, but are in fact more restrictive and linear in the passage that they afford our eye. As an entity that seeks to flexibly tap into and contain networked produsage, *House of Cards* arguably stands as an allegory of the transition from third to fourth waves of technocratic control. In that sense, the difference between it and the BBC original might be formulated as that between the different closet epistemologies attendant upon the cusp between second and third waves, and third and fourth waves, of technocratic subjectivity.

Celerity

While the technocratic closet is beyond the scope of this thesis, this position between third and fourth waves doesn't merely correspond to the series as an object but to Underwood as its embodiment – and part of what makes the series such a slippery object to perceive is the fact that Underwood identifies as much with the architecture of the series itself as with the technocratic architecture that it describes; there is the same sense of an imperceptible utterance by Big Data that drove *The Social Network* and *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. That explains why Claire alone out of all the characters is permitted to carry some of this charismatic burden: as the ruthless CEO of a prestigious charity company, her rhetoric of “personal growth” and “making a difference” is, in the opening episode, eloquently and chillingly deployed in a decision to let nearly three-quarters of her staff go to free up funds for imminent philanthropic projects. However, Claire doesn't simply function as a sociological explication of Frank's

⁷⁸ Herman Maynard and Susan E. Mehrtens, *The Fourth Wave: Business in the 21st Century* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1996), xiv.

brand of secrecy; rather, the relationship between Claire and Frank, and between Spacey and Wright, constitutes the series' secret – the moment, never fully depicted, or even perceivable, at which they morph into the same institution. Accordingly, Fincher reserves his deepest night, darkest rooms and most shrouded windows for the moments at which they are alone together.

This transforms the relationship between Frank and Claire into a site of tension or contention between the rhetorical secret and becoming-secret. While their mysterious relationship can be read as an allegory or enactment of this complicity between politics and corporate technocracy, as well as between new media and the constriction and restriction of cinetopic passage, it also enacts the feminisation that Deleuze and Guattari identify with the becoming-secret:

The more the secret is made into a structuring, organizing form, the thinner and more ubiquitous it becomes, the more its content becomes molecular, at the same time as its form dissolves. It really wasn't much, as Jocasta says. The secret does not as a result disappear, but it does take on a more feminine status. What was behind President Schreber's paranoid secret all along, if not a becoming-feminine, a becoming-woman? For women do not handle the secret in at all the same way as men (except when they reconstitute an inverted image of virile secrecy, a kind of secrecy of the gynecium). Men alternately fault them for their indiscretion, their gossiping, and for their solidarity, their betrayal. Yet it is curious how a woman can be secretive while at the same time hiding nothing, by virtue of transparency. Celerity against gravity. The celerity of a war machine against the gravity of a State apparatus.⁷⁹

Admittedly, there are moments in the first two episodes of *House of Cards* where Claire partakes of the "inverted image of virile secrecy" that Deleuze and Guattari describe, most notably in and around a segment that witnesses her trying to force a rowing-machine into the basement, Frank's secret, personal space. While this conflation of the secrecies of gymnasium and gynecium becomes more pronounced as the series progresses, and Claire's character becomes more of a phallic caricature, part of what distinguishes Fincher's earlier vision is the way in which he prioritises Claire as becoming-feminine; or, rather, the way in which he presents both Claire and Frank, and the very fact and institution of their

⁷⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 319.

relationship, as a becoming-woman. In doing so, he produces an aesthetic of celerity, recalling Jameson's observation that the Bonaventure's "alarming disjunction between the body and its built environment" is "to the initial bewilderment of the older modernities as the velocities of the spacecraft to those of the automobile."⁸⁰ Celerity, defined scientifically, is synonymous with proper-velocity, or the relativistic measurement of velocity: "Whereas velocity relative to an observer is distance per unit time where both distance and time are measured by the observer, proper velocity relative to an observer divides observer-measured distance by the time elapsed on the clocks of the travelling object."⁸¹ As a celeric object, *House of Cards* no longer conforms to the temporal perceptions of the individual user, but instead exists as a continual contraction and expansion of the fifth wall that previously separated users, its volumes, segments and sequences distended until it is impossible, once again, "to use the language of volume or volumes...since these are impossible to seize."⁸² Just as proper velocity is "useful for comparing relative velocities along a line at high speed,"⁸³ so Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-woman provides some insight into how such an object could possess the minimal linearity, or semblance of linearity, to actually function as a series, or the semblance of a series:

They have no secret because they have become a secret themselves...This is where the secret reaches its ultimate state: its content is molecularized, it has become molecular, at the same time as its form has been dismantled, becoming a pure moving line – in the sense in which it can be said a given line is the "secret" of a painter, or a given rhythmic cell, a given sound molecule (which does not constitute a theme or form) the "secret" of a musician.⁸⁴

In order to understand exactly how this "pure moving line" might make itself felt in Fincher's aesthetic, it is important to recognise that Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the line doesn't correspond to conventional or intuitive notions of linearity:

⁸⁰ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 44.

⁸¹ "Proper Velocity," Wikipedia, Accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/oleazho>.

⁸² Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 43.

⁸³ "Proper Velocity."

⁸⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 319.

Individual or group, we are traversed by lines, meridians, geodesics, tropics and zones marching to different beats and differing in nature...Fernand Deligny transcribes the lines and paths of autistic children by means of *maps*: he carefully distinguishes “lines of drift” and “customary lines.” This does not only apply to walking; he also makes maps of perceptions and maps of gestures (cooking or collecting wood)...showing customary gestures and gestures of drift...A line of drift intersects a customary line, and...that gesture in turn emits several lines. In short, *there is a line of flight, which is already complex since it has singularities; and there is a customary or molar line with segments; and between the two (?), there is a molecular line with quanta that cause it to tip to one side or the other.*⁸⁵

In this passage, Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between three types of line. Firstly, there are “customary or molar lines,” which exhibit the segmentation that enables conventional or perceptible linearity. Secondly, there are “molecular lines” or “lines of drift” that chart, in multiple ways, an alternative line or trajectory to that outlined by the customary lines. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the very multiplicity of these lines of drift means that they are qualitatively different from customary lines; they are not simply a series of alternative customary lines. Rather, like the venue of drift enacted by *LA Plays Itself*, or the procedural drift enacted by Kracauer’s perception-experiments, they stand in much the same relation to customary lines as the cinetopic anecdote does to the cinephilic anecdote – and so it is appropriate that Deleuze and Guattari identify the movement from customary lines to lines of drift, and the movement from molar to molecular lines, with the moment at which the line itself starts to correspond to something “more than” walking; the moment at which passage is subsumed into something more constructively gestural (“cooking or collecting wood”). Deleuze and Guattari identify this gestural moment with the third type of line, “a line of flight,” which, associated as it is with “complex singularities” speaks both to the relativistic space-time of Fincher’s celeric vision and clarifies the line of flight as the object of tropic mapping, here flamboyantly expanded into meridial mapping, geodesic mapping and zonal mapping, in a concise summation of the geological, meteorological dynamism of the Netflix maps.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 223.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the unimaginability and incommensurability of these lines of flight is what allows them, via the becoming-secret, to represent some escape from a late capitalist regime in which the very idea of escape seems beyond imagining; or, alternatively, what allows them to map out passages in a regime in which all passage seems to be prefigured and prefabricated. In Fisher's terms, the very flamboyance and idiosyncrasy of Deleuze and Guattari's formulation therefore represents an imaginative challenge to a world in which it is "easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism,"⁸⁶ as well as a correlative to Shaviro's reminder, at the conclusion of *Post-Cinematic Affect*, that his case studies are "exemplary works for a time when – despite the astonishing pace of scientific discovery and technological invention – the imagination itself threatens to fail us." If Fincher's contribution to *House of Cards* is exemplary in a comparable way, then the kernel of its exemplarity comes towards the end of the first episode, in a sequence in which Frank and Claire are attending the newly elected President's inaugural address. Against the backdrop of this address, Frank inaugurates a quite striking mode of address to the audience, a conflation of flightline and sightline, whose originality is perhaps clearest when the syntax of dialogue and images is fully cited (Figures 56-61).⁸⁷

"Centuries from now ..."

In "Diegetic or Digital? The Convergence of Science-Fiction Literature and Science-Fiction Film in Hypermedia," Brooks Landon argues that there is an organic connection between the emergence of time-travel science fiction and the emergence of cinema: "Considered broadly, the special effects on which the cinematic apparatus relies for its most basic illusion of motion makes all science-fiction film time-travel film, makes the time-travel formula particularly powerful in film, and may even be said to make our experience of any film, science fiction

⁸⁶ Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (London: Zero Books, 2009), 1.

⁸⁷ "Chapter 1," Season 1, Episode 1 of Fincher and Willamon, *House of Cards*, February 1, 2013, 46:20-46:42. Strictly speaking, these aren't episodes at all, since the series was originally screened as a single entity subdivided into "chapters," more akin to a STD release than a television series; the moment at which straight-to-digital and straight-to-DVD phenomenology converge.

or otherwise, a kind of time-travel experience.”⁸⁸ While Landon extrapolates from this an analogy between cinema and the space-time continuum upon which time travel depends, Jameson’s discussion of science fiction provides a different account of the scientific system to which time travel cinema ascribes:

First and foremost in almost all respects comes the requirement already mentioned for system as such, at first epitomized by spatial closure, a permanent structural feature of the genre only moderately disguised when, with capitalism and historicity, this imaginary no-place migrates from the south seas or the north or south pole to the future and becomes accessible only by time travel, if not in some outer space which itself lies for all practical purposes in the future.⁸⁹

If, as Jameson argues, time travel serves to transplant the “spatial closure” of utopian or dystopian literature into a temporal register, then it presumably exhibits a “temporal closure,” an insistence on the future *as* future, that stands in much the same relation to the temporal slipperiness ostensibly associated with time travel cinema as Newtonian to Einsteinian physics. Similarly, if, as Shaviro argues, “classical Hollywood continuity editing” instantiates the sharp spatio-temporal distinctions of “Fordist-Taylorist industrial mass production,”⁹⁰ and their basis in a Newtonian universe, then the first great wave of science fiction, coinciding, in the 1950s, with the last great decade of classical Hollywood editing, represents a concerted attempt to reinforce this Newtonian supremacy by calibrating it against, and thereby containing, an emergent Einsteinian dissolution of cinematic space and time. This makes subsequent time travel films an apt vehicle for emphasising classical, Newtonian values – going back to the future. Far from collapsing themselves into the future that they describe, these films only fully signify when the dates that they envisage are reached, the elapsed time standing as a testament to the reification of space and time that they enacted.

⁸⁸ Brook Landon, “Diegetic or Digital? The Convergence of Science-Fiction Literature and Science-Fiction Film in Hypermedia,” in *Alien Zone II: The Spaces of Science Fiction Cinema*, ed. Annette Kuhn (London: Verso, 1999), 40.

⁸⁹ Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future* 203-04.

⁹⁰ Julia Leyda, Nicholas Rombes, Steven Shaviro and Therese Grisham, “Roundtable Discussion: The Post-Cinematic in *Paranormal Activity* and *Paranormal Activity 2*,” *La Furia Umana* 10 (2011), <http://tinyurl.com/8kqnhad>.

This process, as well as its implications for a post-perceptual milieu, is evident in the recent internet frenzy surrounding *Back to the Future Part II*.⁹¹ In this film, Marty McFly travels forward to October 1, 2015, leading to the DeLorean display “Oct 21, 2015” that has only really begun to signify in its full profundity over the last few years (Figure 62). In part, this signification has been because the image has been altered to fit two alternative dates. On July 5, 2010, the website *Total Film* announced that the day had arrived as a prank; on June 27, 2012, the mobile app *Simply Tapp* announced that the day had arrived as part of a promotional campaign for an upcoming box set of *Back to the Future* DVDs.⁹² While these temporal glitches can be understood in terms of the momentousness of October 21, 2015 finally arriving – that is, the momentousness of *Back to the Future II* achieving completion, and its spatio-temporal thesis achieving consummation – they also speak to the incompatibility of this temporality within a post-cinematic milieu. As argued, Shaviro observes that *Southland Tales* is symptomatic of post-cinematic time travel in its evocation of “a gradual running down of time itself and a rift in the space-time continuum. The leaking-away of time – its asymptotic approach to an end that it never fully attains.”⁹³ Not only does this suggest that post-cinematic time travel commits to an Einsteinian universe in a way that cinematic time travel only purports to, but it implies that post-cinematic visions of futurity no longer promise us the satisfying and sublime prospect of eventually and eventually reaching the dates they envisage; rather, the logic of post-cinematic time travel is that any future date that is envisaged is already here.

