Cinematic Thought: The Representation of Subjective Processes in the Films of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick

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Summary

Drawing on a wide range of critical and theoretical material, this thesis explores the representation of subjective phenomena, such as dream, memory and fantasy, in the films of Ingmar Bergman, Alain Resnais and Stanley Kubrick. My introduction outlines my argument concerning how film represents or communicates non-verbal thought processes, before examining theories and depictions of cinematic thought in the silent era. Subsequently, the thesis is divided into three sections, each consisting of two chapters and focussing on the work of a single director. In the first section, I explore Bergman's representation of subjective processes. Chapter 2 offers a close formal analysis of the dream sequences in *Wild Strawberries*, while chapter 3 examines the stylistic properties and thematic concerns of Bergman's later, experimental work of the 1960s and '70s. In chapter 4, I analyze Resnais' work, emphasizing in particular his early innovations in representing imagination, memory and streams of consciousness. Chapter 5 extends this analysis by examining the concept of collective memory (or imagination) in relation to Resnais' interrogation of France's recent history (the Occupation and the Algerian War). In the final section, I focus on Kubrick's work. Chapter 6 explores Kubrick's 1962 adaptation of *Lolita* and the notion of 'first-person' cinematic narration. My formal analysis of the film is contextualized through a discussion of its production history, and examines the relationship between cinematic thought, censorship and the values and norms of Hollywood. Chapter 7 builds upon this analysis, exploring different forms of subjective narration and 'uncanny' thought in Kubrick's later work. In conclusion, I summarize the key ideas developed in my thesis in order to support my central argument that cinema has a unique capacity for representing specific aspects of non-verbal thought.

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Introduction

Approximately twenty minutes into Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), there is one of the most remarkable cuts in the history of cinema. Having discovered the possibility of using animal bones as weapons, a tribe of apes is able to fight off a rival clan and thus secure the territory and resources (a small waterhole) crucial to its survival. Subsequently, the leader of the armed tribe, who has demonstrated his supremacy by killing one of the rival apes, celebrates his newfound power by triumphantly throwing his bone-weapon into the air. The bone spins through the air in slow-motion, begins to descend, and is abruptly replaced by a new object – a man-made satellite orbiting the earth, which slowly drifts downwards across the screen.

Numerous critics have commented on the originality, audacity and narrative economy of the transition, which silently elides four million years of human evolution, moving us instantaneously from 'The Dawn of Man' to the space age of the not-too-distant future.[1] Equally, many have expounded upon the aesthetic elegance of the graphic match between the bone descending in slow-motion and the satellite gliding past the earth. Yet, surprisingly, few have given due attention to the thematic and conceptual significance of the cut, or have acknowledged its full complexity in articulating an extensive network of ideas that are essential to the film as a whole.[2] Embedded in a twenty-five minute 'prologue' that has neither dialogue nor explanatory voiceover, the cut's essential function is, I believe, to produce meaning non-verbally. More than being an elision or a transition, *2001*'s most famous edit is a juxtaposition of images that suggests a specific set of ideas and themes. It is an example of what I would term cinematic thought: the audiovisual expression of an abstract mental process.

In the context of *2001*'s prologue, the ape's use of the bone as a tool and weapon marks an evolutionary juncture, a first moment of creative thinking that becomes synonymous with 'The Dawn of Man'. The crucial instant of the ape's intellectual advancement is represented explicitly by Kubrick, again through the editing together of images as a direct expression of visual thought (in a sequence that, in many ways, presages the function of the later cut from bone to spacecraft). As the ape picks up the bone and uses it to smash a dead animal's skull, there are two inserts which depict a tapir falling to the ground, as if felled by the blow. Implicitly, these images represent the ape's thought process: the perception of the skull fracturing is juxtaposed with the mental image of the dying tapir, and together they suggest an act of abstract reasoning. This first instance of creative thinking not only ensures the immediate survival of the apes, who have suddenly moved to the top of the food chain, but also paves the way for every subsequent human achievement. As Michel Chion, who offers one of the most comprehensive and insightful analyses of *2001*, observes: 'Out of these first ambiguous mental images is born abstract thinking and subsequently the power to send objects into space.'[3] With this in mind, the visual transformation of the bone into the satellite, which is in itself a form of abstract 'reasoning', celebrates the inventive power of the human intellect. Creative thought allows humankind to transcend its physical limitations, overcome gravity and, eventually, to explore and understand the cosmos.

Yet if the transformation of the bone into the satellite represents the limitless potential of humankind's imaginative and technological feats, the symbolism of these two objects also suggests a number of darker meanings. From the outset, the acquisition of intelligence and technology is intertwined with an inseverable instinct for violence and domination. The first tool is a weapon, used not only to hunt, but also

to perpetrate an act of primitive warfare: the armed apes kill one of their own kind and seize control of the territory surrounding the waterhole. The tool that guarantees the survival and development of the proto-humans thus also poses an implicit threat to the species as a whole. This ambiguous representation of intellectual and technological advancement is exacerbated in the transition from past to future. As several critics have noted, the spacecraft that orbits the earth was conceived and designed as a military satellite carrying a nuclear warhead (an idea that also links back to Kubrick's previous film, *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* [1964], which concludes with a nuclear apocalypse, denoted by images of mushroom clouds filling the earth's skies).[4] Even if this militarization of space is not immediately discernable in the *2001*'s seemingly innocuous satellites, the theme of humanity being destroyed by its own technology is very evident later in the film, when HAL, the computer onboard the spaceship 'Discovery', malfunctions and begins to kill the ship's human crew. The transformation of the primitive bone weapon into the machinery of the future should, therefore, be viewed as both a joyous affirmation of humanity's boundless ingenuity *and* a bleak diagnosis of its persistent brutality, irrationality and short-sightedness.

When, in a 1968 interview, Kubrick was questioned about the 'message' of *2001*, he gave the following response:

> It's not a message that I ever intend to convey in words. *2001* is a nonverbal experience... I tried to create a *visual* experience, one that bypasses verbalized pigeonholing and directly penetrates the subconscious with an emotional and philosophic content.[5]

Clearly, *2001*'s most famous edit is integral to Kubrick's programme of expressing complex ideas and themes cinematically, without recourse to language. Chion

succinctly summarizes the importance of this cut, suggesting that 'Kubrick is taking on the impossible task of bringing to life Eisenstein's dream of conveying abstract thought on the screen through purely visual means.'[6] Yet, as is implicit in Chion's own analysis, Kubrick shows this task to be far from impossible. *2001*'s richly metaphorical cut, with its thematic density and layers of ambiguity and ambivalence, is a clear demonstration of the ample potential of cinematic thought.

Two Types of Thought

The close connection between film and thought, which is implicit in Kubrick's work, has been noted by a number of different theorists and filmmakers. Robert Jones writes:

> Motion pictures are our thoughts made visible and audible. They flow in a swift succession of images, precisely as our thoughts do, and their speed, with their flashbacks – like sudden uprushes of memory – and their abrupt transition from one subject to another, approximates very closely the speed of our thinking. They have the rhythm of the thought-stream and the same uncanny ability to move forward or backward in space or time... They project pure thought, pure dream, pure inner life.[7]

Similarly, Alain Robbe-Grillet, in his introduction to the screenplay for *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961), suggests that,

> The memories one 'sees again', the remote places, the future meetings, or even the episodes of the past we each mentally rearrange to suit our convenience are something like an interior film continually projected in our own minds, as soon as we stop paying attention to what is happening around us.[8]

Each of these examples suggests a basic similarity between the way in which mental representations are manipulated in the mind and the way in which images and sounds are organized in cinematic narrative. In addition, each suggests two interrelated ways in which film might be used to express or represent thought. On the one hand, film can be used to articulate thought directly. If, as Jones argues, film has the same spatio-temporal fluidity as thought, and the same capacity to juxtapose images and ideas in quick succession, then it may be utilized to construct (or reconstruct) a non-verbal thought process synthetically. Essentially, this direct, audiovisual expression of thought is what, I believe, underpins the sequence in *2001* described above. On the other hand, film may represent the thoughts of characters within the fiction. This representation may be limited to the individual shot – as with the insert in *2001* depicting the falling tapir that the ape imagines – or it may extend through a protracted subjective sequence – as, for example, in a lengthy flashback depicting a memory. In the case of certain films, such as *Last Year at Marienbad*, most of what we see and hear is implicitly a product of a fictional character's perspective or imagination. These two types of cinematic thought will form the dual focus throughout this thesis, and will be discussed in depth in relation to the films of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick. First, however, a few further preliminary comments are required.

Language, Image and Thought

In speaking of cinematic thought as non-verbal or prelinguistic, fundamental questions are raised regarding the relationship between language, image and thought.

Specifically, we might ask whether it is possible to determine or define the 'nature' of thought in particular circumstances, whether it is primarily linguistic or imagistic, or whether its character and composition varies with different mental processes. Although these questions are undoubtedly complicated, and difficult to answer definitively, introspection seems to suggest that thought operates on various distinct levels through a variable mixture of images and language. Jean Mitry offers an insightful analysis of how thought may be formulated inside and outside of language:

> Since language is the most direct expression of thought, we may say that the latter is, for the most part, formed in language. But language is an objective reaction whose nature is not essentially different from the majority of reactions that make up human behaviour and for which it can stand as a substitute. Nonformulated thought, reduced to states of awareness, pre-exists and stands outside language and may be translated – or at least become manifest – in other ways.[9]

Mitry suggests that cinema is one such way in which thought can 'become manifest'. The organization of images in film, he argues, produces effects such metaphor, synecdoche, ellipsis and hyperbole. While these effects are usually thought of as 'literary', Mitry observes that they are better defined as being conceptual figures that attest to underlying, fundamental patterns of thought, or 'mental shapes', through which ideas are formulated (via juxtaposition, comparison, substitution and so forth). Thus, for Mitry, language and image provide different forms in which thought processes can be actualized, but neither has a privileged claim to being the essential or primary 'material' of thought.

Whilst analyzing the relationship between language, image and thought, it is also worth considering briefly the way in which film has itself been theorized as a language (or quasi-linguistic system). Under the influence of structuralism and semiotic literary theory, a significant area of film theory written in the 1960s and '70s

sought to define and analyze film as a language-like system of signification. Christian Metz's work provides a good example of the problems associated with adapting critical tools derived from linguistics and literary theory to film analysis. In *Film Language*, Metz argues that in cinematic narrative there are

> certain 'syntactical procedures' that, after frequent use as *speech*, come to appear in later films as a language system: they have become conventional to a degree... The inherent intelligibility of a dissolve or a double exposure cannot clarify the plot of a film unless the spectator has already seen other films in which dissolves and double exposures were used intelligibly.[10]

Undoubtedly, Metz is correct in identifying particular elements of cinematic narration that have become conventionalized 'to a degree', but this does not necessitate or justify the assumption that film can be analyzed as a language or language-like system. A dissolve usually implies a passage of time and/or a shift in location, but this meaning is never a direct consequence of cinematic convention: it is always dependent on the immediate and specific narrative context in which the dissolve occurs. Furthermore, the suggestion that such cinematic devices are to a large extent arbitrary, or are not 'inherently' intelligible to the uninitiated film viewer, is highly questionable. (It seems likely to me that the dissolve has become a conventional way of marking a significant spatial or temporal ellipsis because it does, by its very nature, accentuate and clarify the transition between two distinct images or scenes.) Ultimately, while there are various conventions, norms and codes that we can identify in cinematic narrative, film's meaning is not determined by these structures on a fundamental level. Language is inherently dissimilar to film in that its intelligibility is dependent on the laws and conventions that govern the language system as a whole. For these reasons, I believe that the notion of 'film language' (even if the phrase is used metaphorically) is unhelpful and, indeed, potentially misleading.

Responding to the various theories that have defined film as a form of language, Gilles Deleuze argues:

> Cinema is not a universal or primitive language system [*langue*], nor a language [*langage*]. It brings to light an intelligible content which is like a presupposition, a condition, a necessary correlate through which language constructs its own 'objects'. But this correlate, though inseparable, is specific: it consists of movements and thought processes (pre-linguistic images) and points of view on these movements and processes (pre-signifying signs). It constitutes a whole 'psychomechanics'... the utterable of a language system which has its own logic.[11]

Deleuze, like Mitry, conceives of cinema as a prelinguistic system that gives a non-verbal form to thought. This conception helps to avoid the theoretical problems associated with examining language and film as 'similar' semiotic systems, but, at the same time, it necessarily acknowledges how various codes, patterns and conventions (the formal structures that David Bordwell identifies as defining distinct narrative 'modes') help to articulate a set of audio-visual meanings.[12]

Additionally, the conceptualization of cinematic narrative as a form of prelinguistic thought implies that film is particularly attuned to representing mental states and phenomena that cannot be formulated, or depicted accurately, in linguistic terms. Haim Callev, in an analysis of Resnais' films, suggests that cinema has a distinct advantage (over literature, for example) in representing a stream of consciousness because it can convey our apprehension of non-verbal, sensuous phenomena faithfully and with relative ease: 'The amorphous, pre-speech level of thought can easily find its equivalent in the primary, non-intellectual nature of sounds and images, lighting and colours, graphical arrangements and motion, dynamic changes in screen directions and rhythms.'[13] This notion that film might have a special capacity for representing prelinguistic or 'sensuous' thought will be a

particular focus in my analysis of Bergman. However, it is important to re-emphasize at this point that if film is especially suited to depicting 'non-intellectual' or 'amorphous' thought processes, this need not imply that film cannot also represent complex ideas with a high level of precision. The way in which non-verbal thought operates in *2001* should, again, illustrate this point.

Nevertheless, the possibility that cinema might be particularly attuned to expressing certain mental processes or phenomena raises further issues regarding the fidelity with which film can be said to 'represent' thought. The extent to which film can 'accurately' represent, or translate, various subjective mental states is, of course, questionable – and will be questioned throughout this thesis. One problem concerning the relationship between film and thought should, however, be noted at the outset. There is a fundamental, qualitative difference between the concrete, perceptual images of film and the intangible, virtual images that constitute mental representations. For some theorists, this obvious difference presents an insurmountable problem for the film that attempts to recreate subjective experience in a convincing manner. Greg Currie is particularly polemical in rejecting film's capacity to represent a subjective perspective, even if this perspective is purely optical:

> Viewing the cinema screen is... in important ways rather like viewing the real world; it is not at all like viewing someone's subjective visual experience of the real world (a notion that barely makes sense anyway)... it is only for short periods and with considerable efforts that we are able or willing to regard what is on screen as subjective and therefore as representing what some one thinks or claims, rather than what actually is.[14]

Currie's argument, however, rests on the reductive assumption that in order to 'persuade' the viewer to regard its content as subjective, film must first be able to

capture the precise (visual and psychological) qualities of subjective experience in an illusionistic manner. Mitry, whilst acknowledging the essential difference between cinematic images and mental images, provides a more flexible and nuanced framework for assessing the success or failure of a particular film in conveying subjective experience to the viewer:

> It is completely impossible to represent a mental image, since, having become visual, it ceases to be mental. An image is only subjective to the extent that it relates to a pre-established character. In other words it is not the objectification of a subjective viewpoint but, quite the opposite, the 'subjectification' of a certain objective representation. The purpose is not to translate 'actual' psychological reality (which, in any case, it would be impossible to determine) but to give the audience – through an aesthetic equivalent – the impression that it is seeing or feeling 'as though' it were the character in the drama.[15]

Undoubtedly, Mitry's argument is correct, and of fundamental importance to any study of subjectivity in the cinema. Yet his ideas could equally well apply to the representation of thought in any artistic medium. The literary stream of consciousness, as it is variously constructed by writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Arthur Schnitzler, is, of course, unable to reflect every nuance and detail of 'psychological reality'; instead, it offers an aesthetic reconstruction of thought, providing an insight into the general nature of consciousness and illuminating the specific world-view of a character. Nevertheless, it is still reasonable to suggest that the film medium is particularly adept at recreating the specific qualities of certain mental phenomena, such as dream and memory (just as literature is particularly able to capture other aspects of subjective experience, such as inner monologue). There are, I believe, certain aspects of thought that, because of their primarily visual nature, are inherently 'cinematic', and can, therefore, be conveyed by film in an especially effective, accurate and insightful manner.[16]

Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick: Why These Filmmakers?

Needless to say, Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick share a strong interest in cinematic thought, in both senses of the term (as outlined above). All three have experimented with the medium as a means for representing the minds of fictional characters – depicting a host of imaginative processes, such as dreams, reveries, memories and fantasies.[17] There are, however, also a number of evident differences between these directors in terms of their individual stylistics, their thematic concerns, and the industrial and cultural contexts in which they have worked. As much as their similarities, these differences are a central point of interest in this thesis. Each director offers, I believe, a particular conception of the mind and a rendering of cinematic thought that is rooted in a specific social and cultural context. The structure of this thesis – which is split into three main sections, addressing the work of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick in turn – is, therefore, intended to facilitate both a broad exploration of how thought may be represented in film and a close analysis of how each individual filmmaker conceives of and utilizes cinematic thought. In other words, whilst each section is relatively self-contained, addressing the specific forms and themes that relate to each director's representation of thought, there are also several lines of argument and inquiry that traverse the individual sections and develop a general picture of how thought operates in film.

Each section focuses on fairly distinct aspects of thought, exploring the formal and stylistic means by which they are represented to the viewer. The first section examines two key elements in Bergman's work: his representation of dreams, and his conceptualization of cinema as a type of 'sensuous thought'. Following up on some of

the ideas developed in this first section, the second explores Resnais' depiction of the imagination, with a particular emphasis on his rendering of memory and stream of consciousness. Finally, the third section looks at the ways in which Kubrick addresses the concept of 'first-person' cinematic narration, especially in his adaptations of *Lolita* (1962) and *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). However, while each section has different points of emphasis, there are also a number of common threads that unite the sections. Bergman's interest in dream, for example, is shared to a lesser extent by both Resnais and Kubrick, and my discussion of how Bergman conceives of dreaming is developed through later analyses of Resnais' depiction of the artist's creative dream in *Providence* (1977) and Kubrick's blending of dream and fantasy in *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999). Further connections between the directors' various ideas concerning non-verbal thought, stream of consciousness, memory, and so forth, should become equally apparent as this thesis progresses.

There is, however, one other recurring element that is particularly notable and worth mentioning at this point: each director's work engages with psychoanalysis, albeit to varying degrees and with differing levels of enthusiasm for its conclusions. Bergman's analysis of dreams, particularly in *Wild Strawberries* (1957) and *Face to Face* (1976), can also be seen as a critical analysis of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, while the disintegration of identity in *Persona* (1966) draws heavily on Jungian theory. Similarly, the psychoanalytic account of trauma, repression and 'screen memories' is an implicit influence in several of Resnais' films, such as *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959) and *Muriel, ou Le temps d'un retour* (1963). Lastly, Kubrick is a particularly strong exponent of psychoanalytic theory. His explorations of violence, sexuality, fantasy and identity (in *Lolita, A Clockwork Orange, The Shining* [1980], *Full Metal Jacket* [1987] and *Eyes Wide Shut*) are, in part, founded

upon general psychoanalytic notions of unconscious drives and split psyches, while the Freudian conception of 'the uncanny' is integral to the narrative structures and motifs that underpin *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. With the popularization of psychoanalysis in the 1940s, it is perhaps inevitable that these filmmakers should address this influential theory of the mind in their representations of thought and subjective phenomena.[18] Yet it is important to stress that none of these directors simply transposes the psychoanalytic model of the mind to the screen in a straightforward manner. Instead, each utilizes psychoanalysis, alongside other cultural or theoretical representations of the psyche (and, of course, personal introspection), to develop his particular view of thought, consciousness and the unconscious.

Through close textual analysis, each section will, therefore, elucidate the conceptions of cinematic thought and the mind held by each director, and show how these conceptions interrelate. There is, however, a secondary issue regarding how these directors construct and conceive of cinematic thought that will provide an additional focal point in each section. For all three filmmakers, the expression of thought in film necessarily addresses the specific ideological context(s) in which this thought takes shape and operates. These ideological contexts are defined both by the dominant representational strategies within the cinema itself, and by wider cultural narratives and socio-political institutions. In exploring the ways in which Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick address the relationship between these various ideological frameworks and cinematic thought, I believe we can identify deep connections linking these directors in ways that may not be immediately apparent.

Siegfried Kracauer suggests that, in general, 'What films reflect is not so much explicit credos as psychological dispositions – those deep layers of collective mentality which extend more or less below the dimension of consciousness.'[19] Yet the

films of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick, as well as expressing 'explicit credos', do not simply 'reflect', but reflect *upon* the collective mentality and psychological dispositions; in different ways, each director seeks to dissect, critique and (more often than not) criticize the ideological structures through which contemporary attitudes and beliefs are moulded.

In Bergman's films, thought operates in relation to religious ideology. All the major themes of his cinema – the fear of mortality, the disintegration of identity, the failure of interpersonal relationships – are underpinned by a loss of faith in God and, consequently, a rejection of much of the ideology implicit in religious doctrine. Furthermore, Bergman's explorations of identity, gender and sexuality are shaped in a particularly forceful manner by his questioning of social taboos and religious morality. In contrast, Resnais' predominant concern is the interaction between thought, film and political ideology. Resnais is not only interested in the functioning of the individual imagination, but also in how a national, collective imagination of the past and the present might be forged through media images, propaganda and political discourse. In his explorations of how history is depicted or archived in film, Resnais repeatedly interrogates the fraught relationship between individual memories (or thought processes) and 'communal' representations of the past, suggesting that the latter that are often misleading or disingenuous narratives that are supported, cultivated and sustained by the era's dominant political institutions. Lastly, Kubrick, shares with Resnais an interest in how the collective imagination might be affected by film images, but for him, this fascination is centred on Hollywood as the dominant institution that sets the ideological parameters of film production and reception. Kubrick's films repeatedly explore the relationship between cinematic thought and Hollywood's standard storytelling practices as they have been defined by things such

as genre and narrative conventions, the star system, and, until 1968, the Production Code. For Kubrick, these elements produce a particular moral and philosophical outlook that it is necessary to deconstruct and challenge.

Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick all seek, therefore, to represent a type of thought, or way of thinking, that is antagonistic within its specific ideological context. All three can be defined as dissident filmmakers and thinkers. This status becomes most apparent when we consider the different ways in which each director has had to contend with censorship in his career. Both Bergman and Kubrick faced censorship because of their attempts to depict sex and sexuality in the early 1960s – Bergman in *The Silence* (1963), and Kubrick in *Lolita*. Subsequently, of course, Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* also provoked considerable controversy and debate regarding the representation of violence in film. For Resnais, censorship has been equally problematical, though in his work, censorship has been motivated by political, rather than moral, concerns. In addressing politically sensitive issues such as French collaboration with Nazism, the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan, and the French-Algerian War, *Night and Fog* (1955), *Hiroshima* and *Muriel* all fell victim to some form of direct or indirect censorship. Furthermore, the latter two films also exhibit a powerful (if tacit) concern with the relationship between censorship and how the nation's past is collectively remembered. The repeated attempts that have been made to censor the films of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick do not simply evidence a shared predilection for controversial or 'sensational' material; rather, they demonstrate the way in which these three filmmakers present a challenge to established ideologies and patterns of thought.

Cinematic Thought in the Silent Era: Theory and Practice

Having established the main points of inquiry in this thesis, I shall, in the second part of this introduction, give a brief account of the representation (and theories) of thought in the silent cinema. This analysis will serve two connected purposes. Firstly, it will provide the essential historical background that will help to contextualize my later discussions of cinematic thought in the 1950s and beyond. Secondly, I believe that the narrative strategies of silent film had a particular influence on the three filmmakers I am examining. Perhaps inevitably, the representation of cinematic thought in the work of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick looks back to the era of film when meaning was, by necessity, almost entirely non-verbal, being constructed through images rather than words. With the arrival of sound, cinema certainly lost some of its original visual inventiveness and narrative flexibility: editing practices became more firmly structured around dialogue scenes, camera and character movements were restricted by the need to position and conceal heavy sound-recording equipment, and expositional dialogue assumed a new prominence in terms of story-telling. Writing in 1953, Julio Moreno noted that an immediate consequence of the arrival of the sound film was the loss of the *necessity* of transmitting thought processes in visual terms: 'Incentives were lacking to continue developing the visual means of expression which had reached such a high degree of complexity and refinement in the decade 1920-1930. The spoken word was to facilitate the saying of everything, or almost everything.'[20] Consequently, when later filmmakers attempted to represent thought in film, they inevitably drew upon the silent cinema. As James Monaco suggests:

What Resnais and the generation of the sixties had to do was to free film discourse from [its] dependence on dialogue as the governing element of the cinematic formula. The new object was to tell stories in images rather than words and, in this respect, the innovators of the sixties often returned to the conventions of the silent film for models.[21]

My close formal analysis of silent film, therefore, lays several important foundations for my subsequent explorations of how thought is represented by Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick.

This early emphasis on silent cinema should not, however, imply that sound will be overlooked or neglected in my later arguments. Sound can, of course, play a crucial role in expressing or highlighting certain aspects of thought, and sound will be explored in some detail in later chapters. In particular, the relationship between sound and image, and the use of monologue will be addressed with reference to Resnais' films, while the role of voiceover narration and music in constructing or implicating a specific point of view will be discussed in relation to Kubrick. In examining cinematic thought, the important distinction I wish to highlight is not between sound film and silent film, but between the expression of ideas in language (or dialogue) and the audiovisual expression of non-verbal ideas. With this in mind, we can begin to explore the earliest theories of how thought operates in the cinema.

Münsterberg

The first significant theory of how film might represent mental processes was advanced by Hugo Münsterberg in 1916. Münsterberg was a German-born psychologist and philosopher. He moved to the United States in 1897 to take up a permanent post at Harvard, where he enjoyed a distinguished academic career and

helped to establish the field of applied psychology. It was not until 1915 that Münsterberg developed an interest in the aesthetic possibilities of film, but this interest grew rapidly, and soon he was writing short articles for the magazine *Paramount Pictograph*. The following year, he completed an extended analysis of the new art form, which was published as *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (reprinted in 1970 as *The Film: A Psychological Study*).[22] In this pioneering work, Münsterberg sought to show that various formal aspects of cinematic narrative were analogous to mental processes. Consequently, Münsterberg argued that, because of this correspondence, film was not simply a means of recording or representing objective reality, but was also a medium capable of depicting the workings of the human mind.

Münsterberg's argument rests upon a short analysis of the cinematic techniques that he sees as being particularly effective in capturing distinct aspects of our everyday mental life. Foremost among these techniques are the close-up, flashback, and flash-forward, which are analogous to the psychic processes of attention, memory, and imagination respectively. In the case of the close-up, Münsterberg writes:

> Whenever our attention becomes focused on a specific feature, the surrounding adjusts itself, eliminates everything in which we are not interested, and by the close-up heightens the vividness of that on which our mind is concentrated. It is as if the outer world were woven into our mind and were shaped not through its own laws but by the acts of our attention.[23]

Thus, for Münsterberg, the close-up both guides and mirrors our natural shifts in attention, reorganizing the dramatic space according to our immediate interests as observers of the action. Similarly, the temporal reconfiguration of the narrative, through flashbacks (or cut-backs, in Münsterberg's terminology) and flash-forwards,

is viewed by Münsterberg as an objectification of the normal mental functions of memory and speculative imagination:

> [T]he photoplay can overcome the interval of the future as well as the interval of the past... In short, it can act as our imagination acts. It has the mobility of our ideas which are not controlled by the physical necessity of outer events but by the psychological laws for the association of ideas. In our mind past and future become intertwined with the present. The photoplay obeys the laws of the mind rather than those of the outer world.[24]

In other words, film need not be bound to the chronological unfolding of events, but can cut rapidly between past, present and future, linking temporally disparate ideas, images, and scenes – functioning in the same way as memory or imagination.

Münsterberg draws concrete analogies between the close-up, flashback, and flash-forward and specific intellectual processes: each formal technique is linked to a distinct mental function. However, he also suggests that there are a number of other cinematic devices that are more difficult to construe as direct mental analogues, but which nevertheless may represent important aspects of subjective experience. Münsterberg argues, for example, that cross-cutting loosely parallels our ability to divide our attention between different objects or ideas. Likewise, he identifies numerous cinematic devices that may be suggestive of emotional states: visual distortions, camera movements, lighting effects, pathetic fallacy and so forth can be utilized to represent or evoke an emotional condition.[25] The links between these cinematic devices and the psychological states they are meant to evoke are undoubtedly fairly abstract, and largely dependent on narrative context. But, in part, this is a reflection of the fact that the subjective experiences or emotional states that Münsterberg is attempting to describe are inherently more difficult to define and analyze than mental functions such as attention and recollection. Overall,

Münsterberg's taxonomy of 'subjective techniques', which is by no means exhaustive, suggests that film can represent an extensive range of mental processes and subjective states in a nuanced manner.

For Münsterberg, cinema's capacity to represent the inner world of the mind is what defines it as a unique art form: *'the photoplay tells us the human story by overcoming the forms of the outer world, namely, space, time, and causality, and by adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world, namely, attention, memory, imagination, and emotion.'*[26] However, his eagerness to demonstrate the viability of the analogy between film and mind has provoked some criticism, most notably from Noël Carroll. Carroll argues that as a general theory of film narrative and film spectatorship, Münsterberg's analysis has serious deficiencies. Much of Carroll's criticism centres on Münsterberg's attempt to demonstrate the artistic credentials of film by downplaying its basic nature as a mechanical reproduction of reality.[27] Certainly, many of the problems that Carroll identifies are valid – in emphasizing how film can reflect mental processes, Münsterberg does ignore fundamental issues concerning the illusion of reality commonly created in the cinema. However, we should not lose sight of the historical context in which Münsterberg was writing. His analysis aims to challenge the dominant assumption that film narrative can only mirror, or, at best, reconstitute, objective reality. If he overstates his case, this is at least partially born out of a desire to alter deeply entrenched perceptions about the medium and its limitations.

What is perhaps most impressive about Münsterberg's theory is that it offers a clear account of how cinema has the potential to represent the mental processes of characters within the diegesis: 'The screen may produce not only what we remember or imagine but what the persons in the play see in their own minds.'[28] Carroll

acknowledges that while Münsterberg's work suffers as a general theory of how film functions, it is a very useful critical tool for understanding films that aim specifically to represent thought processes or mental states. It is also important to note that Münsterberg develops a very full account of how cinematic thought might function long before the first major expressionist and surrealist films were made. Above all, Münsterberg's theory is extremely prescient, identifying a latent potential for subjective cinematic narratives.

Soviet Montage Theories: Pudovkin, Eisenstein and Political Thought

There are close similarities between Münsterberg's ideas and the montage theories developed in the Soviet Union during the 1920s. Vsevolod Pudovkin, in particular, is a key exponent of the notion that the editing of a dramatic scene mirrors the natural subjective response of the attentive observer:

> The lens of the camera replaces the eye of the observer, and the changes of angle of the camera – directed now on one person, now on another, now on one detail, now on another – must be subject to the same conditions as those of the eyes of the observer. The film technician, in order to secure the greatest clarity, emphasis and vividness, shoots the scene in separate pieces and, joining them and showing them, directs the attention of the spectator to the separate elements, compelling him to see as the attentive observer saw. From the above is clear the manner in which editing can even work upon the emotions. Imagine to yourself the excited observer of some rapidly developing scene. His agitated glance is thrown rapidly from one spot to another. If we imitate this glance with the camera we get a series of pictures, rapidly alternating pieces, creating a *stirring scenario editing-construction*.[29]

Pudovkin shares Münsterberg's view that scenes in films are organized according to the underlying logic of natural psychology, so that conventional editing practices

become an extension of our everyday perceptual habits – replicating the shifts in our attention as we visually dissect and interpret a scene as it unfolds. In addition, Pudovkin recognizes the potential for different editing rhythms to engage and augment the viewer's emotional response to the unfolding scene, further extending film's capacity to replicate subjective experience. Essentially, Pudovkin, like Münsterberg, is keen to emphasize that while cinema is founded on the mechanical reproduction of reality, this does not mean that cinematic narrative is limited to an objective description of the world. Contrarily, he suggests that through editing in particular (although we could extend the argument to other aspects of cinematic narrative such as lighting), film reconstitutes objective reality in terms of a specific conceptual (and often emotional) perspective.

Despite the basic similarities between the ideas of Münsterberg and Pudovkin, there are also important differences in terms of how each theorist envisages the significance of film's capacity to represent thought processes. In particular, Pudovkin's theory diverges from Münsterberg's in its emphasis on the filmmaker's ability to assemble a cinematic sequence according to a specific ideological perspective, so as to impart to the viewer an abstract political message. For Münsterberg, editing techniques evoke thought processes (such as shifts in attention, speculations, mental associations, and so forth) in line with the immediate demands of the dramatic situation, and are governed by what is presumed to be the viewer's natural psychological response to the dramatic scene. In contrast, while not rejecting the organic link between dramatic content and stylistic processes, Pudovkin privileges the way in which film technique can be used to manipulate or mould the viewer's interpretation according to the filmmaker's intellectual agenda: 'One must learn to understand that editing is in actual fact a compulsory and deliberate guidance of the

thoughts and associations of the spectator.'[30] For Pudovkin, the editing of a scene should be 'coordinated according to a definitely selected course of events or conceptual line.'[31] In this view, editing is not simply a means of strengthening the viewer's natural emotional and intellectual response to the dramatic material, but also impels a specific ideological interpretation of the film's content.

Pudovkin's belief that the spectator's response can (and should) be carefully manipulated according to the filmmaker's political agenda is closely paralleled in the writings of Sergei Eisenstein. However, Eisenstein is, if anything, even more didactic in his assertions concerning the ideological function of cinema. As David Bordwell writes, for Eisenstein, 'The task of cinematography is the "deep and slow drilling in on conceptions." The artwork's "message" will be furnished a priori – a slogan, a Party policy, a general thesis.'[32] Eisenstein suggests that the filmmaker's role is to communicate an unquestionable political meaning, which the spectator cannot fail to comprehend and, ultimately, accept. This notion undoubtedly seems simplistic, but it is important to note that Eisenstein does not necessarily imply that, when faced with the filmmaker's political message, the viewer's role is entirely passive. '[T]he spectator', he writes, 'is drawn into a creative act in which his individuality is not subordinated to the author's individuality, but is opened up through the process of fusion with the author's intention.'[33] Nevertheless, Bordwell is correct to note that Eisenstein's theoretical writings (and films) often rest upon the supposition that cinema is able to communicate very precise abstract concepts to the viewer. Eisenstein is perhaps the first theorist (and filmmaker) to regard cinema as a medium capable of articulating complex lines of abstract thought in images. To understand the basis of this theory, it is first necessary to consider Eisenstein's fundamental ideas concerning montage.

Eisenstein draws an analogy between film and 'ideogramatic' languages (such as written Chinese and Japanese) that combine a limited number of symbolic characters to create additional concepts.[34] In such languages, Eisenstein notes, each ideogram 'taken separately corresponds to an object but their combination corresponds to a concept.'[35] Similarly, he argues, the cinematic shot, in the first place, offers an iconic representation of concrete objects, but montage, the amalgamation of shots, is able to produce any number of abstract significations: '*two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition.*'[36]

From this starting point, Eisenstein begins to develop his theory of 'intellectual cinema'. In this theory, the localized concepts or symbolic meanings created by montage become the foundation for more extensive cinematic sequences that construct an entire logical argument in images. Although Eisenstein felt that he never managed to realize the full potential of intellectual cinema in a practical form (his long-held ambition was to make a feature-length film based on Marx's *Capital*), there are several short sequences in his films that illustrate the basic principles of this type of cinema, such as the famous 'Gods' sequence in *October* (1928).[37] Here Eisenstein juxtaposes a series of different images of God – from a Baroque representation of Christ to a wooden Eskimo idol – in order to highlight their incompatibility (and so to suggest that God is simply an idea created by humans within specific social and historical circumstances). In this sequence, Eisenstein writes,

a conflict arises between the concept 'God' and its symbolisation. Whereas idea and image are completely synonymous in the first Baroque image, they grow further apart with each subsequent image. We retain the description 'God' and show idols that in no way correspond with our own image of this concept. From this we are to draw anti-religious conclusions as to what the divine as such really is.[38]

For Eisenstein, the sequence demonstrates the potential for a form of pure cinematic thought, in which the succession of images attains the status of a process of logical deduction:

> The conventional *descriptive* form of the film becomes a kind of reasoning (as a formal possibility).
>   Whereas the conventional film directs and develops the *emotions*, here we have a hint of the possibility of likewise developing and directing the entire *thought process.*[39]

Eisenstein, I believe, succeeds in showing that film can communicate abstract, and often quite complex, thought processes to the viewer in purely imagistic terms. There is, however, a persistent ambiguity concerning the relationship between film viewer and cinematic text. Eisenstein states that cinema exhibits the possibility of 'developing and directing' thought. On the one hand, this formulation could simply be taken to mean that the viewer's interpretation will be guided by the logical arguments and deductive reasoning represented in the film's images. On the other hand, it is equally plausible that the 'directing' of thought implies a more forceful manipulation of the viewer's response to ensure that the film's content is perceived through a particular ideological filter. As Anne Nesbet notes, 'In early writings and in his early films, Eisenstein seems taken with the idea that the images projected on the screen would actually become the thoughts in the spectator's brain. The film serves, in a sense, in the place of consciousness.'[40] Questions concerning the relationship between cinematic thought – understood as the direct audiovisual expression of ideas, beliefs, values, judgments, and so forth – and the viewer's consciousness are extremely complex, and will be taken up later in reference to Resnais' work, which deals with

issues of ideology, propaganda, consensus-building, and notions of collective memory or imagination.

Many of these issues, however, depend upon another fundamental question raised by Eisenstein: what is the precise nature of the relationship between image and thought? Nesbet observes that Eisenstein's analogy between film and mind has a historical context in a contemporary debate concerning the nature of thought:

> This analogy attempting to bridge the distance between the cinema screen and the murkier arena of the spectator's brain responded not only to the desire to gain direct access to that brain (the 'educational' project), but also to a widespread, but perhaps deceptive, hunch that said that thinking was a process not unlike watching a movie. Was it though? To what degree was thinking based on images, rather than language, and what connection was there between image and word? In Eisenstein's day, the notion of thinking as 'inner speech' was very prevalent, but to what degree that 'speech' was like ordinary language was a heavily contested issue.[41]

Eisenstein's suspicion was that thought (or 'inner speech') operates through both images and language, as is implicit in his musings on the subject:

> How fascinating to listen to your own train of thought, especially in its affect (sic) when you catch yourself wondering: what do I see? how? what do I hear?!
> How do you talk 'within yourself' as distinct from 'outside yourself'? What is the syntax of internal language, as distinct from external? What quiverings of inner words accompany the corresponding image?[42]

For Eisenstein, it seems, thought is comprised of both a verbal inner monologue and a series of corresponding mental images. One of the key tasks of intellectual cinema, therefore, is to elucidate the visual aspect of thought and thus expand our comprehension of how meaning can be constructed in images.

Inevitably, the debate on the nature of thought was fuelled in part by the emergence of cinema, but it was also closely connected to the development of

Modernism in literature. Eisenstein himself took a particular interest in the works of James Joyce, and was fascinated by how Joyce represented the stream of consciousness, or inner monologue, in *Ulysses*.[43] Clearly, there is a close correspondence between how Joyce's inner monologues sought to depict the moment-to-moment development of thought (through the free association of ideas, digressions, the constant movement between perceptions and memories, and so forth) and Eisenstein's intellectual cinema, which aimed to develop and direct abstract thought processes. However, Eisenstein's representation of thought (in the 'Gods' sequence, for instance) is often divorced from the immediate requirements of the narrative, acting as a kind of authorial commentary on the action rather than being rooted in the drama itself.[44] The inner monologue suggested a more artistic way of representing thought, by making it fundamental to plot and characterization. Consequently, Eisenstein became very interested in the idea of developing a cinematic version of the inner monologue.

Although Eisenstein's writings on silent film suggest the possibility of a protracted representation of visual thought, it is in the sound film that Eisenstein sees the full potential of the cinematic inner monologue. While literature can depict thought only in verbal terms, and silent cinema is restricted to showing imagistic thought, the sound film can combine the achievements of both. As Eisenstein writes, inner monologue 'can of course find its full expression only in cinema. For only the sound film is capable of reconstructing all the phases and all the specifics of a train of thought.'[45] The audiovisual representation of the inner monologue, Eisenstein believed, would be able be able to show the subtle interplay between words, sounds, and images in the gradual unfolding of a thought process.

Finally, there is one other important aspect of Eisenstein's theory of thought in film that is closely related to his conception of the cinematic monologue. While Eisenstein's early writings on intellectual cinema emphasize film's capacity to represent and develop rational lines of thought (through logic, argument, and the creation of concepts through montage) his later ideas on inner monologue also concern the less well-formulated aspects of thought. Bordwell provides a good summary of this aspect of Eisenstein's theory:

> He proposes that besides rational, logical thinking there also exists 'sensuous thought.' This is the flow and sequence of thinking unformulated into the logical constructions in which uttered, formulated thoughts are expressed. Logic requires that concepts and categories be differentiated, but sensuous thought springs from a more holistic sort of perception.[46]

As the name suggests, sensuous thought progresses through the loose association of disparate sensations, fleeting images, and half-formed ideas. Whereas intellectual cinema attempts to use montage to represent precise concepts, sensuous thought returns us to a kind of pre-linguistic realm, where the connection between percept and concept is less tangible.

Eisenstein's notion of sensuous thought foreshadows specific developments in Bergman's cinema, which will be considered in the next chapter, but this aspect of his theoretical work is also particularly pertinent to other areas of silent cinema. The irrational and unconscious aspects of thought are, of course, central to both expressionism and surrealism, and an exploration of these movements will provide additional insight into the early development of cinematic thought.

Expressionism

Expressionism, one of the major artistic movements of the early twentieth century, rejected the aesthetics of realism, and instead sought to emphasize the artist's subjective vision and interpretation of the world as the basis for representation. Although the movement was international in its scope, it was particularly prevalent in Germany, where, as John Titford points out, it was nourished by contemporary psychological and philosophical thought – most notably, that of psychoanalysis and phenomenology.[47] It was also in Germany, shortly after World War One, that expressionism made its first impact on the cinema.

German expressionist cinema is historically significant as it produced the first body of feature-length films that really challenged the realist aesthetics that had come to dominate narrative cinema in the 1910s. Expressionism created a cinematic image that could no longer be interpreted as providing an unmediated view of the autonomous fictional world, but instead represented a reality refracted through subjective experience. This reconfiguration of the basic status and function of the cinematic image can be traced back to *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Wiene, 1920). Not only is *Caligari* widely regarded as the first expressionist film, but it is probably the most significant and influential film of the silent era in terms of the development of subjective narrative techniques. In particular, the film pioneered the use of a 'first-person' cinematic narrator, whose subjective recollection or idiosyncratic vision of the world determines the nature of the on-screen images. A short analysis of *Caligari*'s narrative and stylistic innovations is, therefore, crucial to an understanding of the evolution of subjective cinema.

Caligari opens with a short scene in an overgrown park, where the film's main protagonist, Francis (Friedrich Feher), is sitting with an unidentified old man. The man begins to speak of occult occurrences that have driven him from his home, but his story is cut short by the sudden appearance of a young woman dressed in white (Lil Dagover), who slowly walks past the two men, staring straight ahead as if in a trance. Francis informs his companion that the woman is his fiancée, and says that he too has a strange story to tell, which concerns their past life together. An iris then reveals a new location marking the transition to Francis' story.

Francis' story is set in his hometown of Holstenwall. Following the arrival of the annual fair, there are a series of murders, including the killing of Francis' best friend Alan (Hans von Twardowski). Francis and Jane (his fiancée) eventually discover that the murderer is Cesare (Conrad Veidt), a somnambulist whose mind is being controlled by the mysterious fairground hypnotist Dr. Caligari (Werner Krauss). The police arrive at the fair to arrest Caligari, but he manages to escape and, pursued by Francis, flees to the local asylum. Upon entering the building, Francis discovers that Caligari leads a double life, and is, in fact, also the respected director of the asylum. Desperate to prove that the director is an insane criminal, Francis persuades the members of staff at the asylum to search his office. Here they find the director's diary, which reveals the truth of his double identity. Francis' story draws to a close with a scene that shows Caligari being carried away in a straightjacket.

However, as the scene shifts back to the frame story, there is a final twist. Francis and his companion are revealed to be inmates of the asylum run by 'Caligari', as are the various other characters who appeared in Francis' tale. The last scene in the film shows Francis being restrained by the asylum's staff as he hysterically reiterates that the director is the madman Caligari. Upon hearing this, the director says that he

finally understands the nature of Francis' delusion, and believes that he will be able to cure him.

Francis' story is brought to life through numerous expressionistic devices which help to convey his subjective vision of the world. First and foremost, the use of an artificial, stylized mise-en-scène is essential in communicating a sense of dread, anxiety and horror. The streets of Holstenwall are narrow and mazelike, often seeming to lead nowhere as they disappear between the crowded buildings. The houses have inclined facades that jut out across the streets and block out the light, adding to the ominous, claustrophobic atmosphere. Throughout the film, Francis' environment is comprised of angular shapes, oblique lines and distorted perspectives that serve to impart a sense of discord or estrangement from normality.

The expressionist aesthetic of the set design is extended to the film's intertitles, which are written in an irregular, stylized lettering and are placed against a background of various angular shapes. As well as contributing to the unsettling mood of the film as a whole, the design of the text also helps to evoke the sense of mania that frequently underlies the narrative. This function is most evident in the scene depicting the director's 'transformation' into Caligari, where the obsessive thought 'You must become Caligari' is superimposed repeatedly across the screen.

Finally, the performances of Werner Krauss and Conrad Veidt must also be recognized as part of the film's expressionistic design. These performances have a deliberately excessive, pantomimic quality that is necessitated by the functions that Caligari and Cesare fulfil in the film's underlying psychological drama. As John Barlow observes, Caligari and Cesare are not so much conventional, psychologically motivated characters as they are 'abstractions of social fears, the incarnations of demonic forces of a nightmarish world the bourgeoisie was afraid to acknowledge'.[48]

Additionally, several critics have noted the importance of the doppelgänger motif that underpins the characterizations of Caligari and Cesare, which extends the film's thematic concern with the conflict between the order of bourgeois society and the threat of a chaotic descent into irrationality or lawlessness. Dietrich Scheunemann suggests that Caligari's personality is split in two: he is both the benevolent asylum director, a respected scientist and authority figure, and the murderous fairground magician, operating outside of the normal boundaries of civilization and rational thought.[49] Cesare, in turn, is an externalized representation of the latter aspect of Caligari's character, the 'personification Caligari's impulsive drives.'[50] Paul Coates makes a similar point when, noting the possible irony of Cesare's name, he suggests that this ostensibly subservient character is, in fact, 'emperor of the unconscious.'[51] Within Francis' story, Cesare and Caligari together represent the irrational and amoral impulses that threaten the coherence of both society and individual identity. And, given the film's final twist, these characters may, of course, also signify Francis' unconscious recognition of his own plight – as the asylum inmate who believes himself to be entirely sane and the sole possessor of the truth.

This last point indicates the importance of the frame story in the construction of *Caligari*'s subjective narrative. At first glance the function and meaning of this frame story would seem to be entirely self-evident. As Barlow states, 'the frame story is an explanation of the distorted images in the tale told by Francis: he is mad and the distortions are the visions of a madman.'[52] Yet the precise meaning and importance of the frame story has become a much-debated topic in discussions of the film, largely because of a thesis put forward by Siegfried Kracauer: that the frame story was, essentially, a last-minute addition to *Caligari*'s narrative, and was radically antithetical to the scriptwriters' original intentions.[53] Kracauer's argument and

subsequent critical responses to it are worth considering in some depth – not only because the framing device is, I believe, an integral element in the film's overall subjective design, but also because these debates raise some very pertinent subsidiary issues concerning the relationship between film and thought.

Drawing upon an account of the film's production provided by Hans Janowitz (who along with Carl Mayer wrote the story and screenplay), Kracauer suggests that *Caligari* was originally an allegorical story critiquing the authoritarianism that had disastrously propelled Germany into World War One. Caligari was to represent the all-powerful authority figure who commands blind obedience from Cesare, who in turn symbolizes the common man (or soldier) forced to kill at his master's behest. In the story's original finale, Caligari is denounced as an insane tyrant, and this, for Kracauer, is an assertion of the film's underlying revolutionary meaning: 'reason overpowers unreasonable power, insane authority is symbolically abolished.'[54] However, the introduction of the frame story, in which Francis is presented as a madman, reverses this meaning:

> While the original story exposed the madness inherent in authority, Wiene's Caligari glorified authority and convicted its antagonist of madness. A revolutionary film was thus turned into a conformist one – following the much-used pattern of declaring some normal but troublesome individual insane and sending him to a lunatic asylum This change undoubtedly resulted not so much from Wiene's personal predilections as from his instinctive submission to the necessities of the screen; films, at least commercial films, are forced to answer mass desires.[55]

Kracauer's interpretation of *Caligari* attaches a great deal of importance to the frame story, as a deeply meaningful symptom of specific ideological and psychological tensions prevalent in Germany in the aftermath of World War One, whilst simultaneously dismissing as facile the explicit narrative implications of this

plot device. For Kracauer, the framing device is not logically motivated by *Caligari's* internal aesthetic or narrative requirements, but has the primary function of placing the original story in brackets, so as to control its disruptive effects, and ultimately to dismiss its revolutionary content (and style) as the product of a madman's fantasy. Kracauer's reading of the film, therefore, rejects the intrinsic significance of *Caligari's* overt attempt to depict thought imagistically (as the product of Francis' subjectivity), but emphasizes the way in which the film operates as a cipher for a different type of thought: that of the collective imagination of the German film-going public.[56] Wiene's decision to alter the basic mechanics of the film's narrative, Kracauer suggests, was an 'instinctive submission' to 'mass desires', which are circumscribed by specific ideological parameters. The film's revolutionary challenge to traditional authority is deemed by Kracauer to be a seductive but dangerous fantasy, and one that would ultimately prove unacceptable to a mass public craving social and political stability. The reconfiguration of *Caligari's* narrative, then, permits a tentative probing of the revolutionary 'fantasy' that has a certain allure for the downtrodden and defeated German nation, but, ultimately, reinstates the 'benevolent' authority figure who answers a deeper collective desire for socio-political cohesion.

Kracauer's interpretation of *Caligari* is fascinating, insightful and deeply flawed in equal measure. His general premise – that commercial film, in responding to mass tastes and desires, testifies to (and usually reinforces) the dominant ideological trends and collective mentality of a particular era – exposes an additional, fruitful line of enquiry for analyzing how film may represent thought. Yet clearly, Kracauer's particular diagnosis of the national mentality underlying Weimar cinema is intensely problematic, being based, to a large extent, on the perspective provided by subsequent German history – that of 1930s' Fascism. In reading *Caligari* and numerous other

Weimar films as parables of submission to authority, Kracauer is able to construct a meta-narrative in which Weimar cinema is a portent of Nazism, repeatedly revealing the German nation's 'psychological disposition' towards authoritarianism. But he is able to do so only through a very selective interpretation of both the cinematic texts and German history.

Scheunemann provides a very strong riposte to Kracauer's thesis concerning *Caligari*'s overall meaning and the significance of its frame story. As noted previously, he develops the argument that Dr. Caligari is much less the symbol of voracious authority than he is a perfect incarnation of the gothic motif of the doppelgänger, an archetypal figure with an extensive history in German literature and film.[57] Moreover, this reinterpretation of Caligari's character offers a fresh perspective on the frame story, which, Scheunemann argues, functions essentially to duplicate and reinforce the doppelgänger motif in an inherently ambiguous manner. The sudden reorientation of the narrative in the film's finale splits Francis' identity according to exactly the same dichotomy of rationality/ irrationality that has previously defined Caligari's character. In addition, noting that expressionistic devices (such as stylized intertitles) occur in the frame story as well as in Francis' interior narrative, Scheunemann argues that 'it is difficult to uphold any interpretation that is based on the distinction between supposedly "normal" images in the first scene and the "madman's vision" determining the rest of the film.'[58] Instead, he suggests, we are forced to abandon any clear-cut division between 'experienced reality and imagination.'[59]

Scheunemann's interpretation of *Caligari* is an important and well-conceived rejoinder to many of the weaknesses of Kracauer's analysis, but he perhaps goes too far in the opposite direction to Kracauer by disavowing entirely the overt logic of the

frame story as a fundamental signifier of the interior narrative's subjective status. Whilst recognizing that there is an element of ambiguity in the nature of the frame story, I believe it is important to acknowledge that its overriding function is to reaffirm and accentuate the subjective aesthetic that permeates the entire film, and, equally, it is vital to place (and interpret) this resolute reconfiguration of the narrative in its proper historical context. The twist in the frame story should be neither overlooked nor dismissed, nor rejected as an 'unsympathetic' treatment of the main narrative; instead it should be seen as being logically motivated by aesthetic considerations pertaining to the film's overall themes and expressionistic style.

Somewhat surprisingly, Scheunemann fails to identify an organic link between *Caligari*'s expressionism and its subjective themes and narrative. Instead, he suggests:

> The expressionist style was imposed on a neo-Romantic, gothic theme. Its strategic function was obviously twofold: to exert a desired emotional effect on the audience which would strengthen the impact of the gloomy tale, and at the same time to ensure that with this film cinema advances to a more widely accepted art form.[60]

Up to a point, these are undoubtedly valid explanations for the film's expressionistic style.[61] However, to suggest that expressionism was 'imposed' on the story is to downplay the many ways in which this style is, in fact, extremely well-suited to the material's latent psychological drama. The gothic motif of the doppelgänger, as Scheunemann's analysis helps to show, is already inherently psychological, being the exteriorization of an inner state – the external representation of a divided psyche. It is not incidental that this motif became a key obsession of psychoanalysis: most notably, Otto Rank, one of Freud's closest disciples, wrote an entire book on the doppelgänger.[62] If expressionism is, as Lotte Eisner claims, 'concerned solely with images of the mind', then it would seem to be perfectly suited to developing the

themes of *Caligari* as part of an inner, psychological drama.[63] The expressionist image represents the projection of inner phenomena (perceptions, beliefs, fears, desires, and so forth) onto the external environment, and as such is entirely sympathetic to the 'gothic', doppelgänger theme of *Caligari*.

The framing device that reconfigures the main action as the product of Francis' insane imagination was introduced after the expressionistic set design had been approved, and must be seen as being motivated by the desire to both 'explain' and further elaborate the film's meaning as a subjective narrative.[64] It is undoubtedly the extreme nature of this 'explanation' that has prompted the critical backlash questioning its value or significance. The use of expressionism to convey the purely fantastical vision of a madman is seen by both Kracauer and Scheunemann, albeit in very different ways, as the betrayal of one of the expressionist movement's central aims: to champion subjective perception as the key to revealing the hidden meanings, or inner essence, of external reality. For both theorists, the main story of *Caligari* reveals important aspects of the inner workings of reality – be it socio-political reality or the psychological reality underpinning the individual's sense of identity – and these insights are devalued by a framing device that encourages the viewer to dismiss them as illusory. Yet these objections are perhaps the product of a modern perspective on the film that fails to give due recognition to *Caligari*'s historical context, or, more specifically, to the radicalism of its aesthetic enterprise within this context. The basic premise that the cinematic image might represent an interior vision (rather than simply reproducing reality) was not entirely alien at the time of *Caligari*'s release.[65] But the film's extensive and systematic subjectification of cinematic narrative constituted an unprecedented challenge to the objective realism that dominated contemporary narrative cinema. As Barlow observes, the heavy emphasis that

Caligari's frame story places on the connection between the narrator's mental condition and the internal properties of his story is, in part, 'a way of bridging the gap between the everyday reality of the audience and the inner world of Francis' vision.'[66] Above all, the twist in the final section of the frame story functions as a powerful, even excessive, reiteration of the narrative's subjective status, reaffirming one of *Caligari*'s key aims and achievements: to show that cinema need not be bound to the mimetic reproduction of reality, but might also represent what a character says, experiences or thinks.[67]

Caligari's Legacy

There is no doubt that *Caligari* had a significant impact on a number of European filmmakers who were keen to explore stylistic alternatives to conventional cinematic realism. Scheunemann cites a comment made by René Clair in 1922, which gives a good indication of *Caligari*'s role in altering contemporary attitudes toward cinematic narrative: 'And then came *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*... [and] toppled the realist dogma which had been considered as final.'[68] Similarly, Eisenstein, although extremely dismissive of the film's content, recognized that *Caligari*'s audacious stylization was an important 'counterbalance' to the 'naturalistic tendency in Western Cinema.'[69]

The international critical and commercial success of *Caligari* also aided the further development of the expressionist film as a distinct German product. As Thomas Elsaesser observes, producers were quick to recognize the existence of an international niche audience for 'artistic' films such as *Caligari*, and, consequently,

were eager to support projects that promised a similar degree of stylization or narrative experimentation.[70] This, in turn, facilitated further aesthetic developments pertaining to subjective narration and representations of mental phenomena.

Most noticeably, the German cinema of the early to mid-1920s saw a proliferation of the psychological themes and motifs that had underpinned *Caligari*. In particular, the internal, psychoanalytic conflict between rational and irrational forces (or between processes of socialization and instinctual drives) was frequently dramatized, most commonly through the portrayal of split personalities, doppelgängers, monsters or automatons. Notably, Conrad Veidt played a number of roles that clearly drew upon his characterization of Cesare in *Caligari*. In *The Hands of Orlac* (Wiene, 1924), Veidt plays a concert pianist who, following a train crash, has his hands amputated and replaced with those of an executed murderer. Upon his recovery, the pianist comes to believe that the hands have retained the violent impulses of their former owner, and struggles to control their murderous designs. There are perhaps even stronger echoes of the themes and characters of *Caligari* in *The Student of Prague* (Galeen, 1926), a remake of the popular 1913 film of the same name. Here Veidt stars as Balduin, the eponymous student who sells his reflection to the mysterious Scapinelli, played by Werner Krauss. Scapinelli eventually uses this spectral doppelgänger to kill the wealthy aristocrat who is Balduin's rival for the affections of a countess. As in *Caligari*, the murder of the rival suggests that the actions of the 'unthinking' automaton might, in fact, be related to the protagonist's own unconscious wishes. Both *The Hands of Orlac* and *The Student of Prague* can thus be said to dramatize an internal conflict between the rational, socialized aspects of the subject's mind and his unconscious desires and impulses. This thematic concern with irrationality and the fragmentation of the individual's psyche reached its apotheosis

with Pabst's *Secrets of a Soul* (1926), which took psychoanalytic theory as its explicit subject, and was co-written by Hans Neumann and Colin Ross, two of Freud's close associates. In this film, the protagonist's internal struggle with violent impulses towards his wife and anxieties over sexual inadequacy are represented through symbolic images and dream sequences, pre-empting later developments in surrealist cinema.