This tendency informs an emergent genre of what might be called time regionalism – post-cinematic spectacle which insists that the difference between time periods is analogous to that between different time zones; wherever the

⁹¹ *Back To The Future Part II*, directed by Robert Zemeckis (1989; Universal City, CA: Universal Studios, 2009), DVD.

⁹² Will Oremus, “Sorry *Back To The Future* Fans: The Future Still Isn’t Here Yet,” *Slate*, June 27, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/7qcvho9>. The still from *Back To The Future Part II* is taken from this article.

⁹³ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 87.

time in the film in question is located, it is still indubitably *now*.⁹⁴ Frank's comment cements *House of Cards* – or at least Fincher's version of *House of Cards* – within this post-cinematic mode of time travel, as well as inflecting it through panoramic perception to gesture towards something like post-perceptual time travel, or post-temporal perception. For Frank's inaugural address is parsed by Fincher's editing precisely at this gap between now and "centuries from now," as the camera cuts from a shot of his face to a shot of the president's address. The syntax of the sequence is completed when Frank refers to the edge of the frame, at which point Fincher doesn't merely focus on the edge of the frame, but rather moves the camera to the left, or allows Underwood to move it to the left, at which point we see him waving at us, presumably having just finished his address. In one gesture, then, Fincher both collapses now and "centuries from now" and collapses the space at the edge of the frame with the space beyond the edge of the frame, thereby opening up that non-framed space as a temporal as much as a spatial entity; it is, in effect, the "centuries from now" to which Underwood refers. Not only does this preclude any astonishment or sublimity on the part of viewers watching the series "centuries from now," but it suggests that panoramic perception has somehow modulated from an exclusively spatial phenomenon to a panoramic access to the space-time continuum, in something like an update of Deckard's surveillance device in *Blade Runner*,⁹⁵ which has displaced the sublime prospect of actually reaching the date on which *Blade Runner* itself commences.

⁹⁴ Rian Johnson's *Looper* (2012; Culver City, CA: Sony, 2012, Blu-Ray) describes this dissolution in terms of "closing the loop" between present and past; it is arguably the first time travel film to strategically preclude any astonishment or wonder at the eventuation of the dates that it envisages, by way of an indefinite future present. Similarly, Rex Sorgatz posits the "Loop" as the "preeminent narrative device of our time," arguing that "Loops are not short films. Loops are more like spreadsheets: data, but with a fourth dimension, time...The Loop doesn't fret about past or present, because more than any form, it exists in-the-now." ("View Source: Trapped in the Loop," *Tribeca* (blog on the website of the Tribeca Film Festival), July 10, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/oma2w2k>). Sorgatz notes that "sports and entertainment are prime locations for The Loop to thrive" – as are the carnivalesque, repostmodernist spaces of information technology themselves, most notably Apple's current renovations of 1 Infinite Loop.

⁹⁵ *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott (1982; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2007), DVD.

Post-Perceptual Windscreens

It is questionable, however, whether panoramic is the right term for this new access, or whether it is even speaking to a correlationist account of perception any more. When watched on a computer, as the series mostly is, Fincher's lateral movement across the left of the screen doesn't resemble a conventional pan or tracking shot so much as a drag-and-drop movement, the movement that occurs at the edge of a Google frame. In *The Googlization of Everything (And Why We Should Worry)*, Siva Vaidhyanathan identifies the central conceit of Google as a tendency to frame sponsored results as organic results: "The data on who cares about which of these sites is accumulated, and access to those potential consumers, is sold to advertisers at a profit."⁹⁶ While there has been a great deal of attention devoted to the informational potential of Google Maps, Earth and Street View – a great deal of it generated by or at least accessed on Google itself – there has been no sustained effort to translate this scepticism about the "organic framing" that typifies Google geography into an engagement with the visual frames of these vehicles of Google geography, although it is elucidated by David Harvey's concept of an emergent relational space in which "processes do not occur *in* space but define their own spatial frame"⁹⁷. What specific attention has been paid to the aesthetic and phenomenological implications of the moment at which we navigate outside a Google Map, or Google Street View, has tended to come largely from within the realm of hactivism – and, more generally, the wider realm of electronic map hacking and hack map creation – whose "serendipitous spatial exploration"⁹⁸ clarifies, for an emergent post-perceptual era, how "tremendously big and dense an experience" it is to be in a city.⁹⁹ Fincher's revision and modulation of panoramic perception is unthinkable without this

⁹⁶ Siva Vaidhyanathan, *The Googlization of Everything (And Why We Should Worry)* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 26.

⁹⁷ David Harvey, "Space as a Keyword," in *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*, ed. Noel Castree and Derek Gregory (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 273.

⁹⁸ Erle Schuyler, Rich Gibson and Jo Walsh, *Mapping Hacks: Tips & Tools for Electronic Cartography* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2005), 251.

⁹⁹ Rich Gibson and Erle Schuyler, *Google Map Hacks: Tips & Tools for Geographic Searching and Remixing* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2006), 234.

perceptual metamorphosis, just as *House of Cards* is unthinkable without *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*'s hacktivist manifesto.

In *The Railway Journey*, Wolfgang Schivelbusch identifies “metamorphosis” as a constitutive component of panoramic perception, both in the sense in which the panorama is continually metamorphosing from one vista to another, but also in the sense of its own “gradual metamorphosis into the quotidian” that paves the way for the panoramic literacy that Keathley outlines.¹⁰⁰ In *Post Cinematic Affect*, Shaviro also identifies metamorphosis with what is “expansive and open-ended,” but argues that this expansive perception is lost in a post-cinematic milieu, replaced instead with modulation, which is “schematic and implosive”:

Metamorphosis gives us the sense that anything can happen, because form is indefinitely malleable. But...modulations...rather imply that no matter what happens, it can always be contained in advance within a predetermined set of possibilities...There is no proliferation of meanings, but rather a capture of all meanings.¹⁰¹

Returning to the analogy between this temporality at the edge of the frame and the phenomenology of Google Maps, it becomes clear that something like this modular perception is occurring in *House of Cards*. As with the moment at which we move the parameters of a Google Map, Fincher and Frank's relocation of the frame ostensibly speaks to an infinite proliferation but instead gestures towards something like a “capture of all meanings.” At one level, this modular perception speaks to a complete disconnection of perception from an anthropocentric ontology, such that any “embodied, computer-controlled humanoid” can “participate in natural, multimodal communication with a human.”¹⁰² However, the very standardisation of this modular perception has produced a proportionate cinetopic response, in much the same way as the standardisations

¹⁰⁰ Schivelbusch, *Railway Journey*, 130.

¹⁰¹ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 13.

¹⁰² Kristinn R. Thórisson, “Machine perception of real-time multimodal human dialogue,” in *Language, Vision, and Music: Selected Papers from the 8th International Workshop on the Cognitive Sciences of Natural Language Processing, Galway, 1999*, ed. Paul McKeivitt, Seán Ó Nualláin and Conn Mulvihill (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2002), 97.

of classical Hollywood enabled cinephilia, as evinced in another YouTube genre dedicated to the oddities and eccentricities that emerge within the ostensibly streamlined narrative of Google geographies. The very fact of these clips being compiled into a new structure and architecture – whether or not it can be said to be “film” is unclear – transforms these cinephilic attachments into cinetopic anecdotes, particularly clear in “Funny and weird things on Google Street View,” which alternates several scales and types of Google mapped Britain with quirks and glitches, deconstructing and reconstructing the hyperspatial venue of Google Maps itself.¹⁰³

Fincher’s gesture performs a similar function, albeit in a different way. When watched on a computer, his movement – or Frank’s movement – to the space at the left of the screen seems to demand a reflexive response from the viewer, an instinctive movement even further left; a movement that is, of course, comically halted by Frank’s disarming wave. Just as the colportage of *flânerie* offers a space that winks at the viewer, so Fincher’s remediated colportage, overlaid with news imagery, fake stock prices and ghostly tweets, offers a space-time continuum that winks at the viewer – a viewer “centuries from now” winking at us; that is, us winking at us. By enacting and accelerating the very “schematic and implosive” agenda that drives modular post-perception, Fincher presents a post-perceptual sublime, a conflation of a line of flight with a sightline. During the initial preparations for *House of Cards*, Spacey himself found a version of this flightline in a submission to the Jameson First Shot competition – Tom Jenkins’ *Address is Approximate*, credited to “The Theory and Google Streeview.”¹⁰⁴

Encapsulating what Shaviro describes as the “aesthetic poignancy” of post-cinematic media,¹⁰⁵ *Address is Approximate* dovetails the syntax of stop-motion animation and Google Street View, revolving around a series of toys who are

¹⁰³ Robert Trollin’, “Funny and Weird things on Google Street View,” YouTube, March 2, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/omqgcm6>.

¹⁰⁴ Kevin Spacey, “Status Update: “*Address is Approximate*,”” Facebook, November 29, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/lbnr5o>; The Theory, *Address is Approximate*, Vimeo, accessed July 21, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/7u3vezp>.

¹⁰⁵ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 133.

anxious to see the world, but can only access it through their owner's computer. In order to create the illusion of boundless, fluid passage on the computer screen, director Michael Jenkins has to speed up the passage of time in the outside world, creating a disparity between Street View's illusion of real time and the space of flows that sustains it. This crystallises around the disparity between the computer screen and the gigantic window against which it is set. For all its panoramic cinematicity, this window doesn't capture the toys' attention: if anything, it is the mere starting point for a chain of observation that takes them to an old-fashioned poster of the Pacific Coast on their owner's wall, and then finally to the Pacific Coast Google ride that takes up most of the film. In this way, the computer screen and phantom rides of Google Street View both absorb the perceptual posture of the picture window, and envisage an emergent post-perceptual window as not merely a window that gives the illusion of not being a window, but a "shift from windowed to screened seeing" that opacifies the process of windowed seeing itself:

Vision, no longer a property of the window and its frame, becomes an extension of the screen. Likewise, that which is being viewed (and perhaps recorded) no longer exists separate from that which is framing it. The object, previously located on the other side of the frame, converges or fuses with the screen, its physicality becoming the physicality of the screen. In this way, vision involves opacity, not transparency. Scenic seeing requires a sort of tangibility, a physicality of its own.¹⁰⁶

As Jenkins elaborates this post-perceptual picture window, the movement from the bottom of the physical window to the top of the computer window – occasioned primarily by point-of-view shots from the various toys – creates something like a post-cinematic movement-image, a recurrent flightline. Occurring precisely at the interface between non-human points of view and cinetopic saturation, this suggests that post-perceptual flight is likely to embark from spaces populated by cinetopic objects, but not by human subjects, or to create those spaces for the purposes of embarking from them.

¹⁰⁶ Heidi Rae Cooley, "The Body and its Thumbnails: The Work of the Image in Mobile-Imaging" (Doctoral Thesis: University of Southern California, 2007), 64.

Zip Code 11731

In charting out the dream house of the collective, Benjamin writes:

The city is only apparently homogeneous. Even its name takes on a different sound from one district to the next. Nowhere, unless perhaps in dreams, can the phenomenon of the boundary be experienced in a more originary way than in cities. To know them means to understand those lines that, running alongside railroad crossings and across privately owned lots, within the park and across the riverbank, function as limits; it means to know these confines, along with the enclaves of the various districts. As threshold, the boundary stretches across streets; a new precinct begins like a step into the void – as though one had unexpectedly cleared a low step on a flight of stairs.¹⁰⁷

Benjamin might as well have written that the boundary, or line, is “apparently homogeneous” – elsewhere he refers to the “mystery of the boundary stone, which, although located in the heart of the city, once marked the point at which it ended.”¹⁰⁸ In both cases, this boundary-mystery, or threshold-magic, revolves around the moment at which an ostensible point of constriction or confinement comes to signify passage across an even more originary or latent constriction and confinement. Benjamin’s line may start off conforming to the trajectory of railroad crossings – itself already an intersection, from which the line presumably derives its movement-image – but it quickly disregards differences between public and private property, natural and urban topography, and the very syntax of streets themselves, opening up a “new precinct” in the process.

The initial response to the Netflix queues revolved around the first conception of the boundary – or, in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, the customary line – primarily through speculation on the way zip codes, or more frequently clusters of zip codes, reflected wider socioeconomic and geographic tendencies, “a treasure trove of data for the sociologist/anthropologist in the making.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 88.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 86-87.

¹⁰⁹ Luboman411, comment 84 [New York] on “Peek into Netflix Queues,” January 10, 2010. This article allows users to affix a place of residence to their comment. While not strictly necessary for citational purposes, I will include these places,

However, a second response was opened up by comment 79 on the *Times* article: “Has anyone noticed what people in zip code 11371 are watching? *Crocodile Dundee 2*? It’s especially surprising, considering zero people live in that zip code! It’s LaGuardia airport!”¹¹⁰ Quickly highlighted by the *Times* as a noteworthy comment, this prompted speculation into how a zero-population zip code might sustain a Netflix population, initially deflected into the issue of whether there were any other zero-population zipcodes in the Netflix maps. To that end, *Slate* ran a pair of articles inviting viewers to search their home cities for anomalous or unusual zip codes.¹¹¹ At first, other airports were noted (Chicago O’Hare and Minneapolis-St. Paul International), but gradually the list of Netflix no-places expanded to include military infrastructure (Hanscomb Air Force Base, Andrews Air Force Base), government buildings (US Fish & Wildlife Service, Port Snelling, Denver Federal Center) universities (University of Denver, California State University Long Beach, University of Maryland College Park, University of Washington, Catholic University of America, Washington), and, finally, Universal Studios.

While not all of these no-places had a population of zero – although some did – they were all transient, heterotopic spaces, interfaces between the residential zones within which the entire map purported to take place. By including Universal Studios as the keystone of these no-spaces, the *Slate* project suggested that they were all specifically cinetopic heterotopias, thresholds in some emergent, amorphous dream house. Accordingly, co-ordinator and curator John Swansburg wrote that his favourite zip code was “that of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. (20064), which several readers came across on the map. Its Top 10 would seem to reflect the interests of a budding journalist, or perhaps the syllabus of a media-studies course.” As the embodiment of a “budding” field of “media-studies” – still revolving, in some way, around cinema,

since they often resonate evocatively with the insights and proclivities of the commenters.

¹¹⁰ Didit, comment 79 [New York] on “Peek into Netflix Queues,” January 10, 2010.

¹¹¹ John Swansburg, “The Weirdest Zip Codes on the New York Times Netflix Map,” *Browbeat* (blog on the website of *Slate*), January 11, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/pmc5kpj>.

or the cinematicity of new media – this particular zip code induced Swansburg to cite a recapitulation of Benjamin’s originary boundary:

Reader Tony Drollinger e-mailed to flag Minnesota ZIP 55111, which is just east of the aforementioned Minneapolis-St. Paul airport. "I'm an employee of the US Fish & Wildlife Service at Fort Snelling," writes Tony. "This area is comprised of my large federal building (which also houses people from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs, and several branches of the military). Next door to us is an Air Force base, and other parts of the ZIP Code house a MN DOT building, the VA hospital, a state park, a public golf course, a private tennis club, and a bar/restaurant." In other words, not many residents, and presumably only a few Netflix accounts.¹¹²

At this point in the second article, the zip code boundary becomes porous, elastic, heterotopic: as in Benjamin’s account there is a panoramic, metonymic astonishment that a standardised urban division can contain so many diverse pieces of infrastructure and architecture. Bound less by customary lines than lines of drift, this was the moment in the Netflix map-event at which the content of its zip codes truly became secret, or collapsed into the becoming-secret. While this certainly fed into the scepticism and anxiety about Netflix’s promulgation of Big Data that had characterised debate and discussion around the queues from the outset, it also reiterated the question begged by that original comment: how does a zero-population (or even negligibly populated) zip code sustain a Netflix population? For the most part, speculations were voiced informally, usually in the grey zones of online article comments. Some of these were framed as literal speculations about how and where people in these zip codes got access to Netflix queues “The fact that there are any movies showing up in this zip code could be the result of workers at LaGuardia getting their movies sent/billed to work. It could also be that there’s some residences that actually fall into this zip code.”¹¹³ However, speculation also took place rhetorically, deflecting the issue of the zero-population zip code into that of the unrepresented or absent zip code,

¹¹² John Swansburg, “More Weird ZIP Codes on the New York Times Netflix Map,” *Browbeat* (blog on the website of *Slate*), January 13, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/phb92fh>.

¹¹³ Noel Billig, comment 1 on Nathan Yau, “The Geography of Netflix Rentals,” *FlowingData* (blog), January 11, 2010, <http://tinyurl.com/yadjx83>.

especially those zip codes that were considered particularly critical or significant for demographic purposes: “You cut off/ignored almost the entire Westside of L.A. – Brentwood, Pacific Palisades, Malibu, Santa Monica – definitely areas with influential taste.”¹¹⁴

However, another kind of absence was invoked by the 86th and last comment on the *Times* article: “Why is zip code 00083 missing from map?”¹¹⁵ As Moses Gates’ blog *All City New York* observes, zip code 00083 stands as a horizon of digital, post-perceptual mapping. On the one hand, typing “zip code 00083” into a Google search engine (or any other major search engine) yields results for Central Park. On the other hand, most online maps (including Google Earth, Maps and Street View) suggests that this zip code is in fact an “Urban Legend Zip Code” that has “somehow gained a toehold in the popular consciousness”:

Looking up all Zip Codes for "New York, NY" on the United States Postal Service Zip Code Lookup doesn't return 00083...Downloading the GIS shapefile for NY State Zip Codes clearly shows no separate Zip Code for Central Park, instead dividing it up amongst several different Upper East and Upper West Side Zip codes...Entering “00083” on Google Maps, Yahoo Maps, Mapquest, or Weather.com yields nothing...Googling “New York, NY 00083” yields 290 results, most of which are property listings through Real Estate Websites on Central Park West or South, which are obviously not correct. To contrast, Googling "New York, NY, 10001" yields about 28 million results.¹¹⁶

This exhaustive list takes place in an account of Gates’ effort to walk every zip code in New York, “from the lowest zip code...(10001 in Midtown) to the highest (11697 in the Rockaways).” In the post, however, urban passage is quickly subordinated to informational passage: far more space is devoted to the online search for this uncertain zip code than to the actual process and pleasure of the walk. In his mission statement, Gates describes his overall project – to

¹¹⁴ Tom D, comment 91 [Pacific Palisades] on “Peek into Netflix Queues,” January 10, 2010.

¹¹⁵ Al, comment 135 [New York] on “Peek into Netflix Queues,” February 22, 2010.

¹¹⁶ Moses Gates, “The Mysterious Case of the Ghost Zip Code,” *All City New York* (blog), July 7, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/py5eorw>. Appropriately, the warehouses from which Netflix deliver and distribute

exhaustively “know” each of New York City’s census tracts, of which the zip code project is simply one subsection – as just this turn away from botanising on asphalt to botanising on Big Data: “I find taking pictures to be kind of distracting, in addition to immediately pegging you as an outsider most places...I’d love to make an interactive map someday.” Presumably, that map would take as its botanical object those few fragments of Central Park not included in other zip codes: “The NYC Parks Department Headquarters, which is actually within Park boundaries, does not use the 00083 zip code, instead having Zip Code 10065. Likewise, the NYPD Central Park Precinct uses 10024. Other places, like the Central Park Boathouse and Central Park Zoo don’t list Zip codes at all.” To speculate on how these areas might appear on a Netflix map, or why they don’t appear on a Netflix map, is thus to find in the disparity between the zero-population zip code and the heavily populated Netflix code both a new object of botanisation and a new object of cinetopic speculation; a drifting, interactive zip code, constrained less by physical, political or administrative boundaries than by the warp and weave of the passage that brings it into being:

Anyway one thing I think would be cool is if you could “reverse” it. If you could enter the movies YOU watched over the past year and have netflix tell you where you should live. “Your rental queue is most like those in zipcode 54321.” Going one step further, doing a visualization on THAT... namely assuming 10% of people rent movies out of line with their zipcode and that those 10% have zero “friction” in moving... how long would take for this “resettlement” process to stabilize?¹¹⁷

In this vision of a drift code determined entirely by the individual spectator’s cinematic taste, user Numbersguy provides a post-perceptual update of Benjamin’s conception of “shelling.” As with Benjamin, there is a dream of a perfect match between subject and interior. However, that interior is no longer physical, tangible and corporeal, but nor is it collection-as-interior either. For this is not a collection, but a queue: it bears the same relation to an interior that a site like Spotify bears to a music collection. The interior of the future, the new dream house of the collective, is not defined in terms of physical architecture,

¹¹⁷ Numbersguy, comment on Yau, “Geography of Netflix Rentals,” January 19, 2010.

nor a canon of taste that obeys the Benjaminian dictum of aura, but instead to taste as a process, or a structure of feeling, that delights in arranging and rearranging, constituting and reconstituting itself; taste that takes its cues from torrenting and streaming, and that can only be mapped tropically, as “you enter the movies YOU watched over the past year and have netflix tell you where you should live.” Against utopian invocations of the re-establishment of a public sphere, torrenting, streaming and STI release can thus be understood as a reiteration or renovation of the mobilised, individualised interior in opposition to a neoliberal regime driven by publicity’s secret; it is possible, after all, to download a car, amidst a space of flows that transfigures the linearity of the customary shelf, in the same way that Benjamin’s originary boundary opens up the drifting shelf, “as though one had unexpectedly cleared a low step on a flight of stairs.”

This crystallisation of collection to a process without a product, and a STD release without an DVD, migrates collection itself, and the cinetopic passage that accompanies it, into the “symbolic assemblage” of folding architecture and the “collective assemblage” of the becoming-secret: “The secret was invented by society; it is a sociological or social notion. Every secret is a collective assemblage.”¹¹⁸ For Deleuze and Guattari, the very secrecy of the secret is the fact that it is just this invention, just this collective assemblage:

Direct discourse is a detached fragment of a mass and is born of the dismemberment of the collective assemblage; but the collective assemblage is always like the murmur from which I take my proper name, the constellation of voices, concordant or not, from which I draw my voice. I always depend on a molecular assemblage of enunciation that is not given in my conscious mind, any more than it depends solely on my apparent social determinations, which combine many heterogeneous regimes of signs. Speaking in tongues.¹¹⁹

Rephrasing this formulation in terms of the direct discourse of the article and the “constellation of voices” that comprises the comment thread, the very “molecular assemblage of enunciation” that speculates upon these zero-population Netflix

¹¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 317.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

zones is what constitutes those zones; at least, those zones are the murmur from which these commenters take their proper name, regardless of their conscious intentions or social determinations. From that perspective, it is peculiarly appropriate that the central Netflix warehouse in Carol Stream is itself such a zero-population zone, or at least an invisible zone, as well as a proportionately compelling object of botanisation: "The Netflix warehouse in Carol Stream does not appear on any map. Your odds of finding it are slightly better than your odds of stumbling upon a rare insect in a field of weeds."¹²⁰ While the most immediate reason for this is to distinguish Netflix warehouse from DVD store, and Netflix itself from previous DVD infrastructure – "Netflix has grown leery of what happens when customers learn the location of a warehouse – they drop off DVDs at the door" – it arguably works to remediate the DVD store as an entity that is experienced tropically, rather than cognitively, by way of the chronotropic thread between disc and mailbox: "If you subscribe to the DVD-rental service, the Netflix warehouse, which you know must exist somewhere; which a P.O. Box on every Netflix envelope suggests does exist; which processes your Netflix queue... is one of those mythical New Economy temples." Similarly, the anonymity of this zone reveals that those anomalies and heterogeneities which supposedly contaminated the Netflix map findings are actually constitutive of Netflix as a platform:

One imagines miles of pop ephemera between its brick-and-mortar walls -- one imagines that limitless building from "Raiders of the Lost Ark," but with 15,000 copies of "Confessions of a Shopaholic" ...Every Netflix warehouse looks like every other Netflix warehouse, down to the same flat, bright wattage of its light bulbs. It's not attractive, which might explain the hasty mismatch of promotional posters taped to its walls like college dorm decor -- a poster for "Atonement" alongside a poster for the direct-to-video "Dr. Dolittle: Tail to the Chief" alongside a horror flick poster. There's no there there, by design.

Just as those zones which drift towards towards "hasty mismatch" speak most eloquently to the contours of Netflix's centre of operations, so those comments

¹²⁰ Christopher Borrelli, "How Netflix gets your movies to your mailbox so fast," *Chicago Tribune* online, August 4, 2009, <http://tinyurl.com/2djr5u>.

which attend to the drift of the thread speak most incisively to the contours of this emergent drift code, and the fact that there is “no there there, by design”:

The best way to use this data and visualization is to compare within, not across, movies. For the reasons Seth delineated. If you do that, what time of the year the movie was released is less important. Having said that, the dynamics of movie rental (for example, where do sleeper hits start?) would surely be interesting as well, and may confound the patterns we see in the visualization.¹²¹

As Eduardo suggested, I would definitely like to see some temporal information to be able to assess the dynamic of rentals. Perhaps to see where “hot spots” start and the subsequent “ripples.”¹²²

Collapsing the emergence of “sleeper hits” into the visual identification of “hot spots” and the “ripples” that they create, this exchange of comments metaphorises the central tenet of tropic mapping – that we can only tropically map in retrospect, by examining the tropisms that have been produced by ecological stimuli – in terms of the movement from sleeping to waking. As the identification of the moment at which a sleeper hit migrated into a hot spot and then rippled out, or an unsuccessful film became a sleeper hit, this new and improved usage of the Netflix data would map awakening itself as a kind of tropism, supporting John Berra’s insistence that “there is really no such thing as a sleeper hit,” at least in generic terms. Rather, Berra argues, a sleeper hit is simply a synonym for collective discovery – strategically inculcated, to be sure, by the major studios, and often designed as a supplement to blockbuster release strategies, but still fundamentally unpredictable as any “infiltration of the conscious of cinemagoers” that depends fundamentally on conversation and “word of mouth”; the same word of mouth that turned the zero-population Netflix queues into a sleeper hit, and that can only be mapped retrospectively, by scouring over the user comments associated with it. It is in the drift of the very comment threads and online fora that Denby dismisses in the name of conversation that conversation continues to be reimagined and remediated.¹²³

¹²¹ Eduardo, comment on Yau, “Geography of Netflix Rentals,” January 11, 2010.