While it is relatively easy to identify consistent themes and characters that became particularly associated with German expressionism, charting the stylistic evolution of expressionism in the 1920s is a more complex project. Perhaps surprisingly, only a few films (such as *Genuine* [Wiene, 1920] and *Waxworks* [Leni and Birinsky, 1924]) utilized expressionistic sets similar to those that had distinguished *Caligari*. Undoubtedly, the projection of a character's inner world continued to be the guiding principle for expressionist stylistics, but increasingly filmmakers sought to achieve effects comparable to those found in *Caligari* (the subjectivization of the environment) through subtler transformations in *mise-en-scène*, camerawork, editing and cinematography. The 'theatrical' elements that had been central to *Caligari*'s aesthetic (such as artificial studio sets and expressionistic acting) were not abandoned entirely, but in addition, filmmakers developed a panoply of cinematic techniques that were particularly effective in conveying subjective experience. Features such as non-naturalistic lighting, distorting lenses, special effects and extensive point-of-view editing were combined to represent the perceptions, ideas and emotions associated with a character's particular perspective.

The evolution of the expressionist style into new forms of subjective narrative can perhaps best be seen in some of the films of F. W. Murnau. *The Last Laugh* (1924), for instance, is extremely innovative in the way it utilizes editing, camerawork and

aspects of *mise-en-scène* to convey the thoughts and emotions of its protagonist, the

demoted hotel porter (Emil Jannings). The scene in which the porter is informed of

his demotion is cross-cut with images of his younger replacement fluently unloading

heavy luggage from carriages outside the hotel, effectively communicating the older

man's sense of humiliation and despondency. Subsequently, the porter's dejection and

loss of self-esteem are further conveyed through a series of expressionistic devices:

high-angle shots are used consistently to minimize the porter's stature within the

frame, suggesting his altered self-perception; a series of superimposed, subjective

close-ups show the mocking faces of the porter's neighbours as he returns home from

his new job. Camerawork and editing thus affect a general transformation of the

external environment to reflect the protagonist's inner experience. Yet the most

overtly expressionistic effects are confined to a wish-fulfilling dream sequence, which

occurs after the porter falls into a drunken stupor. In the dream, the porter imagines

that he possesses an inhuman strength, and sees himself effortlessly throwing a giant

suitcase into the air while the hotel's guests and staff look on in amazement. The

fantastic nature of the sequence is underscored by visual distortions, optical effects

such as superimpositions, and a freely-moving subjective camera that sways through

the action, imitating the dreamer's drunken perception of events. This direct

presentation of mental imagery also presages the way in which Murnau would

represent characters' thoughts in *Sunrise* (1927), his first American film. While

Sunrise does not use expressionistic devices with the same frequency as *The Last

Laugh*, it does, at several key points, use superimpositions or inserts to reveal the

protagonist's thoughts. The most notable example occurs early on in the film, when

the protagonist (George O'Brien) is tormented by a plot (devised by his lover

[Margaret Livingston]) to murder his wife (Janet Gaynor) and make it look like a

boating accident. As the man watches his wife through the doorway of their house, we are shown a sudden cutaway image of him throwing her body into the lake. This is quickly succeeded by another shot of the man staring off-screen, over which the image of his lover is superimposed in such a way that it appears as if she is whispering into his ear.

In the growing prevalence of subjective narrative sequences, in conjunction with the proliferation of psychological themes and motifs, we can see a general diffusion of expressionist aesthetics through the German art cinema after *Caligari*. However, whereas *Caligari*'s whole narrative was presented as subjective, with this status being reaffirmed systematically through the film's ubiquitous expressionistic aesthetic, few of the expressionist films that followed attempted a similarly consistent level of narrative subjectivity. More commonly, as the above analysis of *The Last Laugh* indicates, short expressionistic sequences were utilized intermittently to represent localized thoughts or emotions pertaining to a character's immediate perspective. These short sequences undoubtedly built upon *Caligari*'s mode of subjective narration, and they became a powerful tool for characterization and for expressing complicated ideas and emotions non-verbally. Consequently, the German film industry developed an international reputation for producing films of unusual psychological depth and complexity.[71] Yet few of the expressionist films that followed *Caligari* seemed to pursue the representation of thought as an end in itself (*Secrets of a Soul* is the most notable exception). In contrast, this project of elucidating the nature of visual thought through cinematic narrative was to become the central goal of surrealist film.

Surrealism

Cinematic surrealism, which developed in France shortly after German expressionism (in the mid-1920s), constitutes the second significant anti-realist movement of the silent era. Like expressionism, surrealism sought to formulate a new type of cinematic narrative based upon subjective experience, where the image no longer functions as a direct representation of reality, but reflects the inner workings of the mind. However, despite their similar conceptualizations of the relationship between image and thought, the two movements differ markedly in terms of their positions in relation to the mainstream film industry. While expressionism was an artistic movement that arose within the broad context of commercial narrative cinema, surrealism was, from the outset, a smaller and much more marginal, avant-garde movement that defined itself, to a large extent, through its opposition to mainstream cinematic practice. The handful of surrealist films that were made towards the end of the silent era – *Entr'acte* (René Clair, 1924), *La Coquille et le clergyman* (1928, directed by Germaine Dulac, screenplay by Antonin Artaud), *L'Étoile de mer* (1928, directed by Man Ray and based on a poem by Robert Desnos) and *Un chien andalou* (Buñuel, 1929) – were produced for very little money, had short running times, and, initially, were exhibited at only a limited number of Parisian cinemas, ciné-clubs and art galleries.[72] Nevertheless, these early experiments in cinematic surrealism developed a number of innovative strategies for representing certain aspects of thought, and, in the longer term, surrealism has had a significant influence on a number of filmmakers.

Undoubtedly, *Un chien andalou*, co-written by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, is the best-known and most influential of the silent surrealist films. It is also, I think, the

film that best illustrates the key stylistic and thematic elements of cinematic surrealism. For these reasons, my discussion of surrealism will be limited to an analysis of this film's representation of thought.

Buñuel suggests that,

> Because of the way it works, the mechanism for producing film images is, of all the means of human expression, the one that is most like the mind of man, or better still, the one which best imitates the functioning of the mind while dreaming.[73]

Like Münsterberg, Buñuel argues that there is (at least potentially) a close equivalence between the functioning of the mind and the functioning of cinematic narrative. The key difference, of course, is that while Münsterberg focuses mainly on the rational mental processes that film is able to imitate, such as attention and voluntary memory, Buñuel suggests that cinematic narrative is better suited to representing the irrational thought processes of the dreaming mind. There are, as numerous theorists and filmmakers have observed, many areas in which film is analogous to dream, and these will be analyzed in close detail in the following chapter, in relation to Bergman. For now, it is sufficient to note briefly the key similarities between film and dream that help to support Buñuel's central contention that the two function in an analogous manner.

Firstly, dream, more than any other mental process, is characterized by its intense visuality. Deprived of external sensory stimuli, the dreamer experiences dream images as being particularly vivid when compared to mental images created in a waking state. Furthermore, because the dreamer is generally unaware that s/he is dreaming, dream images that are generated by the mind are mistaken for perceptions of the external world, and as a consequence, the dream events appear to the dreamer as real

occurrences.[74] Therefore, somewhat paradoxically, it is the realism of the cinematic image that is one of its central assets from a surrealist perspective. Cinema, like dream, creates an illusion of reality that invites temporary belief in the fictional world.[75] In addition, film and dream have similar narrative properties, especially in terms of how we experience their spatial and temporal dimensions. Both film and dream are experienced as occurrences unfolding in the present moment (even when the chronological flow of the narrative is disrupted and the action is relocated in a new temporal setting), and both are marked by their spatial fluidity, by their capacity to move abruptly between distinct spatial fields or locations.[76]

Classical realist cinema attempts to control the potential narrative disjuncture inherent to the medium through practices such as continuity editing, matches on action, eyeline matches, and so forth, all of which impose a strict unity of space and time. In contrast, surrealist film often exposes and exploits the disunities of space and time to create its dreamlike effects and meanings. *Un chien andalou*, in fact, purposefully foregrounds its disruption of conventional narrative by first evoking and then subverting classical story-telling devices.

The film opens with an intertitle that reads 'Once upon a time...' After this clichéd beginning, we see a scene of a nameless man (played by Buñuel) sharpening a razor. The scene is edited in a conventional manner, through a shot/ reverse shot series that shows alternating close-ups of the man's face and the razor linked by an eyeline match. As the man walks out on to a moonlit balcony, there is a similarly diligent observation of classical continuity: a careful match on action across two shots depicts the man passing through the balcony door; conventional point-of-view editing (the character's glance off screen followed by a shot of the object seen from the correct angle) shows the man looking at the full moon. Then continuity is suddenly

disrupted through an insert depicting a woman's (Simone Mareuil) face in close-up. Her left eye is being held open by a man's fingers. There are then two quick shots, the first depicting a thin cloud passing in front of the moon, and the second showing a similar movement as the razor is drawn across the woman's eye.

After the opening sequence, classical narrative continuity is repeatedly evoked only to be sabotaged. An intertitle following the eye-slicing sequence reads 'Eight years later', yet shortly afterwards we see the woman from the opening scene, and she bears no trace of the mutilation we have just witnessed. Throughout the film, intertitles are used to proclaim the passage of time, but because they have no apparent connection to images we see (or are even contradicted by those images), it becomes evident that the usual narrative suppositions they support (such as chronology and causality) are absent.

Narrative space is shown to be equally incoherent by subsequent events in the film. The woman from the opening sequence is shown fleeing through a doorway (in what we are led to assume is her own bedroom) as she attempts to escape the sexual advances of another unidentified man (Pierre Batcheff). After she shuts the door, the woman looks around and finds herself back in the same room she has just exited. Towards the end of the film, the woman passes through the same doorway and finds herself on a beach. In both of these incidents, continuity editing and matches on action create a conventional sense of spatial coherence that is simultaneously subverted by the evident geographical anomalies.

At first glance, it would be easy to view *Un chien andalou*'s narrative as merely absurd. But the film is far from meaningless; it simply operates according to narrative principles that are very different from those that underpin conventional story-telling. In place of the causal logic of classical cinema, *Un chien andalou* utilizes a looser

associationism, indirectly connecting different themes and motifs in order to suggest a number of abstract meanings or ideas. The narrative operates according to the logic of dreams, as described by Freud: the film's manifest content has to be read as a symbolic representation of its latent meaning.[77] From this perspective, the film's spatio-temporal inconsistencies cannot be interpreted as arbitrary, but help to signify a textual transformation or displacement of underlying unconscious thought processes. To take a clear example from a scene described above, when the woman flees her pursuer only to find herself back in the same room as him, this spatial anomaly can be interpreted as a cipher of the woman's unconscious sexual desire, a desire that directly contradicts her conscious attitudes and behaviour.

Although certain localized narrative devices in *Un chien andalou* can plausibly be interpreted as representing the fictional characters' unconscious thoughts or desires, it is important to note that the film does not, in any definitive sense, identify specific images or effects as the direct product of a subjective experience internal to the diegesis. This clearly differentiates the film from expressionist works, where subjective images are related more or less directly to a character's experience – through the immediate narrative context or frame story in which they are embedded. In *Un chien andalou*, every image is subjective – signifying an unconscious thought process – but the film does not posit an ultimate 'source' for this subjectivity. Linda Williams, in her excellent analysis of cinematic surrealism, suggests that this ubiquitous subjectivity is one of the key innovations of the surrealist film:

[T]he exploitation of the film's resemblance to the dream image led to a new kind of film content: the film itself considered as an image-generating process of unconscious thought. This… was a radical departure from the more typical Expressionist procedure of showing either glimpses (in *The Last Laugh*) or extended sequences (in *Caligari*) of a given character's subjective or

unconscious thoughts. Instead of showing what a character thinks, the Surrealist tendency in film was to show how images themselves can 'think' and how the apparent unity of the human subject is really a succession of identification with such 'thinking' images.[78]

Although, as Williams correctly observes, the surrealists were the first to create entire films representing extended thought processes, they were, of course, not unique in conceiving of cinema as a means for expressing visual thought. As we have seen, Eisenstein's intellectual cinema (though never fully realized in practice) sought to utilize a succession of 'thinking' images in a way that closely parallels surrealist filmmaking. The crucial difference between Eisenstein's cinema and that of the surrealists, needless to say, is that while the former aimed to express rational thought processes (logical arguments and deductive reasoning), the latter used images to represent irrational, unconscious thought. Yet in both cases, these thought processes are not the product of a fictional character, but instead implicate a thinking subject (author or dreamer) who is, in some sense, exterior to the immediate diegesis.

However, the lack of a fictional 'source' for the subjective images of the surrealist film does, potentially, raise certain interpretative problems. In psychoanalysis, the interpretation of dream images relies upon a detailed knowledge of the specific relevance of those images to the dreamer – that is, knowledge of the mental associations that connect the dream's symbols to the dreamer's waking reality. Although there may be some discernible internal logic by which the surrealist film is comprehensible, without access to the mental associations of the subject who produced the images, the symbolic significance of the film's manifest content may be far from obvious. Yet, as Williams points out, to produce a dreamlike discourse that can be easily decoded 'is to run the risk of planting psychoanalytic clues or conventionalized symbols that aid in interpretation but violate the unconscious and

irrational ambience so important to the dream.'[79] To an extent, *Un chien andalou*

suffers from precisely this problem: some of its symbols and events seem suitably

dreamlike but are extremely difficult to interpret, while others are more easy to

decipher (according to their pre-ordained cultural or historical significance) but are

somewhat clichéd.[80] In some ways, this problem can be seen as a product of the

competing demands of avant-garde and conventional narrative cinema, with the film

attempting to replicate authentically psychological reality, whilst also trying to create

a story that is engaging and (by a certain standard) comprehensible for an audience.

Later films that have sought to represent unconscious thought have often managed

to balance the dual imperatives of authenticity and comprehensibility through

embedding extended dream sequences within a wider, more conventional narrative

context.[81] In the best of these films, the symbolic significance of the dream images is

derived from their connections to the dreamer's waking experiences as represented in

the broader diegesis. This approach allows the preservation of the key narrative

devices that surrealism utilizes to evoke the atmosphere of the dream (spatio-temporal

fluidity, bizarre imagery, the refusal to distinguish the subjective image from its

objective counterpart through more or less arbitrary stylistic markers), whilst

rendering the dream's latent thought processes accessible to the viewer.

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[1] See for example Robert Kolker, *A Cinema of Loneliness: Penn, Stone, Kubrick, Scorsese, Spielberg Altman*, 3rd edition (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p. 136, and Thomas Allen Nelson, *Kubrick: Inside a Film Artist's Maze* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 103.

[2] James Naremore notes in passing that the match cut is 'conceptually dazzling', but fails to elaborate on the point (James Naremore, *On Kubrick* (London: BFI, 2007), p. 144). Alexander Walker incorporates some analysis of the transition's meaning into his discussion, suggesting that this 'brilliantly associative cut' shows how 'Evolutionary progress proceeds through technological development', but does not fully develop the implications of the multifaceted association between the bone and the satellite (Alexander Walker, *Stanley Kubrick Directs* (London: Davis-Poynter Ltd, 1972), p. 227). Lastly, Mark Crispin Miller is quite reductive in his interpretation of the significance of the cut, writing that the image of the bone that is flung into the air is the film's 'last "human" moment of

potentiality – for, as the match cut tells us, it's all downhill from there' (Mark Crispin Miller, '*2001*: A Cold Descent', in (eds.) Geoffrey Cocks, James Diedrick & Glenn Perusek, *Depth of Field: Stanley Kubrick and the Uses of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), p. 125). Miller's analysis fails to clarify exactly how the match cut expresses such conclusions.

[3] Michel Chion, *Kubrick's Cinema Odyssey*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (London: BFI, 2001), p. 127.

[4] Walker (1972), p. 247, Chion (2001), p. 20.

[5] Stanley Kubrick, interviewed by Eric Norden. See Eric Norden, 'The Playboy Interview: Stanley Kubrick', *Playboy* (September 1968). Reprinted in (ed.) Alison Castle, *The Stanley Kubrick Archives* (London: Taschen, 2005), p. 398.

[6] Chion (2001), p. 126.

[7] R. E. Jones, *The Dramatic Imagination: Reflections and Speculations on the Art of the Theatre* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1941), pp. 17-18.

[8] Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Last Year at Marienbad: A Ciné-Novel*, trans. Richard Howard (London: John Calder, 1977), pp. 11-12.

[9] Jean Mitry, *The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*, trans. Christopher King (London: The Athlone Press, 1998), p. 19.

[10] Christian Metz, *Film Language*, trans. Michael Taylor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 41.

[11] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson & Robert Galeta (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 251.

[12] See David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[13] Haim Callev, *The Stream of Consciousness in the Films of Alain Resnais* (New York: McGruer, 1997), p. 16.

[14] Greg Currie, *Image and Mind: Film, Philosophy and Cognitive Science* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), p. 195.

[15] Mitry (1998), p. 209.

[16] Indeed, scientific data have indicated that, despite the obvious differences between perceiving and imagining, the same areas of the brain are activated by visualizing as by seeing. Nicholas Humphrey writes: 'recent physiological studies have shown that self-generated visual imagery does in fact produce activation in the visual cortex. The evidence comes from studies of both electrical activity in the brain and of cerebral blood-flow while subjects undertake such varied tasks as visualising going for a walk, imagining a cat, and answering questions such as "Is the green of pine trees darker than the green of grass?" Martha Farah has reviewed these studies… and concludes that "across a variety of tasks, it has been found that visual imagery engages the visual cortex, whereas other tasks, which are highly similar save for the visual imagery, do not."' Nicholas Humphrey, *A History of The Mind* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 96. See also Martha J. Farah, 'Is visual imagery really visual? Overloaded evidence from neuropsychology', *Psychological Review*, 95 (1988), pp. 307-317. My point is that we should distinguish visual from non-visual thought processes, and that cinema clearly has a natural capacity to represent certain qualities of the former.

[17] It is worth noting that although the representation of thought is a central aspect in the work of all three of these major filmmakers, the extent to which this topic has been explored in reference to each individual director varies greatly. Critical analyses of Resnais' work (or at least his early work) invariably focus on his overt concerns with memory and the formal rendering of thought processes. There are also numerous discussions of Bergman's representation of thought (and in particular dream), though this is not necessarily seen as the most notable feature of his films (and is often associated with a particular 'phase' in his career). In contrast, this important aspect of Kubrick's cinema remains largely neglected in critical commentaries. However, for all three filmmakers, there is a dearth of critical material dealing adequately with the relationship between the formal/stylistic representation of thought in film and the specific 'content' of that thought.

[18] On the popularization of psychoanalysis, particularly in the US, see Frank Krutnik, *In a Lonely Street: Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 45-55.

[19] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 6.

[20] Julio L. Moreno, 'Subjective Cinema: And the Problem of Film in the First-Person', trans. Ray Morrison, *The Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television*, vol. 7, no. 4 (Summer 1953), p. 348.

[21] James Monaco, *Alain Resnais: The Role of Imagination* (New York: OUP, 1978), p. 55.

[22] Hugo Münsterberg, *The Film: A Psychological Study: The Silent Photoplay in 1916* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970).

[23] Ibid, p. 39.

[24] Ibid, p. 41.

[25] Ibid, pp. 51-6.

[26] Ibid, p. 74 (italics in original).

[27] Noël Carroll, 'Film/ Mind Analogies: The Case of Hugo Münsterberg', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 46, no. 4 (Summer 1988), pp. 489-99.

[28] Münsterberg (1970), p. 42.

[29] Vsevolod Pudovkin, *Film Technique and Film Acting: The Cinema Writings*, trans. Ivor Montagu (London: Vision, 1954), p. 42.

[30] Ibid, p. 45.

[31] Ibid.

[32] David Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1993) p. 123.

[33] Sergei Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (London: Faber & Faber, 1986), p. 35. As many commentators have noted, Eisenstein's writings are very eclectic, and his ideas concerning things such as the roles of the spectator and the artist are subject to repeated modifications over time. Consequentially, it is often difficult to abstract a consistent 'theory' from Eisenstein's work. However, there are certain ideas concerning cinematic thought that recur (albeit in different guises) throughout his writings, and form the essential core of many of his arguments and essays. In addition, the diverse nature of Eisenstein's writings means that his more didactic (and questionable) statements on cinema are often tempered by qualifications made elsewhere, giving his overall theories a level of subtlety that is not always immediately apparent. For an analysis of the changes in Eisenstein's theories in relation to the shifting political and artistic climate in the USSR., see Bordwell (1993), pp. 164-9, and for a good general discussion of Eisenstein's eclecticism, see Anne Nesbet, *Savage Junctures: Eisenstein and the Shape of Thinking* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), pp. 1-20.

[34] Eisenstein gives a number of examples of how Japanese ideograms are combined to create new concepts. The new concept arises from an implicit logical connection between two (or more) symbolic characters. So, for instance, the combination of the characters denoting 'eye' and 'water' produces the sign for 'crying', while the characters for 'door' and 'ear' are joined to produce the sign for 'eavesdropping'. See Sergei Eisenstein, *Selected Works, Volume One: Writings, 1922-34*, ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1988), p. 139; 164.

[35] Ibid, p. 139.

[36] Eisenstein (1986), p. 14 (italics in original).

[37] On the abandoned *Capital* project, see Nesbet (2003), p. 81-85, and Eisenstein (1988), pp. 105-6; 199-200.

[38] Eisenstein (1988), p. 180.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Nesbet (2003), p. 6.

[41] Ibid, pp. 6-7. Similarly, Bordwell notes that with the arrival of cinema in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of the 'thinking image' became much-debated. See Bordwell (1993), pp. 175-6.

[42] Ibid, p. 236.

[43] See Eisenstein (1988), p. 96; 235.

[44] A further example of how Eisenstein develops a 'visual commentary' on the action (rather than representing thought that is interior to the diegesis) can be found in *Strike* (1925), which intercuts the sequence depicting the shooting of the workers with shots showing the slaughter of a cow.

[45] Ibid, p. 236.

[46] Bordwell (1993), p. 171.

[47] John S. Titford, 'Object-Subject Relationships in German Expressionist Cinema', *Cinema Journal*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1973), p. 17. Expressionism shares the fundamental outlook of phenomenology, which similarly identifies personal perception as the basis for knowledge and understanding of the external world. The connection between expressionism and psychoanalysis primarily lies in their shared emphasis on the formative function of the individual's hidden fears and desires, which partially determine the everyday attitudes and patterns of thought that shape perception.

[48] John D. Barlow, *German Expressionist Film* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), p.45.

[49] Dietrich Scheunemann, 'The Double, the Décor, and the Framing Device: Once More on Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*', in (ed.) Dietrich Scheunemann, *Expressionist Film: New Perspectives* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), pp. 130-134

[50] Ibid, p. 130.

[51] Paul Coates, *The Gorgon's Gaze: German Cinema, Expressionism, and the Image of Horror* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), p, 36.

[52] Barlow (1982), p. 35.

[53] Kracauer, (1974), pp. 61-76.

[54] Ibid, p. 65.

[55] Ibid, pp. 66-7.

[56] Thomas Elsaesser also picks up on this transformation of the subjective content of *Caligari* in Kracauer's analysis – from being the product of a character's inner vision to representing wider, extra-diegetic thought processes pertaining to a collective imagination: 'where he [Kracauer] detects a "German soul" which is "tossed between rebellion and submission", the inner states of the characters function precisely not as subjective expressions: they are the screens filtering out or disguising non-individual, social symptoms.' Thomas Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 29.

[57] Scheunemann (2006), pp. 130-4. Scheunemann's analysis is also founded on a close comparison of *Caligari*'s original script (which was rediscovered in 1977) to Janowitz's claims concerning the meaning of the story. From this, he is able to challenge many of Kracauer's assumptions regarding the differences between the written narrative and final film.

[58] Ibid, p. 147.

[59] Ibid, p. 149. However, Scheunemann fails to consider the fact that the subjective status of the interior narrative is not dependent on the restoration of 'normality' in the frame story. The 'distortions' that continue to pervade the frame story can equally be read as being related to (or produced by) Francis' subjective perception of his world. Expressionism, as the projection of internal vision on to the external environment, is perfectly suited to representing subjectivity without requiring a framing device that explicitly identifies an off-screen source of this subjectivity. As I shall argue in the following paragraphs, the framing device accentuates the meaning of the film's expressionistic style for the audience, but is not 'demanded' by that style – it is, in a sense, an example of narrative redundancy.

[60] Ibid, p. 138.

[61] Ibid, p. 136. Scheunemann establishes that the original script was not written in an expressionistic style (as defined by contemporary expressionistic literature and drama), and neither did it directly suggest an expressionist treatment. The expressionism that came to define the film was only introduced after the script had been approved, when set design was being discussed. Furthermore, Lotte Eisner notes that part of the motivation for the use of expressionistic sets (or, at least, part of the reason these sets were readily approved) was the lack of funds and raw materials in the aftermath of the war. The painted backdrops were cheap and easy to construct. See Lotte Eisner, *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*, trans. Roger Greaves (London: Secker & Warburg, 1983), pp. 18-19. In addition, Elsaesser offers a very full account of the industrial, cultural and commercial pressures that prompted the growth of cinematic expressionism, suggesting that this art cinema movement, with its clearly differentiated product, responded to Hollywood's global dominance by attempting to appeal to a niche audience. See Elsaesser (2000), pp. 26-7; pp. 36-43. These arguments suggest multiple, disparate motivations for *Caligari*'s expressionism.

[62] Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytical Study*, ed. and trans. Harry Tucker (London: Karnac, 1989). Additionally, Freud's essay on 'the uncanny' (which also references Rank's study) provides a brief analysis of the doppelgänger motif. See Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 123-159.

[63] Eisner (1983), p. 24.

[64] Ibid, p. 20. Eisner records that it was Fritz Lang (who was originally chosen to direct the film, but had prior commitments) who first suggested using the framing device to explain Francis' story as the delusion of a madman, so as to not 'scare' the public.

[65] As Bruce Kawin notes, as early as 1903, a limited number of films were utilizing short subjective sequences to depict the thoughts of characters. Kawin cites *Life of an American Fireman* (Porter 1903) and *Enoch Arden* (Griffith, 1908) as early examples of films containing brief, imagistic representations of dream and imagination respectively. See Bruce Kawin, *Mindscreen: Bergman, Godard and First-Person Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 9-10.

[66] Barlow (1982), p. 35.

[67] David Bordwell makes a very useful distinction between mimetic and diegetic narrative theories. Bordwell suggests that '*Mimetic* theories conceive of narration as the presentation of a spectacle: a showing.' Contrarily, '*Diegetic* theories conceive of narration as consisting either literally or analogically of verbal activity: a telling.' See Bordwell, (1997), pp. 3-25. Classical realist cinema, with its 'invisible' narration, is usually considered to belong to the mimetic narrative tradition, but a film like *Caligari* clearly attempts to break away from this tradition and foreground the ways in which it 'tells' rather than 'shows' its story.

[68] René Clair, *Kino: Vom Stummfilm zum Tonfilm*, trans. Dietrich Scheunemann (Zurich: Diogenes, 1995), p. 29. Cited in Scheunemann (2006), p. 139.

[69] Eisenstein (1988), p. 31.

[70] Elsaesser (2000), p. 26.

[71] Ibid, p. 121.

[72] On the production and exhibition of French avant-garde films in the 1920s, see Alan Williams, *Republic of Images: A History of French Filmmaking* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 131; pp. 140-2, and Rémi Fournier Lanzoni, *French Cinema: From Its Beginnings to the Present* (New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 45-52. Both Williams and Lanzoni point out that the fragmentation of the French film industry after World War One (owing to the new global dominance of Hollywood) actually aided the development of an early French art cinema. Smaller production companies that struggled to compete in the international marketplace were more inclined to invest money in lower-risk, 'artistic' projects aimed at a different audience. The increased investment in avant-garde film led to the opening of the first specialist art cinemas in the mid-1920s. This, in turn, facilitated the exhibition of independently-financed projects, such as *Un chien andalou* (which was made with money contributed by Buñuel's mother). On the financing, production and exhibition of *Un chien andalou*, see Jenaro Talens, *The Branded Eye: Buñuel's Un Chien andalou*, trans. Giulia Colaizzi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 28-35, and J. H. Matthews, *Surrealism and Film* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1971), p. 84.

[73] Luis Buñuel, 'The Cinema, Instrument of Poetry', in (ed.) Paul Hammond, *The Shadow and its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on the Cinema*, 3rd edition (San Francisco: City Light Books, 2000), p. 114.

[74] As Colin McGinn argues, 'we need to distinguish the *audience* of the dream from the *author* of the dream – the dream consumer from the dream producer. That is, we need to postulate a psychic split in the dreaming mind, a division of the self... [W]e can then suppose that the dream author operates in a way that is sealed of from the knowledge and awareness of the dream audience, so the intentions and mental actions that generate the dream are not open to the dreamer... The dream producer is unconscious relative to the dream consumer.' Colin McGinn, *Mindsight: Image, Dream, Meaning* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 89.

[75] Moreover, this illusionistic effect is often buttressed through formal conventions such as continuity editing, which help to efface the most obvious signs of authorship or construction from the work. It is worth noting that Buñuel's films are, for the most part, classically constructed on a purely formal level, with very few optical distortions, stylistic flourishes or overt signs of the authorial presence. Their surrealistic effects are achieved largely (though not exclusively) through their content.

[76] Susanne Langer, one of the first major theorists to elaborate the key points of comparison between film and dream, also notes the central importance of the similar ways in which time and space are experienced in dreaming and film viewing. For Langer, both film and dream create 'a virtual present, an order of direct apparition.' The events of the film or dream, she suggests, unfold in a determined spaced, but 'are not oriented in any total space... *space comes and goes.*' Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art Developed from Philosophy in a New Key* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul ltd., 1953), pp. 411-415 (italics in original).

[77] The Freudian theory of dreams is another area that will be analyzed in later chapters, and, therefore, I will not discuss the specific details of this theory at present.

[78] Linda Williams, *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 51.

[79] Ibid, p. 16.

[80] For example, the conventionalized significance of the full moon, as a symbol of irrational violence (lunacy), in the prologue can hardly be overlooked.

[81] *Wild Strawberries,* which is discussed in the next chapter, provides the most obvious example of a film that alternates between reality and dream sequences, with each section illuminating the other. Equally, though neither represents a character's 'dream' as such, both *Providence* and *Eyes Wide Shut* depict surrealistic nocturnal sequences with a symbolic significance that becomes comprehensible mainly through the daytime events of the framing narrative.

Thinking Without Language

It was obvious that cinematography would have to become my means of expression. I expressed myself by means of a language which transcended the words I lacked... Suddenly I had an opportunity to communicate with the world around me in a language which literally allowed soul-to-soul communication in terms which, almost sensuously, escape the restrictive control of the intellect.[1]

In the above quotation, Bergman outlines his belief in the expressive capacities of cinema in terms that may at first seem excessively romanticized. His conception of the transcendental language of film is not only open to criticism on the grounds that it marginalises issues surrounding the practicalities and commercial pressures of production, but also becomes contentious in relation to the ambivalence which his own films display towards problems concerning all forms of communication, an ambivalence which repeatedly confounds resolution. Yet there is an important sense in which Bergman's description of film 'language' is intentionally utopian, forming part of his sustained theoretical engagement with the possibilities (and problems) of cinema as a medium for self-expression. There is much to be gained from suggesting that Bergman's statement functions less as a descriptive overview of his work in general, than as a prescription of the goal towards which his cinema aspires at a specific point in his career. In other words, Bergman's idealized description of how film communicates has to be understood primarily as a statement of intent, not as an objective assessment of his own body of work or of the day-to-day experience of filmmaking in general.

The opening quotation is taken from Bergman's short essay 'The Snakeskin`, which was written in 1965 'in direct connection with the work on *Persona* (1966), the

director's most experimental and self-reflexive exploration of cinematic thought.[2] Bergman later published 'The Snakeskin' as a loose preface to *Persona*'s screenplay, reaffirming the specific relation between the essay and the film. Given the context of the essay's genesis and later publication, the specific picture of cinema that Bergman paints seems to serve a dual role: firstly, as a type of manifesto and tentative prediction of the direction in which he sees his cinema travelling; and secondly, as part of an explication or interpretative framework that illuminates a 'difficult' film. Of course, the fact that Bergman's essay might offer an interpretative handle on *Persona* is not without irony, considering that it sets out an idealization of cinema as a means for bypassing the necessity of verbal language. But this apparent paradox is worth unpicking, as it points to a key tension that recurs in Bergman's work, both stylistically and thematically: the conflict between intellectual and sensuous modes of thought, between our ability to conceptualize an idea intellectually and our ability to understand something on an emotional or intuitive level. As Bergman summarises, 'I am caught in a conflict... between my need to transmit a complicated situation through visual images, and my desire for absolute clarity.'[3]

The focus of this section of the thesis is twofold. Firstly, I shall explore Bergman's conviction that film is uniquely suited to communicating thought in non-linguistic terms. This will entail an investigation of the key films in which the director develops a repertoire of techniques for representing his characters' inner experiences. I shall begin with a close analysis of *Wild Strawberries*, and will follow this (in the next chapter) with an examination of *The Silence*, *Persona*, and *Cries and Whispers* (1972). My contention is that it is in these four films that Bergman is most successful in expressing his character's thoughts in non-linguistic terms, and in capturing the predominantly visual nature of certain subjective experiences, such as dreams and

memories. The second focus of this section, running parallel to the first, is the specific picture of mental experience that Bergman develops: his conception of the mind and of how it creates meaning. As suggested earlier, one of the main issues that Bergman tackles is the relationship between different levels of cognitive experience, broadly dividing the sensuous (or emotional) and intellectual aspects of consciousness – or, more simply and conventionally, separating thought from feeling. This division, though not as simple or rigid as it might first appear, also allows Bergman to develop a model of how thought is constructed and operates in relation to both an individual and a social context. The interaction between instinctual drives and the internalized, normative values or beliefs of society at large (often dictated by religion) is central to Bergman's representation of thought, repeatedly emerging as a formal and thematic concern with performance and taboos. In summary, I aim to show that Bergman's cinema strives to 'escape the restrictive control of the intellect' in two related senses: by communicating thought without language, and by exploring the emotional and psychological complexity of his characters in a manner that transgresses institutional and social taboos.

The structure of this section reflects the fact that *Wild Strawberries* can be seen as a stepping-stone between two fairly distinct phases in Bergman's career. Bergman's outlook undergoes a definite philosophical shift in the early 1960s, after which his interest in consciousness and its cinematic representation comes to fruition. This chapter will, therefore, explore Bergman's early representation of the mind in *Wild Strawberries*, while the following chapter will focus on his later cinema.

While *Wild Strawberries* presages the formal experimentation and complex rendering of thought that flourishes in Bergman's films of the '60s and '70s, it also looks back to an earlier era, drawing on many of the techniques for subjective

expression found in the silent cinema. Indeed, Bergman's fascination with non-linguistic representations of thought can be traced to his early interest in silent film. An examination of the ways in which *Wild Strawberries* builds upon the aesthetic legacy of the silent cinema, therefore, provides a logical place to begin our exploration of Bergman's cinematic thought.

Wild Strawberries: Dreams, Memories, and the Silent Cinema

From an early stage in his filmmaking career, Bergman had displayed interest in subjective narrative techniques such as flashbacks, dream sequences and expressionistic *mise-en-scène*. In *Prison* (sometimes known as *The Devil's Wanton*, 1949), Bergman offers a vivid audiovisual representation of a nightmare experienced by the film's heroine, Birgitta Karolina (Doris Svedlung). Similarly striking is the extended flashback at the beginning of *Sawdust and Tinsel* (1953), which depicts the humiliation of a circus clown, Frost (Anders Ek), who discovers his wife, Alma (Gudrun Brost), bathing naked in front of a group of soldiers. The entire sequence is shot in a highly expressionistic style that recalls certain aspects of silent cinema: there is a deliberately hyperbolic (almost pantomimic) quality to the gestures and actions that we observe, and there is almost no dialogue. The background score provides the key commentary on the situation, accompanying the images in a way that is analogous to the live music of the silent era. Peter Cowie has noted that silent film, particularly German expressionism, played an important part in the development of Bergman's early aesthetics, with the director professing to have consciously imitated E. A. Dupont's *Variety* (1925) in his own work, and spending his wages in the late 1940s

collecting prints of silent classics such as *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*.[4] However, while Bergman's early films hint at his interest in the subjective narratives of silent expressionist cinema, they do not develop this interest into anything more than a marginal stylistic and thematic concern. Subjective sequences in these films form significant interludes, but never dominate the narrative for any length of time. It was not until Bergman made *Wild Strawberries* in 1957 that he embarked upon a sustained investigation of subjective experience, making the memories, dreams and fantasies of his central character the focus of an entire film. *Wild Strawberries* should, therefore, be recognized as the first truly significant step in Bergman's exploration of consciousness.

Wild Strawberries centres on a single day in the life of a seventy-eight-year-old medical professor, Isak Borg (Victor Sjöstrom), as he travels by car to the university town of Lund, where he is to receive an award in recognition of his distinguished career. During the course of the day, Isak is beset by a mixture of dreams and memories that gradually reveals to the viewer his anxieties, his present character and the significant moments in his past that have shaped his identity. The physical journey is thus paralleled by a spiritual journey of self-exploration, as Isak gradually reassesses his decisions and the significant relationships in his life – with his late wife, Karin (Gertrud Fridh), his partially-estranged son, Evald (Gunnar Björnstrand), and his daughter-in-law, Marianne (Ingrid Thulin). In re-evaluating these relationships, Isak attempts to find some form of salvation from the crippling loneliness and emotional sterility he comes to recognize in himself.

Clearly, the representation of Isak's inner world of dreams and memories gives us a piercing insight into his character, as well as condensing the back-story that is most relevant to his characterization into only a few reconstructed incidents from his past.

However, in contrast to Bergman's earlier films, *Wild Strawberries* depicts subjective experience in a way that cannot be reduced to a simple function of characterization or economical narrative exposition. Instead, the film takes an interest in these mental phenomena for their own sake, as a key facet of everyday experience. Indeed, Bergman suggests that it was his own day-to-day experience of moving constantly between reality and the intangible world of childhood memories and dreams that formed the basis of the script for *Wild Strawberries*:

> The truth is that I am forever living in my childhood, wandering through darkening apartments, strolling through quiet Uppsala streets, standing in front of the summer cottage and listening to the enormous double-trunk birch tree...
> In *Wild Strawberries* I move effortlessly and rather spontaneously between different planes – time-space, dream-reality... The dreams were mainly authentic: the hearse that overturns with the coffin bursting open, a calamitous final examination in school, the wife who fornicates in public...[5]

Wild Strawberries thus gives a form to Bergman's own inner world. In so doing, it can be seen as the first film in which Bergman really begins to interrogate the possibility of using the medium to represent psychic experience authentically, to move beyond the well-worn clichés and conventions through which subjective states are usually codified and develop a narrative and stylistic complexity that accurately reflects his personal experience and understanding of mental life.

Although Bergman can be credited with numerous stylistic and narrative innovations in his depiction of Isak's subjective experiences, he did not have to rely entirely on his own inventiveness. *Wild Strawberries*, like the flashback in *Sawdust and Tinsel*, bears a clear debt to the narrative practices of the silent cinema. A close analysis of the film reveals many subjective sequences that build upon the techniques developed in the silent cinema in general, and in the work of Victor Sjöstrom in particular. It is my contention that it was not only in his personal memories and

dreams that Bergman sought inspiration for the representation of Isak's psychic experiences, but also in his remembrance of the stylistic devices through which silent film had attempted to depict characters' thoughts and feelings. As I have shown in the introduction to this thesis, in many ways, the silent cinema had already had to develop a complex array of techniques for conveying thoughts, ideas and meanings in purely visual terms, and Bergman inevitably drew upon this heritage when he sought to enrich the depiction of non-linguistic thought in his own films.

The casting of Victor Sjöstrom, Sweden's most celebrated actor and director of the silent era, in the central role of Isak Borg seems to be the first and clearest indicator that Bergman sought to recapture some element of the silent cinema in *Wild Strawberries*. Bengt Forstund suggests that:

> Because Bergman, almost as a rule, wrote his films with specific actors in mind, the role became of its own accord influenced to a large degree by the personality of Sjöstrom – as Bergman knew him – and by certain reminiscences from his films and perhaps by incidents from his life.[6]

However, things are not quite that straightforward. Bergman himself denies that he had Sjöstrom in mind at the writing phase:

> I never for a moment thought of Sjöstrom when I was writing the screenplay. The suggestion came from the film's producer, Carl Anders Dymling. And as I recall, I thought long and hard before I agreed to let him have the part.[7]

Instead, Bergman again stresses the importance of autobiography and introspection to the film's central gestation: 'Isak Borg equals me. *I B* equal *Ice* and *Borg* (the Swedish word for *fortress*). Simple and facile. I had created a figure who, on the outside, looked like my father but *was me, through and through.*'[8] Nevertheless, if Bergman is reticent about drawing any specific connection between Sjöstrom's

character or screen persona and the original development of Isak's character, he is quick to affirm the formative influence that Sjöstrom's work has had on his career and imagination in general. Of particular note is Bergman's recollection of seeing *Thy Soul Shall Bear Witness* (more commonly known by its alternative English title, *The Phantom Carriage*, 1921) as an adolescent:

> I don't think I could have been more than 15 or 16. My father, who was a pastor... had been to Svensk Filmindustri and hired *Thy Soul Shall Bear Witness* to show his confirmands. That was my first experience of a Victor Sjöstrom film – and it made an extraordinarily powerful impression on me.[9]

The direct influence of *The Phantom Carriage* can be detected in many of Bergman's films (the depiction of Death in *The Seventh Seal* (1957) is perhaps the most obvious example), but nowhere is this influence stronger, or more pervasive, than in *Wild Strawberries*. The similarities between the two films are manifested in terms of narrative structure, content, certain aspects of style, and specific iconography.

The Phantom Carriage uses a series of innovative flashbacks to tell the story of David Holm (Victor Sjöstrom), a man whose life has been ruined by alcoholism. The film begins on New Year's Eve, with David relating a ghost story to two friends as they sit drinking in a cemetery. David reveals that some years ago he was told the legend of The Phantom Carriage by his friend Georges (Tore Svenberg). The legend states that the last person to die on New Year's Eve is doomed to spend the next year as the coachman of The Phantom Carriage, charged with the duty of collecting the souls of deceased sinners and bearing them away to a hellish afterlife. The story is related to the audience as a flashback, first revealing a scene in a pub where Georges passes on the legend, and then cutting to a depiction of the ghostly carriage itself,

which appears eerily transparent (an effect achieved through the superimposition of the carriage over a bleak Swedish landscape).

With the legend recounted, we cut back to the present of the framing story, where David becomes involved in a mindless, drunken brawl with his companions. He is accidentally killed, and after David's companions have fled the scene, The Phantom Carriage appears; a close-up of the church clock shows that it has just turned midnight.

The coachman is revealed to be none other than Georges. David is told by Georges that he must take over the burden of driving the carriage, but first he will be given the chance to see the error of his ways so that he can repent his sins. We then see a series of flashbacks depicting the significant moments in David's downfall. Initially he is shown as a committed family man, enjoying a picnic with his wife (Hilda Borgström) and children in an idyllic, lakeside setting that immediately calls to mind the landscape surrounding the summer house in *Wild Strawberries* (a childhood memory recalled by Isak in three separate dream sequences). Soon afterwards, we see the disintegration of David's familial relationships: his brother is imprisoned after he and David are involved in a fatal drunken fight, and, having had enough of David's persistent abuse, his wife leaves him, taking their children with her. Finally, we see David's horrific behaviour towards Edit (Astrid Holm), a Salvation Army volunteer who has nursed David back to health and tries to reunite him with his family so that he can redeem himself. Having witnessed all the misery that he has inflicted upon those closest to him, David finally breaks down and repents his sins. His life is restored and he is able to achieve some form of redemption by racing to prevent his wife's suicide by telling her that he has changed and begging for her forgiveness.

The myriad thematic and structural similarities that exist between *The Phantom Carriage* and *Wild Strawberries* are immediately evident. The central conceit of a man reliving the significant moments in his life as part of a spiritual journey to self-awareness and redemption clearly forms the backbone of both films. Furthermore, we can detect in the experimentalism of Sjöstrom's film a desire to expand the expressive capacities of the medium in a way that is closely paralleled in *Wild Strawberries*. Both films seek ways to represent extra dimensions of experience – be they spiritual, supernatural or psychological – beyond everyday, objective reality. Sjöstrom is one of the earliest pioneers in utilizing a series of flashbacks not merely as exposition but to communicate visually an inner experience and spiritual journey. Forstund asserts that the international critical acclaim afforded to *The Phantom Carriage* (and Sjöstrom's cinema more broadly) can largely be attributed to Sjöstrom's innovations in representing complex subjective experiences in purely cinematic terms – that is, through visual imagery and the manipulation of filmic space and time:

> They [critics] were attracted to Sjöstrom's way of telling stories more than to anything else, and Sjöstrom had never liberated himself to such a degree from a literary source, and really "thought in images". In an almost astounding way, he used flashbacks – and even flashbacks within flashbacks – without disturbing the logical continuity of the narrative for a second.[10]

In *Wild Strawberries*, Bergman's debt to these innovations is clear.

As a final indication of the very direct influence that Sjöstrom's film had on *Wild Strawberries*, we should note the iconography that is common to both. In addition to the lakeside idyll that occurs in both films as a symbol of the central characters' prelapsarian state, The Phantom Carriage itself seems to have been appropriated and reinvented in the first dream sequence from *Wild Strawberries*, where Isak sees an antiquated, horse-drawn hearse bearing his own corpse.

The dreams and memories that appear in *Wild Strawberries* clearly bear considerable debt to *The Phantom Carriage*, and yet, as already noted, Bergman has insisted that they were originally derived from authentic personal experiences. However, these two facts do not necessarily contradict each other. It would seem perfectly reasonable to assume that once Victor Sjöstrom had been cast in the leading role, Bergman would draw upon *The Phantom Carriage* consciously, using Sjöstrom's work as a template for committing his own dreams and memories to film. Another more intriguing, though undoubtedly more speculative, possibility is that Bergman had internalized Sjöstrom's work to the extent that his imaginative outlook was from the start unconsciously indebted to *The Phantom Carriage*. It seems logical that Bergman's imaginative faculties should draw upon the film that made such an 'extraordinarily powerful impression' in his youth. Moreover, Bergman's contention that the cinema as a medium allows 'soul-to-soul' communication (cited at the beginning of the chapter) already implies his belief in the capacity of film to influence the individual's mind directly – to impact upon his or her memories, fantasies and dreams. (I shall return to this aspect of cinematic thought later in this section, and in the following section in relation to Alain Resnais and collective memory.)

The First Dream Sequence

Aside from the specific parallels that can be drawn between *The Phantom Carriage* and *Wild Strawberries*, a more general influence from the silent cinema can be detected in the representation of Isak's dreams and memories. This is particularly the case in the first dream sequence, which occurs about three minutes into the film. In

this sequence, we see Isak wander into an unknown and deserted part of town whilst on his morning walk. A series of bizarre occurrences follows. Firstly, Isak tries to check the time on a street clock only to discover that the hands are missing. Underneath the clock there hangs a sign depicting a pair of bespectacled eyes; the right eye is damaged in such a way that it appears to be bleeding. Isak takes out his pocket watch and finds that it also has no hands. He then looks around and discovers that a man has appeared at the far end of the street. He approaches the man from behind and touches him on the shoulder. The face that spins to greet Isak has the appearance of a dummy with its eyes sewn tightly shut. The body then falls to the ground and blood gushes from its head. Finally, Isak notices the driverless, horse-drawn hearse approaching. As it turns the corner onto Isak's street, the hearse catches its wheel on a lamppost, becomes unbalanced and spills a coffin into the road. Isak sees that a hand is protruding from the coffin and approaches it cautiously. As Isak bends over the coffin to get a better look, the hand comes to life and seizes him by the arm. Slowly, the body pulls itself from the coffin and Isak is confronted by his own reanimated corpse, which seems to be trying to speak to him. The sequence ends with a sudden cut to Isak awaking in fright in his bed.

The first thing that is immediately striking about this sequence is the lack of speech (and in this it foreshadows Bergman's later work, in which many of the most important scenes are marked by a sparsity of dialogue). Two sentences of voiceover introduce the scene swiftly and economically, but after this there is no further verbal exposition. In its function, the voiceover in this sequence seems similar to the intertitle of the silent era, providing a bare outline of the situation to direct the viewer's interpretation of the image-track. As far as possible, it seems, Bergman tries to capture the atmosphere of the dream, to create a visual impact and to generate

meaning in purely non-verbal terms. There are a number of means by which Bergman provides a clear insight into Isak's psyche – into the complex emotions and thought processes that the dream reveals – without recourse to verbal exposition, and these must be examined thoroughly.

Firstly, it is essential to emphasize the importance of Victor Sjöstrom's sensitive physical performance. Sjöstrom's various postures, gestures, movements and facial expressions are constantly affording the viewer a detailed and nuanced picture of Isak's thoughts and emotions – one that requires no explanation because it is grasped intuitively. As Philip and Kersti French suggest, the subtle power of Sjöstrom's performance is vital in rendering a palpable sense of the emotional journey that Isak experiences:

> The film's sixty-year journey into the past and its fifteen-hour one through the present are registered by an endlessly expressive face that exhibits the experience of a lifetime... and a body that learned to speak in silent films. With a tilt of the head, the flick of a muscle... he can reveal the rare emotional depths that his mind and heart are tapping.[11]

Bergman capitalizes on Sjöstrom's ability to convey complex emotions and thought processes without words. For example, the silent confrontation between Isak and his reanimated corpse at the end of the first dream is depicted through a shot/ reverse shot sequence in which the camera cuts between Isak and his doppelganger with a series of increasingly tight close-ups. This use of overwhelming facial close-ups at moments of extreme emotional intensity is another technique that becomes ever more important in Bergman's later psychological dramas.

The empathetic response engendered by Sjöstrom's silent performance is bolstered by the Bergman's shot choices and the carefully controlled editing of the scene. Upon close examination, it becomes clear that the scene's cuts, camera movements and

editing rhythm are precisely orchestrated to reinforce the centrality of Isak's perspective, his visual, emotional and psychological experience of the dream. In this short dream sequence (it lasts for approximately four minutes and consists of sixty-eight individual shots) we are given twenty-one readily-identifiable point-of-view shots, where the camera takes Isak's position in the scene, or shows us the object at which he is looking. In addition to this repeated visual identification with Isak's point of view, we are given a dramatization of his emotional and psychological perspective through abrupt changes in editing rhythm. Again, the sequence where Isak confronts his corpse illustrates this point. After a lengthy shot in which he approaches the coffin, the cutting between Isak and his doppelganger becomes increasingly rapid, articulating the confusion and panic that he is experiencing. These fairly subtle techniques, in conjunction with the lack of any verbal exposition, help to immerse the viewer in the immediacy of the dream, capturing the atmosphere of the subjective experience before any concrete interpretation or analysis is offered.

The final feature of the dream sequence that needs exploring is its dense visual symbolism. Through the dream's dark imagery, we are given an intimation of the anxieties that Isak is suffering long before he consciously recognizes the truth of his emotional situation and attempts to change it. The various symbols in the dream – the handless clocks, the damaged eye, the deserted streets, the eyeless dummy that bleeds and the image of Isak confronting his corpse – are suggestive of death, blindness, isolation and the extreme loneliness from which Isak is suffering.[12] The overall metaphor of the dream is that Isak is experiencing a kind of eternal living death that he cannot perceive or refuses to acknowledge, but it is only after several more nightmarish visions that he is able to recognize and understand this message consciously. He eventually verbalizes the importance of his recurring nightmares to

Marianne: 'It's as if I'm telling myself something I don't want to hear when I'm awake... That I'm dead, even though I'm alive.' Isak's emotional journey is thus comparable to a type of Freudian self-analysis, with Isak being both doctor and patient. It is only by translating his unconscious fears and obsessions into conscious thoughts that Isak is able to change his behaviour and find some peace by the end of the film. Furthermore, the pervasiveness of dreams, visual symbolism and self-analysis in *Wild Strawberries* can be seen as providing an additional link to the cinema of the silent era. As Birgitta Steene notes,

> Non-Swedish reviewers have... suggested that the film follows up an earlier trend in the history of filmmaking, the cinematic expressionism of the 1920s, and that Bergman profited from a realization of older German directors: that the camera has a distinct advantage over the stage in projecting a psychic situation into symbolic imagery and in destroying the unities of time and space.[13]

Bergman's early interest in German expressionism has already been noted. It therefore seems more than reasonable to suggest that he drew upon this area of silent cinema in developing certain aspects of the dream sequences in *Wild Strawberries*.

However, it is also important to emphasize that we should not attribute every technical or stylistic feature in the film's dream sequences to a prior cinematic source. Much of the invention and innovation in *Wild Strawberries* is Bergman's alone, as would be expected from his insistence that the psychic phenomena depicted in the film have a firm and authentic grounding in his personal mental experiences. The lighting of the first dream sequence provides a good example of Bergman's desire to adapt expressionistic conventions better to reflect his personal experience. The lighting in this sequence is non-naturalistic, but it is also very different from the chiaroscuro effects commonly used to depict a nightmarish world in German

expressionist cinema (and in much of Bergman's earlier work). Instead of filming a conventionally shadowy nightmare world, Bergman lights his set to the extent that it is almost bleached out by the unnatural glare. This, he claims, is simply to be faithful to his own experience of unpleasant dreams: 'My nightmares are always saturated in sunshine... It's like a threat, something... terrifying.'[14]

We can also identify the sound editing in the dream sequence as being original and innovative. The incorporation of sound is, of course, significant in indicating that Bergman's dream sequence does not intend simply to mimic every aspect of silent film, slavishly recreating a cinema of the past. Instead, the utilization of certain subjective narrative techniques from the silent era is enhanced through the addition of subjective sound effects – the sudden beating of Isak's heart as he looks up at the handless clock, the accentuated squeaking as the hearse rocks back and forth, the shrill, single note that sounds as Isak comes face to face with his corpse. As with the more conventional – though no less expressive – visual devices described earlier, the subjective soundtrack helps to place the viewer in Isak's position in a very direct and immediate manner.

The Later Subjective Sequences

Wild Strawberries' contains two further major subjective sequences that build upon the initial nightmare, in order to deepen our identification with Isak and our understanding of his psyche. These sequences are not indebted to the silent cinema to the same extent as the first. They contain expansive dialogue and several dramatic scenes that are constructed according to the broad conventions of contemporary

mainstream cinema. Nevertheless, each contains a number of innovations in the representation of the mind, many of which can be seen as foreshadowing the aesthetic developments in Bergman's later work. A brief exploration of the key thematic and stylistic features of the later subjective sequences should help to elucidate how Bergman expands his depiction of Isak's consciousness, and how this in turn begins to reveal some of the director's general conjectures about the human mind.

The second subjective sequence occurs when Isak and Marianne take a break during their journey to visit the lakeside summer house where Isak spent much of his childhood. The sequence is not a dream as such, but something more akin to a reverie or daydream. Isak's voiceover introduces the sequence by stating: 'I came to think of a thing or two associated with the places where we played as children. I don't know how it came about, but the clarity of the present shaded into the even clearer images of memory.' After this, there is a depiction of Isak's youth that freely mixes memory and fantasy. We see Isak, still as the seventy-eight-year old man of the present, observing his family as they were in his youth. He sees a scene where his cousin, Sara (Bibi Andersson), to whom he was 'secretly engaged', is seduced by his younger brother, Sigfrid (Per Sjöstrand), whom she later married. Isak then follows Sara into the summer house where he witnesses a large family gathering that is taking place.

The first thing to note about the reverie is that while the people and settings from Isak's past appear as they were, as if frozen in his memory, it is the seventy-eight-year old Isak who wanders incongruously through this mental landscape. The same is true in another memory that resurfaces in a subsequent dream sequence, where Isak witnesses his wife's adultery. The point, as Birgitta Steene notes, is that, 'In *Wild Strawberries* all time is now, no matter whether we see scenes from Isak's youth, his mature years, or his old age.'[15] By foregrounding Isak's appearance as an old man in

all scenes, Bergman does not allow the viewer to lose sight of the present instant in which dream or memory takes place. In this, *Wild Strawberries* can be seen as a precursor to Resnais' films – particularly *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Last Year at Marienbad* – where memory is never 'relived' but is reconstructed in a concrete present moment.

The second noteworthy feature in this reverie, which is also shared with the original dream sequence, is that its significance to Isak is defined by its symbolism, or more precisely, by the central symbol of the wild strawberries that Sara collects. Philip Mosley observes that the wild strawberry has a long history of being used in Swedish drama as a symbol for beauty, peace and happiness, but '[t]he symbol has a darker side – in ripening only once, briefly, before disappearing, the berry represents the fleeting nature of both beauty and happiness.'[16] It is with this sense of loss that the strawberries are associated in Isak's reverie. He sees Sara being seduced by his brother, and as the two kiss she accidentally overturns the basket that is full of the fruit. The reverie is thus imbued with a definite symbolic meaning and purpose in Isak's mind, signifying the loss of his youth and first love. At the end of the sequence, Isak reaffirms this meaning, revealing in voiceover that he was 'overcome by a feeling of emptiness and mournfulness.'