¹²² Shaun, comment on Yau, “Geography of Netflix Rentals,” January 12, 2010.

¹²³ John Berra, *Declarations of Independence: American Cinema and the Partiality of Independent Production* (Bristol, UK: Intellect Ltd., 2008), 68.

In “The Arcades of Paris,” one of the more integrated drafts of *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin defines the arcade as a tropic map of this kind:

When, as children, we were given those great encyclopedic works *World and Mankind*, *New Universe*, *The Earth*, wouldn't our gaze always fall, first of all, on the color illustration of a “Carboniferous Landscape” or on “Lakes and Glaciers” of the First Ice Age? Such an ideal panorama of a barely eclipsed primeval age opens up when we look through the arcades that are found in all cities. Here resides the last dinosaur of Europe, the consumer. On the walls of these caverns, their immemorial flora, the commodity, luxuriates and enters, like cancerous tissue, into the most irregular combinations. A world of secret affinities: palm tree and feather duster, hair dryer and Venus de Milo, prosthesis and letter-writing manual come together here as after a long separation. The odalisque lies in wait next to the inkwell, priestesses raise aloft ashtrays like patens. These items on display as a rebus; and *how* one ought to read here the birdseed kept in the fixative-pan from a darkroom, the flower seeds beside the binoculars, the broken screws atop the musical score, and the revolver above the goldfish bowl – is right on the tip of one's tongue.¹²⁴

This is one of the few passages in *The Arcades Project* in which Benjamin dissociates the arcade from its nineteenth century Parisian incarnation. Here, the arcade becomes the moment at which the commodity swells to encompass the contours within which it is displayed. Simultaneously “barely eclipsed” and “primeval,” this is not merely the dialectical space that consummates and exhausts collection – a collection without a collector, the *Wunderkammer* of capitalism – but a space that can only be understood once human subjects have exempted themselves from it, or at least exempted their perceptual agency and ontology from the constitution of its contours. It is only then, and only through the sheer heterogeneity of the objects that constitute those contours, that awakening comes right to the “tip of one's tongue.” The comments and speculations surrounding the Netflix maps are poised at this tip: like the Benjaminian arcade, the zero-population Netflix zone is no longer determined by an exclusively human perceptual ecology. Although we can speculate how those titles may have happened to be attributed to those zones, their sheer heterogeneity supervenes those speculations to become the very zone that needs

¹²⁴ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 874.

to be investigated; Benjamin's confluence of "secret affinities" and "irregularities" has become the eccentric, incommensurable queues that are peculiarly associated with and affixed to these no-queues in particular. The "palm tree and feather duster, hair dryer and Venus de Milo, prosthesis and letter-writing manual" may have migrated into "*Flight of the Conchords Season 1, W., Volver, Weeds Season 2, Appaloosa*"¹²⁵ but they are still part of the same arcade, part of the same project - a project that Sedgwick defines as the essence of camp:

Unlike kitsch-attribution, then, camp-recognition doesn't ask, "What kind of debased creature could possibly be the right audience for this spectacle?" Instead, it says *what if*: What if the right audience for this were exactly *me*? What if, for instance, the resistant, oblique, tangential investments of attention and attraction that I am able to bring to this spectacle are actually uncannily responsive to the resistant, oblique, tangential investments of the person, or of some of the people, who created it? And what if, furthermore, others whom I don't know or recognize can see it from the same "perverse" angle? Unlike kitsch-attribution, the sensibility of camp-recognition always sees that it is dealing in reader relations and in projective fantasy (projective though not infrequently true) about the space and practices of cultural production. Generous because it acknowledges (unlike kitsch) that its perceptions are necessarily also creations, it's little wonder that camp can encompass effects of great delicacy and power in our highly sentimental-attributive culture.¹²⁶

The migration from article to comment threads in the Netflix map-event followed exactly this movement from kitsch-attribution to camp-recognition. While the articles, and early comments, displayed incredulity at "the kind of debased creature" that could be responsible for such an irregular Netflix queue, let alone single-handedly debase an entire Netflix zip code, the comment threads gradually turned towards *what if*, the dawning awareness that, somehow, the person responsible for the threads could be the commenter themselves, or at least another commenter. Just as user Numbersguy envisages this as a resettlement process that is not yet stabilised, a gesture of diasporic intimacy and reflective nostalgia, so Sedgwick argues that camp-recognition

¹²⁵ Swansburg, "Weirdest Zip Codes."

¹²⁶ Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 156.

acknowledges that “perceptions are also creations”: the moment at which we are prepared to perceive the camp import of an object is also the moment at which we remake it anew in our own image, resettle it. As an object that can only be perceived at this fleeting cusp between apprehension and resettlement, camp is a fitting vehicle for post-perceptual passage – especially the camp of *House of Cards*, whose whole quandary of spectatorship can now be clarified in terms of the way in which it forces the viewer into *what if* spectatorship. Cast adrift from conventionally temporalised distribution and demographics, *House of Cards* hypothesises spectatorship itself, forcing the viewer to continually ask themselves: *what if* this is made exactly for me; *what if* this is meant to be watched exactly at the moment I choose to watch it; *what if* now is exactly when I choose it to be; *what if* the secret is that there is no secret? The present is always on the cusp of perception, but especially in a post-perceptual regime, dominated more than ever by the “barely eclipsed primevality” of Benjamin’s “secret affinities” and “irregularities,” as commodities, especially cinetopic commodities, become exponentially more primeval and infinitestimally more eclipsed, and the cinetopic anecdote becomes ever more powerful as the “rebus” that hurries this dream towards its awakening, if only by paradoxically distending and luxuriating in its becoming-passage: “The first tremors of awakening serve to deepen sleep.”¹²⁷ Closeted in darkneses of one kind or another, I have often had these tremors, visited by cinetopic passages that allow me, “with the intensity of a dream, to pass through what has been, in order to experience the present as the waking world to which the dream refers,” and I will conclude by way of one of these dreams, and a cinetopic anecdote of my own.

¹²⁷ Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 391.

Conclusion

Ritualistic Domesticity

At the 2013 San Francisco Film Festival, Steven Soderbergh gave a keynote address on the state of cinema. Although Soderbergh insisted that no recording devices of any kind were to be brought into the auditorium during his address – that is, no competing screens – the speech was leaked in its entirety, in a testament to the leakiness of the dark media ecology it opens by evoking:

A few months ago I was on this Jet Blue flight coming from New York to Burbank, and I like Jet Blue not because of the prices, but they have this terminal at JFK that's really nice. I think it may be the nicest terminal in the country although I have to say of this country, if you want to see some great airports you have to go to a major city in another part of the world – they have amazing, amazing airports, they're incredible and they're quiet. You're not being assaulted by music all the time. I don't know when it was decided that we all need a soundtrack everywhere we go. I was just in the bathroom upstairs and there was a soundtrack, accompanying me at the urinal. I don't understand. Anyways I'm getting comfortable in my seat – I spent the extra 60 bucks for the legroom. So we're hitting altitude and I'm getting a little comfortable – and there's this guy who is in the other side of the aisle in front of me and he pulls out his iPad; he's about to start watching stuff. I'm curious as to what he's going to watch. He's a white guy in his mid thirties and what he's done is he's loaded in half a dozen, sort of, "action extravaganzas" and he's watching each of the action sequences. He's skipping over all the dialogue and the narrative. So this guy's flight is just going to be five and a half hours of mayhem.¹

At one level, Soderbergh reiterates the dystopian distant readings of Denby and Thomson: this is certainly a world in which the individual film appears to have been replaced by the "rushed, jammed, broken and overloaded action" of Denby's critique, as "sequences fade into blurs, the different blurs themselves melding into one another." Nevertheless, Soderbergh's account is more infrastructurally reparative than both Denby and Thomson's, even if it mourns the demise of the ultra-heterotopic space of the cinema toilet – against the

¹ San Francisco Film Society, "State of Cinema: Steven Soderbergh," *Vimeo*, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/cszynwd>, 3:08. The transcript can be found at *SF Film Society Blog*, April 30, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/c4vdzuj>.

“airless digital spaces of a digital city,” Soderbergh offers the JetBlue T5 terminal at JFK, “one of the nicest in the country.” Added to the JFK complex in 2008, the T5 terminal includes a shopping mall, a theatre, a church (“Mass Transit”) and a variety of other consumer experiences.² While air travel has been a supplement to the mall experience at least since Baudrillard’s observations on *Parly 2* in “The Consumer Society,” the T5 mall enacts something like a reversal of the commensalist relationship between mall and airport: here, it is the airport that epiphytically clings to the mall, rather than the mall that emerges out of the airport. Given that the only other space of comfort in this opening anecdote is the airplane seat, with its extra leg-room, a reparative, utopian possibility emerges at the heart of this heterotopia: a galactic infrastructure that connects the cinema seat with the sky, a fly-through venue, hovering somewhere between the east and west coasts. It is appropriate, then, the the T5 terminal was built out of the original TWA flight centre which Carr used as a synecdoche for the bicoastality of queer infrastructure,³ since Soderbergh’s response to the dissolution of the individual film is not, as in the case of Denby and Thomson, a wholesale rejection of the possibility of cinematic infrastructure, but a remediation of that infrastrucure by way of the desert that acts as this bicoastal bridge.

As a preface to his announcement of the waning of cinema, Soderbergh announced a retirement that would conclude with a trilogy of films and, finally, a telemovie – *Behind the Candelabra*, an adaptation of Scott Thorson’s account of his life with Liberace.⁴ The film moves between Palm Springs and Las Vegas, and draws upon what Sarah Chaplin describes as the peculiar heterotopia of the desert, specifically the Las Vegas desert, in which “the heterotopian paradigm is recast as one of mindless decoration, lacking emotional depth and intellectual direction, a manoeuvre which invokes elitist class distinctions that reproduce the

² “T5 at JFK,” JetBlue website, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/7ywhjdp>. With its muted, cool tones and Deep Blue Sushi outlet, the ambience and palette of the complex is not unlike that of several of Soderbergh’s more recent films.

³ David W. Dunlap, “Saarinen Terminal to Reopen at Kennedy Airport,” *City Room* (blog on the website of *The New York Times*), February 21, 2008, <http://tinyurl.com/kdcxrma>.

⁴ Ben Child, “Steven Soderbergh retires from film: ‘Movies don’t matter any more,’” *The Guardian* online, January 30, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/ncwyqnj>.

heterotopia not as a post-revolutionary other, but as a lightweight other to the seriousness of lived experience, and to a proper understanding of meaning”:

The Las Vegas skyline has changed over recent years not only because the developer stakes have been raised (neon is now seen by many casino owners as passé) and the clientele has changed somewhat, but also because there has been a historiographical shift in the choice of the themes themselves. As mediated environments, casino resorts and other attractions have moved away from referencing the desert, Hispanic, frontier-town otherness of Las Vegas...or images associated with gambling itself...towards themes which seek to create the image of otherness for Las Vegas by means of imported and re-presented other places, producing an exotic mix and a masked reality. The new range of references can be divided into: historical European...those based on other cities in the United States...those which conjure up exotic or mythical locations...media or music-derived themes (MGM, Debbie Reynolds, Liberace, All Star, Hard Rock); and those which draw on outer space or the future...These are, in many ways, no more than face-lifts, an inevitable consequence of what Baudrillard called “astral America.”⁵

In *Behind the Candelabra*, Soderbergh transforms Las Vegas into such an “exotic or mythical location,” infrastructuralising Liberace into a “media or music-derived theme” whose effort to reach its “highest astral point” and “finest orbital space” cements his performances as a kind of embodied televisual theory. Specifically, Soderbergh draws heavily on Liberace’s theory of ritualistic domesticity, which, “long before it was elucidated by scholars,” was prescient that “the values of closeness, intimacy and individualism – playing to the box – govern not only the form of television, but its content, too. It all predisposes television towards domesticity and family... the endless repetition and changing configuration of limited or predetermined roles and themes – lover to lover, parent to parent, parent to child, children to parent, sibling to sibling, family to family.”⁶

⁵ Sarah Chaplin, “Heterotopia deserta: Las Vegas and other spaces,” in *InterSections: Architectural Histories and Critical Theories*, ed. Iain Borden and Jane Rendell (London: Routledge, 2000), 210, 216. Debbie Reynolds in fact plays Frances Liberace in *Behind the Candelabra*, a decision she explores towards the end of *Unsinkable: A Memoir*, written with Dorian Hannaway, (New York: William Morrow, 2013): “I wanted an authentic look to play Lee’s mother” (281).

⁶ Darden Asbury Pyron, *Liberace: An American Boy*, 5th Edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 146

In Soderbergh's vision, Liberace and Thorston's relationship encompasses all of these themes – in fact, at various points, Liberace explicitly says that he wants to be all of these things to Scott. As a ritualistic domestic partner, he aims to stand in the same relationship to Scott as a television stands towards its viewer, perhaps explaining his dismay at Scott's disinterest in bringing televised pornography into their relationship. Douglas' Liberace identifies this moment of total, rapturous communion and identification with his iconic candelabra – not only does he point out to Thorston that was he the first musician on television to look directly into the camera, but that it was only in doing so that he had the inspiration to include his candelabra in every show. As a refraction of his gaze into a million slivers of astral light, capable of blessing each one of his audience members with an individuated, privileged gaze, Liberace's candelabra ensures that Soderbergh's mise-en-scene is perpetuated by refracted, pixellated and disco-driven shards of light, "holographic...in that it has the coherent light of the laser, the homogeneity of the single elements scattered by the same beams."⁷

If going behind the candelabra means regarding the world as television regards itself, then it is a specifically heterotopic regard (especially in the wake of the heterotopic proliferation of the televisual in the wake of the most recent Golden Age of television), or perhaps even a regard that precedes and is foundational to the heterotopic – what Foucault, in "Of Other Spaces," describes as the "space of our primary perception, the space of dreams," either "flowing like sparkling water" or "fixed, congealed, like stone or crystal."⁸ However, to say that the candelabra is the primary, conditional space of heterotopia is also to say that it is the utopian substrate of heterotopia, since Foucault defines heterotopia first and foremost as "a kind of effectively enacted utopia,"⁹ just as Soderbergh's Liberace is first and foremost a utopian; or, rather, like America, "a utopia that has behaved from the very beginning as though it were already achieved."¹⁰

⁷ Baudrillard, *America*, 29.

⁸ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 23.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁰ Baudrillard, *America*, 28.

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault identifies heterotopia as that which defies a story, or *fabula*: “heterotopias desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences.”¹¹ Not only does *Behind the Candelabra* enact a utopian recovery of the lyrical mythology of Liberace, but it addresses the “very possibility of grammar at its source” in its patient attention to Douglas’ enunciated declarations of love, with which the film concludes. And no film has more perfectly encapsulated the grain of Douglas’ voice, just as no representation of Liberace has focused quite so intently on his *spoken* voice – a voice that, in his autobiography, Liberace steadfastly reserves for his most intimate domestic encounters; namely, those in which he communes with his dogs. In that respect, the foundational ritual-domestic moment in Liberace’s early life was his first dog – or child – which was simultaneously the first moment at which a television camera was brought into his house, a moment that Liberace identifies with his first glimpse of the bicoastal queerness linking the metronormativities of east and west coast, Los Angeles and New York:

The first dog in my life was an adorable toy poodle, Suzette, who was shared by my mother and me, when we lived in Sherman Oaks. At that time, Edward R. Murrow’s “Person to Person” came to interview me. It was a live television show, for which the cameras came right into your home, while Ed asked questions by remote. We talked about dogs... especially poodles. The next day, I got a call from a woman I didn’t know but who lived just a few blocks away. She was moving to New York and had a poodle she couldn’t keep because they didn’t allow dogs in the apartment she’d taken there. She said she would love to give him to me if I was interested in having him. I asked her to tell me a little about the dog, and she replied, “Well, he’s black. And he’s the California state champion in obedience.”¹²

Throughout *Behind the Candelabra*, Soderbergh foregrounds Thorston’s work as an animal trainer for films – a promulgator, embodiment and, by the end, veritable stalwart of obedience. Not only does the film open with a recreation of one of his training sequences, but it continually returns to and foregrounds his

¹¹ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 2nd Edn (London: Routledge, 2001), 29.

¹² Liberace, *The Wonderful Private World of Liberace*, 2nd Edn. (Nashville, TN: Turner, 2003), 73-74.

ambition to become a veterinarian, to speak the language of Liberace and his dogs – and, as the film’s receipt of a Palm Dog, a comic synecdoche for its telecinematic position on the fringes of major award recognition, might suggest, Soderbergh reverses Liberace’s originary televisual moment, in an infrastructural outing, a cinetopic embodiment of closeted infrastructure.¹³ Whereas Liberace originally identified himself with the cloistered domestic space upon which television intruded with its new vision of domesticity – television being more or less equated with the origins of his “Palm Springs family”¹⁴ – Soderbergh’s Liberace has migrated into the new vision of domesticity that intrudes upon the cloistered space that pre-Golden Age television itself has become. If Liberace was touched and transformed by television, he now spectrally touches television with “more than television.”

In that respect, the film fulfills Liberace’s most utopian project: Liberace Park, described at length in the last section of his ongoing project of moving “back to the future” (213). As Liberace describes it, Liberace Park was, in its initial stages, planned as an entertainment museum that would collect and preserve the various media across which he had distributed himself: initially films, television broadcasts and videos, in a theatre modelled on the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, but also the entire history of his live performances, captured in a dedicated venue that would allow both him and his protégés to rehearse and reinvent his finest moments. However, as Liberace notes, his media-image wasn’t confined to performance venues, requiring the language and space of the mall to capture all the commodities and commodity-experiences across which he distributed himself; or, rather, which were distributed across him, meaning that, as his mall-museum expands to an “exquisitely landscaped park,” hermetically sealed from the surrounding landscape, it morphs into something like an attempt to costume and bejewel topography. “Studded” with gazebos and arranged “in the shape of diamonds,” Liberace Park reimagines infrastructure as the attempt to dress a zoomscape, making for a complex that can only be properly appreciated by air:

¹³ Lily Rothman, “Most Unusual Cannes Award: The Palm Dog,” *Time* online, May 28, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/mv9en5w>.

¹⁴ Liberace, *Wonderful Private World*, 73.

“Why, even the airlines are planning to reroute their approaches to the airport so they can point out Liberace Park as one of the highlights of Las Vegas” (206-09).

Neither a mall in an airport nor a mall in a airplane, this space precisely corresponds to Soderbergh’s cinetopic distention of airport and seat – a fly-through mall, a venue that demands the distant reading of an aerial perspective, it represents an early version of what has more recently been described as “the internet of things”: an approach to the world in which the burden of networking is relocated from amorphous information flows to the infrastructure that supports them: “Our economy, society and survival aren’t based on ideas or information – they’re based on things. You can’t eat bits, burn them to stay warm or put them in your gas tank.”¹⁵ While the internet of things, in its foundational incarnation, was intended as a corrective to the perceived procedural tendency of IT theory to focus on ideation rather than application – the same bind as that of folding architecture – the term can be usefully expanded to denote a convergence of discorrelationism and infrastructuralism, in which the availability of the network in every object restores both threshold-magic and the moments of disenchantment that it produces. If, as David Nye suggests in *American Technological Sublime*, the peculiar sublimity of Las Vegas lies in the fact that it is a world both “entirely without infrastructure and beyond the limits of nature,”¹⁶ then *Behind the Candelabra* reimagines this as a post-perceptual sublime in which infrastructure has been naturalised to the point where *everything* has become infrastructural – or, rather, every structure has become infrastructuralist, displaced and dissolved into microstructures and infrastructures. Ultimately, Foucault’s heterotopic “sites” are just this infrastructuralist tension between microstructure and infrastructure – the moment, as it were, that structure itself emerges as if epiphenomenally from this interplay – as well as the manifold structures of distant reading they produce:

¹⁵ Kevin Ashton, “That ‘Internet of Things’ Thing,” *RFID Journal* (blog), June 22, 2009, <http://tinyurl.com/mnedlya>.

¹⁶ David Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 295.

The site is defined by relations of proximity between points or elements; formally, we can describe these relations as series, trees or grids...This problem of the human site or living space is not simply that of knowing whether there will be enough space for men in the world – a problem that is certainly quite important – but also that of knowing what relations of propinquity, what type of storage, circulation, marking, and classification of human elements should be adopted in a given situation in order to achieve a given end. Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites...But among all these sites, I am interested in certain ones that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect.¹⁷

Liberace's account of Liberace Park partakes of just this attempt to know what "relations of propinquity" might be adopted between his various heterotopic manifestations – in fact, his account feels less like a description than an evocation of the spectral structure, the heterotopic distant reading, that epiphenomenally emerges when infrastructure and microstructure are in dialectical synergy, "with reflection pools and fountains that keep time to music."¹⁸ Of course, the spectral structure between the music and the fountains is Liberace's piano itself – but, before examining this, it is worth noting his insistence that all mobility in this complex will be virtual. Trains and cars are forbidden, or at least relegated to history: "There'll be no automobiles in the park, except the antique cars in the museum. The parking area will be screened off by artificially created hills, and shuttle buses will carry people from it to the complex" (209). In other words, a park without windscreens – that is, a park in which the windscreen has been entirely naturalised, subsumed into an all-encompassing virtual mobile gaze, as if this Middle American iteration of the dromoscopic sublimity of *Play Misty For Me* were the ultimate destination of Friedberg's apocalyptic Century Freeway.

Shortly after his description of Liberace Plaza, Liberace recalls a conversation in which George Stevens confided that "I'd love to make a movie in which you don't go near a piano" (214). For all that it celebrates his music, this is, at some level, the point of Liberace Park – to distend the microstructures and infrastructures surrounding Liberace's legendary piano until it becomes a dark object, present

¹⁷ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 23-24.

¹⁸ Liberace, *Wonderful Private World*, 209.

everywhere but not directly perceivable anywhere. In some sense, this is also the film that Soderbergh has made, although his particular focus on the symbiosis between Liberace's on-stage limousine and piano, as well as Thorston's role as chauffeur, means that it is the piano-windscreen complex that becomes the dark object in the film, the point through which everything is mediated but which is itself largely unperceived; as mentioned, there is very little representation of Liberace's actual stage performances, and even that is reserved for Thorston's first encounter with him, and final dream of him. However, if this piano-windscreen complex forms another iteration of the post-perceptual picture windscreens discussed in the third chapter, it is also – more explicitly and directly – the film's locus of camp, since it is precisely in the approach of the limousine's tackiness to the grand piano's supposed classicism that Liberace's camp lies. "Surrounding himself with jeweled pianos" yet "enforcing the standards of rigorous classical musicianship,"¹⁹ Liberace – or Soderbergh's Liberace – reinvents the glissando between drive-in window and picture windscreen as camp; the picaresque skid between a pornographic screen and glory hole.

It is in this reclamation of the dark object as a camp object that the film's utopian vision lies, or at least its vision of how "the strange idea of living in a world with all sorts of dark objects of which [we are] scarcely aware" might be "a thought that both disturbs and incites wonder."²⁰ Shaviro argues that post-cinematic texts don't necessarily offer answers to the questions posed by their late capitalist substrate – rather, their "achievement is precisely to keep them open as questions."²¹ Reframed post-perceptually, it might be said that the achievement of *Behind the Candelabra* – or the achievement of camp that it remediates – is to keep open certain possibilities of perception, creating the "disturbed wonder" that Bryant identifies. If camp preoccupies itself with objects that are considered beneath perception, pre-perceptual, then Soderbergh's achievement is to fuse the pre-perceptual and post-perceptual, making for a cusp

¹⁹ Jim Elledge, *Queers in American Popular Culture, Volume 2: Literature, Pop Art and Performance* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2010), 238.

²⁰ Bryant, "Dark Objects."

²¹ Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*, 63.

that, for Douglas at least, was given a peculiar pregnancy by virtue of coinciding with his recent illness – the “beautiful gift”²² given to him by camp is what Sontag describes as “a kind of love, love for human nature...a tender feeling.”²³

Among other things, this makes criticisms of the accuracy of the representation of Liberace’s homosexuality somewhat beside the point, since the import of this dark camp is that the more a situation approaches camp, the more it must be known, or mapped, tropically; that is, the more homosexual Liberace’s actions, the more they can only be known, even by him, in retrospect, when their implications have fully reverberated and remediated their surroundings. From that perspective, the extraordinary achievement of the film – its “ability to both incite and disturb wonder” – is that it can both depict explicit homosexual activity and reiterate why Liberace appealed to several generations of grandmothers; he is both more homosexual, and less cognisant of, or even fully present at, that homosexuality than in any other depiction, making for a film in which homosexuality exists entirely as a function of touch-feel, mise-en-scene, and mise-en-scene itself is cinetopically revived, in a refreshed *Wunderkammer*, a gesture of tropic unforgetting, rather than cognitive-mnemonic remembrance.