While the second subjective sequence is motivated by Isak's voluntary return to a location from his childhood, deeply ingrained in his memory, the third (another dream sequence) operates according to a very different – though equally familiar and convincing – logic. This sequence is again set at the summer house, but the tone has changed: the sky has darkened and gulls and jackdaws flock menacingly above the water. The sequence is also much more fragmented, with the normal unities of time and space giving way to the familiar logic of a dream: locations mutate rapidly and a

series of disparate events unfolds. We see Sara cradling a newborn child at the waterside (an image that has its root in an earlier conversation, where Isak's elderly mother recalls a similar image from her memory). She retreats to the summer house and Isak follows her, but when he peers through the window he is confronted by the sight of Sara and Sigfrid sitting down for dinner together, a seemingly blissful scene from their married life. Isak knocks urgently on the door, which is eventually opened by Alman (Gunnar Sjöberg), a minor character with whom Isak has become briefly acquainted in the course of his car journey. (Alman and his wife were given a lift by Isak after their car overturned, but were quickly left on the roadside because of their constant, bitter arguments. It seems as if their feuding relationship reminded Isak of his own unhappy marriage, and this is the logical motivation for Alman's reappearance in Isak's dream.) Alman leads Isak down a dark corridor to a lecture theatre, where Isak is forced to sit a rigorous examination. Alman eventually concludes that the celebrated doctor is in fact incompetent, and states that further charges have been brought to his attention by Isak's wife, including accusations of callousness, selfishness and ruthlessness. Isak is then led into the garden, where he witnesses his wife committing adultery. Afterwards, she states that Isak will forgive her transgression with 'false magnanimity'; in her view, 'he doesn't care about anything because he's utterly cold.' The dream ends with Isak being told by Alman that the punishment for his sins is to be 'the usual': loneliness.

It is this sequence, more than any other in *Wild Strawberries*, which seems to capture most authentically the structure and logic of dreams. The dream makes use of incidental details from Isak's experiences whilst awake – pieces of conversation, recollections, family photographs – and transforms them into a highly meaningful, symbolic narrative. The incorporation and transformation of recent, real-life events

and conversations (the day's residues) has been repeatedly identified as a common feature of dream narratives. For example, Freud observes:

> [E]xperience has taught us that almost every dream includes the remains of a memory or an allusion to some event (or often to several events) of the day before the dream, and, if we follow these connections, we often arrive with one blow at the transition from apparently far remote dream-world to the real life of the patient.[17]

Similarly, the dream sequence's rapid geographical transformations, whereby Isak moves quickly between disparate locations, reflect another well-documented property of dreams. Vlada Petrić notes that bizarre spatio-temporal distortions are a key feature of dreams, recognized in both Freudian and neurobiological dream theories.[18] Finally, the sequence also has a consistent, internal logic that suggests Isak's unconscious thought processes in a particularly convincing manner.[19] Images relating to Isak's unfulfilled relationship with Sara give way to scenes from her apparently happy marriage, which in turn prompt the sequence where Isak is interrogated by Alman and forced to witness again his wife's infidelity. In its free association of ideas, images, characters, themes and counter themes, this dream sequence offers a thoroughly-developed conception of unconscious (or preconscious) mental activity, foreshadowing later films such as *The Silence* and *Persona*.

The imagery of the third dream, which develops the symbolism of the previous subjective sequences, also seems more authentically 'dreamlike', being subtly rooted in the narrative situations in which Isak is involved. During his examination, Isak is asked to look through a microscope to identify a bacteria specimen, but confesses that he can see nothing at all, which reinforces the symbol of the eyeless dummy in the first dream. He is then asked to diagnose a patient, and after a confused glance, quickly reports that she is dead. The woman immediately sits up and starts laughing.

Again, the symbolism strongly recalls the images of living death in the original dream sequence, but here, with the reworking of the metaphor, we are given a much stronger indication that Isak is making a diagnosis of his own condition. Significantly, it is when Isak awakes from this latter dream that he offers his first, tentative interpretation of what his unconscious mind is trying to tell him.

Psychoanalytic Dream Theory

The discussion so far has at several points referred to ideas about dreaming and the mind derived primarily from Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Throughout *Wild Strawberries*, there is undoubtedly a strong engagement with Freud's theories concerning the nature and meaning of dreams. A number of psychoanalytic assumptions underpin the narrative: the symbolic value of dream imagery, the existence of repressed anxieties and desires which find an outlet in dreaming, and the suggestion that unconscious psychic trauma can be alleviated when we become consciously aware of it, most commonly by verbalizing our problems or anxieties. However, this psychoanalytic foundation does not signify Bergman's total acceptance of the description of dreams and the mind laid out in orthodox Freudian theory. A brief analysis of the relationship between Freud's dream theory and the depiction of Isak's dreams will indicate the extent to which Bergman concurs with psychoanalytic assumptions, clarifying his overall conception of the mind.

For Freud, the dream is first and foremost the satisfaction of a repressed desire: 'In every dream an instinctual wish has to be represented as fulfilled.'[20] When we fall asleep, he suggests, the usual agency of censorship that represses the instinctual drives

is weakened (though not entirely disabled), allowing our unconscious desires to surface in our consciousness. However, the emergence of these potentially disturbing or disruptive desires poses a constant threat to the rest afforded by sleep. To ensure the continuation of sleep, the mind transforms and distorts our latent thoughts into a dream narrative, providing an outlet for our desires in the form of a 'harmless hallucinatory experience.'[21] The images, sensations and dialogue that constitute the dream's narrative are drawn from a disparate selection of memories, some distant, many belonging to the previous 'day's residues', and from incidental external stimuli, such as noises, that are dimly perceived by the sleeping subject. Processes of 'condensation' and 'displacement' help to release the dream's latent content in a distorted form. The former concentrates and conceals a number of unconscious ideas or desires in symbolic imagery, often compressing several thoughts into a single image, while the latter dislocates emotional effects from their immediate causes within the dream, shifting the dreamer's attention away from the images that have the greatest symbolic significance. The rapid shifts in the dreamer's attention, along with the use of bizarre imagery drawn from disparate sources, help to explain the spatio-temporal discontinuity often experienced in dreams, which adds to the impression that the dream narrative is incoherent or even incomprehensible. Thus for Freud, 'Interpreting a dream consists in translating the manifest content... into latent dream-thoughts, in undoing the distortion which the dream-thoughts have had to submit to from the censorship of the resistance.'[22]

Many of the typical attributes of the dream identified by Freud feature prominently in *Wild Strawberries*, suggesting that Bergman accepts the psychoanalytic description of the dream's surface characteristics. As already noted, Isak's dreams are composed from a mixture of distant memories and recent events,

are subject to various spatio-temporal discontinuities, and are rich in densely symbolic images that can be directly related to his latent concerns. Several critics have emphasized the various ways in which Isak's dreams appear to comply with conventional psychoanalytic theory. Hobson, for example, writes that the first dream sequence 'conforms absolutely to neo-Freudian ego psychology in its relation to the plot of the film', while Steene suggests that as the film progresses, Isak's dreams increasingly 'become self-explorations, classical dreams that could be taken right out of Freud's *Traumdeutung*.'[23] However, even if the dream sequences in *Wild Strawberries* adhere strongly to a basic psychoanalytic framework, there is still reason to question the extent to which the film supports more specific Freudian suppositions pertaining to the nature and meaning of dreams. The clearest point of contention concerns Freud's insistence that every dream is a form of wish-fulfilment. Freud himself described this basic assumption as the 'most disputed point in the whole theory… The inevitable and ever recurring objection raised by the layman [is] that there are nevertheless so many anxiety dreams…'[24] Freud's response to this complaint was to suggest that anxiety arises as a direct consequence of the guilty feelings associated with the imminent fulfilment of the dreamer's forbidden desire.[25] In a similar manner, Freud is able to dismiss the suggestion that 'punishment' dreams refute the wish-fulfilment hypothesis by again emphasizing the existence of psychical divisions in the dreamer, which lead to contradictory desires and impulses:

Punishment-dreams, too, are fulfilments of wishes, though not of wishes of the instinctual impulses but of those of the critical, censoring and punishing agency of the mind [the super-ego]. If we have a pure punishment-dream before us, an easy mental operation will enable us to restore the wishful dream to which the punishment-dream was the correct rejoinder and which, owing to this rejoinder, was replaced as the manifest dream.[26]

Even if we accept Freud's arguments – despite his failure to support his conjectures with unequivocal evidence – it is difficult to interpret Isak's anxiety dreams as disguised wish-fulfilments. It requires extremely circuitous reasoning to conclude that Isak's nightmares – which he describes as 'highly unpleasant' and 'humiliating' – satisfy hidden desires. The examination sequence, in which Isak is charged with professional incompetence, offers a good example of how Bergman's conceptualization of the function and meaning of dreaming conflicts with Freudian assumptions. Freud has noted that the 'examination dream' is a typical manifestation of the anxiety dream, but one that affords a clear explication of how anxiety is covertly linked to wish-fulfilment. He suggests that the dreamer invariably experiences failure in an examination that he or she has passed in real life:

> It would seem, then, that anxious examination dreams (which, as has been confirmed over and over again, appear when the dreamer has some responsibility ahead of him the next day and is afraid that it will be a fiasco) search for some occasion in the past in which great anxiety has turned out to be unjustified and has been contradicted by the event.[27]

In *Wild Strawberries*, this reassuring function is almost exactly reversed. In reality, Isak is shortly to be presented with his fiftieth jubilee doctorate in recognition of his service to his profession; in the dream, he is deemed incompetent, callous and selfish. For Isak, the public affirmation of his success only accentuates his concerns over his personal short-comings, which find an outlet in the dream. Furthermore, it is worth noting that in the screenplay to *Wild Strawberries*, Isak explicitly expresses doubts over the Freudian conception of dreams as wish-fulfilments, while conceding that his dreams nevertheless seem to have a symbolic significance. Bergman has Isak introduce the sequence containing the examination dream with these words:

I record these [images] in the order in which they occurred, without the slightest intention of commenting on their possible meaning. I have never been particularly enthusiastic about the psychoanalytical theory of dreams as the fulfilment of desires in a negative or positive direction. Yet I cannot deny that in these dreams there was something like a warning, which bore into my consciousness and embedded itself there with relentless determination.[28]

While this introduction is modified in the film, so that the direct commentary on psychoanalysis is effaced, the content of the dreams continues to support the written sentiments. Isak's anxiety dreams function primarily as 'warnings' or encoded messages, not as wish-fulfilments.

There is one further area in which I believe that Bergman's representation of Isak's dreams differentiates itself from conventional psychoanalytic theory – with regard to its perspective on childhood memory and desire. This is not to say that *Wild Strawberries* overlooks the formative importance of childhood experience on Isak's personality and imagination; childhood memory provides the recurring locale for Isak's introspection, and there are several indications that Isak's poor relationship with his mother is partially responsible for his inability to form close adult relationships. However, it would be wrong to suggest that childhood desires and preoccupations have the same meaning or level of significance for Bergman as they do in Freudian theory. For Freud, frustrated childhood desire is the primary (and overwhelmingly predominant) cause for the dreams experienced in adulthood, and he is adamant on this point: 'Our theory of dreams regards wishes originating in infancy as the indispensable motive force for the formation of dreams.'[29] In contrast, Bergman identifies various significant moments in adulthood that have equally shaped Isak's personality and imagination, and consequently determine the desires and preoccupations expressed in his dreams. Furthermore, there is little reason to believe that Bergman attaches any particular importance to infancy – as opposed to later

phases of childhood or even adolescence – in terms of how the adult imagination develops.

If we are to avoid reductive conclusions concerning *Wild Strawberries'* representation of thought, it is imperative that we acknowledge the significant areas in which Bergman's conceptualization of the dreaming mind differs from Freud's. Bergman certainly integrates specific aspects of psychoanalytic theory into his depiction of dreaming and character psychology, but this does not amount to an indiscriminate acceptance of all of Freud's assumptions. Analyses of *Wild Strawberries* that are overly reliant on psychoanalytic suppositions invariably misconstrue or distort the film's representation of Isak's psyche. The problems associated with any attempt to apply an orthodox Freudian framework to Bergman's representation of the mind are exemplified in Jacob Zelinger's exploration of the 'faceless man' symbol in Isak's initial nightmare. Having established that it is difficult to locate any 'specific associations from the text or elsewhere' that might illuminate the meaning of this motif, Zelinger suggests: 'It is at least possible to conjecture from what is known of the whole film that this faceless man is a symbol for Borg's father. It is well-known that parents are often disguised in dreams.'[30] This leads Zelinger into a series of further speculations concerning the possibility that Isak harbours an unconscious aggression towards his father, and that the dream image of the faceless figure collapsing in a pool of blood, therefore, fulfils the repressed infantile wish to commit patricide.[31] However, this level of speculation is frequently promoted by the basic methodology and premises of psychoanalysis, which suggest that the dreaming subject will often retreat from the 'true' implication of his thoughts. Freud writes,

an association often comes to a stop precisely before the genuine dream-thought: it has only come near to it and has only had contact with it through allusions. At that point, we intervene on our own; we fill in the hints, draw undeniable conclusions, and give explicit utterance to what the patient has only touched upon in his associations. This sounds as though we allowed our ingenuity and caprice to play with the material put at our disposal by the dreamer and as though we misused it in order to interpret *into* his utterances what cannot be interpreted *from* them... But you have only to carry out a dream-analysis yourselves or read a good account of one in our literature and you will be convinced of the cogent manner in which interpretative work like this proceeds.[32]

Essentially, Freud's methodology ensures that interpretative power lies with the analyst, and therefore archetypal psychoanalytic conclusions can always be upheld despite any protestations from the analysand.[33] This suggests a final point of contention between Bergman's depiction of thought and the theoretical model of the mind constructed by Freud. Despite his acceptance that repressed thoughts, anxieties and desires may be hidden in dream imagery, Bergman places faith in the dreamer's capacity to discover these ideas or emotions and interpret their deepest meanings reliably.

Nevertheless, while there is a marked difference between Freud and Bergman in terms of what each regards as constituting a dream's ultimate meaning, there is still some common ground pertaining to the subject's ability to resolve intellectual and emotional problems encountered in the day through thought processes operating in the dream. Freud acknowledges: 'Reports of numerous cases... seem to put it beyond dispute that dreams can carry on the intellectual work of daytime and bring it to conclusions which had not been reached during the day, and that they can resolve doubts and problems and be the source of inspiration...'[34]

In *Wild Strawberries*, Bergman certainly suggests that dreaming provides the means for Isak to understand and resolve his unconscious problems. When he awakes from his second dream (in the car), Isak begins to articulate his anxieties, and this

marks a turning point in the narrative. With his conscious recognition of the latent meaning of his dreams, Isak is able to engage emotionally with Marianne, and the film moves quickly towards a resolution in which he also begins to rebuild his relationship with his son. *Wild Strawberries* ends with a final, fleeting dream sequence in which Isak returns to the idyllic setting of his childhood, having apparently found some inner peace.

Through the progression of Isak's subjective experiences, Bergman suggests that introspection is a powerful means for achieving some form of solace or salvation from mental anguish. This affirmation can be seen as the beginning of a new strain of thought in Bergman's work. While Bergman would continue to be greatly concerned by questions of religion and theology (at least until he had finished *Winter Light* [1962]), the ideas that are developed in *Wild Strawberries* augur a new phase in his cinema. Mosley points to the new strain of thought that *Wild Strawberries* suggests by comparing it to *The Seventh Seal*, which was released earlier in the same year:

> The problems in *Wild Strawberries* are as great as in *The Seventh Seal* but more personal and psychological; the question of God's presence or absence, so crucial to the denouement of *The Seventh Seal*, gives way to a vaguer notion of order, that personal salvation and peace of mind depend upon simple manifestations of human love and understanding rather than on divine or supernatural intervention.[35]

The key difference between the two films is that in *The Seventh Seal* the characters are constantly looking outward for answers (as, perhaps, is the director), appealing to an exterior authority to assuage their deepest anxieties. In *Wild Strawberries*, the psychological problems that Isak faces are resolved by looking inward. Bergman creates a cinema of introspection, making thought itself the new object of the camera's gaze. Faith in God has been replaced by faith in the power of the human

mind to understand its own workings and create its own meanings, and it is this faith that will dominate Bergman's future cinema.

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[1] Ingmar Bergman, 'The Snakeskin', in Ingmar Bergman, *Persona and Shame: The Screenplays of Ingmar Bergman*, trans. Keith Bradfield (London: Calder & Boyars Ltd., 1972).

[2] Ingmar Bergman, *Images: My Life in Film*, trans. Marianne Ruuth (London & Boston: Faber & Faber, 1994), p. 51.

[3] Ingmar Bergman, *Four Screenplays*, trans. Lars Malmstrom & David Kushner (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 16.

[4] Peter Cowie, *Ingmar Bergman: A Critical Biography* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1982), pp. 114-5; p. 66.

[5] Bergman (1994), p. 22.

[6] Bengt Forstund, *Victor Sjöstrom: His Life and His Work* (New York: Zoetrope, 1988), p. 266.

[7] Bergman (1994), p 24.

[8] Ibid, p. 20. It is worth noting that despite his insistence that the central character was originally nothing more than a thinly veiled version of himself, Bergman also recognizes that Sjöstrom transformed this character through the power and sensitivity of his performance: 'Victor Sjöstrom took my text, made it his own, invested it with his own experiences: his pain, his misanthropy, his brutality, sorrow, fear, loneliness, coldness, warmth, harshness and ennui. Borrowing my father's form, he occupied my soul and made it all his own...' Ibid, p. 24.

[9] Forstund (1988), p. 261.

[10] Ibid, pp. 91-2. Forstund also remarks upon the fact that Sjöstrom was 'extremely sparing with titles at dramatic junctures', suggesting not that the director sought to eradicate intertitles entirely (as did certain advocates of 'pure cinema'), but that he was keen to keep verbal exposition to a minimum (p. 92). Once more, we can detect a clear similarity of purpose in Sjöstrom's and Bergman's films with regard to the representation of thought or emotion.

[11] Philip French & Kersti French, *Wild Strawberries* (London: BFI, 1995), p. 41.

[12] It is also worth noting that several of these symbolic images seem to have been directly influenced by incidents and images from other films. Bengt Forstund notes that the broken watch, as a symbol 'of time standing still, of a life ebbing to its close', was used to great effect by Victor Sjöstrom in his 1920 film *Karin Daughter of Ingmar* (Forstund [1988], p. 86). Again, this appropriation of symbolism from Sjöstrom's silent cinema suggests the formative influence of Sjöstrom's work on Bergman's imagination. In addition, several critics have suggested that the motif of the damaged eye is indebted to Buñuel's *Un chien andalou*, in which, as noted earlier, an eye is shown being sliced with a razor. Similarly, certain commentators have postulated that the image of a man confronting his corpse was inspired by the dream sequence in *Vampyr* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1932), where the sleeping protagonist observes his own body lying in a coffin. (See, for example, Robert T. Eberwein, *Film and the Dream Screen: A Sleep and a Forgetting* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984], pp. 68-9, and Allan Hobson, 'Dream Image and Substrate: Bergman's Films and the Physiology of Sleep', in [ed.] Vlada Petrić, *Film and Dreams: An Approach to Bergman* [South Salem, NY: Redgrave, 1981], pp. 76-8.)

[13] Birgitta Steene, *Ingmar Bergman* (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1968), p. 73.

[14] Stig Bjorkman, Torsten Manns & Jonas Sima (eds.), *Bergman on Bergman*, trans. Paul Britten Austin (London: Secker & Warburg, 1973), p. 78.

[15] Steene (1968), p. 76.

[16] Philip Mosley, *Ingmar Bergman: The Cinema as Mistress* (London: Marion Boyars, 1981), p. 69.

17 Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Vol.22 (1932-36), New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis; and Other Works*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), p. 11. Of course, one does not have to accept every element of Freud's theory of dreaming to recognize the validity of his empirical data on the common surface characteristics of dreams, derived from reports by numerous patients and analysts. I will return to this point shortly, when I examine the viability of an orthodox Freudian interpretation of Isak's dreams.

[18] Vlada Petrić, 'Film and Dreams: A Theoretical-Historical Survey', in Petrić (1981), pp. 16-18. Petrić notes that recent scientific research into dreams frequently challenges certain elements of the psychoanalytical theory of dreaming developed by Freud. However, this is partly a reflection of the fact that dream clinic research is usually focussed on biological, rather than psychological, explanations for

mental phenomena. The pertinent point for the present discussion is that despite procedural and interpretative differences, there is a general agreement among theorists on the properties or characteristics that typify our experience of dreaming.

[19] Again, Freud provides a good account of this aspect of dreaming. Summarizing the arguments of several dream theorists, he suggests that in dreams apparently disparate ideas, images and scenes are, upon closer inspection, frequently linked through the logic of free association: 'The laws of association governing the sequence of ideas hold good of dream-images, and indeed their dominance is even more clearly and strongly expressed in dreams.' (Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, (eds.) James Strachey, Alan Tyson & Angela Richards, trans. James Strachey [London: penguin, 1991], p. 124.)

[20] Freud (1964), pp. 18-19.

[21] Ibid, p. 17.

[22] Sigmund Freud, *Standard Edition, 9(1906-08), Jensen's* Gradiva; *and Other Works* (1959), p. 59.

[23] Petrić (1981), p. 79; Steene (1968), p. 75.

[24] Freud (1964), p. 27.

[25] See, for example, Freud (1991), pp. 737-44.

[26] Freud (1964), p. 27.

[27] Freud (1991), p. 378.

[28] Bergman (1960), pp. 211-12.

[29] Freud (1991), p. 746.

[30] Jacob Zellinger, 'Bergman and Freud on Dreams and Dreaming', in Petrić (1981), p. 100.

[31] Ibid, pp 100-102.

[32] Freud (1964), p. 12.

[33] For a thorough critique of the methodology and many of the conclusions of psychoanalysis, see Richard Webster, *Why Freud was Wrong: Sin, Science and Psychoanalysis* (London: Fontana Press, 1996).

[34] Freud (1991), pp. 131-2.

[35] Mosley (1981), pp. 68-9.

Sensation and the Intellect in Bergman's Chamber Films

Citing several contemporary newspaper reviews, Laura Hubner notes: '*Wild Strawberries* was viewed by many as confusing and opaque at the time of its initial showing outside Sweden in 1958'.[1] In the *New York Times*, Bosley Crowther described the film as being 'so thoroughly mystifying that we wonder whether Mr Bergman himself knows what he was trying to say.'[2] Hubner argues that in terms of the symbolism and meaning of *Wild Strawberries*' dream sequences, there is little that should have proved overly challenging to a contemporary audience; many of the ideas and symbols used, she points out, are 'drawn from filmic [expressionistic and surrealist] and psychoanalytic conventions, which would have been fairly familiar at the time, if not so easily identifiable as in retrospect.'[3] This leads Hubner to suggest that 'It was not so much the content of the dreams... that was causing many of the confusions but the way that dreams, dreamlike scenes and memories were depicted alongside everyday life.'[4] What was perhaps most innovative in *Wild Strawberries*, therefore, was the narrative structure (the way in which reality and dreams intertwined throughout the film) and the style in which psychic phenomena were depicted. Critics who praised the film isolated these elements as being the source of its originality and artistic accomplishment. Jympson Harman described *Wild Strawberries* as 'A New Kind of Film', while in the *Glasgow Herald*, the film was commended for its 'flawless' structure, the length of screen time allotted to rendering Isak's dream world, and the sophistication with which the dreams were realized, in contrast to the 'silly' manner in which dream sequences are usually depicted on screen.[5]

However, while it is true that *Wild Strawberries* discards many of the conventional, and often arbitrary, methods for depicting dreams or other subjective

sequences – such as soft-focus photography, superimposition or other visual distortions that mark the image as unreal – it is important to note that these sequences are still cued in a very clear manner. Each sequence is introduced by a shot of Isak falling asleep, a dissolve, and a voiceover commentary, all of which inform us of the transition to the dream sequence in a very obvious and conventional way.[6] There is an intricate, interlocking relationship between Isak's real-life experiences and his dreams – whereby each facet illuminates the other – but there is never any ambiguity with regard to what is real and what is imagined. It is for this reason that Philip and Kersti French – who also draw attention to the widespread contemporary conception of *Wild Strawberries* as 'a difficult and demanding picture' - assert that, 'We do not, however, find it obscure or unduly problematic, as are a good many Bergman films of the following two decades.'[7] What is crucial in this analysis is the retrospective contextualization of *Wild Strawberries* within Bergman's wider oeuvre. If today it is difficult to appreciate the contemporary response to *Wild Strawberries'* representation of mental phenomena, this is largely owing to the substantial transformations that occurred in Bergman's subsequent cinema (and in European art cinema in general).

At the beginning of the 1960s, Bergman's cinema underwent a rapid evolution. The director adopted an increasingly minimalist style which he described as 'chamber cinema', in reference to August Strindberg's conception of 'the chamber play'. Peter Cowie cites the description of the key features of chamber drama supplied by Martin Lamm (whose lectures Bergman had attended): 'A compact and simple structure, a small cast of characters, an action limited almost entirely to the moment of catastrophe, intensified pathos, and the universal sense of the tragic.'[8] In Bergman, the development of this highly refined style of narrative is coupled with a still greater focus on the psychological conflicts of the central characters. Marsha Kinder suggests

that, 'Starting with *Through a Glass Darkly*, Bergman's later films begin to become more dreamlike', but, in contrast to *Wild Strawberries*, 'the line between reality and dream tends to dissolve.'[9] In addition, Kinder accurately notes that these 'later dream films' have several essential characteristics that mark them as belonging to a new phase in Bergman's cinema (some of which partially overlap with the features of chamber drama described above):

> they tend to reduce the earlier, more diffuse and conventional plots to primary configurations; there are fewer characters; the tone is consistently dark and ominous; the psychic intensity is unrelieved by comic subplots; the structure moves inward toward a greater psychological penetration; situations are primordial, involving incest, madness, vampirism and death.[10]

Thus Bergman's later films become more generally oneiric or psychological in terms of tone, themes and structure, while at the same time there is no longer a clear differentiation between what is real and what is imagined. For Bergman, this shift engendered a crucial reconfiguration of the conditions of spectatorship and identification: 'You stop watching from the outside and become part of the madness inside.'[11] Our unsettled position as viewer, therefore, parallels the psychological trauma, confusion or madness within the narrative, strengthening our identification with the characters and affording a powerful insight into their minds. However, before exploring these minds in more detail, it is necessary to take a step back and consider the additional reasons for the evolution of Bergman's chamber cinema. In order to understand the full significance of the transformations in Bergman's cinematic representation of thought, it is necessary that these transformations be contextualized in relation to both the internal development of Bergman's own philosophy and wider currents in European art cinema in the late 1950s.

To begin with the latter point, Bergman's films of the early 1960s have to be contextualized as belonging to a period of increased experimentation in European cinema. The emergence of the French New Wave and the evolution of Italian art cinema through the mature works of directors such as Fellini and Antonioni are particularly pertinent to Bergman's development in terms of their experimentation with subjective narratives. There are obvious parallels between Fellini's films – especially *8½* (1963) and *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits*, 1965) – and Bergman's psychological films of the early 1960s, all of which undermine the distinction between objective and subjective occurrences, making the ontological status of certain narrative events ambiguous. In Antonioni's trilogy, consisting of *L'Avventura* (1960), *La Notte* (1961) and *L'Eclisse* (1962), and in his subsequent film, *Il Deserto rosso* (1964), there are many concerns that resonate with Bergman: the focus on the 'subjective time' in which events unfold, the weakening of conventional narrative causality, the projection of internal, emotional states on to the external landscape, and the close emphasis on the psychological or spiritual crises besetting the protagonists (with a particular prominence afforded to female protagonists). Similarly, the work of Alain Resnais in France during this period is crucial in terms of how it expands the possibilities of subjective cinematic narratives. Both *Hiroshima mon amour* and *Last Year at Marienbad* follow the type of narrative path laid out by Bergman in *Wild Strawberries*, representing the protagonists' subjective experiences or recollections as they unfold in the present. Yet, in turn, Bergman's later films, such as *The Silence and Persona*, bear a clear debt to Resnais' cinema – particularly in terms of their psychological and narrative ambiguities. In summary, we can highlight the following as features of Bergman's chamber cinema which are closely linked to the subjective aesthetics being developed in the European

art cinema in the late 1950s and early 1960s: a reduction of dialogue (and, concomitantly, less emphasis on speech as explication of plot); fewer dramatic 'events' and a weakening of the causal connections between actions; a fragmentation of classical narrative space and time, which is reconfigured as an expression of subjective perceptions; a blurring of the distinction between events that are 'real' and those that are dreamt, remembered or imagined; and a closer focus on female protagonists and female subjectivity.

However, it is equally vital that we consider these changes in relation to the logical, internal evolution of Bergman's cinema. Specifically, it is the gradual transformation in Bergman's attitude towards religious questions that motivates the formal and thematic shift in his cinema. As indicated previously, this transformation is manifested in the differences between *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*. While both display a sceptical agnosticism, the latter begins to suggest a more humanistic strand in Bergman's philosophical outlook, with Isak looking inward for his 'salvation'. In *Through a Glass Darkly*, God's silence again becomes an explicit narrative concern, and one that is intrinsically linked to our subjective perception of the world around us. The Biblical passage from which the title is taken, which appears in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, affirms the notion that our perception of the world is like a dim reflection of reality; only through God is full knowledge of the world possible: 'For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known.'[12] However, in *Through a Glass Darkly*, Bergman actually begins to suggest something very different. In the film, God only appears to Karin (Harriet Andersson), who is suffering from schizophrenic hallucinations, implying that the presence of God does not clarify our perceptions, but instead is a fundamental part of our delusions. Yet, at this time,

Bergman was still unwilling to reject the idea of God – despite his growing doubts – and included an epilogue in which a new conception of human love as 'proof' of God's existence is advocated. Subsequently, Bergman wrote:

> *Through a Glass Darkly* was a desperate attempt to present a simple philosophy: God is love and love is God. A person surrounded by love is also surrounded by God...
> So here we started with a falsehood, largely unconscious, but a falsehood nevertheless.[13]

With hindsight, Bergman recognized a disingenuous aspect to *Through a Glass Darkly*, which he described as a 'false tone' running throughout the film.[14] Again, there is a growing humanism (or even existentialism) at the core of the film, but this is masked by the reassertion of the need for a theistic framework in which meaning and value is to be understood.

Bergman's next film, *Winter Light* (1962), marks an important turning point in his cinema. The film concerns the spiritual crisis experienced by Pastor Tomas Ericsson. (Gunnar Björnstrand). Tomas' faith in God has been shaken following his wife's death from cancer. In the course of an afternoon following the Sunday service, Tomas is confronted by a suicidal parishioner, Jonas (Max von Sydow), seeking guidance. For Jonas, life appears utterly futile, and Man's capacity for hate and destruction is a constant source of anxiety (he is obsessed by the thought of an imminent nuclear apocalypse). Tomas responds to these fears by saying, 'We must trust God', but his words are entirely hollow, with his voice and countenance betraying his lack of conviction. In truth, Jonas' anxieties mirror Tomas' deep-seated doubts. Unable to comfort Jonas, Tomas later articulates his own lack of faith to his parishioner: 'Death is just a snuffing out, a disintegration of body and soul. There is no creator, no sustainer.' With these words, Tomas unwittingly endorses Jonas' suicide plans, and

shortly afterwards, he learns that Jonas has shot himself. This turn of events seems inevitable to the viewer, but it is a shock to Tomas, who has been entirely fixated on his own problems. If there is an implicit criticism of Tomas' character in the film, this is not directed at his lack of faith, but at his inability to show real empathy or compassion to Jonas.

Winter Light is uncompromisingly bleak, yet Bergman regarded it as one of his finest achievements, and as the ultimate articulation of his own spiritual crisis.[15] Certainly, the film marks a decisive shift in Bergman's philosophical outlook, and the importance of this to the development of his later cinema should not be overlooked. After *Winter Light*, Bergman's films are atheistic; the protracted interrogation of God's existence or nature has been effaced as a direct thematic concern, and God is only significant as a conspicuous absence – that is, as the eponymous silence that heralds a new era in Bergman's cinema. Needless to say, the atheistic position that underpins this new phase of Bergman's cinema has a number of far-reaching consequences in terms of how (and why) subjective thought is represented.

Firstly, the absence of God implies the loss of any transcendental meaning or value system that can illuminate human existence. For Bergman, acceptance of this position necessitates a re-examination of how human beings create their own values and meanings within a social context. In *The Silence*, this inevitably leads to a greater focus on subjective experience, along with a closer exploration of fundamental aspects of human emotion and behaviour – things such as love, hate, aggression and sexuality. In addition, the loss of faith in the explanatory power of religion can be closely related to Bergman's increased willingness to depict psychological ambiguity or uncertainty. In Bergman's atheistic cinema, character motivations are frequently obscure, and, more often than not, thoughts and emotions are depicted as ambiguous

or ambivalent. One of the major faults that Bergman identified retrospectively in *Through a Glass Darkly* was his 'need to be didactic', which led to the film's resolute but disingenuous conclusion.[16] In contrast, his later films are more concerned with asking questions and challenging assumptions.

Part of the motivation for Bergman's desire to represent thought non-linguistically can also be traced to his rejection of religion. There is a clear, historical link between religious authority and the illuminating power of language, crystallized in the centrality of written doctrine in the major religions. Written doctrine purports to be an authoritative – and objective – account of the world, containing incontestable truths, meanings and values. For Bergman, the son of a pastor, the connection between authoritative language and religion must have been particularly resonant. In his biography of Bergman, Peter Cowie observes: 'All three Bergman children were made to go to church on Sunday to hear their father preach. Religion was "something to get hold of, something substantial."'[17] Bergman's rejection of religion is, therefore, a very literal rejection of patriarchal discourse. As further evidence for this, it is important to note that the spiritual conflict portrayed in *Winter Light* is also rendered as a symbolic struggle between father and son. Ingmar Bergman's father was named Erik; in *Winter Light*, the protagonist is Pastor Ericsson, suggesting that this character merges the figures of Bergman and his father, reconfiguring the inner conflict as an imaginary battle between father and son. This symbolic conflict is strengthened when, following his failure to comfort Jonas, Tomas quotes Christ's words on the Cross, echoing his appeal to the intransigent, silent Father: 'God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' On several levels, Tomas' inner struggle is envisaged as the conflict between the son who questions and the intractable father who demands obedience and faith.[18]

Finally, the centrality of female protagonists and female subjectivity to Bergman's representation of non-linguistic thought is also explicable in terms of his rejection of religion – insofar as this is a rejection of patriarchal language and authority. In *The Silence*, *Persona* and *Cries and Whispers*, Bergman focuses almost exclusively on female subjective experience. This is not to suggest that Bergman tacitly reinforces a series of reductive binary oppositions, contrasting supposedly 'male' traits of objectivity and rationality with female subjectivity and irrationality. Instead, he seeks to emphasize the relationship between individual thought and the dominant ideological framework that produces normative beliefs and values. Since this framework has historically been defined by patriarchal society, female subjective experience provides an obvious position from which to question the dominant viewpoint.

It should be clear that the aesthetic developments in Bergman's depiction of cinematic thought are closely related to the changing ideas, beliefs and attitudes represented in that thought. Therefore, through a close formal analysis of *The Silence*, *Persona* and *Cries and Whispers* – which I regard as Bergman's most significant films in terms of how thought is represented – I shall also be exploring the way in which important psychological themes of identity, sexuality, gender and performance are conceptualized. This analysis will build upon the previous discussion of subjectivity in *Wild Strawberries*, with a similar focus on the non-linguistic, predominantly visual means by which thought is rendered cinematically. I believe that the techniques Bergman uses to represent thought cinematically can be explored fruitfully by dividing them into two broad categories: those that relate to the manipulation of narrative space (editing, composition, camera movement), and those that relate to the manipulation of narrative time (narrative structuration – flashbacks,

plotting, continuity and discontinuity – and, again, editing). Inevitably, there is some overlap across the two categories, but by isolating and cataloguing the techniques by which Bergman depicts thought, I hope to show how his formal representation of subjective experience develops across a series of films, and how specific stylistic features relate to certain thematic concerns.

The Silence: Expressionistic Space

In terms of its plot, *The Silence* is very simple. Two sisters named Ester (Ingrid Thulin) and Anna (Gunnel Linbolm), and Anna's young son, Johan (Jorgen Lindstrom), are travelling by train through an unidentified foreign country. In the course of the journey, Ester becomes seriously ill, and the group has to disembark in an occupied city. While Ester convalesces in a large hotel suite, Anna explores the city, and Johan is left to wander through the hotel's labyrinthine corridors. Anna has a series of sexual liaisons with a barman whom she meets in a café. This leads to a bitter argument with her sister, who is very disapproving of Anna's actions (it is implied that the sisters may have had an incestuous relationship in the past). Anna rejects Ester's attempts to control her behaviour, and subsequently Ester's condition deteriorates rapidly. Later, we see Ester bedridden and seemingly close to death. Dispassionately, Anna tells Ester that she and Johan will be departing, and the film ends with the mother and son resuming their train journey.

As well as being deliberately economical in terms of its plot, *The Silence* is very sparse in dialogue. This lack of speech reflects one of the film's central thematic concerns: the breakdown of communication. On an immediate level, normal verbal

processes are impaired through the placement of the characters in a foreign city with an unknown language. This immediately focuses our attention on the alternative, non-verbal forms of communication by which the characters express their thoughts and feelings. Gestures, mimes, facial expressions, body language, the showing of photographs, and even puppeteering become crucial in terms of how ideas and emotions are conveyed, both among the characters and (indirectly) to the viewer. This emphasis on the importance of non-verbal communication is carried through to Bergman's later work. In *Persona*, we are again confronted with a situation in which spoken dialogue is problematized. The film centres on the relationship between Elisabet (Liv Ullmann), an actress who suddenly and inexplicably stops speaking, and Alma (Bibi Andersson), her nurse and companion. Similarly, in *Cries and Whispers* problems of verbal communication are highlighted, as implied by the title. This film concerns the relationship between three sisters, Karin (Ingrid Thulin), Maria (Liv Ullmann) and Agnes (Harriet Andersson), and their maid, Anna (Kari Sylwan). Agnes is dying from a terminal illness, and Karin and Maria have returned to their childhood home to nurse and comfort their sister through her final days. Despite the situation, Karin and Maria remain distant from each other and from Agnes, finding it almost impossible to engage in meaningful conversation or recapture the intimacy of childhood. Yet, as with *The Silence*, the complexity of the characters' fraught relationships is conveyed largely without expositional dialogue, through non-verbal exchanges and interactions. For Bergman, the restriction of verbal processes on an immediate diegetic level helps to refocus our attention on the 'sensuous' aspects of thought and cinematic communication.

With limited verbal exposition, the manipulation of space becomes essential in offering us a clear insight into the characters' relationships and minds. In *The Silence*,

space is not clearly delineated according to the conventions of classical realism. The characters do not occupy a preordained dramatic space in which the action unfolds objectively. Instead, spatial configurations are frequently expressionistic, conveying, or even projecting, subjective judgements and evaluations. The film's opening shot is exemplary in terms of how space is configured in relation to the three central characters. The shot lasts approximately two minutes, during which time the camera moves back and forth among the three protagonists. Initially, a tight close-up reveals Johan with his eyes closed. The camera then pans right before halting once more, framing Anna in a medium close-up as she lazily fans herself. After this brief pause, the camera pans again, revealing Ester in medium shot. Subsequently, Johan awakes, rubs his eyes, and the camera follows him as he paces restlessly around the train carriage. During the course of this shot, we are gradually able to discern details about the immediate environment in which the action is unfolding. There is no initial establishment of space and setting; the opening close-up is deliberately disorientating.

Our experience in this scene is similar to Johan's: it is almost as if we 'awake' into this unfamiliar setting. Yet, at the same time, by framing each character in turn, the opening shot helps to establish three distinct subjects with whom we are invited to identify. The initial camera movement prefigures later shifts in identification and perspective, as the narrative point of view consistently switches among the three main characters. In addition, the rendering of space helps to convey a number of subjective evaluations of the situation and environment, which are rooted in the characters' immediate perceptions. The initial, visual isolation of each character in the frame reflects the emotional or spiritual isolation that defines these characters and their interactions throughout the film. In contrast to this, the way in which the overall space is represented also gives a sense of the tension arising from the characters' physical

confinement and proximity to each other. A powerful impression of claustrophobia is created through the closeness of the actors to the camera, Johan's pacing around the small carriage, and the high contrast photography which seems to compress the depth of field. The dramatic space is constructed in relation to how the characters perceive and react to their surroundings. Consequently, it is possible for us to grasp intuitively aspects of the characters' attitudes and emotions before these have been formulated as intellectual abstractions.

The expressive use of space developed in this opening sequence continues throughout the film. Frequently, spatial organization or composition offers a specific insight into a character's mind, imbuing the ostensibly objective image with a subjective meaning. A strong example of this occurs in the hotel suite when Ester overhears Anna and Johan discussing their possible departure. Johan asks his mother if Ester will be leaving with them that night, and she replies that she does not know. During this exchange, Ester is positioned in the foreground of the image, in profile, while Anna and Johan occupy a separate room in the background and are framed by the doorway. There is a cut to a tight two-shot of Anna and Johan hugging, followed by a cut back to Ester, who now wears a slightly pained expression. Shortly afterwards, Ester moves further into the foreground, now facing the camera, while Anna and Johan continue to be framed together in the background. The composition forces our attention to alternate between the pained expression we see on Ester's face and the brightly illuminated figures of mother and son sharing the background, synthesizing the two images as an instant visual realisation of Ester's mental distress. This powerful, wordless intimation of how Ester perceives her isolation and exclusion acts as a stark counterpoint to the verbal façade she creates, calmly telling Anna and

Johan that they should leave that night. Again, Bergman suggests the way in which film can expose aspects of thought that language masks.

In this instance, the way in which the characters occupy the fragmented dramatic space offers a clear insight into the specific mental dimensions of the image, but often there is a more general expressivity in the rendering of space. Repeatedly, the characters' immediate surroundings are depicted as being confusing or overwhelming. The hotel corridors and chambers in which Johan plays are represented as being vast and mazelike. The hotel suite itself, with its array of separate rooms, doorways, windows and mirrors (frames within the frame), is a disorientating space; on several occasions it is not easy to make sense of the space or situate the characters in relation to each other. Added to this, on a structural level the film dislocates the different environments in which the action occurs. A shot of Anna and Johan on the train is followed by a high-angle shot of an unidentified street, with no attempt to create a smooth transition between the two.

In many ways, this extensive use of expressive space and visual discontinuity can be compared to the organization of space in the dream sequences in *Wild Strawberries*. As in the earlier film, the use of fragmentation and discontinuity helps to create a dreamlike atmosphere in which the usual unities of time and space are disrupted. The critical difference, of course, is that in *The Silence* there is no clear demarcation of individual subjective sequences. The film is expressionistic throughout, interweaving objective representation and subjective impressions. Sven Nykvist, Bergman's cinematographer, reported that when planning *The Silence* Bergman had insisted that 'There must not be any of the old, hackneyed dream effects such as visions in soft focus or dissolves. The film itself must have the character of a dream.'[19] In *The Silence*, Bergman purposefully refuses any obvious cues that

differentiate subjective and objective representation. This can be related to his description of the viewing process in *Through a Glass Darkly*, where we 'stop watching from the outside and become part of the madness inside.' Our position as spectators is similar to that of the characters: we are thrown into an unfamiliar, dreamlike environment and confronted with a series of bizarre situations that defies easy interpretation. Despite the fidelity with which *Wild Strawberries* represents the dreaming process, there is always a certain critical distance between the viewer and the dream material. Our awareness that a dream is being represented inevitably colours our attitude to the action depicted, so that we are ready to interpret events symbolically, and restore a rational premise to illogical occurrences. Yet, as several commentators have observed, when we dream, our unquestioning acceptance of the dream events as 'real' is intrinsic to the experience; the dreaming state is characterized fundamentally by our inability to discern its subjective status. As Freud writes, when we dream 'we appear not to *think* but to *experience*; that is to say, we attach complete belief to the hallucinations...'[20] Because *The Silence* does not overtly 'represent' a dream, but instead has 'the character of a dream', it can be seen as an attempt to replicate dreaming on an experiential rather than conceptual level. Once more, the distinction that Bergman draws between sensuous and intellectualized modes of thinking is important. In *The Silence*, there is a strong emphasis on the immediacy of perceptual and emotional experience. Our critical engagement with the film's themes is temporarily suspended. As Bergman writes:

> In this medium, as in music, we go straight to the feelings. Only afterwards can we start to work with our intellect. If... the suggestions from the filmmaker are strong enough, they'll stimulate your thoughts when you leave the screening room.[21]

'An Eye Unprejudiced': The Child's Point of View

In *Metaphors on Vision*, experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage asks us to imagine 'an eye unprejudiced... an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know everything encountered in life through an adventure of perception.'[22] For Brakhage, cinema has the potential to defamiliarize everyday objects, restoring to us this type of vision in which sights are not yet classified. In so doing, it enables 'a pursuit of knowledge foreign to language and founded upon visual communication, demanding a development of the optical mind, and dependent upon perception in the original and deepest sense of the word.'[23] The parallels between Brakhage's theory of the optical mind and Bergman's 'sensuous' communication should be evident immediately. Both are based upon the idea of a pre- or non-linguistic mode of thinking, and both recognize the potential restrictions that the intellect imposes upon everyday experience. For Bergman, as for Brakhage, cinematic communication is capable of deconstructing the familiar, and so is inherently suited to questioning conventional knowledge or ideas. *The Silence*, in particular, exposes a gap between perception and understanding, revealing the essential processes by which consciousness 'makes sense' of the world, or retrospectively organizes disparate sensations and emotions into conceptual frameworks. Unsurprisingly, the child's point of view is of primary importance in reconfiguring our perceptual experience. As noted previously, the first shot of the film shows Johan as he awakes, rubs his eyes, and begins to explore his environment. He is, in Cowie's words, 'fresh to the world.'[24] The child provides the 'eye unprejudiced' through which everyday objects, ideas and assumptions are scrutinized afresh.

The clearest example of how *The Silence* defamiliarizes the everyday through the child's point of view occurs very early in the film, when Johan stands at the train window and watches a long progression of tanks stream past. The window becomes a screen through which the events perceived lose both their sense of reality and their sense of connection to the perceiver. We see a series of shots and reverse-shots, which alternate between the rapt expression on Johan's face and a seemingly endless line of tanks flying across the screen. As Johan becomes more deeply engrossed in the spectacle, shots of the window taken from behind the child's back are replaced with direct optical point of view shots, so that the window fills the frame. As this transition occurs, the sense of 'unreality' is accentuated. The tanks seem increasingly artificial and two-dimensional: they have the appearance of models or toys. The objects perceived appear to have been distorted by the perceiver's imagination. Thus as the sequence progresses, we are forced into an ever-closer identification with the child's perspective, and as this happens the act of subjective perception itself becomes the focus of our attention.

Although this sequence delineates Johan's point of view in a conventional manner (the glance towards the out-of-field object followed by a shot revealing the object being observed), it is important to recognize the unusual way in which *The Silence* utilizes point-of-view shots.[25] The point-of-view shot is always subjective, in that it represents what a particular character sees, but in its classical incarnation this implicit subjectivity rarely conflicts with the autonomy of the object represented. The shot is used to convey important narrative information, and to orientate us in a well-defined narrative space. The primary focus is on what the character sees, not on questions of how the appearance of the object relates to subjective perception. As Julio Moreno observes, the point-of-view shot is most frequently used 'as an adjunct of continuity,

helping to string the narrative together. This was the first form in which the usage appeared, and its earliest manifestations date from the very beginnings of motion pictures.'[26] In contrast, Johan's point of view is used not to convey unambiguous narrative information or to reinforce continuity. Instead, it arrests the flow of narrative, drawing attention to an act of perception that fails to confer a clear meaning on the objects perceived. Essentially, this point of view represents an inability to make sense of the external environment, imparting to the viewer a sense of estrangement from the world.

Stuart Kaminsky observes that Bergman frequently uses child characters to interrogate (and problematize) the world of adult knowledge:

> Bergman's children are constantly reaching out to touch and communicate with an adult world which they cannot understand. If the child does make contact, either by his own experience or a shared experience, his protective innocence is torn away and he must face the insight which he has only vaguely sensed. He must face the realisation that God does not exist or does not communicate, that terrible things are possible because man is unprotected, that death exists as a frightening and real end.[27]

Kaminsky's ideas are particularly applicable to the scene in which Johan views the tanks through the train window. Here the figurative concept of 'reaching out' to the adult world is enacted physically when Johan places his palm against the windowpane (a gesture that is directly echoed in *Persona* when the same actor touches a screen depicting the unstable, constantly shifting close-up of the film's two leading actresses). The glass offers the child perceptual access to the adult world whilst simultaneously acting as a barrier which prevents him from directly apprehending that world. However, it would be wrong to suggest that Bergman draws a radical distinction between the child's 'naïve' perception and the comprehensive worldview of the adult. Nor does it follow that the child's inability to make sense of the adult

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world implies a deficiency. The 'insight' of adulthood, as described by Kaminsky, centres on the destruction of certainty and absolute meaning, primarily through a loss of faith in the overarching explanations of existence offered by religious discourse. In this context, the child's incomprehension is, for Bergman, emblematic of the general condition of humanity when faced with the 'terrible things' that have proven possible in the twentieth century. In 'failing' to attach a conventional meaning to the spectacle of innumerable tanks passing the train, Johan's perspective – the 'eye unprejudiced' – instead alerts us to the fundamental irrationality or incomprehensibility that seems to underpin the modern experience of mechanized warfare.

Persona: The Subjective Response to the Documentary Image

In *The Silence*, Johan's point of view is used to defamiliarize the environment for the viewer. Our optical identification with the child provokes us to re-evaluate the world from a different (and novel) perspective, and thus to perceive more deeply. For Johan, the external world is not yet replete with meanings that are 'given' or taken for granted. His mind is constantly interrogating, analyzing and attempting to interpret. Similarly, the viewer, whose perspective is aligned with Johan's, is prompted to an act of reconceptualization. It is here that we can see exactly why cinematic communication represents an ideal for Bergman. The manipulation of space gives us a very direct apprehension of Johan's imaginative engagement with the world, replicating the conditions by which his mind struggles to interpret the disordered impressions of its environment. This expresses a type of purely visual thought. We can, of course, attempt to translate the meaning of the scene into abstract linguistic

terms – working with our intellect once we have left the screening room. But for Bergman, the primary operation of cinema is to communicate sensuously, to construct and convey ideas in a non-verbal form.

Because of its capacity to evoke a direct identification with a character's sensory or emotional experience, cinema is especially adept at expressing traumatic, confusing or ambivalent psychological states that cannot easily be conveyed or understood in words. In *Persona*, there are two scenes that are reliant on this ability to represent the mind's primordial, non-intellectual response to sudden trauma. Elisabet encounters two images of twentieth century violence which provoke a powerful emotional response. The first encounter occurs towards the beginning of the film, while Elisabet is still confined to her hospital room. Whilst watching television, Elisabet is suddenly confronted with a newscast showing the image of a Vietnamese monk's self-immolation. In the second half of the film, while she is convalescing in the beach house, Elisabet opens a book and discovers the famous photograph of a group of Jews being cleared out of the Warsaw Ghetto by Nazi soldiers. Each scene is particularly illuminating, both in terms of the specific insight we are given into Elisabet's mind and in terms of Bergman's broader approach to depicting mental processes. Therefore, I shall analyze each in some detail, beginning with the latter.

After Elisabet discovers the Warsaw Ghetto photograph, there is a shot/ reverse-shot depiction of her carefully regarding the image. At first the photograph is shown from a distance, with its outer edges clearly visible on the table, approximating Elisabet's optical point of view. Subsequently, after another shot of Elisabet's face, the photo is reframed so that a single detail – the young boy with his hands held above his head – fills the entire screen. This reframing can be said to enact a movement from optical point of view to 'psychological' (or mental) point of view: the image on screen

no longer depicts what Elisabet sees, but represents her thought processes, showing how her attention shifts as she examines the picture in front of her. The photograph is fragmented and reassembled through a series of cuts that successively focus on specific details of the image. The boy is framed in a medium-shot then a close-up. This is followed by a shot of the Nazi guard holding his gun threateningly. This, in turn, is succeeded by a shot isolating the crowd of Jews in the left of the image, where they appear to have been herded together like cattle. This editing clearly indicates the attempt of the observer to reconstruct a narrative from the image, to imbue the static present moment that has been captured with a temporal aspect that would reanimate the figures. The meaning of this reconstruction, however, is open to debate. David Vierling argues that Elisabet's 'analytical' reaction to the picture engenders a failure to grasp its overall significance: 'Her dissection of the photograph analyzes parts of the whole; yet, by seeing them only as parts she fails to experience the overall synthesis of the parts – the emotion, the horror of the image.'[28] While I agree that there is, in some sense, a failure of the intellect to comprehend the image through its dissection and reconstitution, it is wrong to imply that this attempt at analysis is antithetical to an emotional response, or, indeed, that Elisabet's response is *not* emotional.

Vierling's analysis is misleading because it overlooks two key stylistic elements in Bergman's depiction of Elisabet's response. The first is the rhythm of the editing: the tempo increases noticeably as the sequence progresses, so that we are progressively bombarded with fragments of the image that we have time to perceive but not to analyze. The second is the use of the soundtrack, on which we hear a sustained note that gradually increases in pitch and volume, becoming intrusive and abrasive. Its crescendo is accompanied by a fade to black. Both of these components convey the

non-intellectual response to the image. Both, in fact, imply an emotional reaction which overwhelms the intellect's attempt to analyze and reconstruct a narrative from the image.

The scene in which Elisabet witnesses the television image of the Buddhist monk's self-immolation is constructed along similar lines to the later scene with the photograph. Again, we are made to identify with Elisabet as she is suddenly and involuntarily confronted with an image of horror. As Elisabet realizes what is being depicted on screen, she recoils and backs into the corner of the room, placing as much distance as possible between herself and the image. But this physical and mental retreat is accompanied by a compulsion to look. Once more, a series of shots and reverse-shots is used to represent Elisabet's psychological point of view as she becomes engrossed by the image. We cut back and forth between close-ups of the television image and Elisabet's face, each of which fills our screen. Simultaneously, the diegetic sound becomes subjective as the noise from the television intensifies. These techniques effectively collapse the physical gap between subject and object. In Elisabet's close-ups, the light from the television is reflected in her eyes, and her skin appears clammy, as if in an empathetic response to the heat depicted on screen. Finally, there is a jump cut from the image of the burning monk to a long shot of Elisabet breathing anxiously. The television is now switched off, and the break in continuity makes it appear that this has happened autonomously: it is as if the image has suddenly been cut or blocked out in response to its overwhelming intensity. The discontinuity, which Hubner suggests is '"felt" rather than noted intellectually', seems to mirror Elisabet's emotional response.[29] It is worth comparing this moment to the apparent 'breakdown' of the projector later on in the film, which occurs after Elisabet steps on a piece of broken glass that Alma has planted in her path. In the latter case,

the celluloid appears to catch fire, creating a sudden, almost visceral shock. Once more, the occurrence of physical (and psychological) pain is accompanied by a formal disruption of narrative and continuity. In these instances, the objective representation of space, time and action is entirely eliminated, being replaced by an abstract representation of subjective emotions and sensations.

A note that Bergman made whilst working on the screenplay for *Persona*, and which he later published in *Images*, reveals the line of thought that inspired his insertion of documentary images into the film:

> I am unable to grasp the large catastrophes. They leave my heart untouched. At most I can read about such atrocities with a kind of greed – a pornography of horror. But I shall never rid myself of those images. Images that turn my art into a bag of tricks, into something indifferent, meaningless.[30]

Bergman's statement is complex and, in places, almost appears self-contradictory. He confesses to being unable to 'grasp' atrocities when he reads about them, but the images associated with these horrors seem to be indelibly grafted on his mind. Implicitly, these images possess a communicative power that cannot be replicated in narrative, whether factual or fictional. Yet the failure of the intellect when confronted by the documentary image of horror is something that *Persona* conveys extremely well. Again, for Bergman, cinematic communication is able to express the seemingly ineffable aspects of thought that resist verbalization. As Susan Sontag observes:

> Elizabeth watching a newsreel on TV of a bonze in Saigon immolating himself, or staring at the famous photograph of a little boy from the Warsaw Ghetto being led off to be slaughtered, are, for Bergman, above all, images of total violence, of unredeemed cruelty. They occur in *Persona* as images of what cannot be imaginatively encompassed or digested, rather than as occasions for right political and moral thoughts. In their function, these images don't differ from the earlier flashbacks of a palm into which a nail is being hammered or of the anonymous bodies in the morgue.[31]

Sontag is certainly correct to suggest that these images are in some sense indigestible, and function primarily on an affective rather intellectual level. However, her analysis ignores the question of how the documentary images are qualitatively different to other images of violence in the film. The recognition of the documentary images' authenticity makes us respond to them in a very different way compared to similar violent images. Indeed, Elisabet's response, with which the viewer is invited to identify, acknowledges the fundamental difference between these real-life images and representations of pain constructed in film or theatre. Her perspective appears to be similar to that expressed by Bergman: her art is reduced to 'a bag of tricks' when she confronts the inimitable power of photographed reality. Implicitly, Elisabet's muteness has been provoked at least in part by her sudden conviction that her life – both publicly and privately – is constituted by hollow performances (the psychiatrist [Margaretha Krook] suggests that Elisabet's silence is provoked by a 'hopeless dream of being', the search for an authentic identity that is not defined by social role-playing). Therefore, while the documentary images are not inserted to inspire political thought, as such, they are not devoid of thematic meaning. They have a direct thematic significance insofar as they highlight issues of performance and reality as these relate to both Elisabet's concept of identity and *Persona's* wider, self-reflexive exploration of different levels of cinematic 'reality'.[32]

Shot/ Reverse Shot: Identification and Self-Reflexivity

Both *Persona* and *The Silence* contain important sequences that foreground our identification with a character's point of view. This identification is achieved,

primarily, through the shot/ reverse shot editing that is also used to codify subjectivity in classical cinema. However, while Bergman utilizes a 'classical technique' to convey subjective impressions, his overall representation of point of view diverges from the classical paradigm in a number of ways. A brief consideration of the classical deployment of the shot/ reverse shot structure is illuminating, for it reveals the way in which Bergman reconfigures classical narrative space in order to make us more conscious of character subjectivity, and the processes by which we identify with this subjectivity. In *Persona*, particularly, there is a self-reflexive engagement with the illusionism of classical technique, which acts as a touchstone for the contrasting, subjective aesthetics of Bergman's cinema. This strong engagement with classicism should not come as a surprise. As Birgitta Steene notes, Bergman did not 'spring forth as a European auteur', but learned his craft within a popular film industry similar to Hollywood in terms of its commercial foundation, and which encouraged a close adherence to 'the principles of classical sutured cinema.'[33]

In many ways, the unity of shot and reverse shot in classical continuity editing underpins the apparent autonomy of space and narrative events. Taken on its own, the single shot is necessarily selective: it is framed from a specific angle, and depicts a limited spatial field that has been temporarily annexed from its surroundings. A sense of geographical fullness is only achieved when a second shot, usually depicting the reverse field of the first, is introduced to synthesise the offscreen and onscreen space as a unified dramatic location. Several theorists have suggested that this movement between shot and reverse shot provides the fundamental, objective foundation for classical realist cinema.[34] When the reverse shot is appended to the original shot, it enacts an effacement of the process of the camera's *subjective* selection: the discriminative framing of one event is subordinated to a dyadic structure that

reinforces a logical spatial relationship. Traditionally, this organization of space is used to incorporate characters and their subjective perspectives within an overarching objective-realist mode of representation. This means that the shot/ reverse shot structure is predominantly used to alternate between character perspectives in dialogue scenes and to codify optical point of view. Spectatorship of classical cinema, therefore, becomes a process of many localized subjective identifications within a narrative framework that ensures the illusion of an overall objectivity and autonomy of events. Furthermore, the viewer is unlikely to be conscious of the ongoing process of identification, insofar as the classical cinema does not draw attention to its stylistic construction. As noted previously, point of view editing is used primarily to convey important narrative information rather than to confer an independent significance on the act of perceiving. As a consequence, the classical cinema rarely raises questions concerning the ontological difference between objective and subjective shots.