Towards the beginning of *The Wind in the Trees*, Keathley comments on the way in which the rise of television affected the framing and depth of cinema:

On the one hand, of course, movie theaters still offer what television cannot: scale, both in image and sound. But because today the vast majority of a movie’s life will be lived on television, films must be shot in such a way that they will also play effectively on the small screen. Changes have thus been made in cinematic style to accommodate a film’s being shown on television sets with much smaller screens, dramatically reduced contrast range and, oftentimes, incorrect aspect ratios...Filmic images are now composed in a shallower depth-of-field, there are more close-ups than ever before, and visual information is more clearly centered in the frame. Spectators are not required to scan the frame in the way required

²² Gregg Kilday, “Michael Douglas Gets Emotional at ‘Behind the Candelabra’ Event,” *The Hollywood Reporter* online, May 22, 2013, <http://tinyurl.com/ouo73vh>.

²³ Sontag, “Notes on Camp,” 119.

by widescreen or even Academy ratio cinematic images, but they can instead watch in the distracted manner of the television viewer...²⁴

Where Keathley calls for a reversal of the apparently hierarchical relationship between the cinematic and televisual screen, or between large screens and small screens, *Behind the Candelabra* is less interested in reversal than in reversibility – specifically, the “reversible relation between the post-cinematic diegesis and the non-diegetic ecology of our post-cinematic world” described by Denson. Certainly, at some level, it imbues television, and the telemovie, with cinematic co-ordinates. However, it doesn’t feel as if Soderbergh’s intention is simply to reverse the relationship between television and cinema by making a telemovie with cinematic co-ordinates, a telemovie that only makes proper sense when remediated as cinema. As the more or less simultaneous release of the telemovie and theatrical version might suggest, the film encapsulates the reversible porosity between different scales of screens, using the telemovie to unforget cinema, rather than remember and commemorate it, perhaps explaining why Soderbergh deploys a depth-of-field that is thoroughly object-oriented – an internet of sites, rather than an internet of spaces – that not only results in a mise-en-scene driven by “freeze-frame baroque,” but discovers in the symbiotic relationship between post-perceptual screens a renewal of the baroque relationship to the miniature. For what Keathley ultimately criticises about the rise of televised cinema is that it is not, properly speaking, miniature - when transformed from a microstructure to an infrastructure, it withstands the test of magnification, but not of resolution. In baroque terms, however, the miniature, like the *Wunderkammer*, must be a proportionate “version of the universe”²⁵ – and, against a post-perceptual milieu that often seems to defy remarkability, citability and sitability, Soderbergh offers “a series of tight-packed domes at miniature scale” that finds in camp’s citational identification “with what it is enjoying”²⁶ a way of rendering the “disturbing wonder” of symbiotic screens perceivable, as well as the potencies of the *cinépheur*, whose miniature

²⁴ Keathley, *Wind in the Trees*, 15.

²⁵ Carla Yanni, *Nature’s Museums: Victorian Sciences and the Architecture of Display* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 16.

²⁶ Sontag, “Notes on Camp,” 119.

heterotopias and minor shots “offer themselves to the viewer in a utopia” that “has the capacity to make its context remarkable” (Figures 63-65).²⁷

A Cinetopic Anecdote

Halfway through writing this thesis, I rented out Albert and David Maysles’ documentary *Running Fence*.²⁸ I had always been fascinated by Christo and Jean-Claude’s land sculptures, and by this one in particular. Specifically, I was fascinated by the moment at which the fabric-laden fence, a line of drift which stretched across western California, descended into the ocean. I had several books on Christo, and most of them depicted this moment in the fence’s movement, but they all used the same couple of photographs. These were all taken at dusk, or dawn, and the coastline was heavily shadowed, making it hard to tell if the fence was descending into water, or just descending into darkness.

When I rented out the film, I was surprised to find that a great deal of it was devoted to exactly this moment, detailing the logistics and spectacle of the moment at which the fence hit the water (Figures 66-68). I was equally surprised to find that the fence didn’t actually descend underwater at all, but was instead composed of smaller and smaller increments that treated the water itself as their foundation. While I anticipated the meeting of the fence and water as something like a rapturous, totalising cinephilic moment, I was instead faced with a series of discrete stages, “the hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows,” in the form of a structure that excavated cinephilic attachment, or infrastructuralised cinephilic attachment, preventing cinematic and infrastructural attachment “from settling into primordial polarities.”²⁹

²⁷ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 86, 46.

²⁸ *Running Fence*, directed by Albert Maysles and David Maysles (1977; New York: Plexifilm, 2004), DVD.

²⁹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 2nd Edn. (London: Routledge, 2004), 5; Maysles and Maysles, *Running Fence*, 33:32, 32:57, 37:19. The concluding frame occurs at 37:44.

For days after watching the film, it stayed with me, haunted me. I was not preoccupied with any specific image or moment in a cinephilic sense. Yet I could not be preoccupied with the structure in any novel way either – after all, I had already studied it in the books I had. It took a while to percolate before I realised that there was some connection in my mind between the structure of the fence and the DVD parlour – an offshoot of my University library – from which I had rented the disc. Some more time passed before I realised I was fantasising that the DVD library was structured in a similar way to the fence itself – specifically, to that moment at which the fence stretched across the water. I had searched for that secret from the disc, but had somehow found it in the DVD library.

As the months went by, I noticed myself imagining DVD stores, and cinemas, in the oddest places – generally, any-places-whatever, or places that were devoid of any apparent functionality, including the remains of a pier on the beach at Far Rockaway, New York, my own version of Carr’s fantasmatic 66 South Street (Figure 69). Nevertheless, all these spaces returned to that moment at which the fence descended into the water, and the fantasy of the DVD store. I began drawing up plans in my mind. The store would be a couple of metres wide, with glass walls: anything wider would restrict the dramatic sense of movement into the water. There would be shelves along the walls, but not such that they would impede the browser’s sense of movement into the water; perhaps they would be glass shelves. The store would start high up, on the sand and rock, and gradually progress until it was completely underwater – and a glass ceiling would enable the browser to look up through the bottom of the surface of the water. I realised I wanted the store to be buried some way in the ground – not just for structural reasons, but so that even the “dry” part would offer a cross-section of the sand, would involve a sense of sinking into a porous medium; this was titillating. And of course the glass panels would have to be kept clean as a camera’s lens.

Sometimes, too, the fantasy was of a cinema, rather than a DVD store, but even then I tended to theme the space in my mind in terms of browsing through possible cinematic experiences than seeing an actual film. It was a browsing space – which is to say, a space of distant reading, or distant viewing. And, after a

while, it started to make sense to me that I had settled upon a piece of land art as a cipher for this distant viewing – for what is land art, after all, but a distant viewing of a landscape? Many of Moretti’s diagrams in *Graphs, Maps, Trees* are indistinguishable from the blueprints and working sketches of the greatest works of land art, while Robert Smithson, the greatest land art practitioner-scholar of them all, not only wrote that his art was interested in “fabricating as much distance as possible,”³⁰ but foreshadowed Liberace Park’s “aerial art”:

Aerial art can therefore not only give limits to “space,” but also the hidden dimensions of “time” apart from natural duration – an *artificial time* that can suggest galactic distance here on earth. Its focus on “non-visual” space and time begins to shape an esthetic based on the *airport as an idea*, and not simply as a mode of transportation. This airport is but a dot in the vast infinity of universes, an imperceptible point in a cosmic immensity, a speck in an impenetrable nowhere – aerial art reflects to a degree this vastness.³¹

It made sense, then, that one of the venues I had collapsed into this DVD store was the airport: the store was to be a departure towards the imperceptible, or, rather a departure in which the site itself would become a locus of the post-perceptual – a piece of aerial art that would act as a launching pad to a “cosmic immensity, or what Smithson describes as “a non-objective sense of site”:

The future air terminal exists both in terms of mind and thing. It suggests the infinite in a finite way. The straight lines of landing fields and runways bring into existence a perception of “perspective” that evades all our conceptions of nature. The naturalism of seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art is replaced by non-objective sense of site. The landscape begins to look more like a three-dimensional map than a rustic garden. Aerial photography and air transportation bring into view the surface features of this shifting world of perspectives. The rational structures of buildings disappears into irrational disguises and are pitched into optical illusions. The world seen from the air is abstract and illusive. From the window of an airplane one can see drastic changes of scale, as one ascends and descends. The effect takes one from the dazzling to the monotonous in a short space of time – from the shrinking terminal to the obstructing clouds.

³⁰ Robert Smithson and Allen Kaprow, “What is a Museum?,” in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 45.

³¹ Robert Smithson, “Aerial Art,” in *Collected Writings*, 117.

As my ideas coalesced around this “future air terminal,” I found myself focusing on how the films should be arranged throughout the store. Specifically, I wondered which films should be grouped at that zone at which the store started to descend into the water. In fact, I spent some time trying to pinpoint this zone itself: would it be where the water lapped against the glass for the first time, would it be where the store was halfway in the water – so at approximately head height – or would it be where the water closed over the glass roof for the first time? It was an unanswerable question, because what I was dealing with was neither a threshold nor a passage, but Benjamin’s threshold-passage, just as the glass panels of the store itself were drawn, “hither and thither,” from his “glass architecture of the future.” By not having the Running Fence actually descend into the water, but instead stretch across its surface, Christo and Jean-Claude had kept threshold-passage open, and prevented threshold and passage “settling into primordial polarities.” I gradually found myself watching every film from the vantage of this threshold-passage, as an embodiment of this glass architecture.

As Keathley suggests in the last section of *The Wind in the Trees*, a cinephilic anecdote, told thoughtfully and reflectively, can yield a meaning, a reading, a discrete interpretation of film history. While that may be true of the cinetopic anecdote, it can only arrive once the purveyor of the anecdote has collapsed themselves into the anecdote, created or recreated the cinematic heterotopia, and reconfigured the affective labour of post-cinematic and post-perceptual media ecologies. While I have not constructed this DVD store, and may never construct it, I still find myself affectively constructing it whenever I watch a film, since I am still contemplating the right film to place at that threshold-passage between sand, rock and water, considering every film, no matter what its pedigree or position on the canonical-cinephilic continuum, as a hidden repository of the glass architecture of the future, a portal to post-perception – and that is the peculiar wonder, as well as the peculiar onus, of the *cinepheur*.

Bibliographic Note

This thesis makes extensive use of digital sources – not just websites but threads on forums, comments on websites, tweets, status updates and other forms of online ephemera. For that reason, I have made a few bibliographic decisions.

1. I have used TinyURLs instead of regular URLs. TinyURLs provide a concise, permanent record of a website in a shortened format. When entered into a browser, a TinyURL will immediately revert to the original website. They make it easier to read and navigate the thesis and its sources. More information about TinyURLs can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/>.
2. I have only provided access dates for sites that seem peculiarly ephemeral or unstable. Otherwise, all sites are active as of August 8, 2013.
3. I have cited usernames *as* usernames, rather than proper names. For example, Edward Lozzi's YouTube post is listed in the bibliography under 'E' rather than 'L,' despite the fact that Edward Lozzi is also his proper name. I have also capitalised all usernames for the sake of clarity and consistency, since they are not case-sensitive.
4. When I cite comments on a website, I do so in an analogous way to chapters in a book, only citing the site once in full and then in a truncated way for subsequent comments.
5. While I have italicised online publications and blogs, I have not italicised platforms such as YouTube, Facebook or Twitter.
6. In order to avoid bibliographic clutter and the unnecessary accumulation of sources, I have not cited works that are cited second hand in my thesis. Instead, I attribute them to the primary source in my footnotes and then cite that primary source in my bibliography. In the footnote, I quote the citation in the primary source in full, regardless of whether it conforms to the Chicago Style Guide. This has been necessary when dealing with a text like *The Arcades Project* which is itself quite bibliographic in nature.

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Figure 1. The iPhone Movie Map for London App.



Figure 2. *Wunderkammer* of the missed film (Jack).



Figure 3. *Wunderkammer* of the inadequately viewed film (Bill).



Figure 4. *Wunderkammer* of the undervalued film (Harvey).



Figures 5-7. *Wunderkammera* of the improperly constituted venue (Eric).



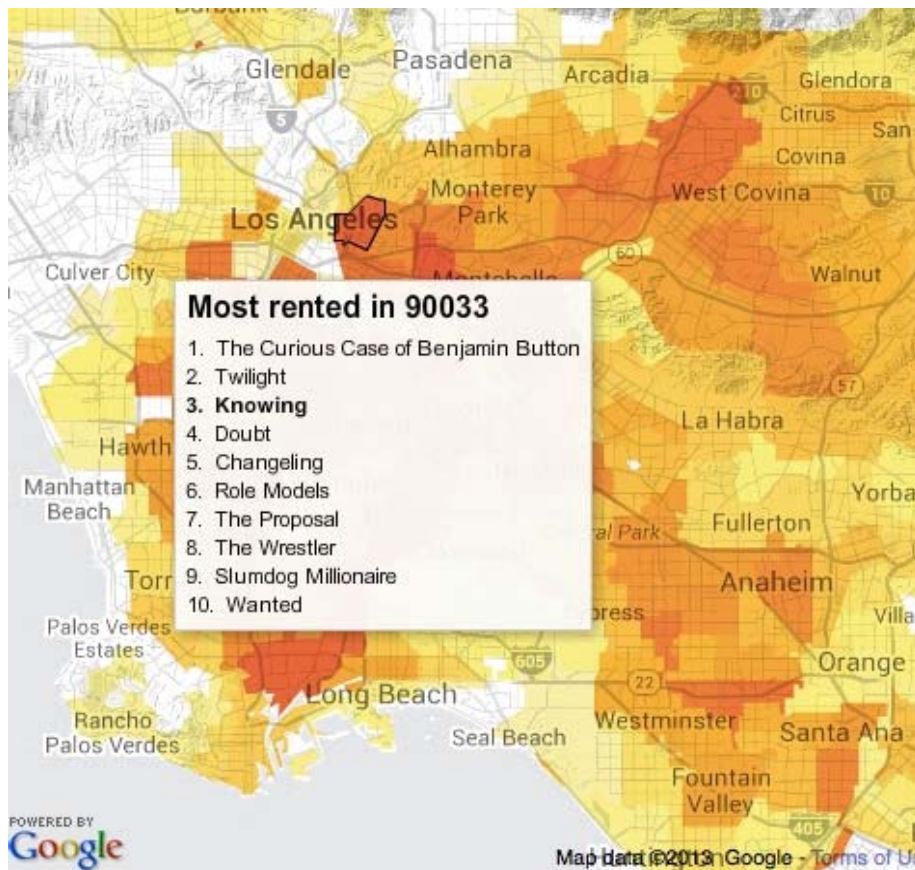
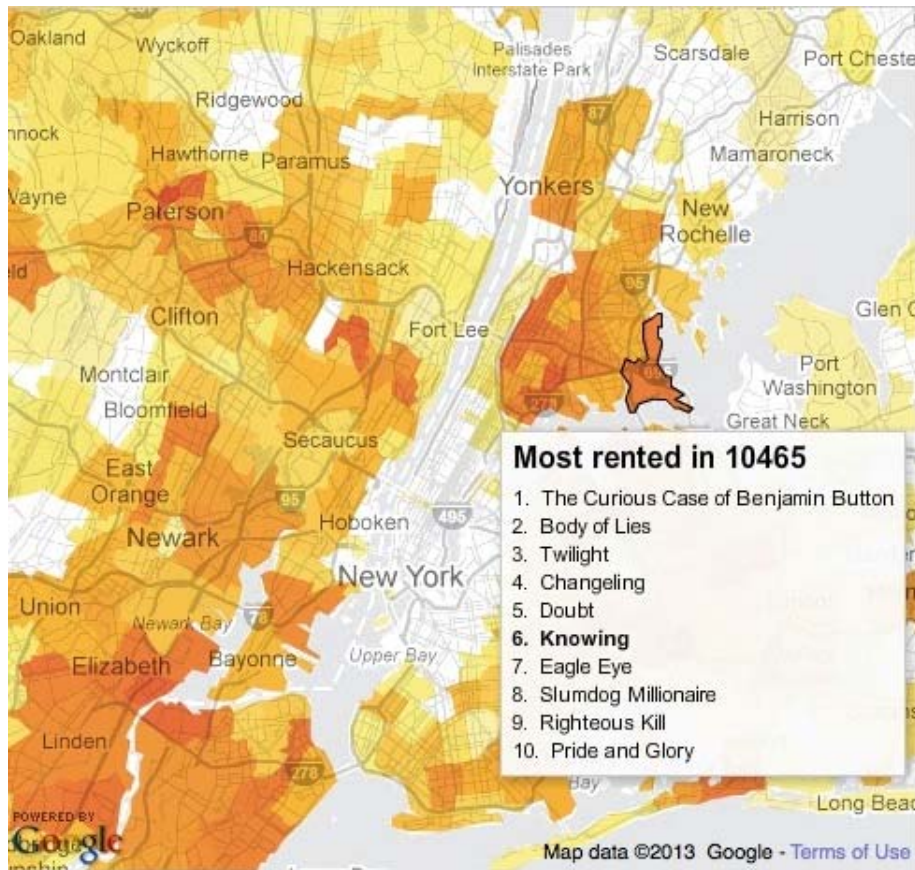
Figure 8. *Wunderkammer* of curatorial excess and detritus (Roberta).



Figure 9. *Wunderkammer* of Cinemania.



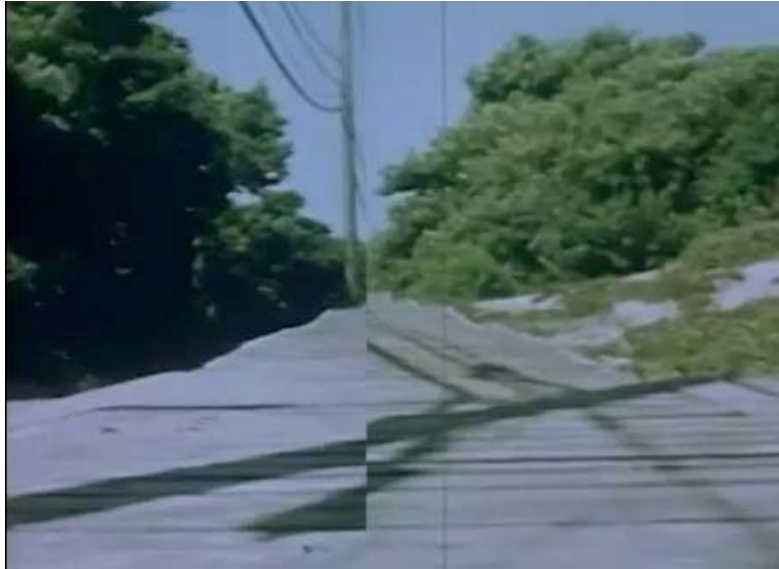
Figures 10-11. Dream houses of the collective.



Figures 12-14. Fire Island – wind in the trees.



Figures 15-17. Fire Island – limit-cinephilia.



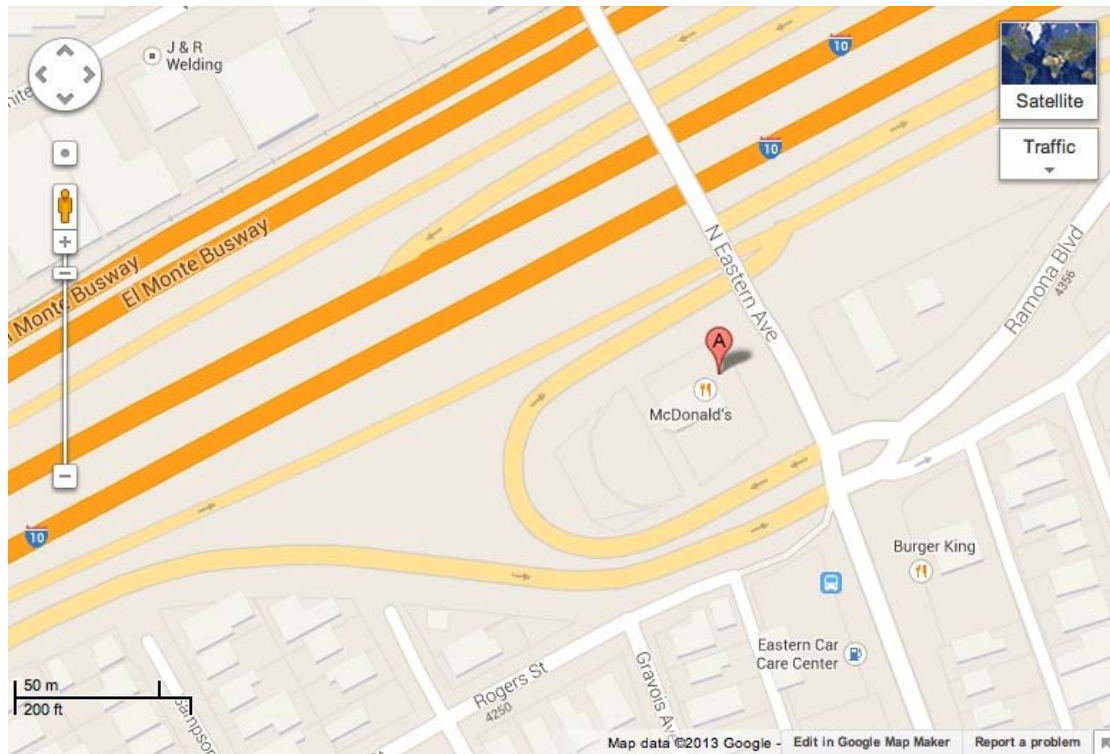
Figures 18-20. Fire Island – remastered.



Figure 21. A cinetopic anecdote.



Figures 22-23. McDonald's, 1617 N Eastern Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90063, USA.



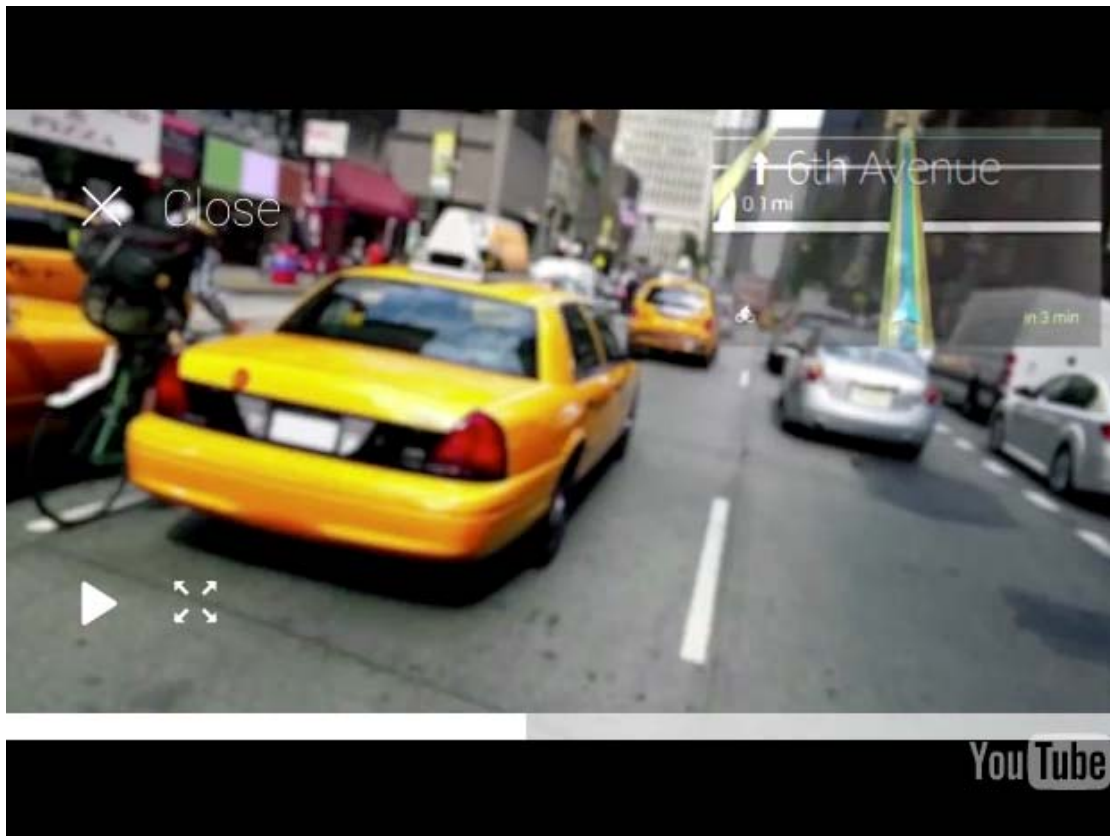
Figures 24-25. McDonald's, 1617 N Eastern Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90063, USA (continued).



Figures 26-28. Drive-through/offramp.



Figures 29-30. Google Glass.