Bergman's deployment of shot/ reverse shot and point of view is clearly different in a number of important ways. In the cases we have examined, the narrative significance of the represented object of perception is, at best, a secondary concern. The primary focus is on how the object is represented – that is, how its representation relates to the perceiver's consciousness and thought processes. Images, actions and events that clearly belong to an exterior reality (the tanks, the Vietnamese monk) lose their sense of autonomy. Their meanings become contingent upon their situation within an overarching subjective experience. Moreover, our identification with the perceiver is heavily emphasized through repeated cutting between subject and object. Having established a subjective narrative framework, Bergman consistently draws attention to the processes of identification by which we are orientated in relation to the story.

Bergman's desire to make us aware of the processes of identification that underpin our viewing experience is evident very early on in *Persona*. After the film's initial stream of images, which seems to erupt from the projector that flares to life, we are presented with a shot of a white room occupied by an unidentified boy (Jorgen Lindstrom). The boy looks directly towards the camera, and then reaches towards it. A reverse shot then shows him from behind, touching a screen which depicts a close-up of Elisabet gradually morphing into an image of Alma. This sequence is crucial because it is the first instance in the film in which two shots are linked formally to represent a continuous dramatic occurrence (the previous stream of images is not organized according to any conventional spatio-temporal structure denoting narrative continuity). Yet, as P. Adams Sitney points out, this particular inception of shot/ reverse shot does not ease the viewer into a conventional narrative situation, but instead addresses its own artifice:

> This first instance of shot-countershot in the film draws attention to itself in two ways: first, by having the boy look directly into the camera, and reach out as if to touch it, the filmmaker brings into play the only locus of offscreen space that would not be automatically absorbed into the fictive arena that all other pivots of shot-countershot generate. Secondly, the reversed shot does nothing to hide the fact that the boy is confronting a screen. The unified spatial 'event' that he thus depicts has been drained of its fictional authority.[35]

Essentially, shot/ reverse shot editing usually produces a coherent spatial field that 'contains' the film's action in a naturalistic manner. The first instance of shot/ reverse shot at the beginning of *Persona* is very different in that it foregrounds the conditions of film viewing. It draws attention to the artifice of 'normal' editing, implies the presence of the camera, and makes us conscious of the sharp reorientation of our perspective from shot to shot. In short, we are alerted to the mechanisms by which we

as film viewers are positioned in relation to the narrative, and to the processes of interpretation and identification that follow from this positioning.

This early self-reflexive sequence serves several purposes. Firstly, it sensitizes the viewer to the ways in which conventional filmic narrative and representation will be subverted. Throughout the film, events that appear initially to be 'real' occurrences, and which are presented as such, gradually lose their credibility, so that we are forced to re-evaluate these incidents as being subjectively rendered (the depiction of physical vampirism or the scene in which Elisabet's husband [Gunnar Björnstrand] appears are obvious examples). Secondly, the sequence also alerts us to the difficulty of locating a specific origin of many of the film's subjective visions. The sequence offers the boy as a potential surrogate viewer with whom we may identify; indeed, because he watches a screen depicting the fiction's two main protagonists, it might seem reasonable to suggest that the subsequent events are in some way filtered through his awareness of the narrative. This interpretation is strengthened by the same actor's similar role in *The Silence*. In the earlier film, the boy is more an observer than a participant in the action. In *Persona*, this role is developed so that the character is physically removed from the film's main action (we cannot even say that he occupies the same diegetic space as Elisabet and Alma in any conclusive sense). However, the second shot of the shot/ reverse shot pair reveals that our initial optical viewpoint can also be attributed to the Alma/ Elisabet image. Retrospectively, we discover that our perspective has been aligned with that of the women on the screen. The sequence can be seen as a microcosmic representation of the film as a whole, where subjective viewpoint is constantly shifting and often ambiguous. Finally, the sequence also highlights the themes of identity and identification that are central to the film's narrative. The identification of the viewer with the characters on screen, which

underpins our experience of film, is represented directly when the boy reaches out towards the giant image. This foreshadows the psychological identifications that take place between Alma and Elisabet and cause their identities to 'merge'. Initially, Alma also occupies the position of film-viewer, and identifies with Elisabet's screen image. She relates her experience of having seen the actress in a film. 'When I came home,' she recalls, 'I saw myself in the mirror and thought: we're alike... I think I could turn myself into you. If I made a real effort. I mean inside.' The recognition of the viewer's potential identification with the character on the screen is intrinsically linked to the film's exploration of mimicry, projection and role-playing as facets of personality formation.

Towards the end of *Persona*, there is another episode that can be thought of as an aberrant shot/ reverse shot sequence, and which further develops the film's examination of identification and identity. We are presented with a repeated monologue in which Alma makes a series of assertions about Elisabet's failure as a mother. The actress, Alma suggests, found herself unable to play the 'role' of mother: she was horrified by the pregnancy, failed to bond with her son, and secretly wished that he would die. As Alma speaks for the first time, the camera remains fixed upon Elisabet's face, showing her reactions to the nurse's 'revelations'. Immediately afterwards, the entire monologue is repeated, but with the camera angle reversed, so that Alma's face is depicted as she speaks. In a way, the scene has the appearance of having been placed in the film in a raw, 'unedited' state: it depicts a series of shots and reverse shots – actions and reactions – that have not been spliced together to form a continuous narrative and a cohesive dramatic space. This spatial deconstruction changes the viewer's role, which becomes less passive and more critical, as s/he is forced to adopt a strange, dualistic perspective in which the two separate 'takes' must

be reconfigured mentally in relation to each other. Again, this disintegration of the classical space of shot/ reverse shot functions to break the cinematic illusion of an objectively documented reality. As Sontag observes:

> [Film] always gives the illusion of a voyeuristic access to an untampered reality, a neutral view of things as they are. What is filmed is always, in some sense, a 'document'. But what contemporary film-makers more and more often show is the process of seeing itself, giving grounds or evidence for several different ways of seeing the same thing, which the viewer may entertain concurrently or successively.[36]

The doubled monologue not only foregrounds the different perspectives that may operate within a single scene, but also raises the question of whose 'thoughts' are being presented in the dialogue. Alma delivers her analysis of Elisabet's feelings towards motherhood as if she has some sort of telepathic ability – or at the very least, has access to information about her patient that has not been divulged to the viewer. She relates details about Elisabet's past experiences as if these are indisputable facts, and as if she is able to penetrate and explain the actress' innermost thoughts. At the same time, the initial representation of Elisabet's facial expressions seems to confirm the accuracy of Alma's report. Elisabet appears guilty and uncomfortable, frequently looking away from the camera as she breaks eye contact with Alma. Yet when the sequence is repeated, depicting Alma's face as she delivers her speech, we are suddenly forced to reconsider the validity of the analysis, to question its accuracy as a representation of Elisabet's psyche. Alma's face reveals a sense of malicious intent that is not evident from her voice alone, as if she is taking a cruel pleasure in 'unmasking' Elisabet. This, of course, heightens our awareness of the possibility that Alma's analysis may not be a fair or accurate evaluation of Elisabet's character. The situation is further complicated by the fact that some of Alma's accusations might

equally well be interpreted as self-criticisms. Earlier in the film, in another long monologue, Alma reveals that whilst on holiday with her fiancé she participated in an orgy with three strangers, after which she became pregnant and had an abortion. Alma's accusations against Elisabet can, therefore, be seen as a projection of her own sense of guilt arising from her infidelity and its consequences.[37] After the doubled monologue, Alma seems to recognize the ambiguity regarding whose thoughts and actions she is describing, as she suddenly exclaims, 'No! I'm not like you. I don't feel like you'. This is preceded and followed by the composite image of the two women's faces, which encapsulates the merger of two apparently distinct perspectives and consciousnesses within a single identity. This image articulates a number of conclusive realizations on Alma's part, concerning the instability of identity, the complex relationship between self-perception and the perception of the Other, and the different layers of personality that operate in different social contexts. But, as Robin Wood notes, it can also be said to symbolize the film viewer's imaginative engagement with the characters: 'most people find it possible – even inevitable – during the film to identify with both Alma and Elizabeth: their consciousnesses find a common denominator in the consciousness of the spectator.'[38] The fluidity of our identifications with each character's point of view (specifically in the doubled monologue sequence, but also in the film as a whole) prepares us for their symbolic amalgamation.

The Close-Up and the Mask

Each section of the doubled monologue is presented through a series of four shots, linked by dissolves, that gradually bring us closer and closer to the character's face.

The first section begins with a medium shot of Elisabet taken from over Alma's shoulder (as if this is to be a conventional dialogue scene utilizing shot/ reverse shot editing), and ends with a full-screen close-up of Elisabet's face as she stares directly into the camera. The second section mirrors the first, with the camera angles reversed. Each section generates a progression from an objectively presented dramatic space, in which there is a clear delineation of the spatial relationship between the two characters (through the over-the-shoulder shot), to a subjective, 'expressive' space that has lost its geographical grounding. We are gradually compelled to focus solely on the face and its immediate expressivity.

Gilles Deleuze considers the close-up (of any object including the face) to be a pure 'affection image', in the sense that it creates an immediate emotional or sensorial effect for the viewer.[39] Deleuze argues that the close-up does not simply enlarge a specific object, but instead *'abstracts it from all spatio-temporal coordinates'*, so that the overall change in the object is qualitative rather than quantitative: 'The close-up is not an enlargement and, if it implies a change of dimension, this is an absolute change: a mutation of movement which ceases to be translation in order to become expression.'[40] This argument builds upon the theoretical work of Béla Balász, who suggests, 'The facial expression on a face is complete and comprehensible in itself and therefore we need not think of it as existing in space and time.'[41] For both theorists, the facial close-up articulates the movement that is also implied by Bergman in the doubled monologue sequence. The close-up of the face, Deleuze and Balász suggest, momentarily transports us from a clearly defined spatial realm to a mental or spiritual realm in which we are given a privileged access to a character's thoughts and feelings.

For Balász, facial expression is the ultimate representation of the individual's subjectivity, and the facial close-up is unique in objectively capturing this subjective phenomenon:

> Facial expression is the most subjective manifestation of man, more subjective even than speech, for vocabulary and grammar are subject to more or less universally valid rules and conventions, while the play of features, as has already been said, is a manifestation not governed by objective canons, even though it is largely a matter of imitation. This most subjective and individual of human manifestations is rendered objective in the close-up.[42]

The idea that the close-up objectively captures the idiosyncratic expression of the self is something that can broadly be accepted, but requires certain caveats. Firstly, we cannot totally abstract our interpretation of a facial expression from the memory of its context. This has been famously demonstrated by the Kuleshov experiment, in which a 'neutral' facial expression was juxtaposed with different emotive images in order to gauge the effect of montage in altering the viewer's perception of the individual image. Kuleshov's results suggested that the viewer's interpretation of the facial expression tends to be influenced by the immediate narrative context.[43] Similarly, the scene in *Persona* in which Elisabet confronts the image of the burning monk illustrates the montage effect, with the horrified expression on the actress' face being magnified by its juxtaposition with the extremely emotive documentary footage. Added to this, we must account for the ways in which lighting and sound effects potentially alter our perception of the facial close-up. Nevertheless, Balász's basic premise that the close-up may present us with an objective view of a character's unique subjectivity can be accepted in principle. The central point of his argument is that the facial close-up presents an ideal in terms of its communicability: from the face in close-up, we intuitively read a character's subjective impressions, thought

processes, and emotions. In this regard, the facial close-up exemplifies the type of unique cinematic technique that Bergman regards as operating in prelinguistic terms, or as a form of 'soul-to-soul' communication.

The notion that the face, especially as it is captured in close-up, provides a unique access to thought and feeling is reiterated throughout Bergman's cinema. In *Wild Strawberries*, as has already been noted, Victor Sjöstrom's face is repeatedly framed in close-up: the expressiveness of the silent cinema actor's face is integral in communicating to the viewer the innermost thoughts of the film's laconic protagonist. In the third dream sequence, Sara holds up a mirror to Isak's face and proceeds to 'read' his features, cataloguing his secret obsessions and anxieties as if she were looking directly into his mind. There is a similar scene in *Cries and Whispers*. Maria stands before a mirror while David (Erland Josephson), the doctor with whom she is having an adulterous affair, enumerates the emotional flaws that he sees as being written upon her face. As Peter Cowie notes, 'Bergman's men and women abhor the mirror; it reflects the truth they are unwilling to accept... [F]acial expressions and bodily behaviour are more suggestive of inner feelings and soul condition than the words pronounced by Bergman's characters.'[44] Indeed, there are several incidents in Bergman's cinema where the truthfulness of the face is contrasted with the duplicity of language. In *The Silence*, as we have already seen, Ester creates a vocal façade, calmly suggesting that Anna and Johan should leave her alone in the foreign city. At the same time, her facial expression betrays her true feelings to the viewer. The face's capacity to reveal thoughts that the individual attempts to conceal with disingenuous language is also emphasized in *Autumn Sonata* (1978). Eva (Liv Ullmann) accuses her mother (Ingrid Bergman) of habitual insincerity. When she was a child, Eva tells her mother, 'I mistrusted your words. They didn't match the expression I saw in your

eyes.' In these instances, Bergman portrays the face as providing an inimitable insight into the secret thoughts that his characters try to hide.

There is, however, another side to the face that is scrutinized in Bergman's cinema, and particularly in *Persona*. The facial close-up is also used, at times, to make us aware of the limits of the face's 'readability'. The idealized access to a character's innermost thoughts and emotions that the facial close-up would seem to guarantee is disrupted periodically by the problematic face that proves indecipherable. In *Persona*'s doubled monologue scene, the series of close-ups brings us ever-nearer to the face. We are encouraged to explore the face, to discern the true reason for Elisabet's silence, or the validity of Alma's accusations. Yet in the final, full-screen close-up that ends each section, we are suddenly confronted with an ambiguous image of the face, which is lit from one side so that it is half illuminated and half in shadow. We are presented with two diametrically opposed possibilities epitomized in the single image – that the face offers a window on to an authentic mental realm, or that the face functions as an opaque, or even duplicitous, façade. Throughout the film, there is an ongoing tension between these two possible roles for the face. Initially, Alma places unquestioning faith in her ability to discern the (genuine) thoughts and feelings signified by Elisabet's facial expressions. She believes that Elisabet is friendly, compassionate, and interested in (and sympathetic to) her problems. Alma only realizes that she may have misread Elisabet's character when she discovers the contents of a derisive letter which the actress has written about her. Elisabet's appearance, as Alma perceives it, does not reflect her inner self.

The potential disparity between the qualities signified by the face and the authentic, inner character (or between 'seeming' and 'being') is central to *Persona*'s exploration of performance and personality. As numerous commentators on the film

have noted, 'persona' is the Latin word for mask, and, historically, refers to the mask worn by actors or actresses in classical theatre. The film's title, therefore, can be seen as highlighting a fundamental distinction between 'authentic' identity and the metaphorical masks, or social disguises, which people may wear. However, for Bergman the relationship between identity and performance is more complex than this distinction might suggest. The meaning he attaches to the 'persona' is undoubtedly influenced by the specific theorization of the term in Jungian analytic psychology.[45] Jungian theory adopts the usual definition of the persona – to denote the character one displays in public – but, crucially, does not assume that this aspect of one's personality is necessarily 'inauthentic', suggesting instead that identity is fundamentally a multifaceted phenomenon. A short analysis of Jung's theory is highly illuminating when considering Bergman's representation of the mind.

Jung asserts that there is inevitably a disparity between the personality one adopts and displays in public – which is shaped by social requirements – and one's private behaviour and attitudes:

> [Man] puts on a *mask*, which he knows corresponds with conscious intentions, while it also meets with the requirements and opinions of his environment, so that first one motive then the other is in the ascendant. This mask... I have called the *persona*, which was the designation given to the mask worn by the actors of antiquity.[46]

Jung contrasts the persona with the 'inner attitude', which he calls the 'anima' (the Latin term for mind or spirit).[47] However, this dichotomy should not automatically suggest a hierarchy in which the persona worn by an individual is less a part of his or her 'real' character than the attitudes and beliefs adopted in private life. Furthermore, an individual may be said to display several different personae according to the effects of different social situations. As Jung writes:

[A] moderately acute psychological observation can succeed without much difficulty in proving at least the traces of character-splitting in the normal individual. For example, we have only to observe a man rather closely under varying circumstances, to discover that a transition from one milieu to another brings about a striking alteration in his personality, whereby a sharply-outlined and distinctly changed character emerges... Which, then, is the true character, the real personality? This is a question it is often impossible to answer.[48]

Performance and role-playing are, for Jung, a basic component of everyday life and identity. The mask that a person may wear can be seen as a disguise, but it must also be seen as a concrete expression of one aspect of his or her personality in a particular social context. For Jung, identity is not singular, but is always, to a greater or lesser extent, split.

In *Persona*, Elisabet's identity seems, to her, to be split to an unusual degree. It is implied that Elisabet suddenly perceives her identity as being constituted by a series of social performances that seem disconnected from her 'inner self'. During a performance of *Electra*, she suddenly falls silent. The following day, she has entirely given up speaking. In withdrawing from interpersonal relations, Elisabet refuses to 'perform', or to play a social role. Alma, in contrast, initially sees her identity as something coherent and unproblematic. It is only through her contact with Elisabet, and perhaps through her attempt to identify with the actress' perspective, that Alma becomes aware of the fissures in her own personality. At the beginning of the film, Alma introduces herself to Elisabet, telling her patient that she is twenty-five years-old, engaged, has been a nurse for two years, and that her mother was also a nurse. With this small talk, Alma reveals that she has a conventional, uncomplicated view of her own identity, and that there is a simple correspondence between her private and public self. She is a nurse – a carer – just as her mother was, and we are led to assume that once she marries and has children, this role will also define her private life.

Later, in the beach house, she tells Elisabet that at the hospital there is home for old nurses, 'Ones that have always been nurses, lived for their work. Always in uniform.' She concludes that she likes the idea of devoting her life to a single, meaningful role. However, shortly afterwards, Alma begins to articulate a different side to her personality, recognizing the limitations that a singular identity imposes upon the individual. When she relates the details of the orgy in which she participated (and of which her fiancé, presumably, remains unaware), Alma is extremely ambivalent. As she recollects the scene, she appears simultaneously elated, embarrassed, surprised, and frightened. The purely instinctual, irrational facet of her identity that emerges in this sexual experience, and that appears entirely contrary to her everyday sense of self, is something that astounds and scares Alma. After she has told her story, she cries uncontrollably and says, 'It doesn't make sense. None of it fits together.' Alma is forced to confront the irrational aspect of her identity again, when she discovers Elisabet's apparent duplicity, and physically attacks the actress. First Alma plants a shard of glass in Elisabet's path, and then she threatens Elisabet with a pot of boiling water. With these incidents, a dark, animalistic aspect of Alma's identity emerges, one that contrasts directly with the caring persona that defines her earlier in the film. Echoing Jung, we might well ask: which is the true character, the real personality?

Persona suggests a complex, dialectical relationship between performance and identity, and in this regard, the film's self-reflexivity – its stylistic and thematic concern with its own fictitiousness – is again highly significant. *Persona*'s self-reflexivity explains, in part, why Bergman's characters' faces sometimes appear to be impenetrable masks, which defy our attempts to discern definitively a stable identity. Balász saw the close-up of the face as 'complete and comprehensible in itself', as a window on the character's inner life, but his theorization of the close-up is, implicitly,

built upon the assumption that cinema conforms to the tenets of objective realism. Balász was writing in 1945 (building on theories that he had first developed even earlier, in the preceding two decades), and his ideas are grounded in the paradigm of classical realist cinema. His concept of characterization, and of how we read character, is rooted in a notion of cinema as an illusionist art form that dispenses with theatricality:

> The public of today will not tolerate the spoken soliloquy, allegedly because it is 'unnatural.' Now the film has brought us the silent soliloquy, in which a face can speak with the subtlest shades of meaning without appearing unnatural and arousing the distaste of the spectators. In this silent monologue, the solitary human soul can find a tongue more candid and uninhibited than in any spoken soliloquy, for it speaks instinctively, subconsciously. The language of the face cannot be suppressed or controlled. However disciplined and practisedly hypocritical a face may be, in the enlarging close-up we see even that it is concealing something, that is looking a lie.[49]

For Balász, the singular soul reveals itself in the facial close-up – regardless of any conscious effort to mask or conceal character. Facial expression may display simultaneously multiple 'feelings, passions and thoughts', but these are readily interpretable, and reflective of a coherent inner self.[50] However, the relationship between camera, face and 'soul' that Balász postulates is almost antithetical to the self-reflexive, Modernist aesthetic that underpins much of Bergman's later cinema. The foregrounding of the fictional context in which a character acts is often used to negate the authenticity of the most 'private' moments. This is most evident in the actual 'soliloquies' with which Bergman experiments. Alma retires to her room, having just met Elisabet for the first time, and, finding herself alone and unable to sleep, begins to speak aloud about her thoughts and feelings. She speaks naturally, pondering over her future prospects in terms of her marriage, family and career – as if this is simply an interior monologue in which she is trying to organize her thoughts.

But as she speaks, she intermittently glances directly into the camera, drawing attention to the construction of the scene. Clearly, this self-reflexivity emphasizes to the viewer the artificial parameters by which s/he is suddenly afforded an insight into Alma's 'private' thoughts. In addition, and more profoundly, it suggests Alma's first, embryonic awareness that her identity is constituted, in part by personae, that she defines herself according to the social roles of nurse, wife, and mother. (The idea that these roles are 'masks' is subtly reinforced by the visual symbolism of Alma rubbing her face with lotion as she speaks.) Our identification with Alma is particularly strong in this scene, in the sense that our consciousness of her performance reflects her sudden self-consciousness.

With the introduction of a self-reflexive element to characterization, the camera begins to act almost as a mirror for the onscreen character, reconfiguring her actions, words and gestures in terms of her consciousness of her own appearance. Alternatively, the camera becomes the locus of a spectral, objectifying gaze that belongs to both the self and the imaginary other. More simply, the self-reflexive acknowledgment of the camera suggests an introspective gaze that has been externalized, projected onto a hypothetical spectator. As previously noted, both *Wild Strawberries* and *Cries and Whispers* contain mirror scenes that explicitly externalize the act of self-perception. In both there is an underlying narrative subjectivity by which the criticisms of another character are transformed into self-criticism. In *Wild Strawberries*, Isak dreams that Sara holds a mirror to his face and describes what she sees. In *Cries and Whispers*, Maria's flashback shows David pointing out her flaws as they stand before the mirror: it is a depiction of the event as it is subjectively recollected or imagined. In representing this subjective recollection, Bergman has the camera literally take the place of the mirror. Both characters, framed in close-up, look

directly into the lens while David analyzes Maria's features. A shot incorporating a mirror often causes confusion concerning subject and object positions, or conflates these positions so that the character is simultaneously subject and object of the gaze. Similarly, Bergman's camera, insofar as it acts as a mirror for the character, transforms the normal, objective status of space. The camera no longer records the world with objective integrity, but functions in relation to the character's self-conscious imagination.

Narrative Structure and Characterization

Bergman describes his initial plan for *The Silence* as follows: 'My original idea was to make a film that should obey musical laws instead of dramaturgical ones. A film acting by association – rhythmically, with themes and counter themes.'[51] This reconceptualization of narrative structure is fundamental to the representation of thought, not only in *The Silence*, but also in *Persona* and *Cries and Whispers*. In place of conventional plotting, in which events, actions and reactions are linked together in a logical, causal chain, Bergman substitutes an open, associational structure, in which the viewer must identify patterns, connecting disparate ideas, motifs and themes. Many of these 'themes and counter themes' are recurrent across Bergman's work, and are deeply psychological. In *The Silence*, *Persona*, and *Cries and Whispers*, plot and characterization are to a large extent founded upon binary oppositions such as rationality and irrationality, compassion and cruelty, mind and body, mask and soul,

and public and private identity.[52] In all three films, 'realistic' plotting is secondary to the affirmation of symbolic meaning.

The portrayal of Ester's illness in *The Silence* provides a good example of how Bergman rejects the usual logic of causality in order to foreground the existence of specific leitmotifs. Through the course of the film, Ester's condition deteriorates, so much so that by the time Anna and Johan leave, she appears to be close to death. Yet this deterioration is not, by any standard, depicted in a conventional, realistic manner. Periods of abject sickness are followed swiftly by moments of almost total recovery. At one point, Ester is shown writhing in her bed as if suffocating, but shortly afterwards she appears utterly composed, working at her typewriter. This rapid recovery makes little sense in terms of realistic plotting, but it makes plenty of sense thematically and in terms of characterization. The physical degradation associated with Ester's illness – the chaotic collapse of her bodily functions – is contrasted directly with her attempts to maintain the orderly existence, defined by her intellectual pursuits. This can be seen as part of a thematic refrain concerning the relationship between the mind and the body. Ester's desire to assert order over her body reflects her desire to project an authoritative, intellectual persona.

The use of 'themes and counter themes' is fundamental to Bergman's characterizations: his central characters are often archetypal, incarnating a specific set of ideas or motifs. This is not to say that these characters are unrealistic or lack depth, but that they possess exaggerated qualities that directly relate to Bergman's underlying philosophical or moral concerns. In *The Silence*, the sisters are portrayed, on the surface, as having polarized personalities: Ester's veneer of cool intellectualism is contrasted with Anna's flagrant sensuality, typified by her meaningless sexual liaison with a foreign bartender, with whom she cannot verbally communicate. Of

course, this polarization is not absolute, and in some ways, each sister can be said to represent the repressed element of the other's identity. Ester's intellectual aspect is something of a mask. Whilst she languishes in her sickbed, she shows herself to be ruled by her immediate bodily impulses: at various times, we see Ester drinking alcohol excessively, chain-smoking and masturbating. Conversely, the impulsive behaviour that seems to define Anna is underpinned by an element of conscious calculation. Her animalistic sexuality is depicted as a form of symbolic rebellion against Ester's desire to control her. In *Persona* (as we have seen) Elisabet and Alma are also depicted initially as 'opposites', yet turn out to be alike in a number of ways, and in *Cries and Whispers*, the characterizations again conform to this general pattern. Karin and Maria's relationship is similar to that of Ester and Anna: Karin is cold, intellectual, and acts as if she despises all forms of human contact; Maria is sensual and flirtatious. Yet, once more, each of these diametrically opposed characters needs something from the other. Maria desires Karin's approval and acceptance, just as Karin secretly wishes for Maria's love. These characterizations can, therefore, be described as dialectical. Each character is defined in relation to the other, and each is internally 'split', being constituted by opposing forces or desires.

Another, equally productive, way of understanding the relationships between these characters is to propose that each represents a different aspect of a single consciousness. Beverle Houston suggests:

In *The Silence*, this extreme contrast [of personalities], together with the characters' isolation in an unknown city, creates a dream-like situation where the figures seem to represent not so much characters in a dramatic fiction, but unconscious forces at war in the mysterious terrain of the inner life.[53]

Similarly, Sontag writes:

It's correct to speak of *Persona* in terms of the fortunes of two characters named Elisabeth and Alma who are engaged in a desperate duel of identities. But it is equally pertinent to treat *Persona* as relating to the duel between two mythical parts of a single self: the corrupted person who acts (Elisabeth) and the ingenuous soul (Alma) who founders in contact with corruption.[54]

In *Cries and Whispers*, there is also a blurring of the distinction between individual characters and minds. At one point, Maria tells Karin that, as sisters, they have 'memories in common.' This phrase would usually be taken as metaphorical, but at certain points the film does seem to represent a shared or split consciousness. Most notably, after Agnes has (we think) died, she calls out to each of the other women in turn, pleading for comfort and compassion. Maria and Karin are horrified by their sister's 'resurrection', and quickly run from her chamber. Only Anna, the loyal servant, remains behind to comfort her former mistress. It is unclear that this pivotal incident is being attributed to any one character's imagination (although it can be construed as Anna's fantasy). Instead, this ambiguous moment seems to function as a shared psychic or spiritual experience, or, alternatively, to represent in abstract terms a single, but ambivalent, response to death.

In 1964, in between *The Silence* and *Persona*, Bergman told an interviewer that he saw 'more and more clearly that the film as an art form is approaching a discovery of its essential self. It should communicate psychic states, not merely project pictures of external actions.'[55] In the films I am discussing, it is often untenable to consider the action and events represented as being 'real' occurrences. From *The Silence* through *Persona* to *Cries and Whispers*, the external actions are increasingly symbolic projections of mental conflicts or inner happenings. In *The Silence*, most events retain a basic sense of realism, but expressionistic techniques are used throughout to make us aware of the subjective comprehension of the external world. In *Persona*, several

occurrences seem entirely imaginary: Elisabet's nocturnal visit to Alma's bedroom, the arrival of Elisabet's husband (who mistakes Alma for his wife), the scenes that depict Elisabet sucking Alma's blood. Clearly, these incidents should be interpreted symbolically, as visual representations of the central characters' conscious or unconscious mental activities. Finally, in *Cries and Whispers*, the status of various events as real or otherwise is almost irrelevant. The film does not attempt to define rigid boundaries between reality and imagination when representing flashbacks or fantastical occurrences (such as the resurrection scene). All 'external actions', to a greater or lesser extent, reflect an immediate psychological reality as it is experienced by the film's characters.

Bruce Kawin, in his study of 'first-person' cinematic narrative, suggests that many of the unreal, dreamlike visions that occur in *Persona* can be interpreted as symptoms or projections of the film's latent, psychological meaning:

> Much of *Persona*'s excellence lies in its decision not to pinpoint the origin of these visions, but to offer them as *in some way* 'happening' – as if the film itself had in these moments shifted the territory of its exposition from the surface of the story to its eerie undercurrents.[56]

As they are not depicted as part of any particular character's subjective experience, Kawin argues that these 'mindscreens' (direct cinematic representations of thought) could be regarded as 'systemic', attributable to an offscreen, extradiegetic narrator.[57] Of course, there are several problems inherent to the postulation of an unidentified, supra-fictional narrator. Nevertheless, the narrative form that Kawin describes has a clear precedent in the drama of Strindberg. Strindberg's work exerts an extremely powerful influence over Bergman's imagination. As several critics have pointed out, *Persona*'s basic storyline is based upon Strindberg's one act play *The Stronger*

(1889), which concerns the power struggle between two women, one of whom talks while the other remains silent. However, it is Strindberg's *A Dream Play* (1901) that should be identified as the fundamental stylistic model for *Persona* – and, equally, for *The Silence* and *Cries and Whispers*. Strindberg describes his intention with regard to *A Dream Play* as follows:

> [T]he author has in this dream play sought to imitate the disjointed yet seemingly logical shape of a dream. Everything can happen, everything is possible and probable. Time and place do not exist; the imagination spins, weaving new patterns on a flimsy basis of reality: a mixture of memories, experiences, free associations, absurdities and improvisations.
>
> The characters split, double, multiply, evaporate, condense, dissolve and merge. But one consciousness rules over them all: the dreamer's; for him there are no secrets, no inconsistencies, no scruples and no laws.[58]

In *A Dream Play*, all external actions reflect the state of the dreamer's mind; every event and character represents an aspect or thought process of a single consciousness. The dramatic form developed by Strindberg clearly provides a paradigm not only for Bergman's dream sequences in *Wild Strawberries*, but also for the depiction of thought in Bergman's later films. We should note that Bergman produced two versions of *A Dream Play* in the 1960s: one for Swedish television in 1963 (the year *The Silence* was released), and one for the stage in the winter of 1969 (just before he began working on *Cries and Whispers*).[59] Bergman's representation of consciousness during this period, through 'split' characterizations, associative narrative structures, and fantastical action, draws heavily on Strindberg's conceptualization of the dreaming mind.

Strindberg's notes on *A Dream Play* describe a narrative form in which thought is dramatized, in which all external actions signify psychic states. For Bergman, film is the ideal medium for achieving this form.

'No Scruples, No Laws': Censorship and Unconscious Thought

There is a second aspect of the narrative form described by Strindberg that is particularly pertinent in relation to Bergman's depiction of thought. Because the dreaming mind is not subject to the normal processes of censorship that operate in waking life, Strindberg emphasizes that for the dreamer there are not only 'no inconsistencies' in the ostensibly disjointed dream narrative, but also 'no scruples and no laws'. Implicitly, the thought processes rendered in *A Dream Play* express instinctual, unconscious drives. Similarly, many of the sequences in Bergman's films can be seen as representations of the characters' unconscious impulses or desires. Kawin's description of the 'eerie undercurrents' that surface sporadically in *Persona* begins to address this issue of the interplay between consciousness and the unconscious, or text and subtext. The fantastical sequences that cannot be definitively attributed to any one character's subjective experience can be interpreted as direct expressions of unconscious (or repressed) thought. Equally, the various scenes in *The Silence, Persona* and *Cries and Whispers* that address issues of unconstrained violence or sexuality attempt to formulate a relationship between conscious ideas and attitudes, and the unconscious mind.

Upon its release, *The Silence* was perceived by many as an offensive, immoral film. Its frank depiction of Anna's sexual behaviour, along with the subtextual implication of a former incestuous relationship between the sisters, was very controversial by contemporary standards. Cowie states that the Swedish censors originally deemed certain scenes in the film too sexually explicit for release:

At first, the Swedish censorship bureau intended to make cuts in the cabaret sequence. But a campaign in the liberal press led to an amendment in the rules, whereby a film should not be cut if its artistic quality was beyond reproach. This new statute came into effect just three days before *The Silence* was due to receive its certificate – in July 1963.[60]

The Silence also caused controversy abroad. Initially, the French Censorship Board refused to issue a visa to the film, requesting cuts, and in West Germany debate over the film reached parliament.[61]

In at least one sense, the behaviour depicted in *The Silence is* immoral – or, better still, amoral. For Bergman, the concepts of transgressive behaviour and sexual taboo define a specific category of thought that operates in relation to social institutions such as the Church, the family and the state. In *The Silence*, Anna's sexual behaviour should be perceived as being profane, in the sense that it is devoid of any spiritual or moral significance. Anna's uninhibited sexuality is symptomatic of a complete loss of belief in conventional religious ideology. This is not, of course, to say that Bergman portrays Anna in a positive light: in her character, the absence of a spiritual dimension is almost synonymous with total moral bankruptcy. Nevertheless, for Bergman, Anna's amoral sexuality expresses a truth concerning one aspect of human nature. Her behaviour is depicted in a deliberately shocking and provocative manner in order to challenge the ideas and values concerning sexuality (and, in particular, female sexuality) that have been defined historically by patriarchal religious thought. In *Through a Glass Darkly*, there is a similar subversion of the conventional sexual morality circumscribed in religious doctrine. In Karin's hallucination, God appears before her in the form of a spider and attempts to 'penetrate' her body. The image suggests that a violent lust lies behind the façade of 'holy' love. Karin's 'skewed' perspective is utilized to question God's demands for submission and worship, which

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are symbolized as an attempted sexual violation. Like many other characters in Bergman's films, Karin discovers in the idea of God not illumination but a fundamental constraint on her ability to act and think for herself. In this context, sexual transgression represents a rejection of a specific moral ideology.

The Silence and *Through a Glass Darkly* depict a form of instinctual sexuality, unencumbered by laws or scruples. This is potentially liberating, in the sense that it frees thought and action from the ideological constraints imposed by social institutions. At the same time, such unconstrained behaviour is depicted as dangerously nihilistic. In both films, basic humanistic values of love and compassion are supplanted by greed, lust and self-interest; indeed, the loss of the fundamental distinction between love and lust is implicit in the incestuous relationships that are suggested to have occurred between Karin and her brother (Lars Passgard), and between Anna and Ester. Similarly, in *Cries and Whispers*, it is intimated that Karin harbours an incestuous desire for Maria, and her guilt prevents her from showing any signs of affection to her sister. In *Persona*, uninhibited sexuality is again depicted as both liberating and threatening. When Alma recollects the beach orgy, she is extremely ambivalent. The incident is described as a moment of joyous abandon, in which Alma experienced a total liberation from her everyday character and principles. Yet this loss of identity is simultaneously perceived as something dangerous and deeply disturbing. Alma recognizes in herself instinctual forces over which she has limited control, and which are entirely contrary to her normal sense of self. It is these same forces that are unleashed when Alma attacks Elisabet. The utter collapse of Alma's normal, socially-defined identity at this point is conveyed by the simultaneous 'collapse' of the narrative, as represented by the images depicting the breakdown of the projector. The collapse of the cinematic illusion is a powerful metaphor for the

sudden disintegration of the conceptual structures that support Alma's senses of reality and self-identity. As Robin Wood observes:

> After the depiction of the projector-breakdown, the 'naturalist' drama is resumed, but we can no longer feel in quite the same relation to it: our sense of security has been (like Alma's) irreparably undermined, and from here on we have the constant feeling that *anything* may happen[62]

Once Alma discovers the violent (and sexual) impulses that threaten to overturn her conscious principles and beliefs, her coherent worldview is irrevocably lost. Again, Bergman represents transgressive or profane behaviour as a shock to habitual patterns of thought.

In *Cries and Whispers*, sexual behaviour is, once more, of central importance with regard to characterization and the representation of thought. Maria's sexual attitudes are similar to Anna's in *The Silence*. Maria's sexual promiscuity seems correlative to a sort of spiritual atrophy. Her adulterous affair with the doctor appears to be devoid of emotional significance for either party. It does, however, signify the contempt with which Maria regards her husband (Henning Moritzen). Equally, Karin's marriage is depicted as an unpleasant sham. In a flashback, Karin and her husband (Georg Årlin) are shown sitting at opposite ends of a large dinner table. Conversation is sparse and perfunctory, and the atmosphere is very uncomfortable. Karin breaks a wine glass, prompting a disdainful glance from her husband. As she regards the broken fragments, Karin utters, 'It's nothing but a tissue of lies. All of it.' Later, after she has retired to her bedroom, Karin uses a shard from the broken glass to cut her genitals, and when her husband approaches her, she proudly smears the blood across her face. The images are hallucinatory, and the action is staged in such a theatrical way that there is little reason to believe that the sequence faithfully portrays a past experience

as it actually occurred. Karin's recollection seems to condense many disparate ideas, impressions, emotions and memories into a single symbolic sequence.

This 'flashback' provides another example of the film's mixing of fantasy and reality, or of an instant where subtextual or unconscious thought is represented. Yet again, the sudden emergence of violence is intended to shock. The film's setting is important in this respect. Significant emphasis is placed on the veneer of propriety that defines the milieu of the Swedish upper class at the beginning of the twentieth century. In this milieu, certain aspects of thought, emotion and behaviour are constrained by the strict social hierarchy and sexual inequality (reinforced by religious doctrine). Karin perceives her everyday existence in this society to be a 'tissue of lies'. Her marriage does not represent a holy union with her husband, but is seen as a form of degradation, a state of enforced subservience. Karin's self-mutilation is a shocking expression of her perception of the repressed reality of her marriage. What Bergman depicts is a type of 'uncensored' thought that challenges the laws and scruples that constitute everyday, conscious attitudes.

Memory and Free Association

Cries and Whispers is Bergman's fullest exploration of memory as a distinct mental phenomenon. In terms of story, Bergman's own memories (particularly his childhood memories) provide substance for a number his films (for example, *Wild Strawberries*, *Winter Light* and *Fanny and Alexander* [1982]). However, *Cries and Whispers* is more explicitly concerned with representing memory processes than any other film in his oeuvre.

As we have seen, Bergman utilizes a series of flashbacks to represent the characters' memories, but these flashbacks are unconventional insofar as they give us reason to question the veracity of what is being depicted. The flashbacks in *Cries and Whispers* cannot be said to function as straightforward 'recollections', but seem to represent an imaginative or fantastical reconstitution of past events. They do not show 'what happened', as such, but explore the psychological meaning or significance of past events for the different characters. In part, this imaginative reinvention of the past is symptomatic of a specific conceptualization of memory as an inherently creative process. The relationship between film and memory will be addressed in detail in the following chapter, with regard to the work of Alain Resnais, and therefore I shall limit the present discussion of this issue. However, it is important to note that Bergman, like Resnais, does not portray the memory image as an accurate record of the past, but as something that is created in the present moment. Memory is an act of interpretation that transforms the past according to the psychological requirements of the present.

For Bergman, memory also proves an ideal device for developing an associational narrative structure, founded on a limited number of themes and counter themes. In *Cries and Whispers*, memory organizes the past in relation to the present, creating a narrative that connects disparate recollections, impressions, ideas and emotions. Maria's flashback, in particular, seems to be constructed according to the logic of association. The flashback depicts Maria's adulterous affair with David, which is resumed one night while Maria's husband, Joakim, is away from the house on business. The following morning, Maria discovers her husband slumped in a chair with a knife embedded in his stomach. He turns toward her and pleads for help, but Maria slowly retreats from him, shaking her head. We are led to assume that Joakim has become aware of the affair, that there is a direct causal connection between

Maria's infidelity and what we assume to be his attempted suicide. Yet there is no explicit evidence to support this hypothesis, and, again, the action depicted is sufficiently melodramatic and symbolic to prompt questions about its 'authenticity'.

We can, however, be confident that a causal connection between the events depicted exists in Maria's mind. The sequence represents an abstract psychological reality that exists for Maria, and is organized according to her perception of the meaning of the past. Furthermore, her flashback represents mental associations not only between past events, but also between past and present. Maria's memory of her husband's physical and psychological torment is also a reflection on Agnes' suffering in the present. Both plead for help and compassion from Maria, and in both cases she finds herself unable to comply. The memory sequence operates as a kind of self-recrimination, showing Maria's suppressed acknowledgement of her own faults and failings, both past and present.

The fluid movement between past and present is used to identify and juxtapose key moments that define the sisters' characters and their relationships with each other. In this respect, *Cries and Whispers* is similar to *Wild Strawberries*. In both films, the past and present are intertwined, so that each is viewed in relation to the other. A few symbolic events and memories provide us with a clear insight into the minds of the protagonists, and show how present behaviour, attitudes and perceptions are affected by the remembrance of the past. In *Cries and Whispers*, the connections between past and present are particularly strong because the childhood home provides the sole setting for both memory and the action that takes place in the present. This unchanging location gives the impression of timelessness; there is little sense of separation between events of the past and those of the present. The way in which the past and present seem to become conflated in the minds of the sisters is exemplified in

a scene that occurs shortly after Karin's flashback. Karin is sitting with Maria discussing the sale of the house following Agnes' death. The positioning of the women in the frame, far apart at opposite sides of a table, replicates the composition used to depict Karin's memory of having dinner with her husband. The similarity of the images emphasizes the connection between Karin's failed marital relationship and the comparable failure of the sisters' relationship. This connection is further highlighted when Karin again knocks over a wine glass. This time the glass does not break, but Karin glances anxiously towards her sister. She then nervously tells Maria that her husband often accuses her of clumsiness. As the scene unfolds, we are made increasingly aware of how past and present are being linked together to elucidate the thought processes and mental associations that underpin Karin's behaviour. The scene demonstrates film's unique capacity to make wordless connections between temporally disconnected events and motifs, to communicate the psychological subtext of the external action.

In the free associative structure of *Cries and Whispers*, Bergman finds a means of expressing abstract thought processes in visual terms. However, it is the experimental opening sequence of *Persona* that perhaps constitutes Bergman's fullest attempt to represent thought entirely without language. Bergman has described this sequence as comprising a 'poem... in images'.[63] This statement is highly pertinent, as it suggests precisely that this stream of images should be seen as a visual expression of abstract thought. According to Bergman, the poem relates to the situation in which he first conceived of *Persona* (whilst in hospital recovering from pneumonia), but he refuses to attribute a more specific meaning to the sequence: 'As for the interpretation, you can interpret it any way you like. As with any poem. Images mean different things to different people.'[64] In conclusion to this section, I will offer my interpretation of these

images, demonstrating the way in which they can be related to wider aspects of Bergman's cinematic thought.

While it is important to stress the abstract nature of the 'poem', it is slightly disingenuous of Bergman to suggest that there is a total openness to the interpretative process. The opening sequence seems to be constructed according to the broad principles of free association, so that the individual images are connected together to produce quite specific lines of thought. As Sitney points out, while Bergman's visual poem lacks the spatio-temporal continuity that defines conventional filmic narrative, it nevertheless has a 'thematic and associational structure' that guides our response to its images.[65] Similarly, in an excellent analysis of this sequence, Kawin shows that there is a definite thematic and stylistic evolution in Bergman's imagery, and this provides a logical framework for our interpretation.[66] In order to show how Bergman's association of images communicates thought, it is first necessary to give a brief overview of how the opening sequence unfolds.

An initial series of shots shows the two filaments in an arc lamp flaring to life, and film strip beginning to pass through the projector. After this, we are presented with a shot of a screen, on to which a simple, silent animation is being projected. The image on the screen is grainy and degraded, suggesting that film stock is old and worn. The animation gives way to a scene from the silent farce that Bergman shot as part of *Prison*, and which was based upon a story he made up as a child.[67] This, in turn, is succeeded by a single image of a spider crawling across the screen, and then by shots depicting the slaughter of a lamb. This is followed by three shots of a nail being driven through a hand into a wooden surface (presumably a cross). For the first time since the opening shots of the projector, the image is accompanied by synchronous sound: the noise of the nail penetrating the wood. Subsequently, we hear church bells

on the soundtrack, and there is a sequence of shots that depicts a church and the surrounding area. We see a large snow drift against the wall of the church. There is then a cut to the interior of a morgue, which graphically matches the image of the snowdrift to the profile of a dead woman's face. Further shots of corpses are cross-cut with a shot of the white room in which the unidentified boy lies immobile. Throughout this section, we hear background noise, such as water dripping, doors opening and closing, and echoing footsteps. Finally, the camera returns to the unidentified boy as he awakes and touches the screen depicting Alma and Elisabet, introducing *Persona*'s main narrative section.

At first glance, it would appear that this sequence consists largely of disconnected images, lacking in thematic or formal unity. But, upon closer inspection, the stream of images contains several distinct trains of thought, or discernable narrative strands. Kawin detects two specific narrative paths that are followed concurrently in *Persona's* opening section. The first concerns the historical evolution of the cinema itself. The sequence begins by depicting a crude animation (captured on out-of-date, deteriorated film stock), then shows the silent farce, and, finally, goes on to represent images that have synchronous sound and are captured on modern film stock. The historical or technical evolution depicted in the images is paralleled by a simultaneous formal evolution within the sequence. As Kawin suggests, 'it is important to notice that a grammar of film techniques is maturing – on an *interior* level – from fragment to fragment, as the image continues to sophisticate (or limit) itself.'[68] Discrete individual images (such as the spider) give way to more complicated arrangements of shots that begin to suggest a rudimentary form of narrative. The transitions between sections also become increasingly meaningful: the cut from the snowdrift to the corpse, for example, is a graphic match that links an image of winter with an image of

death, suggesting the development of an underlying theme. Finally, as the opening sequence nears its end, the use of continuous background noise on the soundtrack begins to give a basic sense of spatio-temporal continuity. This prepares the viewer for the first shot/ reverse shot sequence, which, as noted earlier, establishes a tentative dramatic space for the subsequent action. The formal development in the sequence emphasizes the various ways in which cinema can construct a set of logical relations between disparate images in order to create visual meaning.

The second narrative strand that Kawin identifies concerns the development of religious thought (and specifically Christian belief). He notes an important succession of images: the lamb being slaughtered, the shots depicting the nail being driven into the hand, and finally the image of the church.[69] We might add to this list a shot from the morgue sequence, in which one of the corpses appears to open its eyes – which clearly evokes the idea of the Resurrection. The images represent an evolution of religious belief, from pagan ritualistic sacrifice, through the crucifixion, to the establishment of the Christian Church and its complex mythology. What is particularly striking in this series of images is the subversion of conventional religious iconography and ideology, which expresses a particular aspect of Bergman's thought. The image of hand being nailed to a plank clearly evokes the idea of Christ's crucifixion, but it produces a markedly different effect to the familiar Catholic icon depicting Christ's body on a cross (as it is seen, for example, on the church wall in *Winter Light*). The three close-ups of the nail penetrating the hand create an immediate visceral impact, emphasizing the physical brutality of the act rather than its symbolic dimensions. The crucifixion is depicted in the same violent manner as the ritualistic animal slaughter with which it is juxtaposed, implying their underlying conceptual similarity. Bergman does not represent the two acts as being

different, but as distinct incarnations of the same religious principle of sacrifice leading to rebirth or new life. Similarly, the image of the corpse opening its eyes transforms the religious conception of resurrection into something horrific – in the same way that both *Wild Strawberries* and *Cries and Whispers* use images of the dead coming alive (Isak and Agnes) to denote physical or psychological torment.

Overall, the opening sequence of *Persona* can be said to represent the development of Bergman's own cinematic imagination; it constitutes the director's self-reflexive statement about the possibilities of visual thought and the future direction of his cinema. The twin narrative strands that are developed through the opening can be considered as a unified exploration of the evolution of Bergman's filmmaking career prior to *Persona*. The multiple references to his previous films delineate a roughly chronological picture of how Bergman's cinematic thought has developed. The silent farce is drawn from *Prison*, the very first film that Bergman both wrote and directed, but also looks back to the story that Bergman created as a child (which was itself derived from a short film that he owned and used to run through his toy projector).[70] This farce also provides an early indication of some of the themes that will become central in Bergman's later work, in depicting death as a physical being who terrorizes the living. Further images in the opening sequence seem to be more or less direct references to the themes articulated in Bergman's previous work: the spider conveys the image of God that is described in both *Through a Glass Darkly* and *Winter Light*; the juxtaposition of pagan and Christian ritual evokes the religious background of *The Virgin Spring* (1960); and, finally, the morbid examination of the corpses in the morgue returns us to the anxieties over death expressed (in particular) by *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*.

The opening sequence of *Persona* recapitulates the ideas and themes that have defined Bergman's cinema in the past, whilst also articulating his desire to move forward and create radically new forms of subjective cinematic narrative. Its free associative structure represents a significant development in the director's communication of non-linguistic thought. Indeed, Bergman would eventually suggest that with the experimental narratives of *Persona* and *Cries and Whispers* he had attained his fullest realization of the cinema's unique expressive possibilities:

> Today I feel that in *Persona* – and later in *Cries and Whispers* – I had gone as far as I could go. And that in these two instances, when working in total freedom, I touched wordless secrets that only the cinema can discover.[71]

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[1] Laura Hubner, *The Films of Ingmar Bergman: Illusions of Light and Darkness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 93.

[2] Bosley Crowther, 'Review of *Wild Strawberries*', *New York Times*, 23 June 1959. Accessed online, 30 August 2007, <http://movies2.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9D06E0DE173BEF3BBC4B51DFB0668382649EDE >

[3] Hubner (2007), pp. 94-5.

[4] Ibid, p. 95.

[5] Jympson Harman, 'A New Kind of Film', *Evening News*, 23 October 1958; 'Dream Sequences in Swedish Film', *Glasgow Herald*, 25 August 1958, both cited in Hubner (2007), pp. 93-95.

[6] In his book on representations of dreaming in film, Robert Eberwein discusses the technical devices typically used in cueing and depicting dream sequences: 'The dream may be introduced and defined through the use of such devices as voice-overs, fades and dissolves, superimpositions, or shots of a sleeper followed by a dream.' Subsequently, he suggests that visual distortions or techniques such as slow-motion are also commonly used to emphasize the subjective status of the dream content. Clearly, while Bergman's stylistic representation of dream images is atypical, he follows several well-established conventions in emphasizing the transition from reality to dream. See Eberwein (1984), pp. 53-4.

[7] French & French (1995), pp. 62-3.

[8] Martin Lamm, *August Strindberg*, trans. and ed. Harry G Carlsson (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971). Cited in Cowie (1982), p. 44. A similar definition can be found in Hubner (2007), p. 70.

[9] Marsha Kinder, 'The Penetrating Dream Style of Ingmar Bergman', in Petrić (1981), p.60.

[10] Ibid, p 61.

[11] Ingmar Bergman, in a filmed interview, 'Introduction to Ingmar Bergman' (1967), produced for television by Lewis Freedman, cited by Kinder, in Petrić (1981), p. 60.

[12] The relevant verses are available at *The Bible Online* (accessed 24 September, 2008), <http://www.carm.org/kjv/1Cor/1cor_13.htm>

[13] Bergman (1994), p. 248.

[14] Ibid, pp. 243-4.

[15] See Cowie (1982), pp. 207-8.

[16] Bergman (1994), p. 243.

[17] Cowie (1982), p. 10.

[18] Bergman makes this point more explicitly in his notes on *Winter Light*, which outline the spiritual conflict at the film's centre: 'I'd rather carry my heavy inheritance of universal terror than submit to God's demands for surrender and worship.' Cited in Bergman (1994), p. 258.

[19] Sven Nykvist, 'Photographing the films of Ingmar Bergman', *American Cinematographer*, vol. 43, no. 10 (October 1962). Cited in Cowie (1982), p. 211.

[20] Freud (1991), p. 115.

[21] Bergman, cited in Petrić (1981), p. 53.

[22] Stan Brakhage, 'Metaphors on Vision', in (eds.) Leo Braudy & Marshall Cohen, *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 5th Edition (Oxford: OUP, 1999), p. 228.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Cowie (1982), p. 211.

[25] For a detailed account of the classical construction of optical point of view, see Edward Branigan, 'Formal Permutations of the Point-of-View Shot', *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975), pp. 54-64.

[26] Moreno (1953), p. 345.

[27] Stuart M. Kaminsky, 'The Torment of Insight: Children and Innocence in the Films of Ingmar Bergman', in (ed.) Stuart M. Kaminsky & Joseph F. Hill, *Ingmar Bergman: Essays in Criticism* (London & Oxford: OUP, 1975), p. 10.

[28] David L. Vierling, 'Bergman's *Persona*: The Metaphysics of Meta-Cinema', *Diacritics*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Summer 1974), p. 48.

[29] Hubner (2007), p. 75.

[30] Ingmar Bergman (1994), pp. 58-9.

[31] Susan Sontag, 'Bergman's *Persona*', in *Styles of a Radical Will* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1969), p. 141.

[32] In addition, we might note that these particular images seem to have a specific pertinence to Elisabet's situation; they are not chosen simply for their ability to convey 'absolute horror'. The monk's self-immolation is, on a basic level, a silent protest not unlike Elisabet's – though, of course, its power and significance are immeasurably greater. The photograph of the Jewish boy is related in the narrative to a photograph of Elisabet's son (whom she has abandoned). Implicitly, each image might summon a number of mental associations for Elisabet, and cause her to question the meaning or value of her actions. These images, therefore, are imbued with some highly personalized meanings through Elisabet's subjective appropriation of them. The idiosyncratic thought processes that Bergman represents through these images can be contrasted with the type of communal memory, or collective imagination, that is more frequently associated with such images. More shall be said on this topic in the following section on Alain Resnais.

[33] Birgitta Steene, 'Bergman's *Persona* Through a Native Mindscape', in (ed.) Lloyd Michaels, *Ingmar Bergman's* Persona (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p. 27.

[34] See for example, Daniel Dayan, 'The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema', in Braudy & Cohen (1999), pp. 118-29. 'By means of the suture [the 'stitching' together of shot and reverse shot], the film-discourse presents itself as a product without a producer, a discourse without an origin' (p. 129).

[35] P. Adams Sitney, 'Kinematography and the Analytic Text: A Reading of *Persona*', *October*, vol. 38 (Autumn, 1986), p. 125.

[36] Sontag (1969), p. 139.

[37] The guilt associated with the abandonment or abortion of the child can also be linked back to the earlier scene in which the boy touches the screen depicting Elisabet and Alma. Because this child has no explicit identity or role in the film as a whole, we are, in some sense, invited to speculate about his connection to the narrative. His physical separation from Elisabet and Alma could be interpreted as a figurative representation of his relationship to the women. It is reasonable to suggest that he might symbolize the absent, rejected child who occupies the central characters' thoughts.

[38] Robin Wood, 'The World Within, The World Without', in Kaminsky & Hill (1975), p. 57.

[39] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson & Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2005), pp. 89-104.

[40] Ibid, p. 98 (emphasis in original text).

[41] Béla Balász, 'The Face of Man', from *Theory of the Film*, in Braudy & Cohen (1999), p. 306.

[42] Ibid.

[43] See Lev Kuleshov, *Selected Works: Fifty Years in Film*, trans. Dmitri Agrachev & Nina Belenkaya (Moscow: Radgua, 1987), p. 17. We should, of course, acknowledge that Kuleshov's 'experiment' was not scientific in any strict sense, and that his results, therefore, provide only anecdotal evidence for the outlined theory.

[44] Cowie (1982), p. 162.