Figures 31-32. Google Glass (continued).



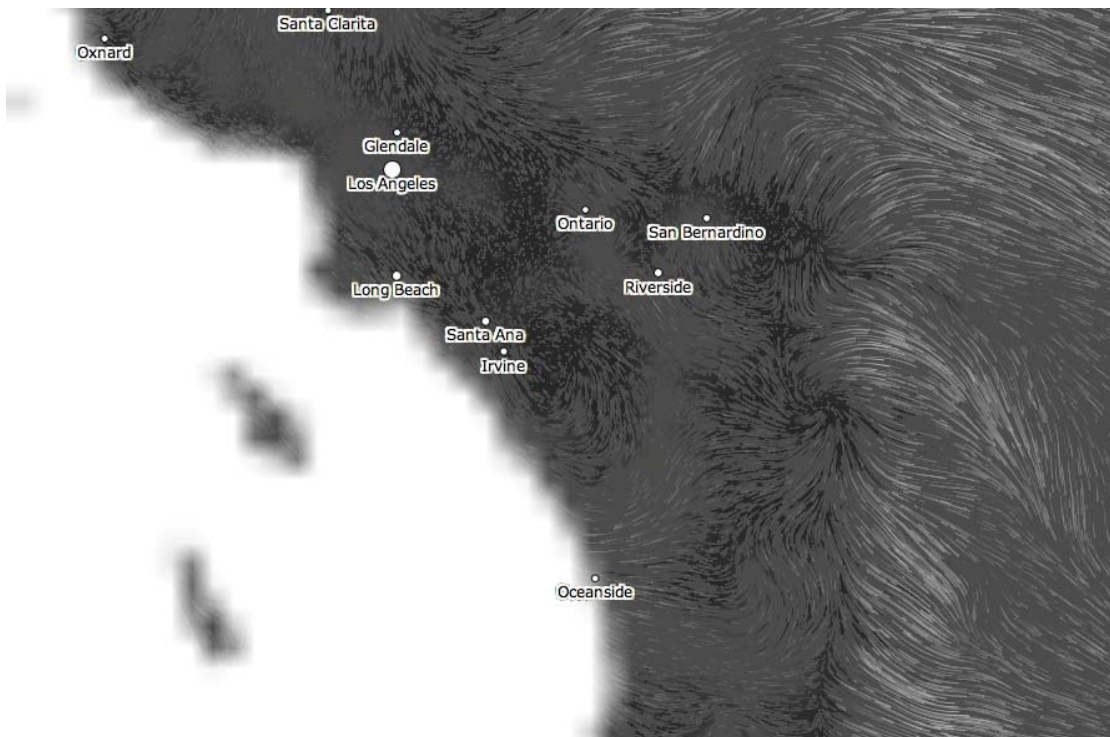
Figures 33-35. Infrastructural *Wunderkammer*.



Figure 36-38. Infrastructural *Wunderkammer* (continued).



Figures 39-40. Google Wind.



Figures 41-42. *Pickup on South Street.*



Figures 43-44. *Pickup on South Street* (continued).



Figures 45-47. Rite Aid.



Figures 48-50. *Manhattan.*



Figure 51. Netflix Map: *Tropic Thunder*.

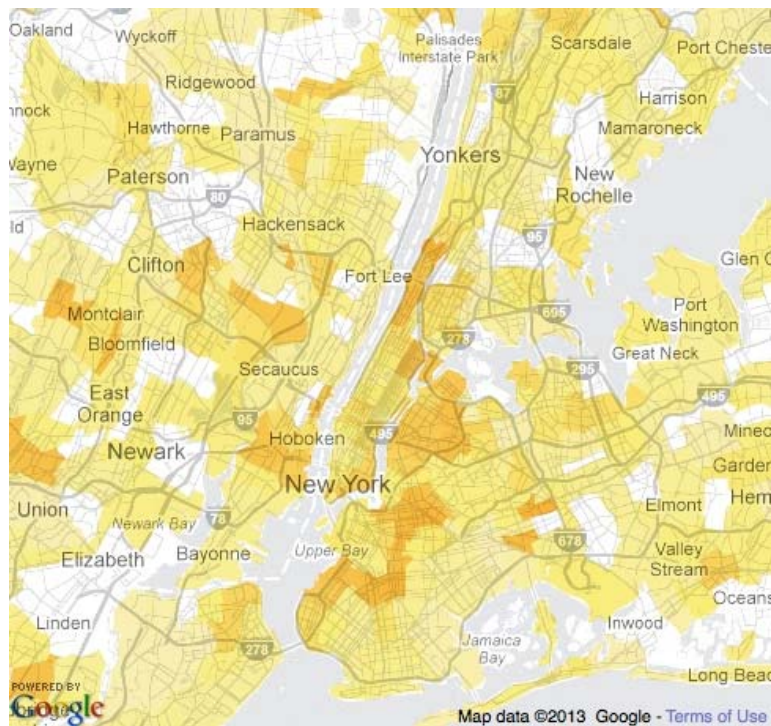
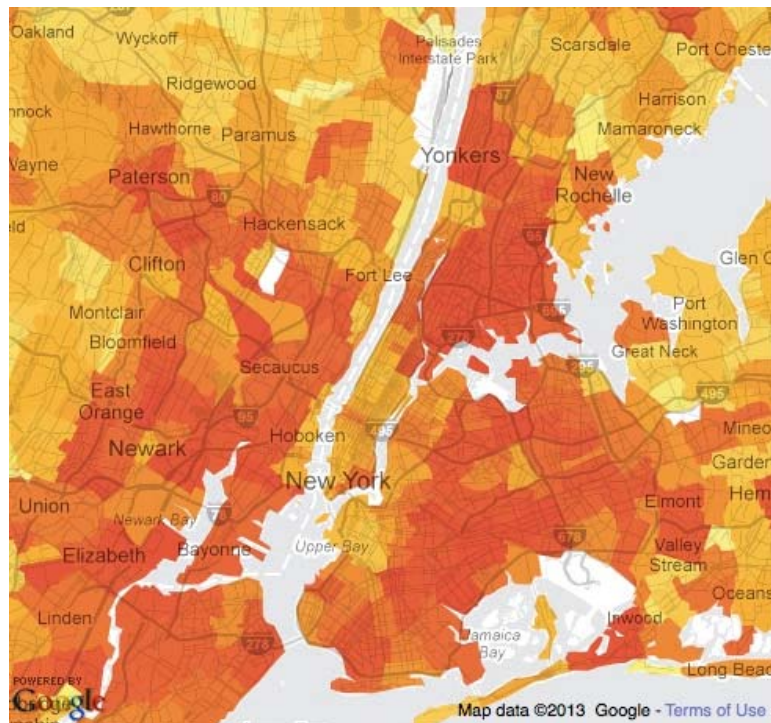


Figure 52. Netflix Map: *Twilight*.



Figures 53-54. Netflix Maps: *Bedtime Stories*.

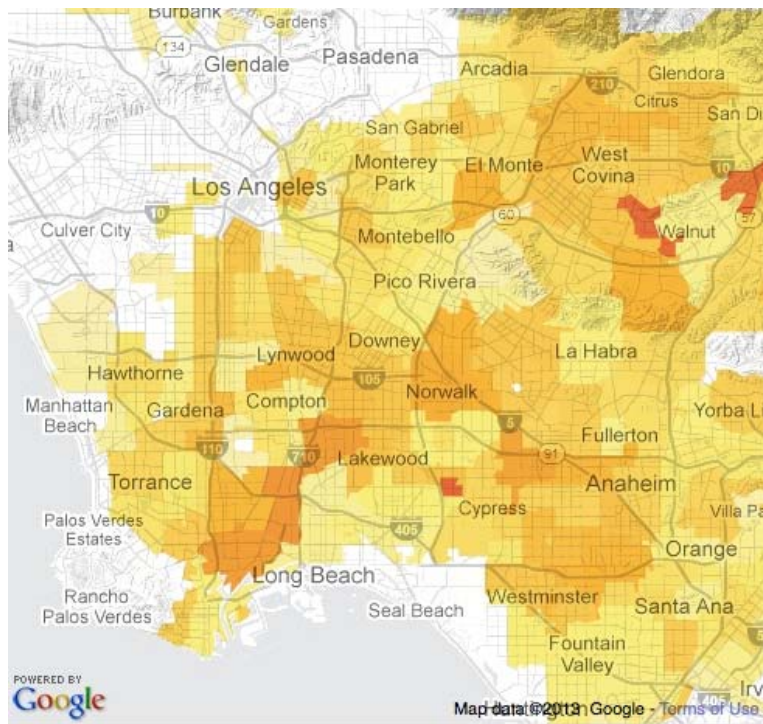
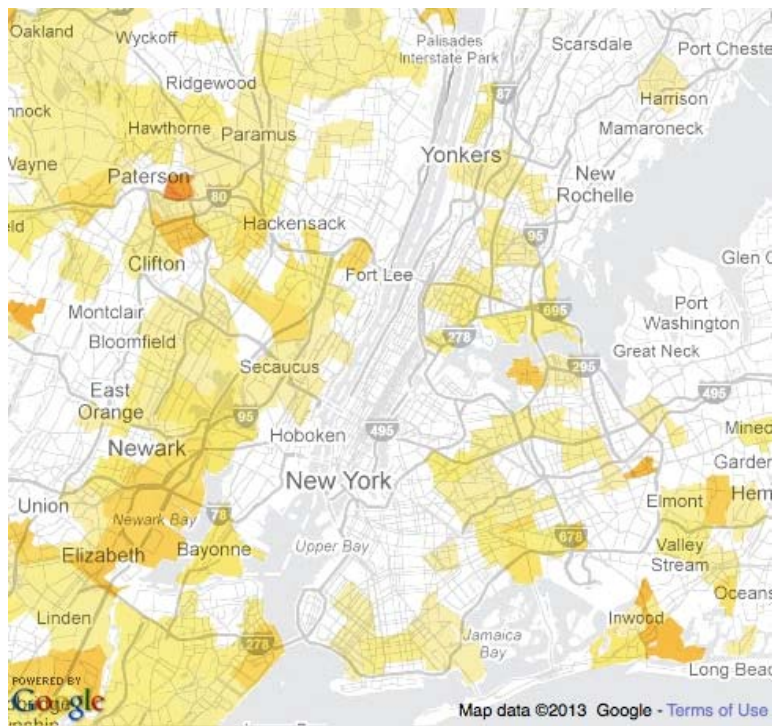
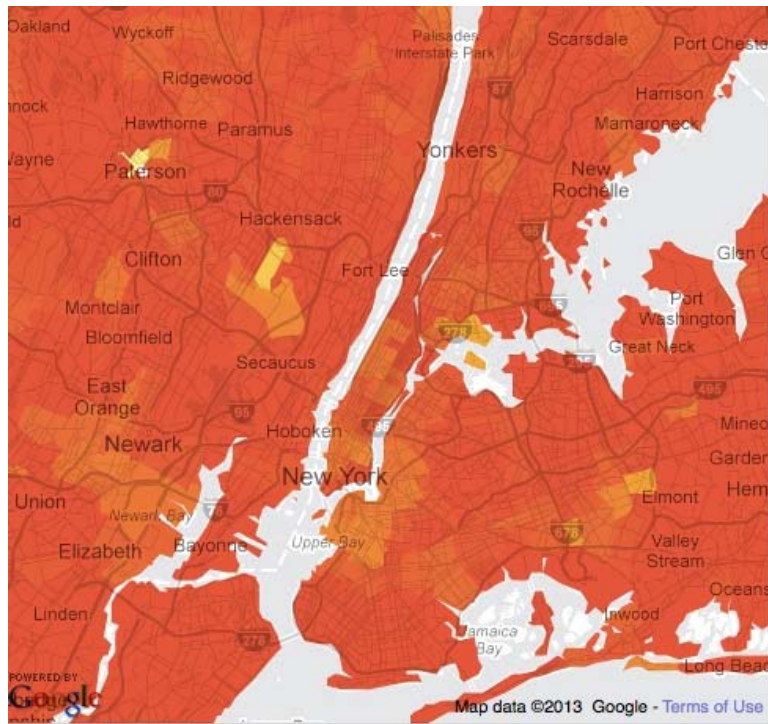


Figure 55. Netflix Map: *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.



Figures 56-58. “Centuries from now...”



Power's a lot like real estate. It's all about location, location, location. The closer you are to the source, the higher your property value. Centuries from now, when people watch this footage...

Figures 59-61. "Centuries from now..." (continued).



...who will they see smiling, just at the edge of the frame?



Figure 62. October 21, 2015.



Figures 63-65. Minor Shots.



Figures 66-68. *Running Fence.*



Figure 69. Far Rockaway.



Figure 70. The *cinepheur*.