[45] See John Simon, *Ingmar Bergman Directs* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1973), p. 224. Simon notes that Bergman was reading Jung's work whilst working on *Persona*.

[46] Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychological Types or The Psychology of Individuation*, trans. H. Godwin Baynes (London: Kegan Paul, French and Trubner, 1946), p. 590.

[47] Ibid, p. 593. The Latin word 'alma' can also be defined as 'soul', making it essentially synonymous with Jung's understanding of anima as 'inner being'. Clearly, the persona/ anima dichotomy defines Bergman's initial characterization of Elisabet and Alma to a significant degree.

[48] Ibid, p. 589.

[49] Balász, in Braudy & Cohen (1999), p. 307.

[50] Ibid, p. 308.

[51] Ingmar Bergman, cited in Bjorkman et al. (1973), p. 181.

[52] These dichotomies are recurrent in many of Bergman's other films of this period. They are equally important in, for example, *Hour of The Wolf* (1967), *Shame* (1968), and *A Passion* (1969).

[53] Beverle Houston, 'The Manifestation of Self in *The Silence*', in Petrić (1981), p. 139.

[54] Sontag (1969), p. 136.

[55] Bergman, cited in Cowie, (1982), p. 227.

[56] Kawin (1978), p. 125.

[57] Ibid, pp. 115-6.

[58] August Strindberg, *Plays: Two: The Dance of Death, A Dream Play, The Stronger*, trans. Michael Meyer (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 175.

[59] Cowie (1982), p. 268.

[60] Ibid, p. 215.

[61] Ibid. With the level of attention it received in the media, *The Silence* was a significant financial success, both domestically and internationally.

[62] Wood, in Kaminsky & Hill (1975), p. 61.

[63] Bjorkman et al (1973), p. 198.

[64] Ibid, p. 199.

[65] Sitney (1986), p. 126.

[66] See Kawin (1978), pp. 108-11.

[67] Bergman describes the film as follows: 'It is about a man who is locked up in a mystical room where all kind of atrocities happen to him: A spider descends from the ceiling, a villain appears with a long knife ready to kill him; the devil jumps out of a chest; and death, a skull, jiggles in front of a window with wide-slatted blinds.' (Bergman [1994], p. 152.)

[68] Kawin (1978), p. 110.

[69] Ibid, pp.109-10.

[70] See Bjorkman et al (1973), pp. 198-9.

[71] Bergman (1994), p. 65.

Thinking Modernity

> For me the film represents an attempt, still very crude and primitive, to approach the complexity of thought and of its mechanisms.[1]

Perhaps more than any other filmmaker of the postwar period, Alain Resnais has shown himself to be acutely aware of the potential parallels between our most private internal thought processes and cinema, the most public of art forms. Critical analysis of this facet of Resnais' work has largely centred on the issue of memory – and inevitably this lies at the heart of many of Resnais films – but for the director memory is not, in itself, the fundamental aspect of our mental lives that his cinema addresses: 'I prefer to speak of the imaginary, or of consciousness. What interests me in the mind is that faculty we have to imagine what is going to happen in our heads, or remember what has happened.'[2] This process of visualization, our ability to conjure and manipulate mental images, is central to our everyday experience and understanding of the world around us, but it is also something which is highly abstract, entirely subjective and, as such, is not easily open to scientific analysis. Indeed the exact nature of mental representation is still a subject of heavy debate in the realm of cognitive psychology:

> Mental representations are created by the processes of perception and are exchanged between cognitive processes, serving as the currency of thought. There has therefore been much debate about the nature of mental representation. Much of this debate has focussed on the issue of whether mental representations are analogical, that is whether we think in images, or whether they are propositional (symbolic), that is language-like descriptions of the world.[3]

While recent research seems to support the theory that mental representation utilizes both symbolic and analogical descriptions (and, certainly, this seems intuitively to be the case), it is still very difficult to offer a rigorous scientific understanding of consciousness.[4] Arguably, the importance of Resnais' films lies in their recognition of the capacity of cinema to both represent and shape thought processes. Resnais' cinema offers an intuitive exploration of consciousness which grapples with both visual *and* symbolic aspects of our psychic experience.

In Resnais' first feature film, *Hiroshima mon amour*, Emmanuelle Riva's unnamed French woman watches as her Japanese lover's hand twitches in his sleep. We then cut to the brief image of a dying German soldier, whose hand also spasms in a short close-up. On an immediate level, this sequence offers a visual representation of a memory, a flashback that draws its strength from the graphic analogy between the sleeping Japanese in the present and the dying German of the past. But as *Hiroshima*'s narrative unfolds, and we learn more of the characters' circumstances, we also gain some awareness of the symbolic significance of this flash of memory, which helps to explain the French woman's subsequent compulsion to tell her story. For the French woman, this is not merely an involuntary memory evoked by a graphic analogue, but is also the beginning of a recognition of the basic analogy between two 'transgressive' relationships. In her wartime relationship with the German, the French woman was seen as betraying her community and nation; through her adulterous relationship with the Japanese man, she is likewise betraying her family back in France. The nascent similarity between the two affairs comes into full consciousness when the French woman, in recounting her story to the Japanese man, begins to refer to the German as 'you', equating her present listener with her dead lover. As the film progresses, it becomes increasingly apparent that the single – and ostensibly simple –

mental image is surprisingly dense in its connotations. This symbolic density not only points to the 'complexity of thought' that Resnais' cinema attempts to imitate, but also offers an insight into the significance of Resnais' subtle distinction between memory *per* se and the imaginative *act* of remembering. For Resnais, memory is rooted in the present moment: it is never a straightforward recollection of the past, but a reconstruction of the past through the lens of the present. Thus in *Hiroshima* the event recalled – the death of the German soldier – is not necessarily a faithful presentation of the event as it happened; rather, it is the event as it is filtered and reconstituted through the concerns of consciousness in the present moment.

Although *Hiroshima mon amour* was, upon its release, rightly seen as a revolutionary film – as Jean-Luc Godard remarked, 'seeing *Hiroshima* gave one the impression of watching a film that would have been quite inconceivable in terms of what one was already familiar with in the cinema' – we can certainly locate its director within a broad tradition of filmmakers concerned with challenging the tenets of objective realism that had (and have) dominated narrative cinema since the arrival of sound.[5] Indeed, in the early 1960s, Resnais was frequently eager to list the filmmakers whom he felt had laid the ground for his own aesthetic, citing in particular Buñuel, Cocteau, Antonioni, Welles, Eisenstein and Visconti.[6] As Roy Armes notes, despite some major thematic, stylistic and ideological differences among the members of this group, 'What these directors do have in common... is a dissatisfaction with the conception of cinema as the direct recording of reality.'[7] In diverse ways, all of these directors had challenged the basic assumption that cinema is in essence a realist art form. Where Resnais' early work went much further, was in its systematic exploration of the complicated interface between cinema, mental life, and external reality. It is worth noting, at this point, that Resnais came to feature filmmaking through first

working as a documentarist, and his output of the 1950s and '60s seems to thrive on the potential tension that exists between cinema's ability to document (or simply record) and its ability to fictionalize. If Resnais recognizes a visual component to thought that can be replicated in cinema, then he also recognizes the importance of audiovisual artefacts in moulding and transforming the collective imagination. The point can be clarified by returning to the example of how memory works in Resnais' cinema. Memory works on the personal level as a subjective recollection of the past mediated by conditions in the present, and this recollection can be imitated in audiovisual terms. However, as a physical record of the past, film can also be seen as a repository for collective memories, necessarily conditioning our interior representation of past events and our concomitant understanding of our history.

There are thus two distinct aspects to Resnais' cinematic thought, and in this section, I will explore each in succession. Firstly, in this chapter, I will analyze the formal strategies that Resnais utilizes to explore thought in its various guises (memory, fantasy, dream and imagination). This will involve a close consideration of how Resnais' representation of his characters' thoughts can be related to different models of mental life: both theoretical models and those implicit in extant modernist literature and cinema. My analysis will, therefore, also build upon some of the ideas developed in the Bergman section. In the following chapter, I will go on to examine the historical and political dimensions of Resnais' work, focussing on how he addresses, and often problematizes, the relationship between the individual's subjective experience and the wider 'collective imagination'. However, as a preliminary to these main lines of discussion, I feel it is necessary to consider another issue pertaining to the tensions between personal and collective imagination: the question of *auteurism*.

Cinematic Authorship

Although Resnais had been making short documentaries since the late 1940s, the release of his first feature film coincided with the birth of the French New Wave. Consequently, he became identified, to a certain extent, with both the movement itself and the *politique des auteurs* that it advocated.[8] However, the concept of *auteurism* becomes problematical when addressing Resnais' working practices. From an early stage in his career, Resnais showed a predilection for working with scriptwriters with a strong literary reputation. In 1950, the French poet Paul Éluard wrote the script for Resnais' short film *Guernica*, which explored the famous Picasso painting. Similarly, Resnais went on to collaborate with another poet (and concentration camp survivor), Jean Cayrol, on *Night and Fog* and *Muriel, ou Le temps d'un retour*, and famously worked with the modernist writers Marguerite Duras and Alain Robbe-Grillet, on *Hiroshima* and *Last Year at Marienbad* respectively. As James Monaco astutely points out, the issue is not that Resnais utilizes scriptwriters better to fulfil his own vision, but that he actively rescinds the singular creative control credited to the director in *auteur* theory: 'he has made the opposition between *auteur* and author one of the main dynamics of his films.'[9] In an article in 1960, Resnais himself disclaimed his *auteur* status in fairly explicit terms: 'Do I consider myself to be the author of my own films? No, but above all I consider that this does not interest me.'[10] To view these sentiments as simply self-deprecating, or as a rebuttal of *auteur* theory *per se*, is perhaps to miss the significance of Resnais' wholesale rejection of *interest* in being the 'author' of his work. A consideration of the deep importance of collaboration and collectivity in Resnais' cinema helps to illuminate this significance, especially as it relates back to the question of approaching thought – or imagination – through film.

Although Resnais has consistently sought out established writers with a distinctive personal style, and has encouraged these writers to be faithful to their own thematic, stylistic and narrative inclinations, he nevertheless is something more than a silent partner when it comes to scriptwriting. As Monaco deftly summarises:

> All of Resnais' screenwriters make it clear that he never imposes his views on them. All of them are equally insistent that the finished product – somehow – strongly bears his mark. When the script has reached its final stage it represents a quiet collaboration between writer and director, and, as a result, Resnais changes very little of the scenario during the shooting. Resnais likes to have his film mapped out precisely before he begins so that he can pay attention to realizing the script in the mise-en-scène.[11]

The challenge that Resnais presents to conventional models of *auteurism* is further complicated when we consider the thematic and aesthetic consistency of his early work. This work displays a profound coherence that transcends the different collaborations underpinning each individual film, as several critics have observed. John Ward, for example, notes with some surprise the 'detailed unity' that marks Resnais' first quartet of feature films, asserting that this level of cohesiveness 'would be surprising from collaboration with a single writer, let alone with four.'[12] An obvious solution to this conundrum lies in the fact that Resnais is very careful in choosing collaborators: he seeks out writers whose themes and styles already complement his own particular worldview. Less obviously, perhaps, these collaborations also suggest an underlying symbiosis between cinematic narrative and French literary modernism in this period.

In an excellent study of the relationship between the New Wave and the New Novel, Lynn Higgins scrupulously identifies the ways in which literature and cinema began to impact on each other in postwar France, transforming their respective formal properties in recognition of a shared philosophical ground and communal cultural

purpose. On the one hand, this equation manifested itself in 'the New Wave's adoption of a literary frame of reference for cinematic reform – its emphasis on the camera as a pen, on the development of individual auteuristic directorial forms of expression...'[13] On the other hand – and more significantly, for the present discussion – the writings of the New Novelists evidenced a new kind of 'cinematic imagination', in turn suggesting a transformation in consciousness itself:

> If the filmmakers have attempted to bring into being what Agnes Varda calls a "cinécriture," the vision of the novelists is distinctly cinematic. [Claude] Simon frequently uses movie metaphors, and his descriptions are often implicitly film-like. He and Robbe-Grillet have both developed techniques of moving from one scene to the next... based on cinematic editing: their novels contain fades, extreme close-ups, wipes, rapid cuts and conspicuous montage, and cinematically articulated flashbacks.[14]

As Claude Simon makes clear, this is not a mimicry of cinema's narrative forms so much as it is a recognition of, and deference to, the way in which cinema modifies our capacity to process visual information: 'For me... the cinema has enriched our vision of things (angles and distance of shots, panning shots, stills, dolly shots, close-ups). And naturally, that new way of seeing shows up in what I write.'[15] It is only a small step to extend Simon's recognition of the links between cinema and visual imagination into an argument concerning the ways in which cinema enriches thought more broadly – indeed, it is difficult to see how Simon's ideas can *avoid* being integrated into a wider web of issues relating to cinema and consciousness. In addition to Resnais' own comparable remarks on cinema and imagination, further support for Simon's intuitions can be found in areas of cognitive film theory. In an overview of such theory from the 1950s onwards, Dan Nadaner identifies the development of a conception of how audiovisual technology might impact upon thought processes:

Following Paivio's (1971) contention that human cognition possesses alternate modes of information processing and Olson's (1970) concept of intelligence as a skill in a medium, Salomon reasoned that new communication media might be calling upon or even developing new cognitive skills.

Thus moving pictures might develop new skills in thinking in framed moving pictures, complete with flashbacks, close-ups, and zoom-ins.[16]

Again, while this theory is difficult to prove or disprove, it certainly seems plausible, and it keys into the dual interests of Resnais' cinema in terms of how film may both represent thought processes and, in turn, come to shape or transform the imaginative schemata through which our conceptions are formed.

With this in mind, we can now directly address the question of why personal authorship is of little interest to Resnais. In stressing the importance of collective imagination as a facet of both production and reception, Resnais recognizes cinema not only as an art form particularly suited to rendering an approximation of individual thought processes, but also as a site of shared consciousness that inflects our imaginative engagement with the world. This partially explains Resnais' repeated conflation of private and public memory (or consciousness) in his early work. Private and public traumas constitute the two narrative strands in *Hiroshima mon amour*. Similarly, there are dualistic narratives in *Muriel* and *The War is Over* (1966), both of which use an individual's consciousness as a way of approaching collective experience (of the Algerian War and Spanish Fascism respectively). In each of these cases, Resnais challenges the dominant national discourses that seem to circumscribe the representation of historical events, using the representation of the individual's experience and consciousness as a way of redressing prevalent, and often officially sanctioned, ideology. I shall return to these issues concerning the collective imagination in the next chapter. First, it is crucial to embark upon a full discussion of

the formal innovations that Resnais utilizes in order to represent individual consciousness through film.

Representing the Individual's Consciousness: *Hiroshima mon amour*

Resnais' most fundamental innovation in representing subjectivity in film is perhaps his general refusal to utilize obvious visual markers to distinguish the subjective image from its objective counterpart.[17] In the vast majority of films, strongly subjective impressions that are generated in isolated moments of remembering, imagining, dreaming or fantasizing are marked as being different from objective images. Subjectivity is usually indicated through the use of visual devices such as soft focus photography or overexposure of the film stock. In contrast, Resnais' films rarely draw a qualitative distinction between the image as it is objectively recorded and the image as it is subjectively imagined or remembered. This is not to ignore the degree of abstraction that is still present in the subjective images of Resnais' films; but this abstraction is usually derived from content and context rather than from direct technical manipulation of the image. This strategy of representation has to be seen as a basic tenet of the mental realism that Resnais' cinema attempts to achieve. In affording an equal degree of realism to objective and subjective images, Resnais refuses to acknowledge an inherent difference between direct perception and our experience when we visualize something.

The opening of *Hiroshima mon amour* exemplifies Resnais' innovative approach to representing a complex thought process through a series of images that are almost documentary-like in their realism.[18] It also introduces another important facet in

Resnais' construction of an interior monologue: an ambiguous relationship between the image-track and the soundtrack. Images of Hiroshima are cross-cut with abstract close-ups of two intertwined bodies, whilst on the soundtrack two voices argue: a female voice claims to have seen 'everything' in Hiroshima while a male voice repeatedly dismisses this claim, stating that the woman 'saw nothing.' It is only in retrospect that we can identify the voices as belonging to the French woman and the Japanese man, and surmise that the abstract bedroom scene represents the beginning of their brief affair. However, even when we understand these basic facts, the logic of the opening sequence is not immediately evident and requires some unpicking.

Firstly, it is important to establish that the 'documentary' segment of the opening functions as some form of interior monologue, or memory, taking place in the mind of the French woman. The images that we see are not only 'directed' by the woman's voiceover, but also, at certain moments, seem to imply her presence as an observer. For example, when she speaks about her experiences at the hospital, we are given a slow forward tracking shot through the corridors (at approximately walking pace) while various patients and nurses look directly towards the camera, acknowledging the existence of a witness to the scenes.

If this segment of the opening sequence is representative of the French woman's memory or consciousness, it might seem logical that the bedroom scene acts as the 'present moment' from which previous events are being described, remembered or imagined. However, there is strong reason to doubt that the opening shots represent a concrete situation in which a real debate between the two characters is taking place. Firstly, the poeticism, repetition and rhetoric that mark the dialogue seem to be at odds with such a hypothesis, especially when we consider the generally more prosaic dialogue which typifies subsequent sections of the film. It therefore makes more sense

to regard the 'dialogue' as being simply another facet of the woman's internal monologue or thought process, representing some aspect of her uncertainty as she strives to make sense of her experiences in Hiroshima. Similarly, the repeated images that depict the entwined couple, whilst obviously referencing a real liaison, are deliberately abstract and unrealistic, and so must be regarded as another part of a complex interior monologue. The opening shots depict the two bodies covered by – in the words of Marguerite Duras – *'ashes, rain, dew* or *sweat.'*[19] This symbolic depiction of the lovers clearly foreshadows the specific details that emerge when the French woman 'recollects' her experiences at the museum in Hiroshima, where she saw various reconstructions and newsreels depicting the aftermath of the atomic blast. During these reconstructions, we again see bodies covered by ashes and by rainfall that has become tainted with nuclear fallout. Similarly, we can identify more general connections between the two segments of the opening sequence, reinforcing the sense that together they constitute a continuous and unified stream of consciousness. To take another example, the two segments share a common emphasis on the sensitivity – or vulnerability – of flesh: repeated close-ups of the lovers caressing each other's unblemished skin in the first segment are jarringly contrasted with images of horrifically burnt flesh in the second. Thus when we reflect upon the opening sequence as a whole, the two 'distinct' segments seem to be subtly, but inextricably, linked by underlying thought processes within a singular consciousness.

I have referred to the opening sequence of *Hiroshima mon amour* as both an interior monologue and a stream of consciousness, but I believe it is important to make a subtle distinction between the terms as I am using them. As the term is commonly used, stream of consciousness implies a continuous flow of thoughts, ideas or impressions, which may be either verbal or non-verbal. The term suggests a fairly

unstructured, associative mental process wherein fleeting impressions and ideas are brought together without necessarily being given a concrete form. In contrast, interior monologue suggests a more structured mental state, with thoughts being resolved linguistically, or at least with an equivalent degree of mental organization. In the initial representation of the French woman's thought processes and memories, there is a movement between different degrees of mental organization. As we have seen, there is a very tentative free association of ideas and visual motifs through which the woman begins to relate – perhaps unconsciously – her experience of Hiroshima to both her present situation and her personal wartime trauma. However, large sections of the opening sequence also seem to be scrupulously organized, with the image-track working in close conjunction with the woman's verbal descriptions as she mentally catalogues her thoughts about the city. At certain points, the methods used to represent the French woman's memories, impressions and ideas are strikingly similar to the documentary techniques found in *Night and Fog*. Therefore, it seems crucial to ascribe aspects of both the stream of consciousness and the interior monologue to the opening sequence. The opening is marked by an oscillation between a conscious effort to work through concrete data and the involuntary free association of ideas as they arise from moment to moment. As the film progresses, this oscillation consistently typifies the representation of the French woman's thought processes as she begins to recollect her own traumatic wartime experience.

The movement from involuntary memory to conscious recall is demonstrated most clearly through the way in which the details pertaining to the French woman's first love affair (in wartime Nevers) are presented to us. Initially, as previously noted, we are given an isolated glimpse of the affair's traumatic conclusion, in the form of an involuntary flash of memory. Whilst being questioned by the Japanese man, the

woman begins to recall further details of her experience, and subsequently recounts the entire story as a coherent and chronological narrative. However, even within this purposeful recollection of events, the details that emerge from the woman's story are mediated by a series of free associations with her present situation, so that the Nevers story is, in part, reconstructed in relation to the woman's recent experiences in Hiroshima. As Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier insightfully observes, there is a powerful mirroring process whereby several ideas and motifs that surface in the woman's initial recollection of the museum in Hiroshima are reflected in the subsequent recollection of Nevers:

> A deformed hand, a destroyed eye, hair torn out, a distraught woman breaking out of a cavernous dwelling, legs of passers-by, river, anger, stone – long is the list of materials which the narrative of Nevers drags out of Hiroshima's museum and reconstructs into appeased, if not acceptable, forms.[20]

This mirroring structure begins to formulate a relationship between the individual and collective experiences of wartime trauma, a point to which I will return in the next chapter. For now, it is sufficient to note that the interior monologue that accompanies the French woman's verbal recollection of Nevers does not function as a 'flashback' in the conventional sense, with the images faithfully depicting an immutable past. Instead, the 'memories' that we see on screen reconstruct the past as it is experienced and imagined in the present moment.[21]

The juxtaposition of past and present in the act of remembering has an important consequence: it emphasises the creative aspects of memory, reaffirming the significance of Resnais' distinction between straightforward 'recollection' and imagination or consciousness more broadly. There are two ways of looking at how underlying imaginative processes assert an influence on the French woman's

memories or perceptions in a given present moment. We could say that her recollection of Nevers is guided by her analogous (but obviously indirect) experience of wartime trauma in Hiroshima. Or, alternatively, we might argue that her immediate perceptions of Hiroshima, and in particular the details that she focuses on in the museum, are already inflected by her own memories of the war. However, the two interpretations need not be mutually exclusive, and it might be more productive to suggest that there is simply a dynamic movement between past memories and present perceptions that shapes the woman's thoughts as they are presented to us. In any case, the creative function of memory lends a heightened significance to the specific images that occur while the woman is recollecting or narrating. The precise formulation of these images is highly significant in terms of the insight it affords us into the French woman's mental state and thought processes. As Lynn Higgins argues:

> If we view her, for a moment, in terms of her narrative function rather than in terms of the actress's presence on the screen, we can see that the French woman is told by her stories more than she tells them, and her subjectivity is the product rather than the source of the spectacle she sees.[22]

This reversal, whereby the narration of a story emphasises the primary importance of the teller's subjectivity, is not in itself an innovation. Both *Citizen Kane* (1941) and, in particular, *Rashomon* (1950) develop a similar shift in focus, so that the subjective act of recollection takes priority over, and in many places obscures, the accurate depiction of events. The difference with *Hiroshima*, and Resnais' cinema more broadly, is that it offers a more subtle and complex rendering of subjectivity and thought processes within its extended first-person narratives and streams of consciousness. In earlier examples of 'first-person' cinema, there is usually an obvious level of narratorial bias (or a specific 'agenda') that justifies the distortion or

obfuscation of past events; in Resnais' films, the creative composition of first-person narratives and memory images is rarely symptomatic of conscious falsification, but instead reveals the complexity of the individual mind.

Along with the content and composition of the images that represent the French woman's memories, the order in which some of these memory images are presented to us provides further insight into her mental processes. In particular, the gradual, non-chronological evocation of the details surrounding the shooting of the German soldier suggests the difficult recollection of the French woman's worst, suppressed memories. When, at the Japanese man's behest, the woman begins to relate the story of her first affair with the German soldier, she provides only a few details of their clandestine meetings before abruptly stating, 'Then he died... I was eighteen.' This statement is accompanied by a seemingly innocuous low-angle shot of a balcony garden, followed by a dissolve back to the present scene at the Japanese man's house. We have to wait until the next scene, where the woman narrates the rest of her story in the tea room, before we can understand the significance of the balcony image. Having related the aftermath of the German's death (her descent into 'madness' and the long period of confinement in the cellar), the French woman returns to the death itself, finally recollecting all the details of the event as a continuous narrative. She reveals that on the day that Nevers was liberated, the German soldier was shot from a balcony by a Resistance fighter. As she speaks, her memory of the incident is succinctly represented by an image of her running to meet the German, followed by a swift pan to her approximate optical point-of-view of his fallen body, followed by another quick pan up to the balcony. The accumulation of details eventually builds up a coherent picture of events, as we move from isolated, disordered images of the German's death to a full understanding of what happened. As Haim Callev observes,

This process of evocation reflects the operating principles of the originating mind. It begins with resistance to the emerging memories, peaks with their full evocation and ends with detachment, which leads to a new liberating oblivion. The order in which the mental images appear on the screen represents the difficulties in the mental process of extracting repressed memories.[23]

Ultimately, the conscious recollection of Nevers – in terms of both the visual interior monologue and the verbal narration – represents a therapeutic attempt to make sense of something that seems at first to be incomprehensible. Ropars-Wuilleumier is again particularly insightful on this point, suggesting that the French woman's narration acts to 'transform one isolated, brutal, incomprehensible image – the first mental visualization of the dying German – into a coherent and continuous whole whose verbalization guarantees, moreover, its interpretation.'[24] This gradual process of interpretation can be seen as the underlying narrative trajectory of the entire film, applying equally to the personal history of Nevers and, in a more oblique way, to the public history of Hiroshima. The thought processes that are represented in the film trace a movement from a loose association of ideas and fleeting impressions towards a more comprehensive mental interpretation, expressed in a coherent narrative form.

The Ambiguous Internal Monologue: *Last Year at Marienbad*

Last Year at Marienbad begins in a similar way to *Hiroshima*. A man's voiceover, accompanied by lugubrious organ music, comments upon the baroque décor of the large hotel (or, perhaps, hotels) in which the film is set. At the same time, the camera glides through endless, labyrinthine corridors in a series of tracking shots, gradually revealing details of the *mise-en-scène* without pausing or focusing on any feature in

particular. Eventually, we arrive in a dark salon where a play is being performed – a play which, it subsequently transpires, has the same basic plot as *Marienbad* itself. After a short time, the camera tracks towards the stage (on which an actress stands motionless), before cutting to reveal a rapt audience. With this cut, both the music and the man's voiceover come to an abrupt end, being replaced by the diegetic dialogue between the actor and actress on stage. It is immediately noticeable that the actor's speech is markedly similar to the previous voiceover, repeating specific words and phrases from the monologue, and sharing its distinctive rhythm and intonation.

As in *Hiroshima*, we are given an introductory sequence that functions as a form of interior monologue, with the voiceover and the shots of the hotel obliquely setting up later ideas, motifs and narrative. The subsequent staging of the play, with its reworking of the voiceover, suggests a plausible 'present moment' in which the monologue might be rooted. We come to recognize that the opening voiceover was spoken by Giorgio Albertazzi, whose character – identified in Robbe-Grillet's screenplay as 'X' – is present in the audience of the play.[25] Therefore, with hindsight, the most obvious interpretation of the opening might suggest that it is a function of X's imagination, a daydream that he experiences whilst watching the play. Several critics have taken this idea even further, postulating that the entire story of *Marienbad* could be the fantastical imaginings of one of the characters in the audience, as he or she reworks the play's basic narrative into the drama involving X, A (Delphine Seyrig) and M (Sacha Pitöeff).[26] Regardless of whether we accept this particular interpretation or not, the fact that such an interpretation is *feasible* is suggestive of the complexity of *Marienbad*'s narrative structure, and of the potential ubiquity of the internal monologue within the film.

Resnais himself has stressed that most of the scenes found in *Marienbad* must be understood as interior monologue; the film provides a pervasive, *visual* representation of consciousness:

> The interior monologue is never in the soundtrack; it is almost always in the visuals, which, even when they show events in the past, correspond to the *present* thoughts in the mind of the character. So what is presented as the present or the past is simply a reality which exists while the character is speaking.[27]

The fact that the interior monologue is 'almost always' present in the image-track, regardless of whether it ostensibly refers to present or past, this year or last year, marks the most obvious and significant divergence from the narrative form of *Hiroshima*. *Marienbad* introduces a new level of ambiguity in terms of what is imagined or remembered and what, if anything, is 'real'. This ambiguity also extends to the question of *which* character, at any one point, remembers or imagines: 'one never knows if the images are in the man's head or the woman's. There is throughout a movement between the two.'[28] This principle is emphatically demonstrated at an early point in the film. After the play, X observes an argument between two characters, a man and a woman. They are framed in a mirror, with X occupying a position in the foreground between the mirror and a doorframe. As the argument intensifies, the camera pans away from X, centring the couple in the frame. After a few seconds, the camera pans back, but X has disappeared and A is now present at the scene of the argument, leaning against the far side of the doorframe. This scene seems to serve little narrative purpose, other than to emphasize for the viewer the ambiguities that will consistently be present in the film's representations of space, time and point of view.

The uncertainty of who visualizes during the interior monologues aids a tentative, psychologically-ambiguous, mental relationship between X and A. Robbe-Grillet describes *Marienbad* as being, essentially,

> the story of a *persuading*: it deals with a reality which the hero creates out of his own vision, out of his own words. And if his persistence, his secret conviction, finally prevail, they do so among a perfect labyrinth of false trails variants, failures and repetitions.[29]

X's struggle to persuade A of the veracity of his vision is crystallized in specific images that are explicitly shaped and directed by his verbal narration. For example, he describes encountering A leaning against a stone balustrade in the gardens of Frederiksbad, giving precise details of her position and posture. At the same time, we see an image of A that is contrary to this description: A's position on screen is notably – defiantly – different. However, after a pause of a few seconds, A appears to acquiesce, 'correcting' her position on screen to fit the previous description. Again, the precise details of this encounter may have little narrative significance, but they draw attention to several important questions regarding the nature of the 'mental reality' that is being created on screen: To whom we should attribute the mental images? Are these memories or fantasies or a mixture of the two? Is A beginning to accept (or even recollect) X's story? Is there a potential conflict in how the two characters remember or imagine the past? All of these questions become more important as the film progresses and the story of what happened 'last year' grows increasingly contentious.

In addition to the ambiguities that arise from having two different 'narrators', with (possibly) different interpretations of the 'reality' that is being created, there is a more general sense of narrative ambiguity that we can identify in *Marienbad*. This arises

from Resnais and Robbe-Grillet's particular conceptualization of consciousness, and their concern with faithfully depicting the complexity of our mental lives. In the introduction to the *Marienbad* screenplay, published shortly after the film's release, Robbe-Grillet recalls that one of the first things he and Resnais agreed upon was that their film should abandon traditional relations of cause and effect in favour of a more accurate depiction of thought processes taking place during a subjective time frame:

> Everyone knows the linear plots of the old-fashioned cinema, which never spare us a link in the chain of all-too-expected events... In reality, our mind goes faster – or slower, on occasion. Its style is more varied, richer and less reassuring: it skips certain passages, it preserves a perfect record of certain 'unimportant' details, it repeats and doubles back on itself. And this *mental time*, with its peculiarities, its gaps, its obsessions, its obscure areas, is the one that interests us since it is the tempo of our emotions, of our *life*.[30]

Throughout *Marienbad*, we see the fundamental importance of subjective time to the construction of the narrative and the representation of individual incidents – even when those incidents seem, at first, to be entirely realistic. At several points, during the course of apparently banal background conversations, the hotel guests suddenly stop talking and become as motionless as the statues in the gardens. After several seconds, the conversations resume as if there had been no break. We also see the mind 'doubling back' on itself in the several scenes and motifs that recur at various stages in the narrative: the scene at the statue, the game of Nim that M always wins, the firing range, the tracking shots through endless corridors. All of these repeated scenes serve to arrest normal narrative progression in deference to the construction of a subjective reality and time frame. The complexity of the film's narrative structure is demanded by its objective of representing complex thought patterns and emotions, as Robbe-Grillet emphasizes:

Marienbad is as opaque as the moments we live through in the climaxes of our feelings, in our loves, in our whole emotional life. So to reproach the film for its lack of clarity is really to reproach human feelings for their obscurity.[31]

Given the ambiguities concerning causal connections and narrative point of view, is it still possible – or even worthwhile – to offer an interpretation of 'what happened' last year at Marienbad? A further comment made by Robbe-Grillet helps to clarify this issue. He suggests that form, as opposed to immediate content, dictates the ultimate meaning of *Marienbad*: 'It is in its form that we must look for its true content.'[32] It is specifically in the formal representation of certain events, ideas and emotions that we can begin to build a picture of what *might have* happened. Resnais similarly suggests that through close formal analysis we can discern different levels of plausibility in images representing past events:

> [...] if you study *Marienbad* closely, you see that certain images are ambiguous, that their degree of reality is equivocal. But some images are far more clearly false, and there are images of *lying* whose falsity is, I feel, quite evident.[33]

One such image, which seems to have a high degree of narrative significance, occurs when X describes going up to A's bedroom. We see an over-exposed shot which is repeated four times, depicting A apparently welcoming X with open arms. The over-exposure of the shot suggests overt subjectivity in a very conventional manner, and the fact that Resnais so rarely uses this type of stylistic marking only serves to emphasize further the director's desire that we infer the questionability of this particular image. The narrative implication is clear: if X and A did indeed have some form of relationship in the past, it is not necessarily as depicted in X's account. Indeed, the later stages of *Marienbad* become increasingly dominated by the deeply disturbing 'potential' narratives that we can infer from the formal presentation of the

mental images conjured by X and A, including the suggestion that A was raped by X and this was followed by her murder or suicide.

X may present a false account of the nature of his previous relationship with A, but this does not mean that he is deliberately lying. As his story progresses, it becomes increasingly marked by moments of self-doubt, hesitation, confusion and denials of alternative versions of events ('No! That's wrong... It wasn't by force...'). If his narrative is hiding a more sinister version of last year's events, it seems that the details have become subject to repression and self-censorship. The film might represent the mechanisms of a mind seeking to suppress certain memories. This idea is given added credence by the comparable processes explored not only by Resnais in *Hiroshima mon amour*, but also by Robbe-Grillet's previous written work. *The Voyeur* (1955), for example, tells the story of a few hours in the life of a travelling salesman, Matthias, who, it is implied (though never confirmed), may have murdered a young girl.[34] We are given a precise, and seemingly objective, visual description of Matthias' movements and observations, and from this we gain an oblique insight into his mental state. During this time, we learn about the murder through a newspaper which the protagonist repeatedly unfolds. We are led to infer Matthias' involvement in the crime through the ambiguous timeline of events and a suspicious gap in his day, where his movements are not recounted. Arguably, the narrative structure of *Last Year at Marienbad* follows an extremely similar pattern, with a central idea or event being repressed, or even entirely excised from the story as it is presented to us. Robbe-Grillet offers a highly illuminating description of how his work relies upon a conspicuous narrative gap, 'a sort of hollow in the heart of reality':

In *Marienbad* it is the 'last year' which provides the hollow. What happens then – if anything – produces a constant emptiness in the story... The narrative

covers everything as far as the void, and everything subsequent to it; and we then try to join the two so as to dispose of that disquieting emptiness. But the opposite happens; the emptiness spreads, it fills everything.[35]

In a very real sense, we can say that it is an unrepresented rape which forms the hollow of *Last Year at Marienbad*. Robbe-Grillet actually scripted a 'swift and brutal rape scene' which Resnais decided not to shoot.[36] The primary reason might have been anticipated problems with censorship, but the decision to omit the rape certainly also reinforces the atmosphere of 'disquieting emptiness' that Robbe-Grillet describes in his work. Throughout the filmed version of *Marienbad*, we are given unsettling intimations of the repressed rape of A by X, as if the absent trauma at the heart of the story does indeed distort the rest of the narrative, 'filling' every other event. Lynn Higgins provides an incisive account of this process:

> If rape as an event has been suppressed from the story, it is present as discourse, dispersed in multiple thematic codes. It is represented symbolically by a series of broken things: a glass, A's shoe, later a balustrade over which X escapes being seen by M. It is present in a theme of penetration (into rooms, into thoughts). It can be seen in the fear A's face displays and in her repeated and increasingly frantic refrain, 'Please [more literally, I beg of you]... let me alone...' It is there in the various manifestations of X's pursuit and A's flight. And it is visible in the actress's self-protective gesture, arm held diagonally across her torso, which becomes her character's signature.[37]

We might add that along with these recurrent symbols and themes, the editing of certain sequences is also suggestive of a concealed or repressed narrative wherein X, having been spurned, violently assaults A. An early scene at the firing range is particularly noteworthy. Here we see a number of armed men in a line, with X present in the middle of the line-up. In turn, each man turns around and quickly fires his pistol. When it is X's turn to fire, he turns around and aims his pistol, but before he shoots there is a cut to a different location, showing A emerging from a darkened

background. The two shots are joined in such a way as to suggest a coherent space, as if X is indeed shooting at A. Again, we are given a glimpse of a narrative that might be absent or repressed from the film's direct 'content', but may yet subsist in its style and structure.

Speculation and Dream: *The War Is Over* and *Providence*

After the formal experimentation that marked Resnais' first two feature films, his subsequent work seems, by comparison, somewhat simpler; it is less complex in terms of narrative structure and less ambiguous in terms of meaning. Nevertheless, the director's fascination with the workings of the brain and consciousness persists throughout the first half of his career, emerging as a thematic concern in all of his films from *Muriel* to *Mon oncle d'Amérique* (1980). In *Muriel*, Resnais once again explores wartime trauma and its impact upon the psyche, telling the story of a young veteran of the French-Algerian conflict who struggles to live with his memories of the atrocities committed by French soldiers. The film deals with both the personal and the collective experience of decolonization, and charts a profound shift in consciousness with regard to the implications of French imperialism (which will be discussed in the next chapter). In a very different way, *Stavisky* (1974) also addresses a specifically French collective experience. This film is a historical drama which recreates the events leading to the suicide, or possibly murder, of Serge Alexandre, the notorious French-Jewish financier and conman. In the course of *Stavisky*, Resnais' interest is not only in recreating a significant political scandal and mysterious death, but also in exploring how these events might be remembered or imagined.[38] By contrast, *Mon*

oncle d'Amérique again confronts the workings of the brain in a very direct manner, investigating the role of genetic determinism in human social behaviour. The film mixes conventional narrative with scientific treatise, balancing a contemporary human interest story with a series of interviews with behavioural scientist Henri Laborit, whose sociobiological theory provides a sort of intermittent commentary on the fictional drama.

In very different ways, all of the films that Resnais made during this period (1963-1980) attest to his ongoing concern with the relationship between film and thought. However, in the context of our present discussion, two films, *The War Is Over* (1966) and *Providence* (1977), require particular attention. Although not as systematically experimental as his earliest works, these films offer significant developments in terms of the formal strategies that Resnais utilizes in order to represent thought and explore consciousness. I shall, therefore, conclude my analysis of Resnais' stylistic and narrative innovations with a brief investigation of each film.

The War Is Over was Resnais' first collaboration with Jorge Semprun (who would later write the screenplay for *Stavisky*), and tells the story of Diego (Yves Montand), a Spanish revolutionary who has spent thirty years trying to mobilize resistance to Franco's Fascist regime. Diego works out of France as part of a small, left wing movement which is involved in distributing subversive literature across the border. The film concerns the revolutionary group's attempt to organize a general strike in Spain amidst the government's large counter-insurgency operation, which leads to the capture of several key members of the resistance.

For the most part, the story of *The War Is Over* is told in a straightforward, realistic and stylistically conventional manner. However, this largely conventional presentation of events is punctuated by the intermittent representation of the

protagonist's thoughts as he imagines future events.[39] Sequences of subjective images depict possible future scenarios as they play out in Diego's mind. This unusual narrative technique is introduced at a very early stage in the film, while Diego is being driven across the Spanish border back into France. The driver (Dominique Rozan) reassures Diego that they should reach the train station before the train to Paris is scheduled to depart. As the driver continues to talk, we are presented with a rapid succession of shots depicting Diego's speculative thought process. The shots represent various potential scenarios: Diego boarding the train as it pulls away, or narrowly missing the departure, or being greeted by a friend as he arrives in Paris, and so forth. Many critics have described these images as 'flashforwards', but as James Monaco observes, this term is not very precise: 'Diego doesn't summon up pictures of what is about to happen but rather alternatives of what might happen.'[40] These shots might, therefore, be better described as speculative or subjunctive images. In any case, while these images anticipate a possible future, they follow *Marienbad*'s representation of the internal monologue in being firmly rooted in the perpetual present moment of consciousness. Throughout the film's first proleptic sequence, the unbroken conversation on the soundtrack constantly reaffirms the present reality. Similarly, background noise and conversation is a consistent feature of later representations of Diego's speculative imagination, so that we are very aware of how the images function as a fleeting 'mental reality' occupying a finite time in the present.

This representation of thought – as a rapid oscillation between perception and imagination – has an inherent value as an accurate depiction of everyday mental life. However, the recurring evocation of the protagonist's mental speculations also has a powerful resonance within the specific narrative context of *The War Is Over*. Diego's

precarious situation means that he has to be constantly looking forward, being concerned with both evading the Spanish authorities in the short-term and planning a long-term revolutionary strategy. Monaco observes,

> Diego's continual involvement in decision-making introduces an important new facet of Resnais's investigation into the phenomenon of imagination. In the past, alternate realities for Resnais's characters had been composed of equal parts memory and fantasy: both were essentially psychological. But now the life of the mind takes on a new meaning: logical rather than emotional.[41]

The War Is Over is undoubtedly marked by a more systematic use of logic as a structuring principle for thought processes. This is particularly noticeable in Diego's voiceovers, where he consistently refers to himself in the second person (as 'tu'), analyzing his thoughts and actions in an apparently objective manner. However, it is misleading to suggest that Diego's attitude is logical *rather than* emotional. Diego's imagination of the future frequently seems involuntary and prompted by anxiety, as when he imagines the possible capture of Juan (Jean-François Rémi), a fellow revolutionary who may have been identified as an insurgent by the Spanish government. Similarly, the proleptic images that reveal Diego's friends and associates before they are encountered in actuality do not merely reaffirm the logical pre-planning of subsequent actions, but offer an insight into the protagonist's emotions. Resnais offers an interesting interpretation of the effect of introducing the characters in Diego's imagination before they appear in 'real' scenes: 'It interests me when one sees the scenes that they correspond to a feeling of déjà-vu, that they are anticipated. I think that all of the characters in the film are presented as imaginary figures before they appear in reality.'[42] The feeling of déjà-vu that is created for the viewer gives some sense of the repetitive routine that constitutes Diego's long experience as a revolutionary. It suggests Diego's weariness, his emotional response to a constant

battle that does not seem to be marked by significant progress and does not have an end in sight.

Through the course of the film, Diego displays a great deal of ambivalence towards his vocation. This is not because of any lack of conviction in the worthiness of his revolutionary cause, but because he has come to question the level of personal sacrifice it entails and the effectiveness of his movement's policies. Diego's ambivalence extends to the realm of his personal relationships, where his involvement with two women seems to present us with something of a symbolic dichotomy. Firstly, we see Diego's brief affair with Nadine (Geneviève Bujold), the daughter of René Sallanches, the man whose passport Diego uses in order to cross the Spanish border. It later transpires that Nadine is also part of a radical left wing group which plans to use explosives to disrupt Spain's tourist trade and so financially cripple the regime. Diego is also involved in a long-term relationship with Marianne (Ingrid Thulin), whom he stays with while in Paris. Marianne is the antithesis of Nadine, being much closer to Diego's age, having a seemingly normal life and job, and expressing the desire to raise a family with Diego. Although both women are fully developed characters, they also seem to have a strong symbolic function, presenting Diego with two possible futures. Marianne seems to symbolize security, comfort and a permanent identity, while Nadine symbolizes freedom and a youthful revolutionary fervour, untouched by the cynicism of experience. Diego's attraction to both women can thus be seen as an extension of his general emotional uncertainty regarding his future as a revolutionary fighter. Again, this facet of Diego's mental life is given a concrete representation in a sequence of imaginative images. After learning that he will not be returning to Spain for some time, his comrades deeming it to be too dangerous, Diego immediately phones Marianne to tell her that he will be staying in

France with her, 'maybe forever.' While he insists that he is not unhappy with this outcome, we are simultaneously presented with a sequence of mental images depicting his possible ambivalence, culminating in a lengthy shot of Nadine as he recollects their brief liaison.

While the subjective images representing Diego's thoughts provide *The War is Over* with a very distinctive aesthetic and offer an ongoing insight into the protagonist's mind, in real terms, these short interludes occupy only a small proportion of the film's running time. In contrast, *Providence*, Resnais' only English language film, offers a more pervasive representation of mental life, more in line with the director's earliest works.

Providence is divided into two parts. The first depicts a restless night in the life of a dying, alcoholic author, Clive Langham (John Gielgud). During this night, Clive begins to imagine a story where the principal characters are his three children: his sons, Claud (Dirk Bogarde) and Kevin (David Warner), and his daughter-in-law – Claud's wife – Sonia (Ellen Burstyn). This story begins with an apparent mercy killing: Kevin shoots an old man who seems to be metamorphosing into an animal. He is subsequently put on trial for murder, with Claud as the prosecuting lawyer, but is acquitted. Afterwards, Sonia – who is trapped in a loveless marriage with Claud – tries to initiate an affair with Kevin. This narrative can be seen as the product of both the conscious and unconscious processes of its author: at times, Clive seems to be knowingly creating, 'directing' his characters and interpreting their actions (through voiceover) as he plans out a future novel; at other times, Clive may well be dreaming, with certain recurring nightmare images encroaching on the story as its author lapses in and out of sleep.[43] The second, shorter part of *Providence* is set the following day, on Clive's seventy-eighth birthday. Here Clive is visited by Claud, Kevin and Sonia,

and there are obvious and startling discrepancies between these real life characters and the fictional counterparts dreamt up by Clive. For example, the previously cold, arrogant and contemptuous Claud is now portrayed as being warm and sensitive; similarly, his relationship with Sonia is now revealed to be loving and monogamous.

The discrepancies between how Clive's children act in the dream/ story and how they act in reality are very telling. Retrospectively, what emerges in Clive's story – much more than an insight into the minds of his children – is the revelation of his own psyche – his fears, desires, anxieties, preoccupations and so forth. Marsha Kinder observes that *Providence* lends itself to 'a Gestalt approach to dreams in which all characters, settings, and props are seen as projections of the dreamer.'[44] Consequently, the rather two-dimensional characters who populate Clive's story can be seen as exaggerated or purified aspects of his own personality:

> From a Freudian perspective Clive is the ego, who is hounded by Claud, the 'contemptuous' lawyer and 'jailer,' functioning as super-ego: in self-defence, the ego encourages the childish id figures – the rebellious Sonia and the radical visionary Kevin – to act out their (and his) libidinal desires.[45]

Although Resnais' previous representations of the mind have engaged with a general psychoanalytic framework – in terms of depicting repression, trauma and hysteria, for example – *Providence* does so in a much more obvious and self-conscious manner. A Freudian reading of the film is playfully encouraged by the Oedipal struggle that underpins several different narrative strands. Most notably, Claud's mistress (Elaine Stritch) resembles his dead mother, Molly, who we later learn committed suicide whilst suffering from terminal cancer. Clive's guilt concerning this fact goes a great way towards explaining much of the psychical drama that unfolds in the first section of the film. At the moment when Clive 'invents' Claud's mistress, his voiceover

commentary reveals, 'She looks like his mother! Clearly, the boy must have an unconscious mind, just like everybody else.'

Of course, the unconscious mind that is revealed to us is Clive's own, through his dreams and through the process of sublimation as he creates his story. Clive's unconscious introspection is encapsulated in a recurring visual metaphor: the image of an autopsy, perhaps the fantastical representation of Clive's own body being dissected after death. Later, in the second section of the film, Claud will reaffirm one aspect of this image's significance, using his own verbal metaphor to make a connection between the writer's creative process and a gruesome dissection. After Clive reveals that he has been working on an idea for a new novel, Claud immediately asks, 'Who are you disembowelling this time?' The metaphor is doubly apt, not only pointing to the way in which Clive's story reveals the gruesome traumas that underlie his psychic dysfunction, but also recalling Clive's physical illness: the breakdown of his digestive system is the main symptom of his terminal illness, and it is this that leads to his nightmarish nocturnal experience. For Clive, the visual metaphor is similarly over-determined. The image of the autopsy also signifies the spectre of Clive's imminent death, something which constantly haunts his imagination. This vision is recurring and involuntary, a fact that is emphasized when the image first appears and Clive's voiceover pleads, 'Get out of my mind.'

There is one other image which 'intrudes' into Clive's waking life: the memory of his wife's suicide. In the second section of the film, while Clive looks at an old photograph of Molly, comparing his mirrored image to her portrait, we are shown a sequence depicting his vivid memory of her suicide. We see Molly's body lying in the bathtub where she has opened her veins. As Wilson points out, the image is designed to create a powerful visual impact: 'the blood-red bathwater is in stark contrast to the

black and white of the rest of the frame.'[46] The indelibility of the image is very important, as it is Molly's suicide which determines and explains how Clive imagines his relationship with his children, particularly Claud. It is implied that although he may have loved his wife, Clive was not faithful to her and may, at times, have treated her with the same coldness that Claud displays towards Sonia in his fantasy. Therefore, Clive sees himself as being partly culpable for Molly's suicide, and imagines that Claud likewise blames his father – despite Claud's protestations to the contrary. Monaco argues: 'This is the basic emotional set of the film: a quasi-paranoid, irreconcilable dichotomy between one's image of oneself and one's image of the self as perceived by others.'[47] At times this dichotomy is definitely 'paranoid', but we might question whether there is not some reality, or at least plausibility, behind the thoughts and emotions that Clive attributes to his son. Although, in the second section, Claud states that he does not blame his father for Molly's death, his words do not seem entirely convincing. He attempts to absolve his father of guilt, but their relationship remains strained, as if the suspicion of mental recriminations can not be so easily eliminated. Indeed, the entire second section – with its sunshine and bucolic setting – seems like something of a false idyll. Just as the second section retrospectively transforms our interpretation of the first, so too does the first section alter our perception of the family relationships in the second. Underneath the benign social interactions we are witnessing there are still – at least for Clive – all the unresolved and unconscious emotional issues that are latent to the fantasy narrative.

In creating a narrative which follows the logic of a dream, Resnais represents Clive's imagined story through a collage of disparate locations, drawn from various moments that subsist in the author's memory. The 'settings' are constantly evolving with the author's imagination: the veranda at the back of Claud's house, for example,

is presented with three different backdrops in the course of the film, each seeming to refer to a specific, important location from Clive's memory. *Providence* thus follows a similar spatio-temporal rationale to the final dream sequence in *Wild Strawberries*. Like the earlier film, *Providence* constructs a flexible, purely subjective space-time, which connects ideas, images and symbols according to implicit mental associations rather than conventional narrative logic.

The dreamscape created in *Providence* is, therefore, radically subjective in the sense that it reflects the specificity of the individual's mind and thought process. Yet, at the same time, the film also identifies collective, cultural reference points that shape the protagonist's imagination. Clive Langham's nightmares involve recurring images of surveillance, incarceration and deportation. He repeatedly imagines armed soldiers herding the elderly and infirm into a large stadium surrounded by a wire fence. These images are extremely powerful in evoking the very real, twentieth-century nightmares that have already been documented by Resnais in *Night and Fog* (specifically, the spectre of Paris' *Vel' d'Hiv*, which was, during the Occupation, transformed into a temporary internment camp). Wilson provides an incisive summary of the effects of these images:

> Certainly the film draws on the scenarios, the structures which in the twentieth-century imagination speak of threat, dehumanisation and death. Yet it does not conjure specific ghosts of the past, nor engage effectively with particular situations, showing instead how those horrors become a conduit, even a concrete form for the expression of anxiety and terror. The film depends on the sense that these scenarios will be pregnant with pathos and fear for the viewer as well, that we will share their cultural context and menace.[48]

Providence shows us only a glimpse of the 'twentieth-century imagination', but this collective consciousness is a constant, pressing concern of Resnais' cinema. Resnais' desire to represent individual thought processes is relentlessly intertwined with his

equally powerful desire to explore the collective aspects of memory and imagination. His films do not simply 'represent' thought in images; they also recognize how images might actively shape thought, or might transform the ways in which the individual imagines the past. The complex issues regarding the relationship between film, history, and the collective imagination will be the concern of the following chapter.

[1] Alain Resnais, commenting on *Last Year at Marienbad*, 'Trying to Understand My Own Film', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 123 (September 1961). Translated by Raymond Durgnat and reprinted in *Films and Filming* (February 1962), p. 10.

[2] Alain Resnais, in Stéphane Goudet (ed.), *Positif, revue de cinéma: Alain Resnais* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002). Translated by Emma Wilson and cited in Emma Wilson, *Alain Resnais* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 1.

[3] Jackie Andrade and John May, *Cognitive Psychology* (London: B105 Scientific Publishers, 2004), p. 86.

[4] Ibid, p. 88. See also Allan Paivio, *Mental Representations: A Dual Coding Approach* (Oxford: OUP, 1986), pp. 53 -83.

[5] Jean-Luc Godard, cited in (ed.) Jim Hillier, *Cahiers du Cinéma: The 1950s. Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 59.

[6] See Roy Armes, *The Cinema of Alain Resnais* (London, Zwemmer, 1968), p. 28.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Retrospectively, many critics have made an important distinction between the New Wave filmmakers who first wrote for *Cahiers du Cinéma* and the so-called 'Left Bank' filmmakers – Resnais, Chris Marker and Agnes Varda – who were older, began making films earlier, and did not begin their careers by writing film criticism.

[9] Monaco (1978), p. 28.

[10] Resnais, cited in Armes (1968), p. 9.

[11] Monaco (1978), pp. 29-30.

[12] John Ward, *Alain Resnais, or the Theme of Time* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), p. 116.

[13] Lynn A. Higgins, *New Novel, New Wave, New Politics: Fiction and the Representation of History in Postwar France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 10.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Claude Simon, cited in Higgins (1996), p. 26.

[16] Dan Nadaner, 'Film and Cognition: A Critical Review of Current Theory', *Studies in Art Education*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Winter 1984), p. 122.

[17] This is not to say that Resnais' 'realistic' representation of mental imagery is without aesthetic precedent. As we have seen, the dream sequences in *Wild Strawberries* are not differentiated from the waking scenes by overt stylistically markers – though their subjective status is heavily 'cued' through dissolves and voiceovers. Looking further back, Buñuel's early surrealist films, *Un chien andalou* and *L'Âge d'or* (1930), are also somewhat akin to Resnais' work in that they do not directly mark their subjective images as such. What is original in Resnais' work, however, is the constant, seamless movement between objective and subjective images, between the present moment and the realm of memory or imagination.

[18] It is worth noting here that *Hiroshima mon amour* did in fact grow out of a documentary on the atomic bomb that Resnais was asked to make by Argos Films, for whom he had made *Night and Fog* four years earlier.

[19] Marguerite Duras, cited in Wilson (2006), p. 46.

[20] Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, 'How history begets meaning: Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour*', trans. Susan Hayward, in (eds.) Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau, *French Film: Texts and Contexts* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 180.

[21] The scientific data on memory, we should note, increasingly supports Resnais and Duras' intuitive depiction of recollection as an active and creative process. Neurobiologist Steven Rose writes: 'brains

do not work with *information* in the computer sense, but with *meaning*. And meaning is a historically and developmentally shaped process, expressed by individuals in interaction with their natural and social environment. Indeed, one of the problems of studying memory is precisely that it is a dialectical phenomenon. Because each time we remember, we in some sense do work on and transform our memories; they are not simply being called up from a store and, once consulted, replaced unmodified. Our memories are recreated every time we remember' (Steven Rose, *The Making of Memory: From Molecules to Mind* [London: Bantam Press, 1992], p. 91).

[22] Higgins (1996), p. 45. A similar idea is raised directly in the film film's dialogue. After the Japanese man asks about the woman's first love in Nevers, she becomes indignant and wants to know why he wants to hear more about that specific incident in her life. He replies that, 'I somehow understand that it was there that you began to be who you are today.' Although the specific details of these events are, of course, vital, the Japanese man seems to recognize that in the act of narrating this incident from her past, the French woman is also offering a much deeper insight into who she is in the present.

[23] Callev (1997), p. 149.

[24] Ropars-Wuilleumier, in Hayward & Vincendeau (1990), p. 180. Lynn Higgins raises a similar point from a psychoanalytic perspective, observing that in Freud's conception of repressed trauma, the traumatic event is reproduced unconsciously in behavior. 'The goal of therapy is to release the patient from involuntary and hysterical repetition (behavior) by transforming the memory into conscious recall (speech), a process that takes the form of a "translation."' (Higgins [1996], p. 38.) In *Hiroshima*, we can identify various examples of how the French woman's trauma is reenacted at an unconscious level, most obviously in her fleeting and transgressive affair with the Japanese man, but also in her fascination with the details of the wartime devastation in Hiroshima. It is also worth noting that the film emphasizes the French woman's immediate inarticulacy following the death of the German: for weeks afterwards, she cannot speak, merely being able to scream. Even when she becomes 'reasonable' again, she does not speak about her trauma. The Japanese man is the first person to hear her story.

[25] Robbe-Grillet (1977), p. 17. Following convention, the three principal characters shall subsequently be referred to by the letters Robbe-Grillet assigns them in his screenplay.

[26] See, for example, Kawin (1978), p. 82. Although X seems to be the most likely 'source' of this fantasy, the presence of both A and M in the audience means that this need not be the case.

The 'fantasy' theory is supported by the very prominent correspondences between film and play, not only in terms of basic narrative (a man tries to persuade a woman to leave her husband/ guardian for him) but also in common aspects of *mise-en-scene*: the play's set depicts a mansion and gardens, with a large model statue – similar to the one which X and A will later discuss in depth – situated stage right, and when the actress onstage delivers her final line ('And now I am yours') she rests her hand upon her shoulder, taking the same self-protective stance that A will repeatedly assume.

[27] Resnais (1962), p. 9.

[28] Resnais, cited in Wilson (2006), p. 76.

[29] Robbe-Grillet (1977), p. 9.

[30] Ibid, p. 7.

[31] Alain Robbe-Grillet, in 'Last words on *Last Year*: A discussion with Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 123 (September 1961). Translated by Raymond Durgnat and reprinted in *Films and Filming* (March 1962), p. 40.

[32] Robbe-Grillet (1977), pp. 5-6.

[33] Resnais, in Resnais & Robbe-Grillet (1962), p. 39.

[34] See Alain Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1989).

[35] Robbe-Grillet, in Resnais & Robbe-Grillet (1962), p. 41.

[36] See Robbe-Grillet (1977), p. 139. This is by far the most significant difference between the screenplay and the film; for the most part, Resnais realizes Robbe-Grillet's plot, dialogue and descriptions of scenes with extreme fidelity.

[37] Higgins (1996), p. 94.

[38] As a number of critics have observed, Resnais attempts to capture a sense of the period through his mimicry of the contemporary cinematic style. See, for example, Monaco (1978), p. 180. Resnais restricted his choice of camera set-ups to those that would have been possible in the 1930s and originally intended to shoot in black and white, an idea that was blocked by his distributor. This association of a cinematic style with a specific historical period again attests to Resnais' conception of the potential impact of cinema on how we remember.

[39] It is worth noting that a similar narrative strategy was utilized in *Z* (Costa-Gavras, 1969), which was also scripted by Semprun and starred Montand. In this later film, both memories and speculations are

represented as fleeting images. As in *The War is Over*, these subjective images occur intermittently throughout the film and add considerable emotional and psychological depth to the narrative.

[40] Monaco (1978), p. 99.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Resnais, cited in Wilson (2006), p. 113.

[43] The mixture of fantasy and reality – or of unconscious and conscious facets – in Clive's story provides a strong parallel to the similar narrative processes in *Marienbad*. Of course, the crucial difference between the two is that in *Providence* we are given an unambiguous framing story, an 'outside' from which to judge the veracity and meaning of Clive's narrative.

[44] Marsha Kinder, 'The Art of Dreaming in *Three Women* and *Providence:* Structures of the Self', *Film Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Autumn 1977), p. 13.

[45] Ibid, p. 17.

[46] Wilson (2006), p. 141.

[47] Monaco (1978), p. 196.

[48] Wilson (206), p. 134.

Cinema and the Collective Imagination

Especially in a society enmeshed in its own cultural artefacts, with a history which transcends any individual experience and memory but is recorded in texts and images, memory has burst the confines of the individual, the personal, and has become collective... Who of my generation can fail to have scarred on their own memories the images of the bulldozed piles of bodies recovered from the Nazi death camps in 1945, or the screaming, napalm-flamed girl-child running down the road from her village in Vietnam?[1]

As a physical record of the past, cinema provides a visual archive for a culture's collective memories and imagination. What *Providence* seems to grasp is the potential influence of concrete audiovisual artefacts upon the individual's imagination. The film suggests that specific images disseminated in the audiovisual culture of modernity might shape our psychic experience in a very direct manner, and, moreover, this is particularly significant in our imaginative engagement with the past.

As noted earlier, Resnais' acute awareness of the role that cinema might play as a repository for communal memory (or imagination more broadly) can be fruitfully traced to his origin as a documentary filmmaker. In particular, it is essential to emphasize the importance of *Night and Fog* in formulating Resnais' conception of cinema's role as a transmitter of collective memory. *Night and Fog* was formally commissioned by the Committee on the History of the Second World War (*Comité d'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale*) in 1955 to mark the tenth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps.[2] The film was to be based upon research carried out by the Committee. It followed on from the publication of the Committee's lengthy book (*Tragedy of the 1940-45 Deportations: Testimonies of the Survivors of the German Concentration Camps*, 1954), and a 1954 exhibition in Paris, which together documented the history of the deportations. Therefore, *Night and Fog* was always intended to be part of the official remembrance of the atrocities of the

Second World War, providing an audiovisual account of the concentration camps to accompany the written documentation. Clearly, a concept of collective memory and commemoration was implicit in the film's inception.

In *Night and Fog*, Resnais responded to the central issues of memory and commemoration in a number of revealing ways. Firstly, he insisted that the commentary be written by Jean Cayrol, a concentration camp survivor, as a condition for his own participation. Resnais argued that Cayrol's involvement was essential to give the film the authenticity and integrity it demanded.[3] The film is thus grounded in personal experience and memory. Furthermore, the film directly appeals to the viewer's imaginative faculties to recreate the horrors of the concentration camps. Nowhere does the film offer a visual reconstruction of the past. Instead, Resnais utilizes present-day footage of the ruins of the camps, in conjunction with Cayrol's commentary, as a catalyst for the viewer's active, imaginative engagement with past events. For example, the camera shows the ruined dormitories at Auschwitz whilst the commentary states, 'No description, no image can reveal their true dimension – endless, uninterrupted fear... Of this brick dormitory and these tormented dreams, we can but show you the outer shell, the surface.' Throughout the film, there is a rhetorical strategy that suggests that the images of the camps are incomplete without the viewer's imaginative input.

However, set against this rhetorical strategy is the use of concrete images of the camps drawn from the historical archives, and the importance of this visual 'testimony' in creating a collective memory of the atrocities cannot be overstated. *Night and Fog* was the first documentary on the Holocaust to bring the archive footage of the camps to the attention of a wide public, and Resnais was particularly aware of the necessity of introducing into the public domain the footage that had been

shot by the liberating armies. In a 1961 interview in *Premier Plan*, Resnais emphasized that his film incorporated some of the most horrific archive footage – such as the images showing the burial of victims in mass graves, which had been shown as part of the Nuremberg Trials – precisely because this footage had not yet had the chance to become part of the public's comprehension of the Holocaust: 'The short films that were made in the camps in '45 and '46 did not reach an audience. With *Night and Fog*, I hoped to make a film capable of reaching a wide public.'[4] Ewout van der Knaap argues that *Night and Fog* did reach its wide audience, and, in so doing, was the first film to forge a sense of shared public consciousness with regard to the Holocaust:

> [I]t was the first film on the Holocaust to have such a major impact. It played a crucial role in the dissemination and appropriation of images of the past, discussions about it helped to define or construct identity and to shape memory...[5]

The film's images, particularly those drawn from the archival footage, created a shared cultural reference point for the mapping of consciousness of the Holocaust.

This discussion of 'collective consciousness' should already imply the wider socio-political context in which audiovisual culture – or the mass media more broadly – has assumed a particular importance in moulding identity, imagination and our conception of both history and the present. However, the role that the audiovisual media might play in shaping ideas, attitudes and thought processes is intensely problematic: as much as audiovisual representation might provide an authentic documentary basis from which to construct a shared understanding of past and present, it can also be utilized to engineer an ideologically distorted picture of reality, or, more simply, a false consciousness. This latter function of the audiovisual media

is, of course, especially notable in wartime, with newsreels and propaganda films attempting to manufacture a sense of shared identity and purpose within stringent ideological frameworks. Furthermore, nowhere was the awareness of film's potential ideological function better expressed than in Nazi Germany, and *Night and Fog* has to be seen, in part, as a response to, and reinterpretation of, the cultural mythology of the Third Reich. In its first foray into the past, *Night and Fog* utilizes the infamous images of the 1934 Nuremberg rally created in *Triumph of the Will* (Riefenstahl, 1935). Cayrol's sparse commentary suggests the wider historical perspective that necessarily must frame our conceptualization of the images: '1933. The machine goes into action. A nation must have no discord.' What Cayrol's commentary pithily recognizes is the central role played by images of conformity and machine-like efficiency in manufacturing a collective consciousness of national identity that is in line with the ideals of Fascism. But in addition, and perhaps even more importantly, the commentary recognizes and responds to the type of *passive* spectatorship that is invoked by *Triumph of the Will* and audiovisual propaganda more broadly. With its Wagnerian soundtrack and overwhelming imagery of the massed German people, *Triumph of the Will* creates the spectacle of the nation revitalized under the singular leadership of the Führer – the spectacle of Fascist power – which the viewer is encouraged to absorb passively.

Night and Fog reacts against the pernicious, manipulative images of history and nationhood created in Nazi Germany, seeking to construct a different form of collective consciousness and identity. Many of the film's formal strategies seem to respond directly to the power of audiovisual representation – and abuses of this power – in structuring our awareness of history. First and foremost, the refusal to reconstruct the past is closely tied to the rejection of the manipulation of the viewer's response

through staged spectacle. Similarly, when the commentary is not demanding the viewer's active, imaginative response to the images depicted, it largely avoids direct, subjective analysis, offering instead an understated description of the camps in a neutral tone.[6] Finally, *Night and Fog*'s use of music as a subtle, often ironic, counterpoint to its imagery also attests to its overriding formal concern with avoiding any kind of extrinsic emotional manipulation, which again needs to be placed in contrast to the utilization of Wagner's music both at the Nuremberg rallies and in *Triumph of the Will*.[7] *Night and Fog*'s awareness of the possibility of creating authentic visual reference points for our collective memory of the past and conception of the present inevitably entails an equal awareness of – and reaction to – the propagandistic misuses of audiovisual representation.

If mass media images (photographs, newsreels, propaganda films, and so forth) seem particularly important in shaping a collective imagination and identity in the 1930s and '40s, this is increasingly the case in the post-war years, particularly with the advent of television in the 1950s. Resnais' problematization of the relationship between the 'documentary' image and concepts of history, identity and nationhood is grounded in a broader questioning of the increased prominence of audiovisual documentation in the construction of historical discourse or consciousness. The proliferation of documentary news footage of the present moment, disseminated through the mass media, raises fundamental questions about the relationship between the image and our perception of reality, both past and present, and perhaps prompts a fundamental shift in our conceptualization of history. Following the influential French historian Pierre Nora, Higgins suggests that 'the visual or spectacular media (de)form our notions of what is thinkable in historical terms', and Resnais' cinema is finely attuned to this epistemic transformation:

Nowadays, the possibility of viewing news 'as it happens' has created an unprecedented sense of the historicity of the present: the mass media give us a present tense that is already historical. Nora believes that the modern mass media, especially television, have transformed the category of historical thought that has come to be called the 'event.' A further consequence, particularly applicable to *Hiroshima mon amour*, is the increased complexity of the distinction between public and private, as 'the event is projected into private life and served up as spectacle.'[8]

For Higgins, Resnais' cinema demonstrates a new conceptualization of how the 'historical event' is imaged (and subsequently imagined) in the present: that is, how the mass media image historicizes the present and simultaneously transforms the individual's relationship with, and understanding of, historical discourse. The increasing incursion of the mass media into the 'private space' of daily life has certainly led to a greater awareness of how the present is historicized, but arguably the fundamental conceptual shift was made possible originally by the development of photographic technology itself. Susan Sontag argues that photographic reproduction implies a new relationship between image, time and thought:

[W]hat photography supplies is not only a record of the past but a way of dealing with the present, as the effects of the countless billions of contemporary photograph-documents attest. While old photographs fill out our mental image of the past, the photographs being taken now transform what is present now into a mental image, like the past. Cameras establish an inferential relation to the present (reality is known by its traces), provide an instantly retroactive view of experience.[9]

In this way, the present moment is frozen, preserved and instantaneously transformed into historical document. Consequently, with the increasingly rapid transmission of the recorded image through the mass media, we become aware of the inscription of a historical discourse of the present – or the creation of a historical consciousness which is not only a public record, but may also become our future, private memory of the

event (our 'mental image'). The opportunity arises for a seemingly instant historical perspective. The problem, of course, is that this perspective, whilst appearing to be rooted in the 'objective' recording of reality through photography, is not necessarily impartial: it may be subject to a variety of ideological pressures, including direct political and institutional censorship, which can lead to a conscious or an unconscious distortion of events.

It is perhaps this last point that is most important to Resnais' cinema. In questioning how a collective consciousness of history might function, Resnais frequently identifies, and challenges (with varying degrees of success), the dominant discourses and ideological structures that may circumscribe the 'thinkable' at a given historical moment. This process of historical revision is not a separate, 'thematic' concern of Resnais' films, but rather is intimately tied to his formal representation of the mechanisms of thought. For Resnais, individual thought cannot be isolated from the political and historical framework in which it operates (a conjecture that is increasingly valid in the audiovisual culture of the twentieth century). Censorship and political repression thus become prominent concerns when Resnais seeks to represent the nature of his fictional characters' thoughts (particularly in *Hiroshima* and *Muriel*). But to understand fully the ideas that Resnais develops regarding the relationship between dominant ideologies and thought, we must first examine the role that censorship has played in the production and reception of some of his own films.

Censorship and Repression

From an early stage in his career, Resnais displayed a keen interest in the relationship between history, art and politics (or, more specifically, dissident thought). This

interest can be traced back to *Guernica*, Resnais' film of 1950 which explores Picasso's modernist representation of the bombing of civilians during the Spanish Civil War. Not only does this film engage with political dissidence on a thematic level, it also postulates an early, tentative idea of a possible relationship between image and thought. Emma Wilson argues that the film is not simply 'about' the painting, but rather 'it is an attempt to convey an artist's vision of the world, and... to use that vision in order to animate and respond to an event of enormity and horror.'[10] The representation of the individual's perspective as a means of exploring the historical traumas of the twentieth century clearly foreshadows Resnais' later narrative concerns.

Resnais' own political dissidence became more evident with *Statues Also Die* (1953). This documentary, which Resnais made in collaboration with Chris Marker, lamented the destruction of African art under the pressures of French colonialism and cultural hegemony. It suggested that the imposition of Western European ideas, tastes and values in the colonies was gradually destroying the indigenous artistic heritage, and, in so doing, implied a wider condemnation of the whole 'civilizing mission' that was a cornerstone of imperial ideology. While attempting to confront the suppression of free artistic expression in the colonies, *Statues Also Die* was itself subjected to a more direct form of censorship. As Alan Williams tersely observes, 'The film was sufficiently effective to be banned outright by the [French] government after one public showing.'[11] It remained banned for fifteen years. It was only after the ideological upheavals that accompanied French decolonization (especially of Algeria) and the uprisings of May 1968 that the film was again screened in France (in November 1968).[12]

The fate of *Statues Also Die* was highly significant in reaffirming Resnais' awareness of the problems associated with constructing a historical or political perspective that conflicts with the dominant, officially sanctioned ideology. Nevertheless, the director ran into similar censorship problems with *Night and Fog* (his subsequent film), and here there is an added layer of significance when we are considering how the construction of an 'official' historical discourse defines the parameters of collective memory or imagination. The main censorship issue that arose from *Night and Fog* has subsequently, and rightly, become somewhat notorious. Upon receiving Resnais' final cut of the film, the French board of censors insisted that a particular shot evidencing France's active collaboration in the internment and deportation of Jews be removed from the film. The shot depicted a transit camp at Pithiviers which was founded specifically to intern Jews arrested in Paris. The camp was set up by the Germans but administered by the French, a fact that was indirectly acknowledged in *Night and Fog* through the presence of an officer in French uniform in the foreground of the original image of the camp. The board of censors argued that this shot should be removed because it might prove offensive to the present-day French military. With the full support of his producers, Resnais refused to delete the image, and it was only after an impasse lasting several weeks that a compromise was reached. The shot of the French officer was left in the film but a black beam superimposed over his *kepi* (the French military cap) so as to obscure his nationality.[13]

The censors' official justification for their decision – on the grounds of potential offence to the military – may have had some basis in reality, but it clearly fails to acknowledge the wider socio-political rationale behind the alteration, or, moreover, to address the issue of historiographic integrity. The historian Henry Rousso provides a resolute summary of what this act of censorship, whatever the stated reasons, actually

entailed: 'The censors... obliterated not the filmmaker's words or images but an actual historical detail, an incontestable fact. The fact that an official historical agency was included in the production of the film made no difference.'[14] Rousso's wider thesis is very interesting, for he identifies this act of historical distortion as part of what he terms the 'Vichy syndrome', a kind of officially-sanctioned postwar 'amnesia' whereby the population at large was encouraged to forget the extent of French collaboration in favour of the myth of almost universal resistance during the Occupation.[15] I will return to this idea shortly when considering the way in which Resnais represents memory of the Occupation years in *Hiroshima* and *Muriel*. For now, it is sufficient to note that the key act of censorship in *Night and Fog* powerfully illuminated the way in which collective memory can be partially constrained by the ideological imperatives of those in power. If Resnais was already very interested in how a collective memory could and should be constructed, this was undoubtedly compounded by the role that censorship played in obscuring a small but significant detail in *Night and Fog*'s representation of the past.

Despite the direct intervention of the censors, there was still much about *Night and Fog* that was politically sensitive, both in France and abroad. As a consequence, the film was subjected to further, indirect acts of suppression, most notably in the withdrawal of the film from France's official selection for the Cannes film festival. The decision to withdraw *Night and Fog* was made by the Secretary of State for Trade, Maurice Lemaire, after he received an official request from the German Embassy that the film be removed on the grounds that it might once more inflame anti-German sentiments.[16] The decision met with widespread protests in sections of both the French and German press, and following several high-profile debates concerning freedom of expression, Lemaire agreed that *Night and Fog* could be

screened at Cannes, but outside of the official competition. This strategy acknowledged the concern regarding the repression of basic freedoms of expression, but nevertheless made it clear that the film did not *represent* France and was not compatible with the demands of diplomacy and official ideology. Tellingly, the fate of *Night and Fog* at Cannes was to be shared by both *Hiroshima mon amour* and *The War Is Over*. Both of the latter films were excluded from the official selection on the grounds that their politically sensitive material might cause offence to other nations (the United States and Spain respectively). In all three excluded films, one might argue that it was not simply the subject matter that provoked their exclusion, but also their specific dedication to reappraising historical traumas in relation to current political situations and dominant ideological positions. Again, Resnais' films are particularly contentious because they identify and deconstruct elements of the officially-sanctioned historical discourses that mould the collective imagination of past and present.

It is also worth questioning whether the exclusion of *Night and Fog* and *Hiroshima* from the official competition at Cannes was motivated solely by anxiety regarding the sensibilities of *other* nations. In the case of the latter film, Lynn Higgins argues that it seems unlikely that the mere assertion of a historical fact – that the US bombed Hiroshima – could prove sufficiently sensitive to see the film disqualified from entry at Cannes. Instead, she suggests that the film's indelicate probing of the Vichy past and French collaboration was the true reason for its exclusion: 'It seems that it was not the Americans that the film would offend, but the French. According to Edgar Morin, Resnais was told that his film was incompatible with the ideals of the Fifth Republic.'[17] Similarly, even in its final state, with the explicit display of French collaboration removed, *Night and Fog* touches upon some contentious issues

concerning postwar memory, ideology and imperialist foreign policy. With the film's final tracking shots across the ruins of Auschwitz, the commentary directly addresses the viewer in the present tense, reframing the act of remembrance as a way of thinking about the present as well as the past. Cayrol's lyrical and highly affecting commentary is worth quoting at length:

> As I speak to you now, the icy waters of the ponds and ruins fills the hollows of the mass graves, a frigid and muddy water, as murky as our memory...
> Who among us keeps watch from this strange watchtower to warn of the arrival of our new executioners? Are their faces really different from our own? [...] Somewhere in our midst lucky *kapos* still survive, reinstated officers and anonymous informers. There are those who refused to believe, or believed only for brief moments. With our sincere gaze we survey these ruins, as if the old monster lay forever crushed beneath the rubble. We pretend to take up hope again, as the image recedes into the past, as if we were cured once and for all of the scourge of the camps. We pretend it happened only once, at a given time and place. We turn a blind eye to what surrounds us and a deaf ear to humanity's never-ending cry.

As is the case in Resnais' later representations of individual memory, *Night and Fog* suggests, in general terms, that the act of remembering illuminates the present, just as the conditions of the present help to determine how we remember. Consequently, it defines memory, ideally, as a critical analysis of the relationship between past and present, and thus suggests that the act of commemoration should also promote universal vigilance with regard to the present conditions of society. Yet beyond the universalism of *Night and Fog*'s warning against forgetfulness, Resnais and Cayrol had a very specific target in mind when they called for vigilance with regard to present-day injustices: namely, French colonial policy in Algeria.[18] Statements from the director and the writer following the film's completion underline the criticism of French foreign policy implicit in *Night and Fog*. In an article published in the communist newspaper *Les Lettres Français*, Cayrol wrote, 'Do not forget that our

own country is not exempt of the racist scandal', while Resnais expressed similar sentiments in *L'Express* on January 31, 1956.[19] In a much later interview, in 1985, Resnais strengthened his emphasis on the specific political message that *Night and Fog* attempted to convey at the time of its release, claiming that in the closing lines of the commentary 'The whole point was Algeria.'[20] Given *Night and Fog*'s subtextual critique of the current French regime's handling of the Algerian crisis, it seems highly plausible that the film's disqualification from competition at Cannes had imperatives beyond those that were stated officially.

However, it should not go unnoticed that *Night and Fog's* specific critique of contemporary French foreign policy exists *only* as subtext. In part, it is reasonable to attribute this reticence to the film's prime concern with emphasizing the universality and timelessness of its messages. Nevertheless, we should be alert to the fact that an explicit criticism of French policy in Algeria would probably have been impracticable. The banning of *Statues Also Die* had already demonstrated to Resnais the firm prohibition against questioning colonial ideology, and since the declaration of a state of emergency in Algeria (in March 1955), this prohibition had been strengthened through additional legislation restricting 'subversive' discourse.[21] The Algerian War, and in particular the emergence of new restrictions on the freedom of expression following its outbreak, thus provides a general background of increasing political censorship that both mirrors and shapes Resnais' personal experience with the direct and indirect forms of censorship that were imposed on his films. Therefore, an understanding of the repressive strategies utilized by successive French governments to control the representation of the Algerian crisis is a final, essential prerequisite to understanding Resnais' early cinema, and in particular the development of his incisive awareness (and critique) of the concrete socio-political

mechanisms that help to control both present public perceptions and the collective consciousness of 'history.' In short, the official manipulation of public perceptions of Algeria provides a crucial context for Resnais' explorations of how individual thought or subjectivity interacts with wider collective and cultural memories, and thus requires further exposition.

State Propaganda and the Algerian War: 'Managing' Public Perceptions

The Algerian War lasted for almost eight years, from the first major insurgencies led by the FLN (the *Front de Libération nationale*) in November 1954 to the Evian Accords of March 1962, wherein it was agreed that there should be an immediate ceasefire with a view to organizing an Algerian referendum on the question of independence. This referendum saw an overwhelming majority vote in favour of Algerian independence, which was formally ratified by the French government on July 3, 1962. During the conflict, the French government attempted to restrict and control public perceptions of events in Algeria through the promotion of an 'orthodox' ideology which suggested that 'French-Algeria' was being threatened by a barbaric, terrorist minority, whilst simultaneously suppressing reports, representations and discourses that questioned the official doctrine. Martin Harrison, writing two years after the declaration of Algerian independence, offers a very valuable insight into the French government's attempts to 'manage' the public's perception of the Algerian conflict. Harrison writes:

> Historically, most countries have tried to condition the image of reality reaching their citizens at periods of domestic and international tensions. In

France the temptations were particularly pressing. The gulf between official myth and Algerian reality was exceptionally broad. Governments wanted the public to believe first that the rebellion was the work of a handful of terrorists, then that the 'last quarter of an hour' had come, and later that peace could be achieved without political negotiations with the Algerian nationalists. To sustain these beliefs they inevitably 'managed' the news... As outright military victory became less likely, vocal sections of the armed forces became preoccupied with 'conditioning' the people of both Algeria and France.[22]

It is important to emphasize at this point that attempts to 'condition' the people in mainland France were much more problematic than in Algeria, for, as Harrison later notes, throughout the war the French press remained essentially 'free.' This is not to say that indirect forms of censorship were not attempted. Seizures of papers that printed 'subversive' articles regarding French policy in Algeria were common. These seizures, along with the financial losses that they caused, provided a strong disincentive against contradicting official doctrine, as did more general ideological pressures from above, such as the appeal for national solidarity against the terrorist threat.[23] As Harrison observes,

Prudence and patriotism led many papers to promote official versions of reality and to sustain the wishful thinking which persistently jeopardized the emergence of intelligent opinion about Algeria... Unpalatable facts and opinions tended to be smothered and pertinent questions went unasked... Even when 400 000 troops were in the field many papers considered the war a 'police action', and the rebels as 'outlaws' who were 'slaughtered' like animals rather than 'killed' like soldiers.[24]

However, prior censorship of the press in France was imposed only once, and for only a few days, in May 1958. This meant that although the mainstream press, more often than not, upheld the official doctrine on Algeria, dissenting views could not be entirely eradicated, and did reach the French public in a limited capacity. Disturbing reports of the scale and nature of the French campaign in Algeria – which directly contradicted official representations and reports – could not be totally suppressed.

As early as 1955, isolated reports of serious violations of human rights in Algeria began to emerge, and these reports were not always confined to political newspapers with a small circulation. In an article detailing *Le Monde*'s coverage of the Algerian War (which was largely supportive of official doctrine), Mohammed Khane notes one such instance of the mainstream press reporting on evidence of abuses of executive power in Algeria. On June 15 1955, *Le Monde* reported on a leaflet being distributed by an Algerian students' union which exposed the practical consequences of emergency legislation on Algeria – legislation which, among other things, had transferred significant power to the military. Khane observes that this leaflet 'indicated that there had been forced transfers of population, the setting up of "resettlement centres" or camps, euphemistically termed "shelters" (*centres d'hébergement*), and an extension of the [March 31] legislation's implementation to include Algerians found in mainland France.'[25]

However, revelations such as these were soon to be eclipsed by the emergence of even more disturbing reports evidencing the French army's widespread and systematic use of torture to interrogate Algerian prisoners, suspected terrorists, and even French nationals accused of subversive behaviour. Two cases are particularly important for the role they played in inflaming critical attitudes to the war among France's left wing intelligentsia. Firstly, in 1957, Henri Alleg, a French-Algerian journalist who was sympathetic to the cause of the Algerian nationalists, was arrested in Algiers, imprisoned without charge, and tortured by French paratroopers. He subsequently managed to write a full account of his ordeal, which was smuggled out of Algeria and published as *La Question* in Paris in 1958. The French authorities tried to limit the impact of the book, first by censoring any newspaper articles that mentioned it, and then by banning it outright and seizing the unsold copies.

Nevertheless, the book continued to be circulated clandestinely, posing an ongoing challenge to official accounts of lawful 'pacification' in Algeria.[26] The second case of French military brutality that became particularly infamous among Parisian intellectuals concerned the torture, rape and murder of an Algerian woman, Djamila Boupacha, by French paratroopers in Algeria. This case was brought to the attention of the public by Simone de Beauvoir, who eventually co-authored a full account of the case, published in 1962. As Lynn Higgins observes, the horrific details of the case became, for many, a powerful metaphor for French activity in Algeria: 'in the words of one historical source, "the rape of Djamila became the symbol of Algeria violated."'[27]

Consequently, throughout the Algerian conflict there existed a small but significant counter-discourse that could not be effectively suppressed, and which challenged the 'picture of reality' that was propagated by official representations of the war. The fact that successive French governments were particularly resolute, but only partially successful, in attempting to 'manage' the public's perceptions of Algeria had, perhaps, an ironic consequence. The constant, but ultimately untenable, attempt to suppress unflattering representations of the Algerian War may have simply alerted certain intellectual sectors of French society to the government's determination to manipulate public opinion through a spurious depiction of reality.

However, while it was extremely difficult to control the way in which Algeria was portrayed in the press, the same was not true in the case of audiovisual representations. Politically-minded filmmakers such as Resnais were fully aware of the spurious and misleading nature of official representations of the Algerian War, but were unable to directly challenge these representations through their own films. Harrison notes that there were several crucial factors that strictly limited the way in

which the Algerian war was depicted – and could be depicted – in the audiovisual media:

> The handful of film producers who set out to tackle controversial subjects had to contend with commercial hostility, censorship and a subsidy system that could be employed for political ends. Usually the result was mutilation or outright prohibition. Newsreels were firmly under official influence... Most importantly, Radiodiffusion-Télévision Français was subordinated more inflexibly than ever to governmental policies.[28]

The tacit, but steadfast, prohibition against films which sought to address the suppressed controversies of the Algerian war was demonstrated, most famously, by the banning of Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Petit Soldat*, which was completed in 1960 but denied theatrical release until 1963, after the war had ended. *Le Petit Soldat* concerns the activities of Bruno (Michel Subor), an ideologically-confused Frenchman who becomes involved with a clandestine counter-terrorism unit combating Algerian nationalists and FLN sympathizers in Switzerland. Having refused an assignment to assassinate a journalist who supports Algerian independence, Bruno is betrayed by his unit and captured by Algerian nationalists. The most controversial section of the film follows, with Bruno being tortured by his captors, who defend their actions by denouncing the French army's prior use of torture to question prisoners in Algeria. Bruno's captors support their claims by reading excerpts from *La Question* – which Bruno dismisses as a crude attempt to indoctrinate him. In addition to this blunt acknowledgement of French atrocities as a suppressed reality, the film also touches upon another highly sensitive issue: the possibility that aspects of French policy in Algeria are facilitating, or are symptomatic of, a resurgence of French Fascism. Bruno reveals, in voiceover, that his counter-terrorist group is 'financed by a former MP, a

luminary of the Vichy days', a detail which implies a continuity between the Fascism of the Occupation era and the right wing politics of contemporary life.[29]

In *Le Petit Soldat*, Bruno makes the (now often-quoted) claim that 'Photography is truth, and the cinema is truth twenty-four times a second.' Yet what Godard's film powerfully demonstrates is the problematical status of such a claim – both through its own narratorial complexity (Philip Dine accurately describes the film's 'truth' as an 'emphatically first-person account of a confused individual's incoherent attempt to make sense of the historical absurdity in which he finds himself') and through the censors' inevitable refusal to approve the film for exhibition.[30] At this time, cinema was patently not truth, but rather a version of reality delimited by official ideology and institutional censorship. Nevertheless, Godard's proposal of an ideal equivalence between cinema and truth certainly has some validity. As noted earlier, cinema is predicated upon the technical ability to record images and sounds accurately. At its most fundamental level, cinema seems to be simply the mechanical reproduction of reality, independent of human agency and authorial bias. But paradoxically, it might be said that film's particular propagandistic utility rests upon its apparent objectivity, or at least upon an (illogical) assumption that cinematic representation has an unshakable truth value because it is rooted in the fidelity of the mechanical recording process. If we accept that cinematic representation appears to have an inherent objectivity, that it may seem to allow an unmediated access to reality, then part of the rationale behind the French government's stringent control over the audiovisual media (as opposed, for example, to the looser restrictions imposed upon literature and the press) becomes apparent.[31] The efficacy of government-controlled newsreels was dependent upon presenting a carefully selected vision of reality as unmediated 'truth', whilst simultaneously suppressing alternative representations that might undermine

this vision (or even challenge the basic assumption that unmediated cinematic objectivity is a practical possibility). Superficially, cinematic representation has an instant credibility that the written report lacks: conceptually, it is more difficult to denounce 'filmed reality' on the grounds of authorial bias or as an impoverished interpretation of the world.

Given the ways in which state censorship and propaganda during the Algerian War problematized the notion that cinema acts as a transparent window on the world, it is easy to identify a political motivation behind Resnais' increasing interest in subjective narration and how film might represent thought rather than immediate reality. Resnais' interest in subjective narration is not exclusively derived from his conviction that there is an inherent value in representing the subjectivity of everyday experience, but is also born out of his scepticism regarding the cinematic 'objectivity' that underwrites contemporary images of political and historical reality. By representing a fictional character's subjective experience of real-life historical and political situations, Resnais is able to question accepted historical 'truths', or the officially-sanctioned picture of reality, whilst also highlighting the importance of ideological frameworks such as these in moulding the individual's worldview. In the final section of this chapter, I shall explore the two films in which Resnais most thoroughly reinterprets France's recent past through subjective experience – *Hiroshima* and *Muriel*. The former utilizes personal memory as a means for revisiting the traumas of Occupation and collaboration, mounting a challenge to the political myths about the era that were laid down immediately after the Liberation. The latter, released only a year after the official declaration of Algerian independence, directly explores the repressed realities of the Algerian war, investigating both an individual veteran's traumatic memories and the wider impact of decolonization on the French

psyche. In neither case does Resnais simply offer a subjective 'alternative' to contradict the official picture of the recent past. Instead, he shows how the subjective experience (or memory) of history is embedded in a dominant ideological framework. In so doing, he explores the complex relationship between public and private history, drawing attention to the ambivalence, uncertainty and ideological confusion that can be said to subsist in both the individual and collective consciousness of the recent past.

Reinterpreting the Recent Past

The careful management of information during the Algerian War forcefully demonstrated how an officially-endorsed representation of 'reality' might set the parameters in which events could be perceived, understood and, eventually, remembered. Yet it would be wrong to suggest that prior to the Algerian war official discourse and ideology were unimportant in moulding conceptions of current and past events. In particular, several historians have noted that following World War Two, official discourse repeatedly misrepresented France's situation during the Occupation, and the conditions under which the country was liberated, in order to reconstruct a sense of national unity and purpose. Rousso cites a speech made by Charles de Gaulle immediately after Paris was liberated that set the official agenda regarding how France's involvement in the war was to be remembered:

> Paris! Paris humiliated! Paris broken! Paris Martyrized! But Paris liberated! Liberated by itself, by its own people with the help of the armies of France, with the support and aid of France as a whole, of fighting France, of the only France, of the true France, of eternal France.[32]

Rousso suggests that this official interpretation of the prevalence of French resistance, and the role the French populace played in the Liberation, is a flagrant rewriting of history for political ends. Similarly, Philippe Burin argues that de Gaulle's speeches ignored a complex history of deep political divisions, promoting instead a simple narrative wherein a unified France, barring a treacherous minority, had arisen to resist the occupying forces:

> Gaullist rhetoric lent authority to an image of France as 'Free France', a France from which a handful of traitors had excluded themselves only to receive their just deserts at the Liberation. France, Resistance, de Gaulle: together these three magic words substituted a glorious, mythic past for a complex, shifting and divided one.[33]

The myths that were laid down in the immediate aftermath of the Liberation were sufficiently compelling and successful to shape how the war was represented and remembered for years. Rousso argues that for almost a quarter of a century following the Liberation, a kind of false consciousness, or willed amnesia, seemed to define both official accounts and private memories of wartime France. In emphasizing the extent to which 'The Vichy Syndrome' has to be seen as an active constituent in the postwar French psyche, Rousso goes so far as to describe it as a 'neurosis.' The psychoanalytic metaphor is particularly apt in capturing the sense that the trauma France suffered through four years of Occupation and latent civil war became the *repressed* reality of the postwar collective consciousness. This reality was quietly censored – consciously or unconsciously – from private memory and official record, so that only traces (or indirect symptoms) of France's divided past were allowed to subsist. Clearly, this overlapping of public and private repressions following the war finds a particular resonance in Resnais' cinema. As Naomi Greene argues:

It is the smothered unease of this era that gives Resnais' cinema, I think, its special cast. Marking a particular moment in the evolution of French memory of the Vichy past, his films are rooted in, and yet implicitly denounce, the climate of 'unfinished mourning' and 'repression' that... characterized Vichy memory from the end of World War II until the early 1970s.[34]

The significance of Resnais' willingness to explore the repressed realities of the Occupation has to be understood in the context of wider trends in French cinema. Rousso notes that while World War Two inspired countless American and British films (many of which were distributed in France), French filmmakers seemed, on the whole, very unwilling to make films about the war or even to use the period as a dramatic setting: between 1944 and 1986, only two hundred such films were produced or co-produced by France, and 'Even in periods when wartime films were at a peak, they never accounted for more than 7 percent of total French production, at most a dozen films per year...'[35] It was not until the late 1960s and early '70s (over twenty-five years after the Liberation) that the first French films to address Collaboration directly and honestly, such as *The Sorrow and the Pity* (Ophüls, 1969) and *Lacombe Lucien* (Malle, 1974), began to appear – and these films remained somewhat exceptional in the way that they challenged the dominant historical perspective. For Rousso, the unwillingness of filmmakers to revisit the war years – and much less to explore the reality of those years in any depth – is symptomatic of the wider desire to forget the facts of wartime life and accept, without too much thought, the appealing myths about the period laid down immediately after the Liberation.

The prevalence of a collective myth or false consciousness of France's almost universal resistance to the Occupation provides the context in which *Night and Fog*'s acknowledgment of French collaboration proved to be so controversial. Similarly, it provides the context in which *Hiroshima mon amour*'s reinterpretation of the past, via

the heroine's personal memories, is embedded. The heroine's repressed trauma is exacerbated because her experience cannot be accommodated by the dominant accounts of the war, which propose a simple dichotomy between the vast majority who courageously resisted German Occupation and the treacherous minority who collaborated. Her dead lover was 'an enemy of France', marking her as a collaborator; yet in reality, her actions were entirely apolitical: her relationship with the German soldier is represented as being not merely innocuous, but, moreover, as something rather innocent and beautiful – the blossoming of first love. The film gives the impression that the nationality of the French woman's lover is, at least for her, entirely incidental, a product of historical chance that carries no wider political or ideological connotations. Her memory of being unjustly vilified by her community points to the inadequacy of dominant, dualistic accounts of resisters and collaborators, and, furthermore, suggests that contemporary versions of such accounts may have played a role in compounding the widespread ideological and moral confusion that followed the Liberation. The narrative that the French woman has repressed since the end of the war touches upon many of the extremely sensitive issues that have also been repressed, censored or overlooked in the dominant historical discourse of the postwar period. In her story, private and public traumas are intertwined.

The French woman's conscious recollection of her personal trauma can, therefore, be seen in part as a symbolic reinterpretation of those aspects of France's past that have been repressed from the postwar collective memory – namely, the ideological divisions and uncertainties that typified the Occupation era, the shame of active (or even passive) collaboration, the problems associated with the accurate identification of collaborators, and, consequently, the questionable success of the post-Liberation purges in punishing genuine Fascist elements in French society. Many, if not all, of

these issues are highlighted in a single, powerful image: that of the public shaving of the heroine's head. This image is specific to the fictional character's traumatic memory, but is also emblematic of the wider communal memory of post-Liberation France. Julian Jackson notes that this particular type of punishment, reserved particularly for women who had slept with German soldiers, was widespread throughout France and was notable for its extreme theatricality:

> Shavings were carried out all over the country, in cities as well as villages. Frequently, they were made into public spectacle: the women were paraded down the street, sometimes naked; then they were shaved in front of an audience on a hastily erected platform or balcony; swastikas were daubed on their faces or shaved skulls... Sometimes they were the result of personal vendettas masquerading as people's justice. Sometimes angry crowds searched for scapegoats in a random and sadistic manner.[36]

This type of popular justice was clearly designed to be spectacular, symbolic and memorable, yet, as Jackson also suggests, it was from the beginning inherently problematic. The theatrical excesses of popular justice could not entirely mask the lack of discrimination in determining the true culpability of individual 'collaborators.' Jackson argues that as a consequence 'the initial enthusiasm [for the shavings] was quickly replaced by a sense of shame. The Liberation Committee of the French Cinema which produced a film on the Liberation of Paris at the end of August 1944 omitted any scenes of shavings despite having footage of them.'[37] In this context, we can see how the return of the French woman's memories of her public humiliation in *Hiroshima* is also, in some sense, the return of what has been repressed from France's collective memory. In one brief scene, we see a selection of the people of Nevers dutifully shaving the heroine's head while she is subjected to taunts and mocking glances from the crowd of onlookers. The fact that *Hiroshima*'s heroine is, essentially, innocent of any serious charges of collaboration not only adds poignancy

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to her situation, but also highlights the failure of the community to identify those who truly deserve punishment.

The French woman's narrative offers a critical perspective on the collective memory of the Liberation, whilst also illuminating the historical ideology that is perhaps implicit in communal behaviour. It has already been suggested that the public degradation of female 'collaborators' had a highly symbolic function, and as such can be said to offer an insight into the collective psyche. Jackson writes that contemporary witnesses noted the 'carnival-like atmosphere' of the head-shaving ceremonies, and concludes that these ritualized public spectacles provided 'a means by which the community symbolically reappropriated the public space after four years of occupation.'[38] Further to this, he adds that the ritualized punishment of women who had slept with German soldiers was 'described as a sort of moral disinfecting of the community.'[39] More than representing a justified – or justifiable – punishment for female collaborators, the shavings represented a communal attempt to symbolically exorcise the trauma of Occupation, to re-establish a rigid moral order, and to cleanse the collective conscience.

Higgins also offers an interesting account of how the public humiliation of the French woman in *Hiroshima* carries a symbolic function that taps into the post-Liberation French psyche. Higgins suggests that the situation in France after the Liberation can be elucidated through René Girard's concept of a 'sacrificial crisis', wherein self-perpetuating acts of violent retribution threaten to destroy the community or plunge it into endless civil war. In this situation,

> Categories of thought and oppositions between groups break down, so that it is no longer possible to distinguish enemy from ally, inside from outside. The enemy – violence itself – is within and the risk is one of undifferentiation… Such situations invite the identification of a substitute victim or scapegoat on

which unanimous hostility can be exorcised, thus arresting or preventing a perpetually endless chain of violence.[40]

In Higgins' reading of *Hiroshima*, the heroine fulfils this role of scapegoat, drawing attention away from the real military and political crimes that may have been committed but cannot be rooted out and punished without radically destabilizing the community as a whole. In line with the official myths propagated at the time of the Liberation, justice has been symbolically enacted: the treacherous minority has been swiftly identified, punished and effectively excommunicated from 'the true France.' Of course, for the audience, the heroine's memory of her ritual humiliation simply emphasizes the community's failure to deal with the trauma of collaboration in a meaningful way (and the subsequent repression of this failure).

The moral and ideological crisis that is implicit in the French woman's memory of post-Liberation France can be seen as part of a much wider crisis of thought with regard to the traumas of World War Two. Specifically, of course, it is the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima that is at the very centre of this crisis. It is worth stressing again that the heroine remembers Nevers from the present moment in Hiroshima; her experience of Hiroshima provides the constant background context in which her thoughts take shape. It seems reasonable, therefore, to postulate an implicit mental connection between the utter destruction of Hiroshima and the ideological crisis in postwar Nevers. Hiroshima is a constant reminder of the fact that during World War Two atrocities were committed by the Allies as well as by the Axis powers. In a global postwar context, as in post-Liberation Nevers, the distinction between the innocent and the guilty, or allies and enemies, has become problematic to the point of being untenable. Ultimately, *Hiroshima* draws attention to the fundamental impossibility of rationalizing the worst traumas of the war, pointing

instead to the need to reconceptualize postwar morality and politics in global rather than nationalistic terms. In exploring the heroine's traumatic memories of the war, and paralleling these with her experiences in Hiroshima, Resnais and Duras also invite the viewer to reflect upon the collective traumas of World War Two that have not been given due attention, or have been distorted or simplified, in existing representations (cinematic and otherwise) of the period.

Hiroshima was made at the height of the Algerian War, and the way in which the film represents the collective confusions and failures of memory pertaining to World War Two clearly has some grounding in the contemporary political climate. In 1958, the extent to which the public was being offered a distorted picture of the Algerian conflict was becoming apparent. This contemporary misrepresentation of a political situation clearly bears some comparison to the misrepresentations of World War Two that proliferated after the Liberation. In addition, the questions *Hiroshima* raises regarding the Occupation, French collaboration and the sustainability of nationalistic ideology are particularly pertinent, and often highly ironic, in relation to the situation in Algeria. From a retrospective position, the parallels between the German occupation of France and the French colonial presence in Algeria seem obvious, and likewise the draconian measures undertaken to suppress the Algerian uprising – such as the resettlement or internment of native populations and the transferring of executive power to the military – seem unnervingly analogous to actions carried out by the Nazis. But at the time, the logical discrepancy between France's constant commemoration of its heroic resistance to foreign occupation and its ongoing imperialism was not recognized as such by the vast majority. Dine argues that France's actions in Algeria, and the country's initial determination to hold on to the colony at all costs, have to be understood primarily in terms of the extent to which

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imperialist ideology was entrenched in the collective psyche: 'This is not so much to imply a rejection of historical materialism as to acknowledge the Algerian question's importance as a generator of collective confusions, which we may variously refer to as phantasms, instances of false consciousness, or myths.'[41] Algeria was seen by many as being an integral part of France itself, and as such was central to the collective sense of national identity. The violent and drawn-out decolonization of Algeria thus had a huge and traumatic impact upon the collective imagination, and this is the angle from which Resnais approaches the Algerian War in *Muriel*. As was the case in *Hiroshima*, the traumatic events in France's recent history are not recreated as such, but rather are approached and interpreted indirectly in terms of how those events might be imagined or remembered.

Muriel has two main narrative threads. In the first, Hélène Aughain (Delphine Seyrig), an antiques dealer living in contemporary Boulogne, is visited by Alphonse (Jean-Pierre Kérien), an ex-lover whom she has not seen since the outbreak of World War Two. Alphonse claims to have spent the past two decades running a small café in Algeria, but it later transpires that this story is entirely fabricated. He has in fact been living the whole time in France with a wife whom he failed to mention. Although his motives are never made clear, it seems as if Alphonse has contacted Hélène in the hope of resuming their relationship: his fantasized past is part of his new life and new identity. The second narrative concerns Hélène's stepson Bernard (Jean-Baptiste Thiérrée), a young veteran of the Algerian War. Bernard is unable to readjust to civilian life, has become deeply introverted, and spends most of his days alone shooting and editing a film with contents that he is unwilling to disclose. We eventually find out that Bernard is traumatized by the memory of having been involved in torturing a female prisoner in Algeria, who later died of her injuries. (It is

also implied that she may have been raped by one or more of Bernard's comrades: Bernard recounts that her clothes were 'ripped off', but says no more on the subject.) The woman was known to Bernard as Muriel; he never discovered her real name. Bernard admits that he was directly involved in beating Muriel, but implies that the ringleader in the violence was Robert (Philippe Laudenbach), a former friend who disposed of the dead woman's body. Robert is also now living in Boulogne, apparently remorseless, and Bernard spends a lot of time secretly filming his former friend, 'gathering evidence' against him. Eventually, Bernard can no longer bear the possibility that Robert's crimes will go unacknowledged and unpunished. *Muriel* ends with Bernard shooting his former friend and fleeing the city.

Muriel is unlike Resnais' previous feature films in that it cannot be said to be 'subjectively' narrated in any straightforward sense: the subjective images and interior monologues of *Hiroshima* and *Marienbad* are absent from *Muriel*. Nevertheless, we can identify at least three distinct sets of memories that constantly underpin the action and affect the way in which that action is represented: Alphonse and Hélène's recollections of World War Two, Alphonse's fabricated memory of Algeria, and Bernard's traumatic memory of Muriel. Wilson suggests that Bernard's ever-present memories of Algeria frequently 'colour the seemingly unrelated domestic scenes in his home town.'[42] Throughout *Muriel* there is a persistent sense of unease achieved through the stylized construction of even the most banal domestic scenes. The constant use of disjunctive editing defamiliarizes the everyday settings, moving us abruptly between disparate shots and scenes with little regard for conventional narrative continuity. Similarly, there is often a lack of obvious relationship between the images we see and the soundtrack: the film's discordant and ominous music frequently intrudes into apparently innocuous conversations or otherwise insignificant

narrative moments. The overall effect is one of estrangement from everyday reality. Long before the revelations about Bernard's traumatic memory and Alphonse's deceptions, the viewer is given an intimation that nothing in *Muriel* is quite as it seems on the surface. It is reasonable to suggest that while *Muriel*'s narrative is not presented to the viewer as being directly 'subjective', the film's representation of the world is deeply inflected and distorted by the perceptions and memories of its principal characters.

The memories of Algeria that are presented to the viewer by Alphonse and Bernard are also representative of how Algeria has been collectively imagined or represented in the past decade or so. The fabricated memory of Algeria that Alphonse has constructed is a misrepresentation that is very much in line with the old colonial myths that existed prior to the first insurgencies. As Greene observes, 'Alphonse paints a picture of an imaginary Algeria – sunny, open, welcoming – that masks and replaces the image of a nation ravaged by war.'[43] If Alphonse's story represents the false consciousness of Algeria that helped to sustain the French colonial project, Bernard's experience represents the shameful reality of the colonial war that has been largely repressed from the public record. While Alphonse is eager to share his appealing fabrication with anybody willing to listen, Bernard finds it almost impossible to talk about his experience of Algeria, signalling, in part, the proliferation of the dominant myths about the colony and the concomitant repression of the facts that contradict these illusions.

The remarkable scene in which Bernard's memory of Muriel is revealed to the viewer is also vital in conveying the way in which the harshest realities of Algeria have been censored from the historical record and the collective imagination. Bernard relates the story of Muriel's torture to an elderly friend at his makeshift film studio

whilst projecting documentary footage of Algeria. The grainy images of Algeria – which appear to have been taken from newsreel footage – fill the screen while Bernard makes his confession in a continuous voiceover monologue. There is an immediate and obvious disparity between what we see and what we hear. We see innocuous shots of the Algerian landscape and architecture followed by images depicting young soldiers relaxing in the sun, smiling and even play-fighting. At the same time, Bernard recounts his story, revealing how he and a group of four other men were asked to interrogate the woman known as Muriel. When he starts to reveal the details of the torture, Bernard begins to talk in the present tense, reliving the traumatic memory: 'Robert kicks her and shines a torch on her. Her clothes are ripped off. She is propped on a chair but falls...' The juxtaposition of Bernard's evocative account with the innocuous documentary footage serves to emphasize the conspicuous absence of any visual testimony to the brutal realities of the Algerian War; the only cinematic images of Algeria that exist are the official newsreels that mask rather than illuminate the reality of the situation. In refusing to represent visually Bernard's memory, Resnais responds to the climate of censorship and repression that existed throughout the Algerian War, suggesting that Bernard's mental images of the conflict are precisely those which have been excised from the public domain and are thus precluded from the collective imagination.

However, it is not only state-imposed censorship that has limited the circulation of accounts of Algeria that run contrary to the official myths of the colony. *Muriel* suggests that many French men and women would simply prefer not to acknowledge the traumatic realities of recent foreign policy and decolonization. It is because of the general climate of repression that Robert is not perturbed when he discovers that Bernard wishes to expose the crime they committed in Algeria. Robert tells his former

friend, 'You want to talk about Muriel. But Muriel's story can't be told...Every

Frenchman feels alone. He's frightened to death. He'll put the barbed wire up around

his little world all by himself. He doesn't like trouble.'[44] As was the case in

Hiroshima, the comforting myths, or false memories, of the recent past are a means

for avoiding the traumatic reality.

Repressed memories of Algeria can be said to provide the constant background to

Muriel, inducing the feeling of estrangement or alienation that underpins the

representation of domestic life. While this sense of alienation is clearly most

applicable to Bernard, who finds it impossible to readjust to everyday life after

Algeria, the other characters seem to share his lack of direction and the difficulty he

experiences in building close, honest relationships. Again, it is tempting to suggest

that rather than focussing directly on the individual subjective experience, Resnais'

concern in *Muriel* is with the collective experience, or collective consciousness, of a

national trauma. This attention to the collective experience is perhaps most noticeable

in the way that Resnais films the urban landscape of Boulogne, using the city as a

microcosmic representation of the French nation as a whole and as a physical record

of the traumas of recent French history. Greene suggests:

> Boulogne itself, a bewildering maze of bleak and sterile modern buildings in
> which nothing distinguishes one street, one neighborhood, from another, is the
> perfect geographical expression of a nation that, as one pedestrian complains
> of the city, has lost its 'centre.'[45]

We can take this analogy between the condition of the city and the condition of the

nation further by noting that the urban chaos in Boulogne is largely a consequence of

the extensive damage inflicted upon the city at the beginning of World War Two. In a

rapid sequence depicting the city, Resnais emphasizes the discontinuity between past

and present, juxtaposing shots of new shops, the casino and high-rise flats with a lone shot of the small area of the old town that was not destroyed by German bombs. Shortly afterwards, another sequence shows damaged buildings and partial ruins that have not yet been repaired or demolished in conjunction with the street signs commemorating the local resistance to the Occupation. (The official memorials to France's fight against an occupying power are, of course, bitterly ironic in the context of a film dealing with French colonialism.) The city is not shot as neutral background, but is utilized as a recurring reminder of the physical and psychological damage inflicted upon the French nation during the war and as a symbol of the problematic process of social reconstruction.

Muriel is not so much a film about the Algerian War as it is a film about the French nation's collective memory of Algeria, a memory that is problematical because it is largely defined by official myths regarding the colony and the concomitant repression of representations that challenge official ideology. Dine suggests that it is specifically Resnais' awareness of the tension between individual memory and officially-sanctioned history that makes *Muriel* so successful in capturing the French population's communal experience of the Algerian War. The film, Dine writes,

casts a particularly revealing light on the radical incommunicability of the 'Algerian experience'... That it should have done so in 1963 and should continue to do so today is a result of its exceptionally productive juxtaposition of the individual and collective will to forgetfulness as regards events in Algeria, with its characters and the French Nation's obsessive remembering of the Second World War: by hinting at convenient omissions in the memory of that earlier devastation, it serves to emphasize, if not quite to define, the officially encouraged silence surrounding recent events on the other side of the Mediterranean.[46]

For both World War Two and the Algerian War, Resnais suggests that the 'officially encouraged' repression that has defined the collective memory or imagination of these events is, at best, an inadequate response to significant national traumas. In *Muriel*, as in *Hiroshima*, the repressed traumas of the recent past inevitably persist in everyday life, leading only to political confusion and protracted, ineffectual mourning. The implication is that the nation's psychological scars will only heal after the official myths of the past are dismantled and the complex and often shameful realities of recent French history are acknowledged. Ultimately, this is one of the key goals of Resnais' cinema: to develop an alternative consciousness of the recent past. In reinterpreting recent history through his characters' subjective experiences and memories, Resnais mounts a small but significant challenge to the dominant myths that have moulded the collective imagination of the past.

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[1] Rose (1992), p. 8.

[2] The Committee on the History of the Second World War was an official body, headed by prominent historians Henri Michel and Olga Wormser. It was assigned the task of collecting testimonies from survivors of the concentration camps and documenting the history of the French deportations. My account of the Committee's involvement in the production of *Night and Fog* is derived from two main sources: Richard Raskin, *Nuit et Brouillard* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1987), pp. 25-32, and Ewout van der Knaap, 'The Construction of Memory in *Nuit et Brouillard*', in Ewout van der Knaap (ed.), *Uncovering the Holocaust: The International Reception of Night and Fog* (London: Wallflower Press, 2006), pp. 14-17.

[3] See Raskin (1987), p. 28. Cayrol was deported to Mauthausen in 1942 under the 'Night and Fog Decree'.

[4] Alain Resnais, *Premier Plan*, no. 18 (October 1961), reprinted in Raskin (1987) pp. 135-6. Trans. Alix Hughes.

[5] Ewout van der Knaap, 'Transmitting the Memory of the Holocaust', in van der Knaap (2006), p. 2.

[6] In an essay which accompanies the DVD version of *Night and Fog* (released by Criterion in 2003), Phillip Lopate notes that Resnais asked Michel Bouquet, the actor who reads the commentary, to speak his lines in a 'neutral tone' – although Lopate himself finds the delivery frequently to be 'harsh, dry [and] astringent.' See Phillip Lopate, '*Night and Fog*', *criterion.com*, 7 March 2007, <http://www.criterionco.com/asp/release.asp?id=197&eid=314&section=essay>

[7] It is also worth noting that the phrase 'Night and Fog' (*Nacht und Nebel*) has its origin in Wagner's opera *The Rhinegold*. Hitler utilized the phrase in his 'Night and Fog Decree' which established harsh guidelines for the treatment of civilians arrested in occupied territories. Under this decree, numerous 'enemies of the Reich' were swiftly arrested and deported, often without any explanation to their friends and families – making it seem as if they had disappeared in 'night and fog.' Jean Cayrol, who was deported under the decree, subsequently titled his 1946 collection of poems about the camps *Poems of Night and Fog*. The very title of Resnais' film thus has to be seen as tracing the complex evolution of a specific cultural image that has been appropriated and re-appropriated for different political/ideological purposes – in much the same way that Resnais appropriates and reinterprets the cinematic images produced under Nazism. For a very thorough and informative discussion of the evolution of the phrase, see Raskin (1987), pp. 15-22.

[8] Higgins (1996), p. 27.

[9] Susan Sontag, *On Photgraphy* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), pp. 166-7.

[10] Wilson (2006), pp.19-20.

[11] Williams (1992), p. 369.

[12] See Wilson (2006), p. 22.

[13] See Raskin (1987), pp. 30-31. The censored image of the French guard has actually been 'restored' to its original form in the most recent (Criterion) DVD of *Night and Fog* – i.e. in this latest version, the beam that was introduced to hide the French guard's nationality has been removed; effectively, the film has been 'de-censored' and now reflects Resnais' original intent. Yet, in a sense, this 'restoration' is deeply problematical, for it masks the conditions under which the film was originally produced and received. The act censorship that was 'visible' in the theatrically-released version of the film has important historical connotations. The subsequent effacement of this censorship, while restoring the veracity of Resnais' original image, detracts from the film as a historical document of the political and cultural landscape in postwar France.

[14] Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (London: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 230.

[15] Rousso's thesis is also complemented by some of Rose's observations on the increasing power of new technologies to alter historical records and artefacts, fostering an ideologically-skewed collective memory. The new technologies of the twentieth century, Rose argues, offer 'unrivalled prospects... for the production of completely fabricated memories... or even a sort of social amnesia, the public erasure in which the Stalinist airbrushes remove Trotsky from the photographs of the makers of the Bolshevik revolution' (Rose [1992], p. 98). The manipulation of the image in *Night and Fog*, of course, provides another illustration of the validity of Rose's argument.

[16] See Jean-Marc Dreyfus, 'Censorship and Approval: The Reception of *Nuit et Brouillard* in France', in van der Knaap (2006), pp. 38-40.

[17] Higgins (1996), p. 52; Edgar Morin, 'Aspects sociologiques de la genèse du film', *Tu n'as rien vu a Hiroshima* (Bruxelles: Institut de Sociologie, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1962), pp. 25-9.

[18] In addition, the acknowledgment of '*kapos*...reinstated officers and anonymous informers' surviving 'in our midst' is pertinent specifically as an analysis of postwar *French* society, and, one assumes, is intended as such. The fact that certain collaborators may have escaped punishment was, needless to say, extremely sensitive (and usually ignored, at least in the realm of cultural discourse) in France in the 1950s. Similarly, there were significant taboos against any suggestion that the extreme right wing ideology that had supported collaboration might subsist in certain sectors of contemporary French society.

[19] See Dreyfus, in van der Knaap (2006), pp. 41-2.

[20] See Williams (1992), p. 369.

[21] See Martin Harrison, 'Government and Press in France during the Algerian War', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 58, no. 2 (June 1964), pp. 273-85. It is important to stress that the most draconian legislation against free speech was only implemented in Algeria itself, where civil liberties in general were greatly reduced. Nevertheless, the French mainland also experienced new (if less severe) constraints on the freedoms of the press and communications media.

[22] Ibid, p. 273.

[23] Ibid, pp. 274-82.

[24] Ibid, p. 283.

[25] Mohammed Khane, '*Le Monde's* Coverage of the Army and Civil Liberties during the Algerian War, 1954-58', in (eds.) Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans & J.F.V. Keiger, *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62: Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 175-6. Clearly, the relevance of details such as these to *Night and Fog*'s subtextual critique of French foreign policy cannot be overlooked.

However, it must be stressed that although *Le Monde* occasionally acknowledged the existence of repressive military actions, this does not necessarily imply that the paper itself was critical of those actions. Khane maintains that overall the paper's representation of the war 'deviated very little from the official line' (p. 187): '*Le Monde's* coverage of the Algerian War was in many respects shaped by information from the army and official sources. These set the parameters of the newspaper's discourse on the Algerian War. Any alternative discourse was seen as a minority voice or as 'illegitimate' (p.175).

[26] For a good account of the imprisonment of Henri Alleg and the scandal surrounding the 'botched efforts' to ban *La Question*, see Chester W. Obuchowski, 'Algeria: The Tortured Conscience', *The French Review*, vol. 42, no. 1 (October 1968), p. 101. John Calder's preface to the English edition of

La Question also provides useful information regarding the circumstances under which the book was originally written and published. This edition also includes the lengthy article on the book that Jean-Paul Sartre wrote for *L'Express* ('A Victory'), which was itself seized by the French authorities. (See Henri Alleg, *The Question*, trans. John Calder [London: John Calder, 1958].)

[27] Higgins (1996), p. 108. Harrison also offers a useful summary of the Djamila Boupacha case: see Harrison (1964), p. 278.

[28] Harrison (1964), p. 273. In a footnote, Harrison makes the important observation that at this time Radiodiffusion-Télévision Français had a television monopoly in France, except in frontier areas.

[29] The suggestion that French Fascism may not have been exorcised at the moment of the Liberation, managing instead to subsist as a dormant force in French political life, inevitably recalls the warning implicit in the final lines of *Night and Fog*. It is also worth mentioning that at the time when *Le Petit Soldat* was being filmed, it was becoming increasingly common for left wing writers to recognize the parallels between the Fascist past and colonial present. Simone de Beauvoir, for example, wrote that, 'Today the sight of French uniforms makes me shudder as much as the swastikas of bygone years.' (Cited in Obuchowski [1968], pp. 95-6.)

[30] Philip Dine, *Images of the Algerian War: French Fiction and Film, 1954-1992* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 2002), p. 221.

[31] Of course, it is important not to overlook the additional factors that made the censorship of the audiovisual media both more desirable and more practicable than censorship of other forms of expression. The ability of film to reach and influence a very large number of people in a short amount of time is a vital consideration, as is the greater ease with which access to cinematic technologies can be limited.

[32] Rousso (1991), p. 16.

[33] Phillipe Burin, 'Vichy', in (ed.) Lawrence D. Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past Under the Direction of Pierre Nora*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 197.

[34] Naomi Greene, *Landscapes of Loss: The National Past in Postwar French Cinema* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 35.

[35] Rousso (1991), pp. 227-8.

[36] Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-44* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), p. 581.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid, p. 582.

[39] Ibid, p. 583.

[40] Higgins (1996), p. 48.

[41] Dine (2002), p. 10.

[42] Wilson (2006), p. 100.

[43] Greene (1999), p. 49.

[44] Both the dialogue and the basic narrative situation at this point in *Muriel* recall – quite strikingly – certain passages from Sartre's infamous 1958 article 'A Victory' (see note 26 above). The young, inexperienced conscripts sent to fight in Algeria, Sartre suggested, 'come home transformed, aware of their helplessness, and generally taking refuge in a bitter silence. Fear is born. Fear of others and of themselves, and in France today fear permeates all sections of society. The victim and the executioner merge into the same figure: a figure in our own likeness. In fact, in the final extremity, the only way to avoid one role is to accept the other' (Sartre, in Alleg [1958], pp. 12-13.) Sartre also draws pertinent parallels between Occupation-era France and contemporary Algeria, suggesting that 'fifteen years are enough to transform victims into executioners' (p. 12).

[45] Greene (1999), p. 50.

[46] Dine (2002), p. 223

Thinking Through Hollywood

When Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of *Lolita* was released in 1962, the film's tagline – which was foregrounded throughout the marketing campaign – playfully posed a question which must have been in the minds of many people: how did they ever make a movie of *Lolita*? On an immediate level, this of course references the problems associated with bringing the novel's risqué subject matter to the screen in an era when Hollywood was still committed to its conservative Production Code, which effectively forbade the depiction of any material which could be deemed offensive or sensational in favour of its family-friendly brand of entertainment. Yet in addition to questions of sensational content, the tagline can also be seen to address a stylistic issue that relates to this particular adaptation. The novel is narrated in the first-person and gains much of its force and meaning from the evocation of its protagonist-narrator's uniquely skewed perspective on the world, brought to life by Nabokov's exuberant prose style. Indeed, this narratorial perspective underpins the entire story: at no moment are we permitted to forget that the fictional world is being refracted through a particular point of view. In short, to make a movie of *Lolita* is to tackle the problem of how film might translate the literary first-person narrative, and represent the thoughts and perspective of its protagonist.

Reviewing the film shortly after its release, Raymond Durgnat argued that '*Lolita* is one of those stories which cry out for a first-person camera. First-person in the sense of being, not the hero's-eye-view – which isn't important – but his mind's eye view.'[1] The lack of such a device, he concluded, was the film's 'glaring omission', and he was not alone in his assessment of Kubrick's 'mishandling' of the material.[2] In a retrospective analysis of the film, Brandon French presented a similar argument,

cataloguing the ways in which Kubrick 'failed' to capture the novel's essential stylistic properties:

> Kubrick photographed *Lolita* predominantly in medium shots, the least intrusive choice a director can make. There are virtually no distortions of lens or angle, no flourishes of movement, no extreme close-ups or long shots or zooms. The lighting is consistently naturalistic. And there is no appreciable audio manipulation. Kubrick's decision to film in this manner may have been based on his assumption that the bizarre nature of the material required directorial detachment for balance... But the majority of *Lolita*'s content is banal until it is worked upon by Humbert's distorted romantic perspective. To accommodate that content appropriately, Kubrick needed a stylistic equivalent for Nabokov's prose.[3]

Criticism such as this clearly addresses the stylistic issue raised by the film's tagline, but it does so by divorcing this aspect of the adaptation from the industrial and cultural context that is also identified as a condition of the film's production. The underlying assumption is that these are distinct and separate issues. Yet to make such an assumption is to overlook the possibility of a more complex interaction between the artistic motivations and institutional constraints that shaped the adaptation. Durgnat and French raise several valid points regarding the relationship between the book and the film of *Lolita*, but, I believe, they are wrong to suggest that Kubrick disregards the novel's narratorial slant and its intrinsic importance to the story. My contention is that while Kubrick does not attempt a systematic reworking of the novel's first-person narration, his careful manipulation of point of view at significant moments in the film demonstrates his awareness of the crucial relationship between form and content in the original story.[4] At the same time, the stylistic modifications that he makes are, for the most part, necessitated by the transposition of the source material to its new medium – not least because of the changes to content that were imposed by the censors. In order to understand fully Kubrick's reworking of *Lolita*, it

is essential that we first consider both the general challenges presented by the notion of 'first-person' cinematic narrative, and the specific censorship problems that the production had to negotiate.

This chapter will, therefore, firstly provide a brief analysis of the history of first-person narration in the American sound film, discussing in particular Orson Welles, Robert Montgomery and *film noir* in the 1940s and early 1950s. Primarily, this will allow us to consider central issues concerning processes of spectatorship, identification and narratorial perspective in the cinema, whilst clarifying the historical context that helped to shape Kubrick's early films. It will also help to elucidate the many different forms of subjective narration that recur throughout Kubrick's work – from brief dream sequences and fantasy images (*Killer's Kiss* [1955], *A Clockwork Orange*, *Eyes Wide Shut*), to representations of visions and hallucinations (*2001*, *The Shining*), and first-person voiceovers (*Killer's Kiss*, *Lolita*, *A Clockwork Orange*). In addition, this discussion of Welles and *film noir* will facilitate an exploration of the complex and shifting relationships between Hollywood, European art cinema, and Kubrick's own brand of filmmaking. Under the influence of earlier European films, Welles and *film noir* introduced greater narrative experimentation, expressionistic aesthetics, increased psychological complexity, and more 'adult' themes (often dealing with sex, violence and criminality) into the American cinema. Kubrick's cinematic thought, in turn, clearly draws upon this heritage, and attempts to expand further the stylistic and thematic boundaries of American filmmaking.

This preliminary discussion will lay the foundations for an analysis of the difficulties that Kubrick faced in making *Lolita*, which will focus on how he sought to balance the artistic, commercial and institutional demands that framed the adaptation. This, of course, will address his attempt to negotiate the fundamental problem of how

to evoke a psychological content that is integral to the story but, because of censorship, cannot be represented by conventional means.

In exploring the relationship between *Lolita*'s production history and its narrative, I believe we can identify several distinct senses in which Kubrick 'thinks through Hollywood' – or, in different terms, utilizes Hollywood's conventions, codes and ideology as a frame of reference for his own cinematic thought. In the same way that Resnais reflects upon the role of political discourses, censorship and propaganda in shaping thought, Kubrick addresses the influence of Hollywood and its narrative formulae on the popular cultural imagination. His fascination with genre (in most of his films) and his creative use of the star system (particularly in *Lolita* and *Eyes Wide Shut)* attest to his shrewd understanding of how Hollywood formulae can operate as a means of guiding audience expectation and generating meaning. Yet in working with these tried and tested formulae, Kubrick also probes their limits. Hollywood's generic and narrative conventions are built upon a number of tacit ideological assumptions. In critiquing or subverting these conventions, Kubrick continuously exposes and deconstructs the moral, political and philosophical frameworks that define the parameters of American commercial cinema. Kubrick's cinematic thought, therefore, operates through its antagonistic – yet extremely productive – relationship with Hollywood. This is precisely what is reflected and reinforced by *Lolita*'s tagline, which foregrounds the problematical conditions of the film's production as a determinant of our mode of reception.

The overall purpose of this chapter, then, is to demonstrate the way in which Kubrick's formal representation of thought (or, specifically, first-person narration) in *Lolita* is embedded in a wider exploration of how thought might be organized and expressed in relation to Hollywood cinema. Many of the ideas considered in this

initial discussion will then be taken up in a second chapter, which will deal with the various forms of subjective narration in Kubrick's later work.

Orson Welles, Robert Montgomery and First-Person Narration

In 1953, Julio Moreno noted a 'growing rapprochement' between the film and the novel as narrative forms.[5] On the one hand, cinema's 'objective' presentation of facts was beginning to have an impact on a number of American and French authors. As we saw in the previous section, Robbe-Grillet and the other New Novelists should be counted foremost among those whose writing style was influenced directly by the cinema. On the other hand, several filmmakers were starting to experiment with different forms of subjective, or first-person, narration, based to a large extent on literary precedents. The sound film, Moreno suggested, was 'tending toward a greater personalization of the story, replacing the impersonal presentation of facts by narration by one of the characters or, going further, presenting the events subjectively, as seen and felt by one of the characters.'[6] In short, by 1953 (the year in which Kubrick made his first feature-length film), first-person cinematic narration, representing a specific character's viewpoint and thoughts, was well established in both theory and practice.

Tracing the furthest origin of any stylistic or narrative device is always problematic, but when discussing American first-person cinema, Orson Welles' work is undoubtedly a good place to start. With its multiple flashbacks, ostentatious camerawork and expressionistic mise-en-scene, *Citizen Kane* mounted a decisive challenge to the American convention of 'invisible' narration. In place of the

omniscient and unobtrusive mode of storytelling that had, since the 1910s, been synonymous with Hollywood filmmaking, *Citizen Kane* utilized a more subjective approach, wherein the life story of Charles Foster Kane (Orson Welles) is 'recollected' by a series of different characters. Yet Welles' attempt to introduce a form of first-person narration into the American cinema predates *Citizen Kane*. Before analyzing his screen debut, it is instructive to consider Welles' aborted adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, in which he first envisaged the concept of the cinematic first-person narrator.

Heart of Darkness was the film Welles initially planned to make for RKO, an intention which was publicized by the studio in September 1939.[7] The film was to be made under the same contract that eventually set the terms for the production of *Citizen Kane*, which guaranteed Welles an unprecedented level of creative control over any approved project, including the right to final cut. With this promise of almost total freedom to pursue his own ideas, and all the resources of RKO placed at his disposal, Welles was eager to experiment. Clinton Heylin records that in a memo of September 15, 1939, Welles was already suggesting that *Heart of Darkness* would be 'told in an entirely new way'.[8] It soon transpired that Welles intended to replicate the form of the original novel, so that the major part of the story would be told from the perspective of Marlow (the book's primary, first-person narrator). In fact, he planned a very literal evocation of Marlow's point of view: 'Welles had... decided to shoot the film as if the camera represented Marlow's line of vision – to make the first film in history that not only told its tale in first-person narrative but took the actual vantage of its narrator.'[9] Welles intended that the film should systematically utilize Marlow's optical perspective, with all events and characters being seen through his eyes. Tilts, pans and tracking shots would come to represent the physical movements of Marlow's

eyes and body through the course of the story, and when he was addressed by other characters, they would speak directly into the camera. At the same time, subjective sound was to play a key role in rendering the first-person perspective. The script for *Heart of Darkness* indicates that Welles intended to make extensive use of devices such as voiceover, voice-off and internal monologue to evoke Marlow's point of view.[10]

Unfortunately, the type of first-person narrative that Welles envisaged also presented considerable technical problems. In particular, the fact that the camera was meant to represent Marlow's eyes meant that there could be no conventional cutting. As Welles stated in another (undated) memo to RKO:

> In filming *Heart of Darkness* the intention is to operate the camera so that, aesthetically speaking, there will be no interruption of the action at any time, no cuts... the camera has to function not only as mechanical recording device but as a character.[11]

This, Welles acknowledged, would require both aesthetic and technical innovation, but he believed that a film of 'continuous' action was, in principle, achievable. Any necessary cuts, he suggested, could be hidden within what he termed 'feather wipes': whilst the camera was directed on a background detail, such as a wall, an 'invisible' edit could be made, with one shot segueing seamlessly into another. After, several days of test shooting, however, Welles discovered that while these feather wipes worked as intended, they were difficult to orchestrate and, consequentially, very time-consuming. Furthermore, once a sequence had been shot, it could not be altered or edited in any way without breaking the film's continuity: if anything needed changing, entire segments would have to be removed or re-shot. This, of course,

meant that every sequence in the film would have to be planned and executed with the greatest precision.

With the logistical problems created by Welles' unique vision of *Heart of Darkness*, projected costs rose rapidly. After Welles submitted his finished script, the budget department at RKO estimated that it would cost just over one million dollars to make the film – double Welles' allotted budget. Reluctantly, he agreed to postpone the film, and to find a more manageable project for his debut.

While Welles never got to fulfil his ambition of making a film seen entirely from the first-person perspective, one such film was made in the 1940s. Robert Montgomery's *Lady in the Lake* (1946), adapted from a Raymond Chandler story, stands alone in the history of cinema as the only film to have systematically deployed a first-person camera. Apart from a few short, expositional scenes in which Philip Marlowe (played by Montgomery) addresses the camera directly (in a prologue, an epilogue and during two brief intermissions), everything is shot from his optical perspective. Inevitably, this means that many of the stylistic devices that Welles envisaged using for *Heart of Darkness* feature prominently in Montgomery's film: camera movements aim to imitate bodily movements and sensations (so, for example, tracking shots are slightly shaky, rather than smooth, which is intended to mimic our vision whilst walking); when characters speak to Marlowe, they look directly into the camera; and in place of conventional continuity editing, we are given a series of long, continuous shots, with any cuts within scenes being carefully disguised. Almost every aspect of the film was designed with the aim of placing the viewer in Marlowe's position. As Moreno notes, 'even Montgomery's voice was recorded with a more muffled tone than this natural voice, since this is the way everybody hears his own voice.'[12]

Unfortunately, what this exercise in transposing a literal first-person viewpoint to the screen demonstrated, for audiences and critics alike, was the dramatic 'failure' of such a device. Moreno suggests that contemporary audiences were, for the most part, frustrated and confused by the film's continual use of subjective camera, and the subsequent critical response has not improved the film's reputation.[13] Edward Branigan provides an accurate description of *Lady in the Lake*'s position in film history: 'It is one of the few classics whose fame rests on its convincing failure.'[14] Yet we cannot afford to dismiss the film. The critical attention *Lady in the Lake* continues to receive testifies to the film's significance in clarifying some central issues concerning subjectivity and identification in narrative cinema. Furthermore, I believe it is reductive simply to state that the film as a whole is a 'failure'. Certain sequences undoubtedly work better than others, and while *Lady in the Lake* is deeply flawed in many areas, there is much in the film that is worth discussing. A brief analysis of why the film 'fails' in certain respects, but also succeeds, in a limited capacity, in others, will help to elucidate the basic nature of first-person narration and suggest how it might be adapted to operate in film.

One of the primary criticisms that has been levelled at *Lady in the Lake* is that in attempting a 'faithful' reproduction of a subjective viewpoint, it simply draws attention to the many ways in which the camera's view is fundamentally dissimilar to our everyday visual experience. Joseph Brinton, in an early article on *Lady in the Lake*, provides a convincing catalogue of ways in which the camera's view is unlike human vision: its field of view is much narrower (typically, showing only a third of the 180° panorama open to eyesight), the camera lacks the essential agility of the human eye, and depth perception presents a significant problem for the monocular camera, something that is exacerbated whenever Marlowe's limbs are filmed

protruding from the bottom of the frame (when, for example, he reaches out to take documents or sign his name).[15] Deficiencies such as these go unnoticed when subjective camera is used in the flow of normal cinematic narrative, but are constantly evident, and, indeed, are unintentionally foregrounded, in *Lady in the Lake*.

The numerous ways in which the film reminds us of the basic differences between human perception and the camera's mechanical vision is linked to another central problem: that of identification. Both Moreno and Brinton assume that one of the key aims of the first-person camera is to facilitate a greater identification between the viewer and the protagonist, so that the viewer feels, in Moreno's words, 'personally involved in the action'.[16] And this assumption seems reasonable. MGM's advertising for the film certainly suggested something very similar, promising the viewer 'a Revolutionary motion picture; the most amazing since Talkies began! YOU and ROBERT MONTGOMERY solve a murder mystery together!'[17] Yet if a close identification of viewer with protagonist was the film's primary goal, many of its 'first-person' devices had an opposite, alienating effect. It is difficult to become immersed in a narrative where there are constant distractions, such as Marlowe's protruding limbs or cigarette smoke, which periodically drifts across the frame. Similarly, although one may become partially acclimatized to having characters speak directly toward the camera, this technique never loses entirely its strange and eerie qualities.[18]

There are, however, more fundamental problems with *Lady in the Lake*'s subjective perspective, and these directly concern the nature and significance of first-person narration. The assumption that the literary first-person perspective can be mimicked, or even approximated, simply through the continual use of subjective camera is deeply flawed, and patently fails to address the motivational and formal

logic that underpins first-person narration in literature. Clearly, there is more to first-person narration than the narrator's *perceptual* point of view, and it is this reasonably self-evident fact that is reaffirmed repeatedly through *Lady in the Lake*. In restricting itself to the optical perspective of its protagonist, the film also severely limits its capacity to offer any insight into Marlowe's thoughts and feelings.[19] Again, both Moreno and Brinton, for similar reasons, identify this lack of psychological insight as an acute failing of *Lady in the Lake*. Brinton suggests that Montgomery ought to have found a means of representing the movement of Marlowe's attention and thoughts through editing, rather than trying to undertake the impossible and fruitless task of recreating subjectivity as a continuous visual experience:

> Because *Lady in the Lake* fastidiously avoids cuts, it denies the shifting focus of attention and becomes unnaturally static. Ideally, it should have played Marlowe's gaze over a continual succession of objects, and the nature of these objects would have served as a guide to his insights.[20]

Similarly, Moreno argues that 'the fragmentary representation of diverse aspects of reality, made coherent by the logic of montage, is *psychologically* truer than the reproduction of reality in large continuous takes.[21] Clearly, in presenting their ideas of how the film might better have depicted Marlowe's psychological point of view, both writers echo many of the arguments put forth by Münsterberg in his theory of cinematic thought, as described in my introduction.[22] Brinton, in fact, perhaps goes even further than Münsterberg by suggesting that editing might be used to depict 'not merely *what* a character thinks, but *how* he thinks, in terms of his physical individuality.'[23] For Brinton, the representation of a thought process through editing might reveal a great deal about a character; and, we should add, if editing is of some value in depicting the mind of the archetypal, taciturn hero of a Raymond Chandler

novel, it should be seen as an indispensable resource when portraying the individualistic psyches of the narrators of *Lolita* and *A Clockwork Orange*.

A character's immediate perceptual experience, we should perhaps conclude, is (usually) only of limited importance to the first-person narrative. In contrast, the detailed representation of a character's thought processes and psychological make-up is crucial, for this suggests the narrator's entire worldview, fostering a close identification of viewer with protagonist. This is, I believe, borne out by the fact that the most successful scenes in *Lady in the Lake* are those that manage to transcend the limitations of the first-person camera and evoke some aspect of Marlowe's psychological perspective. The few scenes that utilize some form of extra-diegetic music, for example, attain a dramatic and psychological depth that is lacking in most of the film. When Marlowe is searching a house, in which he eventually discovers a murder victim, a sense of anxiety is built up through the gradual introduction of tense background music, which works well in conjunction with the subjective camera's restricted point of view. Similarly, a sequence in which Marlowe limps from his crashed car, fleeing the approaching police vehicles, strikes me as particularly effective in evoking the psychological dimension of the action. After Marlowe climbs from his car, we hear sirens, and the camera pivots to reveal the flashing lights of distant police cars. It then quickly pans back, stopping abruptly on a group of trees at the roadside. As the sirens quickly grow louder, the camera slowly and shakily moves forwards, reaching the trees just as the police arrive at the scene. Both of these sequences are successful insofar as they do not merely show what Marlowe sees, but offer some insight into his thoughts and emotions. Nevertheless, it is important to reiterate that they are by no means typical of the film as a whole, which rarely achieves any sense of psychological depth.

Whether or not Welles could have succeeded where Montgomery failed, in making a dramatically and psychologically satisfying film shot entirely in the first-person, is, of course, impossible to say. His extensive use of voiceovers, monologues, and so forth, in the *Heart of Darkness* script suggests that he was very aware of the need to represent his narrator's thoughts and not merely his perceptions. Yet it is difficult to imagine Welles overcoming all of the fundamental aesthetic problems associated with the systematic use of first-person camera. In any case, by the time he came to make *Citizen Kane*, Welles had abandoned the central stylistic premise of *Heart of Darkness*.

This is not, however, to imply that Welles had lost interest in subjective narration and the possibility of using film to represent thought. Many of the radical ideas (concerning cinematic point of view, the relationship between the audience, camera and characters, and so forth) that underpinned Welles' conceptualization of *Heart of Darkness* re-emerge, in a modified form, in *Citizen Kane*. In particular, the basic idea that a film might be *told* by characters within the fiction, rather than being presented in an unmediated state, subsists as a central premise. Indeed, Welles has suggested that *Citizen Kane* was originally conceived as a story that would be told from drastically differing points of view.[24] In the same way that *Rashomon*, nine years later, would present contradictory eye-witness accounts of a single event, *Citizen Kane* was to have different characters delivering conflicting accounts of the eponymous protagonist's life and personality – with each testimony revealing more about its narrator than about Kane himself. Although Welles and his co-writer Herman Mankiewicz eventually removed the more dramatic disparities in point of view from the script, the various flashbacks in the film still betray some subtle differences in their portrayal of Kane.[25]

We should, however, perhaps be reluctant to suggest that these flashbacks attempt to represent the witnesses' memories in an 'authentic' manner (in the same way, for example, that flashback operates in *Hiroshima mon amour*). As Laura Mulvey points out,

> during the flashback sequences, the *mise-en-scène* goes beyond the literal vision of the five witnesses, and the film's images, at certain moments, show more than the characters on the screen can see or understand. Only the camera and the audience have a vision that will allow them to figure out the film as puzzle. The opening sequence signals this privileged relation between the two, giving the audience a cue or hint, as it were, to use their own eyes and powers of decipherment and not to fall back into habits of dependence or to expect their surrogate on screen to understand the language of film.[26]

Both inside and outside of the flashbacks, the camera does not restrict itself to showing a specific character's perspective, but rather personifies a kind of investigative impulse that underpins the film. In this way, the camera is still, in some sense, analogous to the 'first-person' narrator it would have represented in *Heart of Darkness*. In relentlessly exploring Kane's past, the camera is almost character within the fiction, playing the same role as Thompson, the investigative journalist charged with unravelling the mystery of Kane's life; at the same time, it is also an unusually direct surrogate for the viewer, mimicking his or her desire to unmask and understand the central character. Ultimately, the film's probing camera, which effortlessly passes the fences and 'no trespassing' signs with which the reclusive Kane has surrounded himself, promises a voyeuristic access to the mind of its protagonist.

Nevertheless, as Mulvey suggests, the terms by which we are offered an insight into Kane's psyche are by no means conventional. Much of what we learn about Kane is derived not from what we are directly 'told' (or, specifically, from the dialogue), but more obliquely from *mise-en-scène*, compositions and camerawork; certainly,

many of the most acute psychological insights relating to Kane's character are implicit within the film's imagery rather than being openly stated. When asked what he has discovered about Kane at the end of the film, Thompson replies, 'Not much, really.' Yet the viewer is permitted to discern a great deal about the film's protagonist; it is simply that this information is, for the most part, conveyed visually rather than verbally.

This proliferation of visual meaning attests to an underlying expressionistic aesthetic in Welles' work. With its repeated use of chiaroscuro lighting effects, oblique camera angles, and baroque backgrounds, captured in minute detail through deep-focus photography, *Citizen Kane* seeks a more communicative alternative to the ubiquitous 'realism' of American cinema. And, as with the earliest forms of German expressionism explored in my introduction, Welles' expressionism most often attempts to communicate the psychological dimension of what is being represented on screen through the projection of subjective states onto the external environment. In *Citizen Kane*, the way Kane is shot in relation to his surroundings is often especially significant in both illustrating his immediate state of mind and developing his psychological portrait through the course of the film. In the first flashback, for instance, depicting Kane's meteoric rise to wealth and power, he is frequently shot from a very low angle, so that his physical stature within the frame is greatly exaggerated.[27] Later on, at the political rally that Kane holds as part of his campaign to become Governor of New York, he is again repeatedly framed from a low angle, this time in front of the giant poster depicting his own face. Ultimately, of course, Kane will be unable to live up to this idealized, gargantuan public image that he has cultivated for himself: in fact, the rally scene ends with a different, high-angle shot of Kane taken from the vantage point of his political rival, Jim Gettys (Ray Collins),

whose machinations soon guarantee Kane's public disgrace and downfall. Finally, in the last sections of the film, in which Kane is becoming ever-more isolated and reclusive, he is more frequently framed in extreme long shots, his figure becoming lost within the cavernous rooms of the mansion he shares with his increasingly-estranged second wife (Dorothy Comingore).

Welles' expressionistic method of representing aspects of character through composition and *mise-en-scène* is not only of great interest in itself, but also for the way in which it foreshadows Kubrick's technique of organizing space to represent thought. Robert Kolker is one of the few writers to note the deep similarity between Welles and Kubrick in this respect. He suggests that one of Kubrick's most admirable talents is

> his ability to generate ideas from the organization of a complex spatial realm that encloses his characters and expresses their state of being. For in Kubrick's films we learn more about a character from the way that character inhabits a particular space than... from what that character says.[28]

These comments, as Kolker later suggests, could equally be applied to Welles. Yet there is perhaps a more fundamental connection between Welles and Kubrick, which is partially implicit in Kolker's argument: namely, both see film as a means of expressing thought outside of language. Where both directors excel is in creating extremely powerful, vivid and memorable audiovisual symbols, which seem to condense an endless wealth of meaning. Just as *2001*'s prehistoric bone is densely symbolic, *Citizen Kane*'s sledge and glass paperweight, the dual symbols of Kane's lost innocence, have an ongoing, emblematic importance that resonates throughout the narrative. Mulvey, writing from a psychoanalytic perspective, identifies a similar significance in *Citizen Kane*'s pervasive use of pre- or non-linguistic symbols,

pointing out that one of the truly innovative features of the film is its recognition of the relationship between cinematic and mental imagery:

> The language of the mind, with its dream images, allegorical objects, scenarios of desire, frozen memories and so on, finds a resonance in the language of cinema. In cinema objects, gestures, looks, *mise-en-scène*, lighting, framing and all the accoutrements of the filmic apparatus materialise into a kind of language before or even beyond words. *Citizen Kane*'s originality lies in its self-conscious awareness, even exploitation, of this process.[29]

In the final analysis, the expressionistic technique of *Citizen Kane* provides a much more detailed psychological portrait, and greater insight into the nature of thought, than *Heart of Darkness*' first-person camera could have ever hoped to achieve.

Film Noir and Subjectivity

At the same time that Welles was developing his own expressionistic aesthetic, American cinema in general was undergoing a more modest transformation along somewhat similar lines. The emergence of *film noir* in the early 1940s signalled a small but significant shift away from the illusionistic, 'invisible' style that had always underpinned Hollywood filmmaking, and toward different forms of subjective narration. In part, this shift can be linked to the influx of German directors, writers and technicians who arrived in Hollywood in the early 1930s, fleeing Fascism. As numerous critics have noted, the *noir* 'look', with its frequent non-naturalistic lighting, chiaroscuro effects, oblique camera angles, and unbalanced compositions – often designed to reflect the central protagonist's sense of anxiety and uncertainty – bears a clear debt to German expressionism.[30] Many of the other subjective aspects of

noir narratives (first-person voiceover, flashback structures, and so on) can be traced to stylistic features of the 'hard-boiled' fiction that provided the primary source material for the genre. But before analyzing the subjective style and content of *film noir* in more detail, I wish first to round off my discussion of Welles by briefly considering the 'problem' of formal experimentation within the Hollywood studio system. This problem is best elucidated by examining one of Welles' own *film noir* thrillers: *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947).

On the surface, *The Lady from Shanghai* is a straightforward *film noir*. It displays all of the main stylistic and thematic hallmarks of the genre: the story is told in flashback, with a first-person voiceover; the protagonist-narrator, Michael O'Hara (Orson Welles) is a dupe, endlessly manipulated by the *femme fatale*, Elsa (Rita Hayworth), and corrupt officials Arthur Bannister (Everett Sloane) – the 'world's greatest criminal lawyer' – and George Grisby (Glenn Anders); and the film frequently utilizes a highly expressionistic *mise-en-scène* to reflect the protagonist's inner experience – most notably, of course, in the famous hall of mirrors finale, where Michael, having been drugged, awakes in a fairground crazy house and finds himself confronted by countless, distorted images of Elsa and Arthur Bannister. Yet the final version of *The Lady from Shanghai* represents only a fraction of the film that Welles planned and shot. Upon seeing Welles' preferred cut of the film, Harry Cohn, head of Columbia, decided that it was too long and too complicated, and ordered extensive re-editing and re-shooting, which eventually saw the film's running length reduced from 155 to 86 minutes.[31] Many of the cuts were intended to streamline the narrative, so that the plot advanced quickly towards its conclusion, jettisoning any 'extraneous' ornamentation. So, for example, even the film's spectacular finale was greatly reduced, with the hall of mirrors scene being only the final segment in what was

originally an extensive, nightmarish sequence that depicted Michael wandering confusedly from room to room in the crazy house.[32] Similarly, many other scenes that did not directly advance the film's plot, but contributed immeasurably in terms of atmosphere, theme and characterization, were ultimately excised from the picture.

The cutting of *The Lady from Shanghai* is particularly pertinent to the present discussion because it again highlights the problems of formal experimentation with subjective narration within the inherently conservative context of Hollywood filmmaking. Whereas classical narrative prioritizes things such as clarity and economy, Welles' cinema, like Kubrick's, clearly attempts to develop a mode of visual storytelling that is more subtle, intricate and stylistically complex.[33] Clearly, *film noir* is also stylistically experimental in a way that other Hollywood genres are not, but this experimentation has strict limits. The non-naturalistic stylistic elements of *film noir* signify a small shift toward subjective narration (conveying, for example, a general atmosphere of ambiguity, uncertainty or anxiety that mirrors the protagonist's mental state). In contrast, Welles' brand of expressionism is more radically subjective, more pervasive, and more integral in terms of how it communicates quite specific narrative meanings. Consequently, it presents a more fundamental challenge to Hollywood's narrative conventions.

Although *film noir* does not, in general, have the stylistic complexity of Welles' work, it should, nevertheless, be recognized as being equally significant in introducing new forms of subjective narration into the American cinema. It is also equally significant when discussing Kubrick's early work. Two of his earliest films, *Killer's Kiss* and *The Killing* (1956), belong to the genre, and the former, in particular, seems heavily influenced by the subjective narrative techniques found in earlier *noir*

thrillers. Some further discussion of *film noir* and subjectivity will, therefore, help to contextualize the early evolution of Kubrick's cinematic thought.

The expressionistic aspects of *film noir* are consistently supported by two additional devices that foreground the subjective status of events on screen: first-person voiceover and a flashback structure. Numerous archetypal *films noir* – such as *Double Indemnity* (Wilder, 1944), *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Garnett, 1946), *Gilda* (Vidor, 1946) and *Out of the Past* (Tourneur, 1947) – utilize these key devices in such a way that the main narrative is recast as a story that is 'told' by the male protagonist. As was the case in *Citizen Kane*, the flashbacks in these films are not supposed to offer an accurate representation of the narrator's 'memory'. Instead, we are given a reconstruction of past events that is presented, broadly speaking, from the psychological perspective of the protagonist-narrator. This means that our access to narrative information is usually restricted, so that only events that have been witnessed directly by the protagonist are depicted on screen.[34] Indeed, even in those *films noir* that do not utilize voiceover or flashback – such as *The Maltese Falcon* (Huston, 1941) – the narrative is often focalized by the central male protagonist, whose subjective experience determines precisely what we see and what we know at any given point in the story.[35]

Alongside these general strategies for organizing the narrative around a central psychological perspective, *film noir* occasionally makes use of more discrete, stylistically flamboyant 'subjective sequences'. A particularly noteworthy example is the dream sequence in *Stranger on the Third Floor* (Ingster, 1940), one of the earliest *films noir*. Having witnessed a murder, the film's protagonist, Mike Ward (John McGuire), provides the testimony that secures the conviction of the only suspect in the case. Shortly afterwards, Mike is beset by doubts over the man's guilt, which are

exacerbated when he sees a sinister stranger (Peter Lorre) lurking outside his neighbour's apartment. Back in his own apartment, Mike becomes convinced that his neighbour, with whom he has had a long-running feud, has been murdered by the stranger. After Mike falls asleep, we are shown a fairly lengthy dream sequence in which his neighbour's body is discovered and Mike is promptly arrested and sentenced to death.

For the most part, the dream sequence does not appear particularly authentic. There are some interesting expressionistic effects that, in places, help to suggest a nightmarish atmosphere – oversized rooms and furnishings, distorted perspectives, and a series of low-angle shots of policemen and a judge, recreate the protagonist's sense of being overwhelmed by his surroundings. Yet the sequence is far too coherent and logical to convincingly imitate a real dream, and its meaning is purposefully transparent. Nevertheless, the sequence indicates the more direct means by which *film noir* sometimes attempts to evoke or probe the protagonist's psyche, and provides a key illustration of the genre's fascination with subjective drama.

Moreover, the dream sequence in *Stranger on the Third Floor* highlights the significant influence of psychoanalytic theory on *film noir*'s depiction of subjectivity and thought. Frank Krutnik suggests that the 1940s saw the rapid 'popularization' of psychoanalysis in the United States, and *film noir* played a key role in the general dissemination of basic psychoanalytic concepts.[36] In *Stranger on the Third Floor*, a popularized Freudianism is immediately evident. Experiencing intense guilt over the fact that he may have helped to condemn an innocent man to death, the protagonist finds himself dreaming of his own wrongful conviction. The obvious parallels between the dream and reality are then accentuated by the film's repetition of dialogue: hauled in front of a judge (the archetypal embodiment of the Freudian

superego), Mike finds himself obsessively echoing the words of the convicted man –

'I didn't do it!' Yet, implicitly, Mike's innocence is not so straightforward. In a

flashback prior to the dream, we see that Mike has a long-running and bitter feud with

his neighbour. The neighbour's murder, therefore, seems an exemplary case of

Freudian wish-fulfilment.

Psychoanalysis, we should note, was influential beyond the generic boundaries of

film noir. The 'solution' to *Citizen Kane*'s central mystery clearly operates according

to a psychoanalytic rationale, with 'Rosebud' symbolizing, among other things, the

childhood trauma (separation from the mother) from which Kane has never fully

recovered – although Welles himself famously dismissed this aspect of the plot as

'dollarbook Freud'.[37] Similarly, psychoanalytic ideas concerning guilt, repression and

hysteria are abundant in Hitchcock's films – most notably, of course, in *Spellbound*

(1945), in which Ingrid Bergman plays a psychiatrist attempting to uncover the

identity of an amnesiac (Gregory Peck) suspected of murder. Yet *film noir*'s

appropriation of psychoanalysis is distinctive in that it is particularly concerned with

the theory's treatment of transgressive themes and behaviour – which reflects its own

fascination with criminality, violence and, perhaps most significantly, illicit sexuality.

Krutnik suggests that, initially at least, the theory's 'foregrounding of sex' was

inherently problematic for the film industry, which, consequently, was 'resistant to

any wide-scale exploitation of the visible cultural interest in psychoanalysis'.[38]

However, almost paradoxically, psychoanalysis, and the way in which it

conceptualized sexual behaviour, proved, in the 1940s, to be extremely valuable, for it

suggested a means of circumventing censorship and implying a forbidden sexual

content:

In popularised accounts there was a strong association between Freudian psychoanalysis and hidden or illicit sexuality. In *noir* thrillers – and in 1940s cinema more generally – the invocation of psychoanalysis proved a particularly useful means of suggesting that which could not directly be shown. The narratives of many *noir* thrillers are concerned with corruptive and criminal sexual intrigues which were problematic within the representational confines of classical Hollywood. The association between psychoanalysis and sex allowed a mode of indirect representation in which condensation and displacement played integral roles.[39]

In other words, psychoanalysis not only provided a theoretical framework for denoting 'unrepresentable' aspects of sexual behaviour, but was itself used to symbolize an illicit, sexual content.

Gilda, as Krutnik notes, provides some of the best examples of both uses of psychoanalysis. Early on in the film, Gilda (Rita Hayworth) asks her husband (George Macready) to help her fasten her dress. As he dutifully obliges, she says: 'I can never get a zipper to close. Maybe that stands for something – what do you think?' This quip clearly signposts the film's central strategy of repeatedly implying or symbolizing that which cannot be shown openly – Gilda's promiscuity. Later on in the film, psychoanalysis is evoked in a more direct manner. After Johnny (Glenn Ford) compares his chauffeuring of Gilda to picking up his boss' laundry, Gilda retorts: 'Shame on you, Johnny! Any psychiatrist would tell you that your thought-associations are very revealing.'

The psychoanalytic symbolization and displacement of sexual themes occurs in different form in numerous *films noir*, though it is rarely as self-evident and pervasive as is the case in *Gilda*. The Freudian narrative of *Stranger on the Third Floor* provides another interesting example of the way in which *film noir* incorporates sexual desire as a fundamental element in characterization and plotting. Throughout the film, Mike's actions have an implicit sexual motivation that conflicts with the rational logic by which they are ostensibly justified. Mike works as a reporter, and by

helping to convict a man of murder with his eye-witness testimony, he also manages to secure a promotion and pay-rise. This in turn, it is revealed, will allow him to finally marry his long-term fiancée. Implicitly, Mike's immediate guilt following the suspect's conviction is caused by his deep-seated suspicion that his judgment has been impaired by ulterior motives. Similarly, it is suggested that Mike's feud with his neighbour is rooted in sexual frustration. While Mike considers the fact that he might be blamed if his neighbour has been murdered, he recalls (in flashback) an evening when he had brought his fiancée back to his rented apartment. The flashback shows Mike's prurient neighbour alerting the landlady to the fact that Mike has a woman in his apartment (although, we are meant to infer, the circumstances are perfectly innocent). The scandalized landlady promptly informs Mike that his girlfriend is to leave at once, after which Mike loses his temper and attempts to assault the interfering neighbour. This back-story not only provides the logical reason why Mike might be considered a suspect in his neighbour's murder (the feud and attempted assault), but also suggests that, because of his thwarted desire, he unconsciously identifies with the 'stranger' who commits the brutal crime – something that then feeds into his guilty dream. Ultimately, *Stranger on the Third Floor* constructs, alongside its surface story, an alternate, fantastical narrative in which sexual desire is the irrational, motivational logic behind the protagonist's thoughts and actions.[40]

Clearly, in terms of both its style and its themes, *film noir* begins to test the boundaries of Hollywood cinema, and, undoubtedly, this aspect of the genre must have appealed to Kubrick's sensibilities. Yet Kubrick, like Welles, wished to go significantly beyond the achievements of *film noir* and develop a more adult, aesthetically-complex type of film, which would be able to depict themes, ideas and images that were still inherently problematical within the confines of mainstream

American cinema. This desire was clear from the earliest stage of his career. In July 1953, Kubrick submitted a script titled *Along Came a Spider* – co-written with his friend Howard Sackler (who also wrote the script for *Fear and Desire*) – to Joseph Breen at the Production Code Administration. As James Naremore records, Breen 'rejected the project on the grounds that it contained "scenes of nudity and suggested nudity, excessive brutality, attempted rape, illicit sex... treated with no voice of morality or compensating moral values."'[41] The script had to be extensively revised, and was eventually transformed into *Killer's Kiss*.

Killer's Kiss retains only a small amount of the sensational content that made *Along Came a Spider* untenable. The violence in the film is no longer 'brutal'; instead, it is either implicit or, in the case of the film's denouement, leavened by black humour.[42] The more problematical sexual violence of *Along Came a Spider* is, unsurprisingly, almost entirely absent from *Killer's Kiss*: all that remains is the vague and ambiguous suggestion that Gloria (Irene Kane), the film's heroine, may have been sexually assaulted by Vincent (Frank Silvera), her boss and spurned lover.

Stylistically, Kubrick was more able to experiment and pursue his own interests. *Killer's Kiss* appropriates many of *film noir*'s narrative devices in a particularly effective manner. The film opens in a New York City train station, where Davy (Jamie Smith), the main protagonist and narrator, is waiting anxiously for Gloria, who, we soon learn, has promised to leave the city with him. As he paces back and forth, Davy's voiceover introduces his story in the conventional *noir* fashion ('It's crazy how you can get yourself in a mess sometimes...'). Shortly thereafter, we dissolve to the flashback that discloses Davy's story in full. The tale itself is very generic: Gloria is in danger from Vincent, her exploitative and violent ex-lover; Davy, her neighbour, stumbles into this intrigue after hearing Gloria screaming for help one

evening. The two promptly fall in love, and plan to flee the city together, but before they can, Gloria is kidnapped by Vincent and his criminal associates. After a violent showdown with Vincent, Davy manages to rescue Gloria, and, finally, we are shown the two reunited at the train station. There is, however, a certain level of ingenuity in Kubrick's realization of this standard Hollywood fare. Outside of Davy's fairly extensive voiceovers, dialogue is relatively sparse, with a great deal of narrative information being conveyed visually through editing and the film's expressive *mise-en-scène*. Many of the film's more innovative devices can, of course, be linked to its very small budget and lack of technical resources. Financed mainly with money invested by Maurice Bousel, a friend of Kubrick's family, *Killer's Kiss* had an initial budget of only $40 000.[43] Consequently, Kubrick could not afford to record live sound. The entire soundtrack had to be post-synchronized, which helps to explain the film's pervasive use of voiceover or music, in conjunction with expressive images, in place of direct speech. Nevertheless, important aspects of Kubrick's later aesthetic experimentation are clearly foreshadowed in *Killer's Kiss*, especially with regard to subjective narration and the visual representation of thought.

Naremore observes that in *Killer's Kiss*

> A great deal of what we see relies on nothing more than non-diegetic music and dubbed sound effects in support of three fundamental editing techniques from the silent era – parallel editing, which historians tend to associate with Griffith, point-of-view editing, which is usually associated with Kuleshov or Hitchcock, and montage, which derives from Eisenstein and the Soviets. By virtue of its almost total reliance on editing rather than dialogue, *Killer's Kiss* could be described as what Hitchcock liked to call 'pure cinema'.[44]

Clearly, Hitchcock's concept of 'pure cinema' is close to what I have been describing as non-verbal, cinematic thought, and Naremore is correct to identify the centrality of this aesthetic to Kubrick's early work. Yet in addition, Naremore's references to

different filmmakers and narrative traditions from the silent era have a further significance when discussing Kubrick's stylistic evolution. So far, my introduction to Kubrick's work has focussed on its relationship to American cinema in the 1940s and early '50s, but this immediate context does not provide a full picture of Kubrick's cinematic heritage. From the earliest stages of his career, Kubrick was also influenced by European cinema (from the silent era onwards), which affords additional insight into both his early stylistic experimentation and his later relationship to Hollywood.

Kubrick learnt the basics of film aesthetics from reading the works of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, which became available in translation in the 1940s.[45] At the same time, the first art cinemas were opening in New York, which allowed Kubrick to watch both the best of contemporary European cinema and retrospectives showcasing earlier 'classics'.[46] The disparate mixture of American and European, commercial and avant-garde, films that he consumed whilst learning his craft certainly helps to contextualize and clarify the curious fusion of Hollywood convention (in terms of generic devices, plotting, characterization, and so forth) and stylistic experimentation in *Killer's Kiss*. These early viewing habits also attest to the inherent eclecticism of Kubrick's cinematic taste, and to his ongoing desire to blend ostensibly opposed aspects of art and popular, commercial cinema.[47] From his earliest work, Kubrick's impulse has been to make hybrid films that defy easy categorization and test the boundaries of Hollywood, and it is this same impulse that underpins his adaptation of *Lolita*.

How Did They Ever Make a Movie of *Lolita*?

In 1980 Michel Ciment wrote,

Kubrick's strength derives from his realisation that if the filmmaker is not in charge of every element of his product – from the original rights via the screenplay down to the advertising campaign that will launch his film and the very cinemas in which it will be screened – three or four years work may go for nothing.

... [T]oday all of his efforts are channelled into preserving the same autonomy which he had in his first films, so that, instead of becoming a victim of the means at his disposal, he can on the contrary make them serve his own purpose, one which has never changed: self-expression.[48]

It was Kubrick's experiences in between *Paths of Glory* (1957) and *Lolita* which cemented his resolve to secure his independence as a producer. The frustration he felt at his inability to influence the casting or storyline of *Spartacus* (1960) has been well-documented. Kubrick was drafted into the movie by Kirk Douglas, the film's star and executive producer, as a last-minute replacement for the original director, Anthony Mann (with whom Douglas had had major disagreements). Kubrick subsequently referred to his role on the film as that of a 'hired hand.'[49] In addition, this period saw Kubrick's tentative, and ultimately futile, collaboration with Marlon Brando on *One Eyed Jacks* (which was eventually released in 1961). After months of working on a screenplay with the star, it became clear to Kubrick that Brando saw himself as the creative impetus behind the film and would be unwilling to relinquish any control over the project. This was confirmed when, shortly before Kubrick received the *Spartacus* offer, Brando indicated his intention to direct the film himself and asked Kubrick to leave the project.[50]

Throughout this frustrating period in Kubrick's career, *Lolita* provided both the promise of artistic fulfilment and the possibility of producing the kind of commercial success that could be used to facilitate financial independence from the Hollywood studios. Displaying a shrewd awareness of the novel's cinematic potential, Kubrick and his partner James Harris had obtained the rights to *Lolita* for a relatively small

sum of money in 1958, shortly after it was first published in America.[51] Three years earlier, it had actually been rejected by four major American publishing houses before being published in Paris by the Olympia Press, which specialized in erotica.[52] Despite the fact that many critics immediately heralded the book as a literary masterpiece, the circumstances of its publication, and its protracted unavailability in several countries, fuelled a widespread notoriety, and, inevitably, it was its scandalous reputation, rather than its literary merit, that drove *Lolita*'s rapid sales upon its general release. Thus by 1960, Harris-Kubrick Productions owned the rights to a best-seller that, if handled correctly, could be turned into a film that would have broad appeal across both mainstream and burgeoning art house markets. However, the source of *Lolita*'s commercial potential was, paradoxically, also the source of the major problems that Kubrick and Harris faced in securing financial backing for the film. In a parallel with Nabokov's original experience of attempting to get his novel published, the major U.S. studios initially refused to touch the project, estimating that the censorship problems the film would encounter seriously damaged its prospects as an achievable – let alone profitable – enterprise. This meant that from the earliest stages of pre-production, Kubrick and Harris were made highly aware of the need to acknowledge censorship concerns in every aspect of the film's planning.

However, despite certain inevitable concessions, the early choices that Kubrick made in terms of developing the screenplay and casting the film indicated his determination to ensure that in meeting the censorship requirements he did not sacrifice all of his artistic ambitions for the project. Kubrick eventually persuaded Nabokov to write a screenplay for the film after convincing him that he would make every attempt to keep the novel's basic storyline and spirit intact.[53] The choice of Nabokov as screenwriter seems to be more than simple deference to his authorship of

the source novel (though this doubtlessly helped to reinforce the literary credentials of the adaptation). It also acknowledges the intensely 'cinematic' nature of his imagination: not only does Nabokov's work contain a wealth of references to the cinema, but his prose also displays a propensity towards extremely detailed reconstructions of visual impressions, especially as they pertain to a character's memory of events. Gene D. Phillips notes that in one particular passage from *Lolita*, Humbert Humbert, the novel's narrator, recollects himself watching his teenage mistress play tennis and 'regrets that he had not immortalized her in segments of celluloid, which he could then run in the projection room of his mind.'[54]

Nabokov's visualization of his book was also central to casting the film, as he picked out Sue Lyon for the title role after Kubrick consulted him with photographs of applicants.[55] Needless to say, all of the potential applicants that Kubrick had short-listed for the role already met certain criteria that would help to appease the censors. It had been made clear in an earlier meeting with Geoffrey Shurlock, the head of the Production Code Administration, that in order to obtain the PCA's seal of approval (without which most exhibitors would refuse to show a film) the film should make no mention of Lolita's age and the actress chosen to play the role should not appear to be too child-like.[56] Lolita is twelve at the beginning of the novel and seventeen at the end, and Sue Lyon was fourteen when the film began shooting. This still seems surprisingly young, but Sue Lyon looked quite a bit older than her actual age, with many critics placing her apparent age at around seventeen.[57] For Kubrick, this was not too much of a concession, as he felt that Lyon could convincingly portray the age range required by the novel.

With a suitably mature-looking leading lady in place, Kubrick still faced considerable problems in terms of handling the erotic aspects of the story. His other

casting decisions were central to his strategy for dealing with these problems, and should be understood in relation to the intertextual framework provided by the Hollywood star system. James Mason was always Kubrick's first choice for the role of Humbert.[58] Not only did Mason possess a sense of natural reserve and intelligence that were essential to the role, but the ambiguities of his status as a romantic lead had already been played upon in a number of previous films. In particular, his performance as Norman Maine in *A Star is Born* (1954) – arguably his most famous role – anticipates his role in *Lolita* in how it negotiates the film's highly unusual gender politics. Mason plays the 'man behind the famous woman', a washed-up actor whose relationship with rising star Vicki Lester (Judy Garland, whose own career revival the film was designed to showcase) sees him eventually relegated to the position of permanent house-husband. The relationship between Maine and Lester – which appears to be based on mutual dependence more than mutual attraction – is desexualized, and fails to alleviate the inner turmoil associated with Maine's sense of personal failure. Clearly, many aspects of Mason's performance in *A Star is Born* are drawn upon to characterize Humbert in *Lolita*, particularly in depicting his relationships with Lolita and her mother, Charlotte (Shelley Winters). Humbert's identity is comprised of a series of roles that he plays (first husband to Charlotte, and later father to Lolita) in order to disguise the true nature of his desire. As in *A Star is Born*, Mason's performance suggests the network of façades, deceptions, hidden motivations and sublimations that constitute the disparity between the protagonist's outer appearance and inner life.[59]

The casting of Shelley Winters as Charlotte Haze also suits the demands of *Lolita*'s plot, as many of her supporting roles in the 1950s had led to her pervasive screen persona as the easily-manipulated, needy woman. Especially notable for its

Lolita parallels is her role as a recently-widowed mother of two in *The Night of the Hunter* (Laughton, 1955). Here Robert Mitchum depicts an ostensibly respectable preacher – in fact, a convicted criminal recently released from jail – who seduces and marries Winters' character in order to get close to her children, who alone have access to their late father's hidden fortune. It is almost certain that Kubrick, an avid cinema-goer throughout the 1950s, would have been conscious of the connections he was evoking through his casting choices.[60] These intertextualities indicate the extent to which Kubrick thinks through the images and icons of Hollywood, recognizing the potential wealth of mental associations and narrative implications that can be activated through star personae.

Finally, although not directly linked to his star status, the casting of Peter Sellers in the role of Clare Quilty can also be seen as being important to Kubrick's negotiation of Nabokov's original story. Kubrick had persuaded Nabokov that in order to downplay the novel's erotic storyline, and to offer a point of narrative interest beyond Humbert's attempts to bed his nymphet, the murder of Quilty should occur at the beginning of the film and Quilty's general role as antagonist should be expanded. But this narrative decision also seems to have suggested another angle for handling the book's psychological content. In transforming Quilty from the shadowy, peripheral figure of the novel to an intrusive and almost omni-present force in the film, Nabokov and Kubrick were able to externalize something of the sense of guilt, paranoia and fear of exposure that plagues Humbert in the original text. It is therefore easy to see why Peter Sellers' ability to switch seamlessly between different roles became integral to the characterization of Quilty. His parodic portrayal of different authority figures – including a policeman and a school psychologist (archetypal embodiments of the Freudian superego) both of whom interrogate Humbert about the

nature of his relationship with Lolita – works in conjunction with Mason's nervous and introverted performance to dramatize elements of the novel's original first-person perspective. Furthermore, in his extended role in the film, Quilty acts as Humbert's doppelgänger, with his perverse desires and exaggerated performances reflecting and commenting on Humbert's own personality.

The casting and scripting of *Lolita* thus offered a roadmap for circumventing some of the anticipated censorship problems whilst preserving the key elements that had first attracted Kubrick to the book. Yet even with this clear strategy in place, and with James Mason and Shelley Winters signed up to the project, Kubrick and Harris still found it very difficult to secure additional funding for the film. After unsuccessful negotiations with Warner Brothers – who offered a generous budget and a percentage of the film's profits to Harris-Kubrick, but demanded a high degree of control over the production, including the right to final cut – Kubrick and Harris decided to move the production to Europe, where the film could feasibly be made at a much lower cost and might avoid some of the immediate censorship problems it faced in America.[61] Whilst investigating financial backers in Europe, Harris discovered that Kenneth Hyman, an old school friend who had gone into the film distribution business with his father, was currently funding production in England via a company called Seven Arts UK. In the course of a short meeting with Hyman's father, Harris and Kubrick were able to negotiate a deal with Seven Arts that saw *Lolita* fully funded, with a preliminary budget of one million dollars. The contract also ensured Kubrick's right to final cut.[62] However, in light of the controversy that still surrounded the novel, Seven Arts required absolute guarantees that the film would meet the industry standards necessary to achieve the PCA's seal of approval in the US and to be passed by the BBFC in the UK. It was stipulated that Kubrick should not only liaise with the

official industry censors during production, but should also consult the Catholic Legion of Decency, an independent pressure group that had been rating the acceptability of movies since its formation in the 1930s. At this point the Motion Picture Association of America had yet to introduce its own ratings system (which came into existence in 1968), and in lieu of this, the Legion's ratings were influential for a broad cross-section of the American movie-going public; a 'condemned' classification could therefore do serious damage to a film's financial prospects.[63]

The PCA quickly made it clear that there could be no amorous scenes between Humbert and Lolita, but considering his leading actress' age it is difficult to imagine how Kubrick could have handled any such scenes. Subsequent films that have depicted illicit scenes involving children have managed to negotiate a potential legal minefield by using adult body doubles. *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese, 1976) provides a famous example, where the thirteen-year-old Jodie Foster, portraying a child prostitute, had to be replaced by her twenty-year-old sister for some of her scenes.[64] Similarly, Adrian Lyne's 1997 version of *Lolita* cast the fifteen-year-old Dominique Swain in the title role, and required a body double for several explicit scenes. But beyond the legal problems associated with mixing adult material and child actors, there are the much more complicated moral ramifications of eroticizing a child's image. This brings us back to Kubrick's twofold problem with *Lolita* and the marketing campaign that launched the film.

Point of View and the Ambiguous Image

One of the most interesting images that was produced in the making of *Lolita* does not actually appear in the film itself, but was used on all of the publicity posters. This is

the now iconic picture of Sue Lyon taken by renowned photographer Bert Stern.[65] The photograph depicts Lolita sucking a lollipop and peering directly towards the camera over the top of her gaudy, heart-shaped sunglasses, and beautifully sums up the many contradictions surrounding the movie. The image is at once provocative and darkly humorous (something that also underpins the film), emphasizing the fact that *Lolita* is, in essence, a very twisted love story. Furthermore, it seems to me that it is only through the juxtaposition of the film's tagline with this image of Lolita, gazing out towards us, that we can fully appreciate the way in which *Lolita*'s marketing addresses a potential audience. Together, the image and tagline not only confront us with the terms by which our spectatorship is mediated, but also make an asset of the film's controversial subject.

It is, of course, highly significant that the film's most provocative image should occur in its advert; it is also significant that this image would prove readily acceptable to MGM, who, like the other majors, had originally deemed *Lolita* too sensational to finance, but were eager to distribute the film once it had been pronounced acceptable by the various censors. As *A Clockwork Orange* would demonstrate incontrovertibly ten years later, a little notoriety could be a liability, but it could also prove to be immensely beneficial at the box office. The *Lolita* poster skilfully negotiates the adaptation's risqué subject matter, courting a small amount of controversy without being overly sensational. This clearly demonstrates some of the contradictions – and hypocrisy – surrounding self-censorship during this period of Hollywood history. Writing in 1968, just before Hollywood finally abandoned the Production Code, Richard Randall observed:

> The first task of formal self-regulation over the years has actually not been that of censorship at all, but the protection of the industry against loss. By holding

down extremes of sensationalism and vulgarity, or at least appearing to do so, the code not only creates an image of a responsible industry, but also tends to reduce pressure for 'outside' control and to cut any loss of confidence in (and hence patronage of) the industry on the part of the movie-going public.[66]

However, we should not conclude that the provocative image of the *Lolita* poster is intended merely to tantalize the prospective viewer with an implied sensational content. By foregrounding the problematical image of Lolita – as simultaneously child and sex object, victim and seductress – the poster also highlights the fundamental artistic challenge that Kubrick faced in attempting to translate cinematically the novel's ambiguous, eroticized depiction of its young heroine. Kubrick was aware of the absolute necessity of presenting some sense of Humbert's sexual obsession with Lolita, which was, after all, the very heart of Nabokov's story, but in so doing he would inevitably have to eroticize the image of his real-life underage actress. This is where problems of form and content – that is, of first-person narration and illicit material – truly converge. In the novel we are never in any doubt that the sexual fascination with a pubescent girl is the product of Humbert's perspective, and Nabokov is able to inject a sense of ironic distance between narrator and implied author. This is more challenging in film, where subjective experience has to be conveyed, to some extent, through the objective image. A comparison between Lolita's introduction in the novel and her first appearance in the film is highly instructive in this respect. It illustrates the way in which Kubrick attempts to filter our impression of Lolita through Humbert's perception, and so achieve similar (though not identical) effects to those produced by Nabokov's prose.

In the novel, when Humbert discovers Lolita for the first time, in the garden of his potential summer lodgings, this is what he tells us:

I find it most difficult to express with adequate force that flash, that shiver, that impact of passionate recognition. In the course of the sun-shot moment that my glance slithered over the kneeling child... while I passed by her in my adult disguise (a great big handsome hunk of movieland manhood), the vacuum of my soul managed to suck in every detail of her bright beauty...[67]

As is frequently the case in *Lolita*, our charismatic narrator's description of events has a lyrical beauty that, superficially, masks the true nature of what is being described. Yet, at the same time, this effect is balanced by some of the words Humbert uses and the details he emphasizes. He tells us that his glance 'slithered' over Lolita, providing us with a queasy moment of clarity within this 'sun-shot moment'. Furthermore, Lolita is not described with any level of euphemism: she is simply 'the kneeling child', and, at this point, the vulnerable victim of Humbert's perverse gaze.

While Kubrick could not hope to convey the various layers of meaning that Nabokov implants in this encounter, he does succeed in plunging the viewer into Humbert's subjective experience of the moment, whilst maintaining some sense of ironic detachment. We see Humbert's rapt gaze as he looks offscreen, followed by a point-of-view shot of Lolita on the lawn, staring back – an image that closely resembles the poster photograph described earlier. The glance towards the camera is not as direct as in the poster, but once again it suggests a kind of address to the viewer, who is placed in Humbert's position to an unusual degree. This obviously helps to anchor our identification with Humbert, as we share his perspective at this significant point in the narrative, but at the same time, it subtly transforms the relationship between the characters in the scene. Staring confidently towards the camera, Lolita no longer seems the passive victim of Humbert's predatory gaze. Nevertheless, we are made very aware of the fact that her eroticized image *is* the direct product of Humbert's perspective. By having Lolita glance toward the camera, Kubrick indicates that the shot depicts Humbert's point of view in a particularly

precise manner, and so reinforces the subjective status of the image. Simultaneously, this glance temporarily breaks the illusionism of the moment, affording the viewer some sense of detachment from the fictional action. Therefore, somewhat paradoxically, this scene fosters a close identification with Humbert whilst also providing a sense of ironic detachment from his perspective, and this mixed effect is accentuated through Kubrick's use of sound. Whilst Humbert gazes at Lolita, the soundtrack is filled by the diegetic pop music from Lolita's radio, which is at once inane and strangely hypnotic in its repetitiveness. This intrusive music immerses us in the protagonist's point of view whilst also satirizing his infatuation. (A similarly dualistic use of music – as simultaneously evocative and ironic – can, of course, be found in *A Clockwork Orange*.)

Finally, we should note that this scene also illustrates the centrality of James Mason's persona and performance to Kubrick's negotiation of *Lolita*'s eroticism. Rather than seeming overtly lecherous or sexually threatening, Mason's carefully measured portrayal of Humbert manages to convey a sense of repressed infatuation, perhaps taking its cue from the protagonist's self-perception of his disingenuous image at this moment in the novel. Arlene Croce, reviewing *Lolita* for *Sight and Sound*, recognized the brilliance of Mason's introverted performance in implying the book's forbidden, paedophilic content:

James Mason has been quietly good, or merely quiet, for so long, in so many films, that it would be easy to underestimate his achievement here. But it is solely through his inwardly convulsed portrayal that an intimation of the novel's complete metaphysical anarchy reaches the screen... the grim levity, the sense of imposture, the callousness and howling pain; it's essential that Mason be possessed of an affective life which the other characters in the film never see, and this he is utterly.[68]

Croce's response, like the negative reviews examined earlier in this chapter, clearly interprets and evaluates Kubrick's film through reference to the source novel. Yet, in addition, she displays a shrewd awareness of how *Lolita*'s material has to be reinvented – or rethought – in its new medium. As Croce suggests, regardless of industrial censorship, there is already a vital sense in which the film version of *Lolita* must mask Humbert's desires for large segments of the narrative. In front of the other characters, Humbert is forced to comport himself with an air of utter propriety, and the disjunction between the respectability of the narrator's outward appearance and the perversity of his thoughts is essential to both the novel's black humour and its dramatic appeal. With the additional restrictions imposed by industrial censorship, this aspect of the book clearly sparked Kubrick's artistic imagination. This is illustrated by a second scene that negotiates the problem of representing Humbert's veiled desire.

Shortly after Humbert has married Charlotte, and Lolita has been sent away to summer camp, we are given a comedic sequence that exemplifies the way in which Kubrick represents Humbert's sexual obsession as the repressed subtext of the film. A humorous exchange of dialogue sets up the situation that Humbert is having difficulty fulfilling his inconvenient marital duties. Spurring her husband on, Charlotte tells him, 'You just touch me and I go as limp as a noodle. It scares me.' To which Humbert replies, 'Yes, I know the feeling.' The dialogue obviously reinforces our alignment with Humbert's perspective by involving us in the joke, of which Charlotte is blissfully unaware. Subsequently, there is a visual continuation of the joke in a shot/ reverse shot sequence. We see Humbert move to embrace Charlotte on her bed and then glance surreptitiously towards a photo frame in the foreground. Inevitably, the reverse-angle shot then reveals Lolita's smiling portrait.

Although this sequence is obviously played for its comedic value, it also addresses an idea that is central to the adaptation: that Lolita functions as an unobtainable fantasy image within the film. This idea works on different levels, both inside and outside the fiction. Ultimately, a part of Lolita remains unattainable to Humbert even after he has slept with her, as his initial sexual obsession evolves into an unrequited love and, eventually, a hopeless desire for her forgiveness. There is a clear suggestion that the idealized fantasy of Lolita that Humbert has constructed can never be answered by reality. For the viewer – and perhaps also for Kubrick – we can trace a similar path of frustrated *narrative* desire, as the story moves asymptotically towards the unrealizable consummation of Humbert's relationship with Lolita (something that is mirrored in Kubrick's final film, *Eyes Wide Shut*, which takes unfulfilled fantasy as both its theme and form). This forbidden content is essential to the emotional trajectory of the original story, as the details of Humbert's doomed affair with Lolita gradually transform comedy into tragedy. Yet this content can only be implied within Kubrick's adaptation: it can never be given adequate weight. The shot of Humbert fantasizing over the inaccessible image of Lolita, therefore, acts as a succinct metaphor for the entire narrative situation. It provides another instant where the psychological content of the story is conceptualized in relation to extra-textual censorship.[69]

Conclusions: The Problematic Adaptation

In the winter of 1960, while *Lolita* was in production, Kubrick wrote a short article for *Sight and Sound*. This addresses some of his thoughts on adaptation, and

provides valuable insight into his cinematic reworking of *Lolita*'s original first-person perspective. In this article, he argues that,

> The perfect novel from which to make a movie is, I think, not the novel of action but, on the contrary, the novel which is mainly concerned with the inner life of its characters. It will give the adaptor an absolute compass bearing, as it were, on what a character is thinking or feeling at any given moment of the story. And from this he can invent action which will be an objective correlative of the book's psychological content...[70]

The idea that film can recreate subjective experience through its manipulation of 'objective correlatives' is clearly very pertinent to the scene described above, in which Humbert's psychological perspective is encapsulated in his glance towards Lolita's inaccessible image. But it also suggests the more general way in which Kubrick, responding in part to censorship, transforms Nabokov's subjective narrative. Unable to represent Humbert's sexual obsession with sufficient force, Kubrick reworks *Lolita*'s overt and flamboyant subjective narration into something that is subtler, less pervasive and more naturalistic. Like many of the *films noir* examined earlier, *Lolita* is presented in flashback with an intermittent first-person voiceover that sporadically reminds us that the story is being 'told' from the narrator's approximate perspective. Yet, for the most part, it lacks the expressionistic devices that would mark the film's images as being overtly subjective. Greg Jenkins provides an accurate appraisal of how Kubrick reworks *Lolita*'s narration. He suggests that although Humbert's point of view is 'privileged' within Kubrick's version of *Lolita*,

> the story no longer channels through him. The narration has been nudged some distance, therefore, from a strict first-person orientation toward the film equivalent of a third-person limited approach. As a result, our perception of what happens becomes slightly more detached and balanced.[71]

However, it is important to reiterate that there are certain key moments in the film when Humbert's point of view is not merely 'privileged' but foregrounded. It is in these moments that the novel's original, first-person perspective has an integral significance that Kubrick wishes to highlight.

As a final point of consideration in our discussion, it is worth noting that Kubrick's use of the phrase 'objective correlative' seems to have a further, specific relevance to the problems associated with adapting *Lolita*. Originally, T. S. Eliot popularized the term in an essay on *Hamlet*, in which he suggested:

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.[72]

Yet in his original essay, Eliot evokes the concept of an objective correlative in order to demonstrate the absence, or deficiency, of any such device in *Hamlet*. For Eliot, *Hamlet* is an artistic 'failure' because of its inability to attune its psychological drama to the 'intractable' material of the original story. He argues that 'Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in *excess* of the facts as they appear.'[73] In other words, Eliot believes that Hamlet's psychological and emotional turmoil is incongruous in the context of the play's plot: the emotion Shakespeare wishes to convey is not answered (adequately) by any objective correlative in the story.

It is unclear whether or not Kubrick was familiar with Eliot's essay, and was consciously drawing upon its argument in his analysis of adaptation. Yet, clearly, Eliot's evocation of some form of narrative deficiency, caused by the incongruence of an original story and the terms by which it is reworked, is extremely pertinent to

Kubrick's *Lolita*. In hindsight, Kubrick certainly felt that in adapting *Lolita* he had been unable to retain the emotional and psychological depth of the novel. In an interview in 1970, Kubrick expressed his retrospective frustration at the final shape that *Lolita* had taken:

> Because of all the pressure over the Production Code and the Catholic Legion of Decency, I believe I didn't sufficiently dramatize the erotic aspect of Humbert's relationship with Lolita, and because his sexual obsession was only barely hinted at, many people guessed too quickly that Humbert was in love with Lolita. Whereas in the novel this comes as a discovery at the end... [and] that is one of the most poignant elements of the story.[74]

But whatever Kubrick's retrospective disappointment with *Lolita*, and while there were certain aspects of the drama that suffered in relation to censorship, we should acknowledge that the film does have some success in reworking the source novel's psychological content. Ironically, Kubrick's inability to dramatize the destructive sexual obsession at the centre of his story was not entirely detrimental, for it forced him to negotiate the 'problem' of first-person cinematic narrative in a particularly innovative manner. As well as attempting, in some capacity, to represent thought in film, *Lolita* addresses the relationship between thought and the cultural context in which it operates, exploring how extra-textual factors, such as the conditions of our spectatorship, inform our interpretation of the narrative. Finally, it is perhaps the contradictions inherent in *Lolita* that make it a pivotal film in Kubrick's career. As a film that struggles against, and occasionally outstrips, the conditions of its production, *Lolita* marks out the unique position that Kubrick would come to occupy in relation to Hollywood.

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[1] Raymond Durgnat, '*Lolita*', *Films and Filming* (November 1962), p. 35.
[2] Ibid.

[3] Brandon French, 'The celluloid *Lolita*: A Not-So-Crazy Quilt', in ed. Gerald Peary and Roger Shatzkin, *The Modern American Novel and the Movies* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1978), p. 233.

[4] Thomas Allen Nelson offers a similar reading of Kubrick's reworking of *Lolita*, arguing that in avoiding expressionistic excesses, 'Kubrick manipulates cinematic point of view in ways that are far more covert (but not necessarily any more complex) than Nabokov's... Kubrick's version... strives to find its own expression for both the subtlety and the playfulness of the novel.' Nelson (1982), p. 59.

[5] Moreno (1953), p. 341.

[6] Ibid.

[7] See Clinton Heylin, *Despite the System: Orson Welles Versus the Hollywood Studios* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2005), p. 17. The subsequent factual information I give regarding Welles' attempt to make *Heart of Darkness* is drawn from Heylin's very thorough and well-researched account of the film's pre-production.

[8] Ibid, p. 23.

[9] Ibid.

[10] To give one brief but suggestive example, the script contains a scene where, upon being questioned about the death of Kurtz, 'Marlow hears in his head Kurtz's last words... The Horror! The Horror!' (Ibid, p. 27.) Here subjective sound would have been used to evoke the narrator's memory, providing an immediate insight into his thought process.

[11] Ibid, p. 23. Although the memo is undated, Heylin states that it was sent within a month of the September memo (cited previously), suggesting that it was written in early October, 1939.

[12] Moreno (1953), p. 351.

[13] Ibid, p. 353.

[14] Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 142.

[15] See Joseph P. Brinton, 'Subjective Camera or Subjective Audience?' *Hollywood Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (July, 1947), pp. 361-2.

[16] Moreno (1953), p. 352. See also, Brinton (1947), p. 360.

[17] This is the film's tagline as given on the IMDB (capitalization in original). *Imdb.com*, 11 April 2008, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0039545/>
Brinton also cites a portion of this tagline, though his aim is to demonstrate that the viewer is not made to feel that events are happening to him or her, but rather that s/he is 'standing beside the hero' throughout the picture (Brinton [1947], p. 360).

[18] We should not, however, overlook the fact that while the first-person camera may be intended to foster a close relationship between viewer and protagonist, in *Lady in the Lake* it also functions as a gimmick (as the tagline makes clear), and these two purposes are certainly in partial conflict with each other. The camera, as Marlowe's stand-in, not only sees, but also gets punched (several times), and even kissed by the film's love interest (Audrey Totter). It seems to me inconceivable that such incidents (especially the latter) were not intended to be comical and decidedly anti-illusionistic. Yet critical commentary on the film rarely addresses the possibility that, at certain points, Montgomery's goal might have been tongue-in-cheek humour, rather than credible drama. (Just as Totter leans in toward the camera for her 'kiss', the screen fades to black, after which she says, in an admirably dead-pan tone, 'You close your eyes too, don't you, darling?' With lines such as this, one might think it fair to assume that drama was not the sole item on the film's agenda.)

[19] This, of course, relates back to the distinction that Durgnat made in suggesting that a first-person perspective in *Lolita* should, in his view, depict not 'the hero's-eye-view – which isn't important – but his mind's eye view' (as cited previously).

[20] Brinton (1947), p. 363.

[21] Moreno (1953), p. 352. Moreno also notes, correctly, that in most literary first-person narratives, the narrator frequently reflects upon, or analyzes, his own story rather than simply relating his immediate, unfiltered experiences. The narrator, Moreno suggests, distances himself from his story, 'and adopts concerning himself the viewpoint of a third person. It is thus that everyone recalls his past actions, or imagines his future actions, seeing himself in the act of realizing them.' (Ibid, p. 355.)

[22] Both writers also cover similar ground to Jean Mitry (whose arguments, again, have been presented in the introduction), who suggests that in representing subjectivity, film cannot (and should not attempt to) translate the precise conditions of psychological reality. Instead, film's goal should be to provide an effective aesthetic equivalent, which allows the viewer to feel 'as though' s/he is sharing the character's experience.

[23] Brinton (1947), p. 365.

[24] See Heylin (2005), p 41-4.

[25] Welles suggests that as the script for *Kane* evolved, and the central character became more and more intriguing, the device of using multiple, contradictory points of view seemed less appropriate to the narrative. As he stated in 1982, 'the story got a little better than the gag.' (Cited in Heylin [2005], p. 44.)

[26] Laura Mulvey, *Citizen Kane* (London: BFI, 1992), pp. 27-8.

[27] A very similar technique, we should note in passing, was utilized by Murnau in *The Last Laugh*, with Emil Jannings being consistently shot from a low angle in the early part of the film (emphasizing his inflated sense of self-importance), and from a high angle at later stages (after his character has been demoted).

[28] Kolker (2000), p. 101.

[29] Mulvey (1992), p. 19.

[30] For an excellent summary and analysis of the *film noir* 'look', see Janey Place and Lowell Peterson, 'Some Visual Motifs of *Film Noir*', in (eds.) Alain Silver and James Ursini, *Film Noir Reader* (New York: Limelight, 1996), pp. 64-75.

[31] For a detailed account of all the cuts and changes that were made to *The Lady from Shanghai*, see Heylin (2005), pp. 226-33.

[32] Ibid, p 228-9.

[33] The key difference between Welles and Kubrick, of course, lies in the level of creative control that each was able to exercise over his work. Whereas Kubrick retained his independence from Hollywood, producing his own work with relatively little interference from his distributors, Welles was only able to secure financing for his films by surrendering a great deal of creative control. After *Citizen Kane*, Welles did not have the right to final cut on any of his Hollywood films, and consequently, he was unable to realize many of his more adventurous or experimental ideas. Michel Ciment provides a short but incisive assessment of the key differences between the Hollywood careers of Welles and Kubrick, arguing that the fragmentation of the studio system in the 1950s afforded Kubrick the opportunities to work independently that were unavailable to Welles a decade earlier (Michel Ciment, *Kubrick: The Definitive Edition*, trans. Gilbert Adair & Robert Bononno (New York: Faber & Faber, 2001), p. 36).

[34] There is, however, often some form of ironic distance between what the protagonist on screen 'knows' and what the offscreen narrator divulges in his verbal commentary. *The Lady from Shanghai* provides a prime example of such a discrepancy. In his voiceover, Michael O'Hara frequently comments on the naïveté of his past self, hinting at machinations of which his onscreen counterpart has no knowledge until the very end of the film.

[35] For a particularly thorough account of how 'restricted' narration operates in the detective film, see Bordwell (1997), pp. 64-70.

[36] See Krutnik (1991), pp.45-55. Krutnik cites a telling observation made by Harrison Parker Tyler, who, in 1947, suggested that 'psychoanalysis is now part of the social texture' (ibid. p. 46).

[37] Cited in James Naremore, *The Magic World of Orson Welles* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1989), p. 76.

[38] Krutnik (1991), p. 45.

[39] Ibid, p. 50.

[40] The film's negotiation of sex, irrationality and murder can be compared to many subsequent *films noir*. In both *Double Indemnity* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, for example, sexual obsession becomes an overt motive for murder. Yet because this aspect, again, cannot be represented with adequate force within the diegesis, there is a certain level of displacement. Indeed, in some sense, we might say that the sexual transgression that cannot be depicted directly in these films is rerouted through the murder plots. The irrationality of sexual obsession is displaced via the plot in which the ostensibly 'average' male protagonist is persuaded to murder his rival. In the context of Hollywood, which has always found onscreen violence more palatable than onscreen sex, this shift in focus is of paramount importance in rendering the narrative acceptable.

[41] Naremore (2007), p. 52.

[42] The film's climactic fight takes place in a storeroom filled with female mannequins, with hero and villain attempting, at various points, to bludgeon each other with severed plastic limbs. In some important ways, the nature of this final battle comments on the main plot of the film, which, essentially, involves two men fighting over a woman, the somewhat passive object of their desire. Naremore's description of the film's finale is particularly pertinent in the context of my previous discussion. He suggests that, 'In its own low-budget way, this climactic action is worthy of comparison with the cinematic bravura at the ending of Welles's *The Lady from Shanghai*. Violence and suspense are mingled with a grotesque visual wit.' (Naremore [2007], p.64.)

[43] After the film's soundtrack was added, the total cost grew to almost $75 000 – which was also the amount United Artists eventually paid to distribute the film. On the production of *Killer's Kiss*, see John Baxter, *Stanley Kubrick: A Biography* (London: HarperCollins, 1998), pp. 61-9.

[44] Naremore (2007), pp. 55-6.

[45] See Ciment (2001), p. 34, and Baxter (1998), pp. 39-40.

[46] Ciment notes that Kubrick was, whilst first pursuing his ambition to become a director, particularly assiduous in attending screenings at the Museum of Modern Art (Ciment [2001], p. 34).

[47] Further evidence of the very eclectic nature of Kubrick's taste is provided by Ciment, who cites Kubrick's response when, in 1963, he was asked by the American magazine *Cinema* to name his ten favourite films. Kubrick's list was as follows: 1. *I Vitelloni* (Fellini, 1953), 2. *Wild Strawberries*, 3. *Citizen Kane*, 4. *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (Huston, 1948), 5. *City Lights* (Chaplin, 1931), 6. *Henry V* (Olivier, 1945), 7. *La Notte* (Antonioni, 1961), 8. *The Bank Dick* (Fields, 1940), 9. *Roxie Hart* (Wellman, 1942), 10. *Hell's Angels* (Hughes, 1930). In this diverse mixture of films, Ciment suggests that we can nevertheless discern 'a preference for European art films strongly coloured by a pessimistic view of life… and a predilection for American directors known for their larger-than-life personalities, as also for their marginal position with regard to the system' (Ciment [2001], p. 34).

[48] Ibid, p. 36. Again, it is very interesting to compare Kubrick with Welles in respect to their differing experiences in Hollywood. If Kubrick managed to preserve his autonomy and so ensure the integrity of his films, Welles clearly became 'a victim of the means at his disposal', unable to protect his work from studio interference.

[49] Ibid. In a later interview with Ciment, Kubrick reiterated this point, saying, 'If I ever needed any convincing of the limits of persuasion a director can have on a film where someone else is the producer and he is merely the highest-paid member of the crew, *Spartacus* provided proof to last a lifetime.' Ibid, p. 151.

[50] Baxter gives a detailed – if anecdotal – account of the power struggle between Kubrick and Brando over *One Eyed Jacks*. See Baxter (1998), pp. 103-122.

[51] See Colin Young, 'The Hollywood War of Independence', *Film Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Spring 1959), p. 8. Young notes that following the sudden surge of public interest in the novel, Kubrick and Harris received several bids from other producers seeking the film rights, the highest being $650 000 – over four times what the pair had paid Nabokov.

[52] See Gene D. Phillips, '*Lolita*', in Castle (2005), p. 328.

[53] For further information on the early negotiations between Kubrick and Nabokov, see Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992), pp. 403-6.

[54] Castle (2005), p. 328. See also Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 262-263, for the passage which Phillips paraphrases.

[55] Boyd (1992), p. 415.

[56] Shurlock's record of his initial meeting with Kubrick and Harris details this judgment: '… if the girl looked like a child, the effect might… be offensive to the point where we would not want to approve the picture.' Cited in Baxter (1998), p. 116. See also Richard S. Randall, *Censorship of the Movies: The Political and Social Control of a Mass Medium* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), pp. 202-3.

[57] *The New York Times* review provides a fairly typical response: 'Lolita, the perversely precocious child who had such affect on the libido of the middle-aged hero in the book, is not a child in the movie. She looks to be a good 17 years old, possessed of a striking figure and a devilishly haughty teen-age air. The distinction is fine, we will grant you, but she is definitely not a "nymphet."' Bosley Crowther, '*Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov's adaptation of his novel', *The New York Times*, June 14, 1962. Accessed online, 22 June 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/library/film/061462kubrick-lolita.html>

[58] Baxter (1998), p. 145.

[59] Looking further back, the roles that first made Mason an international star are also quite pertinent to his casting as Humbert. In the 1940s, Mason became famous for playing a series of suave villains and sadistic romantic leads in British dramas such as *The Man in Grey* (Arliss, 1943), *Fanny by Gaslight* (Asquith, 1944) and *They Were Sisters* (Crabtree, 1945). Sheridan Morley suggests that Mason was 'sold' at home and abroad as a kind of seductive miscreant: 'James suggested something sinister, Continental and adult. His 'man you love to hate' roles all indicated, if not outright sexual or sensual perversion, then at least the possibility that sex and violence were intermingled with the… most aristocratic love affairs' (Sheridan Morley, *James Mason: Odd Man Out* [London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1989], p. 5). Clearly, these aspects of Mason's persona are very relevant in *Lolita*, though

his earlier roles would, of course, have been less familiar to American audiences than his 50s' Hollywood roles.

[60] Several sources remark that, across the period when he was first starting to make films, Kubrick watched almost every movie he could – everything on general release as well as all the international and classic films that were screened at the Museum of Modern Art. See, for example, Ciment (2001), p. 34, and Baxter (1998), p. 45.

[61] See Baxter (1998), p. 152.

[62] Ibid, pp. 152-3.

[63] For a detailed exploration of the relationship between the PCA and the Legion of Decency, see Randall (1970), pp. 198-220.

[64] See Andy Dougan, *Martin Scorsese: The Making of His Movies* (London: Orion Media, 1997), p. 48.

[65] Kubrick was acquainted with Stern from the time when they were both living and working in New York; indeed, there was a brief period at the end of the 1940s when both men were employed by *Look* magazine (Kubrick as the magazine's youngest photographer and Stern as a general office hand). See Baxter (1998), p. 40; 64.

[66] Randall (1970), p. 199.

[67] Nabokov (2006), p. 42.

[68] Arlene Croce, '*Lolita*', *Sight and Sound* (Autumn 1962), p. 192.

[69] Ironically, this suggestive sequence also met a great deal of resistance before it was eventually deemed acceptable by the censors. See Baxter (1998), pp. 162-3.

[70] Stanley Kubrick, 'Words and Images', *Sight and Sound* (Winter 1960-61), p. 14.

[71] Greg Jenkins, *Stanley Kubrick and the Art of Adaptation: Three Novels, Three Films* (London: McFarland, 1997), p. 38.

[72] T. S. Eliot, 'Hamlet and His Problems', in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methune, 1920). *Bartleby.com*, 27 June 2006,
< http://www.bartleby.com/200/sw9.html>

[73] Ibid.

[74] Stanley Kubrick in an interview with Joseph Gelmis, *The Film Director as Superstar* (London: Penguin, 1974), pp. 391-392.

Disturbing Fantasies: Kubrick's Later Films

In more ways than one, it was through *Lolita* that Kubrick was able to establish his position inside – and outside – the American film industry. The sale of *Lolita*'s distribution rights to MGM proved to be extremely profitable to Harris-Kubrick, and allowed them to buy out an existing contract with Bryna, Kirk Douglas' production company, for whom they had agreed to make five more pictures (as part of the deal that saw *Paths of Glory* made).[1] In addition, MGM submitted *Lolita* as the official US entry at the Venice Film Festival, raising Kubrick's international profile and confirming his position as a director whose films had crossover appeal in both commercial and developing art house markets. The film thus helped to secure Kubrick's financial position, his independence and his artistic credentials. The success of *Lolita* also signalled the end of the Harris-Kubrick partnership, with each partner now eager to pursue his own path. Harris returned to America to direct his own films, while Kubrick's newfound financial solvency allowed him to settle permanently in England, where he was to act as the sole producer for all his future projects.

Kubrick's decision to make England his permanent base has been seen by many as a clear sign of his desire to insulate himself from the mainstream of American filmmaking.[2] Certainly, after his experience of working in Hollywood on *Spartacus*, he appreciated the physical separation from the major studios afforded by *Lolita*. With his subsequent work – which was all financed and distributed by the Hollywood majors (*Dr Strangelove* by Columbia, *2001* by MGM, and everything from *A Clockwork Orange* onwards by Warner Brothers) – Kubrick found that filming in England provided an additional level of protection against studio interference. It is important to note, however, that in terms of aesthetics, Kubrick did not pursue

independence from Hollywood in quite the same manner. With its narrative experimentation, personal style and difficult subject matter, Kubrick's work is situated on the periphery of mainstream American cinema, but it is nevertheless a part of that cinema. Kubrick's films respond to the narrative formulae of Hollywood with a certain level of satire or critical detachment, but at the same time, they display a very shrewd and penetrating comprehension of how these formulae can be used to manipulate the viewer's emotional and intellectual response. After Kubrick isolated himself from Hollywood, he went on to produce a body of work that was intensely engaged with the cultural concerns of commercial cinema. As Kolker notes:

> Kubrick did not use his isolation to create 'personal' and 'difficult' works of the kind European filmmakers are supposed to make... He made complex films that are available to a variety of audiences. The films of his trilogy – *Dr. Strangelove, 2001: A Space Odyssey, A Clockwork Orange* – were commercially successful and demonstrated an unerring ability to seize on important cultural concerns and obsessions – the cold war, space travel, the ambiguities of violence – and represent them in images and narratives so powerful and appropriate that they became touchstones, reference points for these concerns: myths.[3]

Kolker's observations, in fact, indicate the inadequacy of dualistic thinking when it comes to Kubrick's cinema; binary oppositions such as popular and personal, or commercial cinema and *auteur* cinema, can offer only a limited insight into his work. We might argue that Kubrick *did* use his isolation to create intensely personal and difficult works. The films Kolker mentions are replete with Kubrick's recurring obsessions: the innateness of violence, the conflict between rationality and irrational impulses, the possibility that humanity will be destroyed by its own technology or political institutions. They are also thematically and stylistically complex, and, because of their ambiguity, ambivalence or (in the case of *2001*) relative obscurity, they benefit considerably from repeated viewing. These films are personal in the

sense that they constitute Kubrick's coherent vision of the world, and they are difficult in the sense that they are aesthetically and intellectually challenging. Yet Kubrick's personal vision is constituted through a profound engagement with Hollywood's narrative forms. Like Resnais, Kubrick is concerned with the relationship between individual thought and the cultural context in which it operates, and his films express his personal philosophy by dissecting, and often critiquing, the beliefs, suppositions and values implicit in Hollywood filmmaking.

This chapter will, therefore, continue to address the question of how Kubrick 'thinks through' Hollywood in several different senses. Once again, this will entail a close analysis of Kubrick's formal representation of his characters' thoughts. I shall begin by exploring *A Clockwork Orange*, which, of course, is another film that attempts to translate cinematically the literary first-person perspective. This will be followed by an examination of how different forms of thought are represented in *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. Simultaneously, my analysis of these films will also attempt to delineate how Kubrick's cinematic thought relates to (and reflects upon) its evolving cultural context, addressing things such as the collapse of the Production Code, Hollywood's representation of violence, generic subversion, and the star system.

From *Lolita* to *A Clockwork Orange*

In a very specific sense, Kubrick's *Lolita* was undoubtedly ahead of its time (and this, essentially, is what caused its problems). When the film was released, six years before the MPAA's official ratings system replaced the all-encompassing Production Code,

all of its publicity material carried a disclaimer (included at the behest of the Legion of Decency) announcing that it was intended for adults only. With *Lolita*, Kubrick was clearly attempting to overcome the artistic limitations imposed by Hollywood's moral conservatism and its failure to cater for a differentiated adult audience. Even by the early 1960s, public attitudes towards sex on the screen had started to change. This cultural transformation was both answered and expedited by the growth of art house cinema in America. Films such as Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1955) and *The Silence* offered a candid representation of sex and sexuality that contrasted with Hollywood's innate conservatism, and these films were widely exhibited in American art house theatres. *Lolita* demonstrated Kubrick's prescience in recognizing the growing gap between Hollywood and European cinema, and responding to the changing social and cultural climate. Yet, as we have seen, practical barriers prevented Kubrick from making *Lolita* as he wished. In order to ensure that *Lolita* would reach a wide audience in America, Kubrick had to sacrifice certain artistic aims and work within Hollywood's ideological rationale.

It seems reasonable to suggest that Kubrick's decision to film *A Clockwork Orange* was, in part, born out of his retrospective dissatisfaction with *Lolita*. As a prospective adaptation, *A Clockwork Orange* presented very similar challenges to *Lolita* in terms of its first-person narration, elaborate language and controversial content. In both books, the relationship between form and content is crucial: we are made to see the fictional world through the narrator's amoral perspective and, to a certain extent, identify and sympathize with that perspective. Yet because of the abolition of the Production Code in 1968, *A Clockwork Orange* did not face the same problems as *Lolita* in terms of its realization. Nevertheless, representations of illicit sexuality and violence continued to present a challenge to the conventional morality

of Hollywood in the late 1960s and early '70s. Indeed, in many ways, screen violence became more problematic for Hollywood after it had abandoned the Production Code and relaxed its moral standards. Historically, violence had not proven as contentious as sex or nudity on the screen. It was only after the collapse of the Production Code that debates about the effects of excessive screen violence came to the fore. *A Clockwork Orange* was, of course, one of the films that fuelled this debate, but it should also be seen as a film that self-consciously explores our complex relationship with violence and violent images. While *Lolita* was forced to examine the conditions of its production and reception, *A Clockwork Orange* does so voluntarily. In different ways, both films address the relationship between their attempts to represent thought on screen and the offscreen ideological climate that informs that representation.

Kubrick first read Burgess' novel on the set of *Dr Strangelove* about a year after *Lolita*'s release, but only indicated his desire to adapt it in 1969.[4] This suggests that if the book had initially sparked his cinematic imagination, the idea of an adaptation only took off in relation to the final collapse of the Production Code. This is not simply to say that Kubrick was unwilling to face another censorship battle, although this would be understandable; rather, it seems that *A Clockwork Orange* suddenly presented the opportunity for a serious film about the nature of violence and our relationship with violence as film viewers. After all, the end of the Production Code did not remove all of the obstacles to producing a film like *A Clockwork Orange*. Despite the greater leeway that now existed for producing films that dealt explicitly with sex or violence (or any other controversial subject), there were still economic arguments for conservatism. A survey conducted in 1969 found that 47% of exhibitors would not show any X-rated films, and, of course, the term X-rated quickly became synonymous with pornography, stigmatizing any film with this classification,

regardless of content.[5] In addition, there was the ongoing presence of various influential independent pressure groups, as well as problems in terms of censorship and exhibition laws in foreign territories. However, the practical possibility of making a faithful adaptation of *A Clockwork Orange* existed in stark contrast to the sense of impossibility that had always surrounded the *Lolita* project. Initially, at least, Kubrick was able to focus on the complex artistic issues inherent in adapting Burgess' violent novel for the screen.

As with *Lolita*, Kubrick was faced with the formal problem of rendering a cinematic equivalent to the book's first-person perspective and highly idiosyncratic language. However, the need to preserve the effects of the book's linguistic ingenuity was perhaps even more pressing with *A Clockwork Orange* than it was with *Lolita*. In Burgess' novel, the narrator, Alex (played in the film by Malcolm McDowell), speaks in an invented slang language (called nadsat), and this device is important for a number of reasons. First, it is a very effective and insidious means of presenting the fictional world on Alex's terms. As we gradually master Alex's alien vocabulary, we increasingly share in his perspective and imagination. The slang language, therefore, encourages an unusually close identification between reader and narrator. Secondly, it serves the function of stylizing the novel's violence. By describing extremely sadistic actions in a language that is abstract, elaborate and often highly euphemistic, the book finds a way of alleviating some of its brutality, whilst indicating the amoral nature of Alex's perception of his own violent behaviour. Burgess is clearly interested in the way in which language mediates in our sense of reality, and this dovetails with Kubrick's fascination with how the cinematic image might represent thought, interpreting, rather than reflecting, exterior reality.

In order to evoke Alex's perspective, Kubrick develops a number of the stylistic devices used to express subjectivity in *Lolita*, but instead of merely giving us privileged moments when the protagonist's viewpoint is foregrounded, *A Clockwork Orange* offers a more comprehensive and systematic realization of Alex's worldview. Alex's voiceover is used extensively throughout the film: it introduces the first images, provides an ironic counterpoint to the film's conclusion, and, in between, offers a periodic commentary on the narrative events and our narrator's thoughts concerning them. This first-person voiceover is much more pervasive than the one used in *Lolita*, and, by keeping the language, tone and loquaciousness of the original novel, offers a greater insight into the narrator's delinquent mind. *A Clockwork Orange* also parallels *Lolita* in its foregrounding of the narrator's optical point of view at key points in the narrative, but, again, utilizes this technique more extensively. Our optical identification with Alex is particularly noticeable at various points charting his psychological 'conditioning'. We share his physical position and optical perspective when he is made to watch a series of violent films, then when he is humiliated on stage in front of a group of politicians who are gathered to witness the effectiveness of his treatment, and, finally, when he makes a suicidal leap from a second-storey window. In these scenes, we are made to identify with Alex as a victim of psychological torture and political manipulation. (This identification is essential to Kubrick's negotiation of the story's central moral conundrum, and will be considered in greater depth shortly, in relation to the film's representation of different forms of violence and victimization.)

In addition to the first-person voiceovers and point-of-view shots that express Alex's perspective at key points, we can identify in *A Clockwork Orange* a more general expressionistic aesthetic. Most of the time, the film's images and sounds do

not seem to depict objective reality; instead (to a greater or lesser extent), they represent reality as it is subjectively perceived or imagined by Alex. *A Clockwork Orange* conveys the subjectivity of its narrative through devices such as non-naturalistic lighting, a highly theatrical acting style, fast- and slow-motion and optical distortions (mostly achieved through the pervasive use of wide-angle lenses for shooting interiors and close-ups). [6] From the first shot in the film, in which Alex stares directly towards the camera and raises his glass, to the closing sequence, which depicts one of Alex's violent sexual fantasies, the diegesis is transformed into what Kawin terms 'mindscreen'.[7] In this way, the film finds a general, formal equivalent to the novel's narrative perspective, showing us exterior reality only as it is filtered or refracted through the narrator's consciousness.

However, it is perhaps Kubrick's use of 'subjective' music that is most effective and significant in transmitting the narrator's viewpoint. Taking his cue from the source novel, Kubrick uses various pieces of classical music (recreated on a synthesizer by Walter Carlos) to suggest Alex's emotional state at different points in the narrative. Most notably, certain pieces are frequently used to evoke Alex's rapturous enjoyment of ultraviolence. Rossini's *The Thieving Magpie*, for example, provides the extremely prominent accompaniment to two violent scenes in which Alex is involved in fights – first, with a rival gang, and later, with his own mutinous underlings (his 'droogs'). As Kubrick suggested in a 1972 interview, this use of music was born out of his need to recreate cinematically some of the complex effects of Burgess' prose:

> It was necessary to find a way of stylizing the violence, just as Burgess does by his writing style. The ironic counterpoint of the music was certainly one of the ways of achieving this. All the scenes of violence are very different without the music.[8]

Yet while the soundtrack to *A Clockwork Orange* is motivated by specific aesthetic aims relating to Alex's characterization and the stylization of violence, the idea of music as 'counterpoint' is also something that develops independently through Kubrick's oeuvre. As we have already seen, a form of musical counterpoint is embryonic in the innocent pop music that emerges from Lolita's radio as Humbert gazes at her for the first time. *Dr Strangelove* further develops the potential for music to provide an ironic commentary or counterpoint, with Vera Lynn's rendition of 'We'll Meet Again' accompanying the film's final, apocalyptic images. Finally, the classical soundtrack of *2001* clearly prefigures the music in *A Clockwork Orange*, whilst also transgressing the conventions of both science fiction cinema (by mixing futuristic images with classical music) and the Hollywood film score (through its prominence in relation to the image). R. S. Brown has compared Kubrick with Bergman and Godard in terms of how the three have used classical music not as 'background' but as a counterpoint that makes the image 'legible':

> [T]he excerpts of classical music compositions that replace the original film score no longer function purely as backing for key emotional situations, but rather exist as a kind of parallel emotional/aesthetic universe... Put another way, the music, rather than supporting and/or coloring the visual images and narrative situations, stands as an image in its own right, helping the audience to read the film's other images as such rather than as a replacement for or imitation of objective reality.[9]

If this musical aesthetic really emerges in *2001*, as Brown argues, it is clearly *A Clockwork Orange* that seizes upon the potential of music to confer a subjective status on the image.

Furthermore, *A Clockwork Orange*'s music also helps to recreate the insidious effect of Burgess' prose, by which we are gradually made to identify with Alex's

pleasure in violence. This may at first seem paradoxical given the music's obtrusiveness in contrast to the traditional Hollywood score – the way in which it does not merely 'colour' the images, but stands out as a dominant stylistic feature. However, this is to ignore the complexity of the sound-image relationship in film. Michel Chion offers the best analysis of this relationship, coining the term 'added value' to suggest the way in which image and soundtrack inflect, transform and enhance each other when they come into contact. Chion argues that because of our cultural prioritization of the image as the 'source' of cinematic meaning, sound can be a very effective means of covertly manipulating our processes of narrative interpretation:

> There is always something about sound that overwhelms and surprises us no matter what – especially when we refuse to lend it our conscious attention; and thus sound interferes with our perception, affects it. Surely, our conscious perception can valiantly work at submitting everything to its control, but, in the present cultural state of things, sound more than image has the ability to saturate and short-circuit our perception.
> The consequence for film is that sound, much more than image, can become an insidious means of affective and semantic manipulation. On one hand, sound works on us directly, physiologically (breathing noises in a film can directly affect our own respiration). On the other, sound has an influence on perception: through the phenomenon of added value it interprets the meaning of the image, and makes us see in the image what we would not otherwise see, or would see differently.[10]

Similarly, Anthony Storr, writing about the relationship between music and thought, suggests that music can often have emotive effects that bypass, or even overwhelm, our conscious, intellectual faculties:

> It is generally accepted that music causes increased *arousal* in those who are interested in it and who therefore listen to it with some degree of concentration. By arousal, I mean a condition of heightened alertness, awareness, interest, and excitement: a generally enhanced state of being. This

is at a minimum in sleep and at its maximum when human beings are experiencing powerful emotions like intense grief, rage or sexual excitement.[11]

This description of the emotional impact of music is clearly very pertinent to *A Clockwork Orange*, in which music is used both to represent Alex's intense emotional arousal and to foster a comparable response in the audience. Indeed, it is worth noting that Storr also points to the way in which music can be used to facilitate identification or empathy between individuals by 'coordinating' their emotional experiences.[12]

We should conclude that in terms of its meaning and effect on the audience, the music in *A Clockwork Orange* is highly complex. On the one hand, the music is very obtrusive and, in certain ways, incongruous with the image-track. It is self-evidently ironic, provoking an intellectual, critically-detached understanding of the narrative. On the other hand, it is emotionally powerful and manipulative. It encourages an immediate identification with Alex's psychological experience, regardless of our conscious, intellectual response to his actions. Paradoxically, the film's music simultaneously functions as a satirical counterpoint *and* reinforces our identification with the sadistic protagonist. Claudia Gorbman suggests that Kubrick has a unique ability in matching images with soundtrack, selecting music that is 'at once wittily detached and emotionally appropriate'.[13] As we have seen, Kubrick's ability to evoke and balance contradictory effects through music is evidenced in all of his films from *Lolita* onwards. Yet it seems that this ability has a particular pertinence in terms of how *A Clockwork Orange* seeks to represent thought and, specifically, our emotional and intellectual relationship with violence. The way in which *A Clockwork Orange*'s music is designed to engender a dualistic response is, I believe, inextricably tied to Kubrick's exploration of our ambivalent relationship with violence both on and off the screen.

A Fascination with Violence

In an interview in 1972, Kubrick made a brief comment that is highly illuminating with regard to *A Clockwork Orange*'s complex evocation of Alex's perspective and the ambivalences that seem to define Hollywood's problematic relationship with screen violence: 'Although a certain amount of hypocrisy exists about it, everyone is fascinated by violence. After all, man is the most remorseless killer who ever stalked the earth.'[14] The ambiguity of the term 'fascinated' – which suggests both abstract intellectual curiosity and emotional engagement – is precisely what is replicated in *A Clockwork Orange*'s dualistic representation of violence. Furthermore, Kubrick's language highlights a remarkable clarity and coherence in his cinematic imagination when it comes to conceptualizing violence. As I indicated earlier, *2001* makes the explicit connection between 'The Dawn of Man', the birth of higher mental faculties, and the ensuing conflict (or at least ambiguous relationship) between instinctual violence and the intellect. In acquiring the power of abstract reasoning, the ape chief simultaneously 'invents' the first weapon: from the beginning, Kubrick suggests, intellectual advancement does not allow humankind to transcend its animalistic instinct for violence. Instead, the two remain inextricably intertwined, and, if anything, mankind's ingenuity exacerbates its capacity for 'remorseless' violence.

In many ways, *A Clockwork Orange* continues and develops *2001*'s brief exploration of the instinctual violence that persists after the acquisition of rational thought. As Kolker argues:

> When *2001* makes its transition from the ape's bone floating in the air to the spaceship, something important is left out: what happened to the violence, indeed the joy of violence, that the bone represented? [...] *A Clockwork Orange* returns to examine the ape's heritage.[15]

The general similarities between Alex's gang and the primitive ape tribe are plain to see, especially when Alex and his droogs, armed with knives, clubs and chains, set upon a rival gang, in a parallel to the territorial dispute depicted in *2001*'s prologue. Yet, in addition, there are more profound similarities to be discerned in terms of how violence is conceived, shot and choreographed in the two films. Most notably, the scene in which Alex attacks his droogs by the canal, reasserting his control over the gang, is virtually a reworking of the chief ape's triumphant celebration when he first discovers the bone weapon that will allow him to dominate his species. Both scenes use low-angle medium shots of their protagonists (augmenting their stature within the frame), slow-motion and classical music – *Also Sprach Zarathustra* in *2001* and *The Thieving Magpie* in *A Clockwork Orange*. Furthermore, the scenes share a similarly close choreography between music, editing and character movement. These similarities suggest a narrative continuation from one film to the next that goes significantly beyond a shared thematic concern. Both *2001* and *A Clockwork Orange* express an ongoing fascination with the spectacle of violence, and attempt to find the formal means for representing the different intellectual and emotional dimensions of this fascination.

The connection between Alex and the pre-humans in *2001* suggests an unstable tension between socialization and an innate capacity for violence. Yet it would be wrong to say that instinctual brutality re-emerges only through Alex's delinquency. In *A Clockwork Orange*, violence takes on many different forms, and Kubrick implies that while violence has become increasingly sublimated in the socialized individual, it has not disappeared. Repeatedly, violence is carried out by ostensibly responsible and respected members of society, supported by various questionable

moral justifications (such as punishment, revenge and even 'treatment'). Alex is assaulted by various representatives of the state: his 'Post Corrective Advisor' (Aubrey Morris), a police officer, and, finally, two of his former droogs, who have become the state's new breed of law enforcers. He is also physically and psychologically tortured, first in the course of his 'treatment', and later by Mr Alexander (Patrick Magee) in an act of revenge. In all of these cases, it is made clear that the perpetrators of these acts derive the same type of pleasure from their 'justifiable' violence as Alex does from his instinctual, amoral brutality.

In several of Kubrick's other films we can see a similar tension between socialization (or civilization) and violence. In *2001*, as Kolker suggested, violence appears to disappear from the narrative as the bone transforms into the satellite. Yet *2001*'s most famous cut does not abandon the theme of violence, but subsumes this idea within a new technological and social context. In *2001*'s future, violence is no longer manifested in overt acts of aggression; it is carried out at distance, calmly. Technology has enabled mankind to kill at the push of a button, and, moreover, as that technology has advanced and become autonomous, *it* has attained the ability to kill with a single 'thought'. When HAL murders the ship's hibernating crew, the act is effortless, and is related to the viewer by a computer screen displaying the message 'life functions terminated'. Similarly, when Bowman (Keir Dullea) 'lobotomizes' HAL (while the computer pleads for its life, in the film's most ironic and emotional scene), it is simply a matter of disconnecting a few wires. In Kubrick's future, violence has become detached from emotion and physical action, but, as a consequence, it seems all the more pernicious and potent. Furthermore, with this type of violence it has become impossible to distinguish rationality from irrationality. HAL murders the crew because he is malfunctioning – he has become

'irrational'. Yet, at the same time, his actions are motivated by an implacable logic: he perceives a very real threat to his existence, and chooses to kill the crew to ensure his own survival (in much the same way that the apes' instinctual aggression is a product of the Darwinian fight for survival). Comparably, mankind's creation of the nuclear 'deterrent' in *Dr Strangelove* is depicted as an act of both unassailable logic and utter lunacy.

More commonly, though, Kubrick depicts violence as a repressed, illogical force underlying rational civilization and the socialized human psyche. In *Barry Lyndon* (1975), violence is the dark underside of patriarchy, emerging when Barry (Ryan O'Neal) suddenly submits his stepson (Leon Vitali) to a vicious beating in front of assembled members of the aristocracy. Similarly, in *The Shining*, Jack (Jack Nicholson) is 'possessed' by the irrational, supernatural violence of the Overlook hotel and attempts to murder his own family. Finally, and perhaps most emphatically, the conflict between instinctual aggression and rational thought is represented in *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), where Joker (Matthew Modine) wears both a peace symbol and a combat helmet bearing the handwritten phrase 'born to kill', expressing, as he says, 'something about the duality of man.'

Clearly, Kubrick discerns in the human mind (or, at least, the male mind) a repressed violent impulse. Drawing on psychoanalytic terminology, Kubrick has suggested that this buried instinct is at the root of our natural, yet perhaps deeply unsettling, identification with Alex:

> I think... there is the basic psychological, unconscious identification with Alex... [Y]ou can regard Alex as a creature of the id. He is within all of us. In most cases, this recognition seems to bring a kind of empathy from the audience, but it makes some people very angry and uncomfortable.[16]

Writing shortly after *A Clockwork Orange*'s U.K. premiere, Kubrick is clearly responding to the myriad criticisms and polemics that greeted the film's release. The attacks launched in the popular press seized upon the attractiveness of Alex's character and the way in which we are encouraged to share his perspective, accusing Kubrick of shamelessly glamorizing the violent content of the film. But, inevitably, the representation of violence was considered separately from the context of the story's overall moral framework. Moreover, the various ways in which Kubrick injected a sense of critical distance into the action were widely ignored or misunderstood. For Kubrick, as for Burgess, it was absolutely necessary to portray Alex's enjoyment of violence and to acknowledge our shared capacity for violence, however distasteful. This is central to the story's moral dilemma concerning criminality, state-sponsored brutality and the destruction of personal liberty.[17] Yet this is not to say that Kubrick (or, indeed, Burgess) 'glamorizes' violence. In both book and film, although the story is 'told' by Alex, there is a careful layering of perspectives which ensures that the narrator's seductive amorality is contextualized and qualified.

In what is arguably the film's most violent scene, where Mr Alexander is viciously beaten and forced to watch his wife (Adrienne Corri) being raped, we are given repeated shots from his perspective as he lies bound and gagged on the floor. Vitally, this scene does not use any extra-diegetic music to 'stylize' its violence. Instead, it uses Malcolm McDowell's disturbing rendition of 'Singin' in the Rain', which may act as the blackest of comedic distractions, but does nothing to mitigate the scene's horrific brutality. The momentary shift in perspective, where we are put in the place of the pacified observer of Alex's grotesque crimes, resolutely strips the viewing process of any potential for voyeuristic pleasure or vicarious gratification. It also

presages Alex's eventual transition from victimizer to victim, as he later becomes the passive and helpless victim of state violence: firstly, when he is subjected to a from of torture by being poisoned and forced to watch the sickening images that will 'cure' him of his evil; and secondly, when he is made the object of the collective gaze of the politicians, who watch with undisguised relish as Alex writhes on the ground in front of them, his violent impulses transformed into physical pain by his psychological conditioning.

What should become clear through these shifts in perspective is that Kubrick certainly does not represent violence as a straightforward 'spectacle' to be mindlessly consumed (much less enjoyed) by the uncritical viewer. Instead, he scrutinizes different forms of violent behaviour, and explores the way in which our reaction to violence is partially dependent on how that violence is contextualized and how we are positioned in relation to it. In *A Clockwork Orange*, Kubrick implies that our comprehension of violence and violent images is deeply ambivalent. Viewing violence, he suggests, can be a disturbing or even nauseating experience – but it can also be pleasurable, especially if we are given a 'moralizing' framework that sanctions our vicarious enjoyment. (Again, the scene in which the government ministers enjoy Alex's public torture and degradation with a sense of moral impunity deals with this idea directly.) In short, *A Clockwork Orange* is deeply self-reflexive in the way it addresses the meaning and effects of its violent content.

In contrast to his disappointment with *Lolita*, Kubrick was initially very happy with his version of *A Clockwork Orange*, feeling that the film was a technical triumph which evoked both the complexity of the novel's psychological perspective and the moral ambiguity of cinema's conceptualization of violence. After the film's completion, the notoriously exacting director reported, 'I'm very pleased with *A*

Clockwork Orange. I think it's the most skilful movie I've ever made. I can see almost nothing wrong with it.'[18] Yet it was perhaps Kubrick's skill in evoking his narrator's twisted vision of the world – in conjunction with his refusal to provide an unambiguous moral commentary on that vision – that created much of the outrage, discomfort and widespread misunderstanding that followed the film's release. Media responses often tended towards intense personal attacks. *The Washington Post* review declared that 'Kubrick's style is inflated and ponderous,' and the film 'a deplorable and thoughtless spectacle of violence.'[19] *The Chicago Sun-Times* posed the question 'What the hell is Kubrick up to here?' before promptly concluding that the film is 'An ideological mess, a paranoid right-wing fantasy masquerading as an Orwellian warning.'[20] Crucially, what is missing from these analyses is an adequate critical discrimination between the vision of Kubrick and that of his protagonist and, moreover, a recognition of the way in which the 'spectacle of violence' has been self-consciously foregrounded within the narrative. Don Daniels provided a more considered response to the question 'What the hell is Kubrick up to here?', writing a piece that was both a review and a critique of the media's misrepresentation of Kubrick's work. 'To complain of Alex's singular attractiveness', he argued, 'is to indicate a naïveté about the role and to compliment Malcolm McDowell's rendering of evil's various charms. Kubrick's future society is 'Alexed' into a child's refuse-strewn playground.'[21]

In 1973, amid allegations of copycat violence, Kubrick famously withdrew the film from the U.K. (where he owned the distribution rights).[22] There is, however, no reason to believe that he ever wavered from his firm belief that his film could not be blamed for real-life criminal behaviour. Rather, according to comments made by Christiane Kubrick after her husband's death, Kubrick only withdrew the film after

receiving numerous threats. She told an interviewer, '[He was] both artistically hurt and also scared. He didn't want to be misunderstood and misinterpreted and you don't like to get death threats for your family.'[23] In many ways, the fate of *A Clockwork Orange* seemed to mirror that of its protagonist: it was transformed into a pawn, an emblem of a new type of cultural immorality, to be manipulated by politicians and elements of the media in a debate that often failed to appreciate, or even address, its ideas and artistry. Clearly, the film confronts man's capacity to commit (and derive pleasure from) violence in a very forthright, graphic, and often disturbing manner. Yet it also suggests that our ability to think rationally rather than acting instinctually, to choose compassion rather than violence, is the very essence of our humanity. It is therefore understandable that Kubrick should suffer a great deal of consternation at the general misrepresentation of his work by the mass media, which frequently responded to the film with hysteria rather than critical scrutiny, making it emblematic of a new 'tendency' toward gratuitous violence and sensationalism in Hollywood rather than engaging with the film on its own terms.

In an open letter to *The New York Times*, Kubrick offered his response to one article that was fairly typical in condemning the film without addressing its actual content. This response is fascinating not only for how it redresses the critical misperception of the film, but also for how it incorporates Kubrick's cinematic imagination into its frame of reference (as was the case in some of the director's previously cited comments). Because of this, it offers perhaps the clearest elucidation of how *A Clockwork Orange*'s meaning is embedded, like *2001*'s, as a largely 'non-verbal experience.' Quoting Robert Ardrey, Kubrick defends his portrayal of Alex's joyous barbarity as a refutation of the adequacy, and accuracy, of the assumption that man is by nature 'happy and good':

Finally, the question must be considered whether Rousseau's view of man as a fallen angel is not really the most pessimistic and hopeless of philosophies. It leaves man a monster who has gone steadily away from his original nobility. It is, I am convinced, more optimistic to accept Ardrey's view that '... we are born of risen apes, not fallen angels, and the apes were armed killers besides [...] The miracle of man is not how far he has sunk but how magnificently he has risen.'[24]

When we examine *A Clockwork Orange* with due diligence, and in relation to Kubrick's other work, the perspective that Kubrick shares with Ardrey becomes increasingly visible. The film, we should conclude, exemplifies the notion of cinematic thought.

'No Other Country but the Mind'

Fear and Desire, Kubrick's first feature film, opens with a series of shots of a forested mountainside and a meditative voiceover, which sounds almost like an incantation:

> There is war in this forest. Not a war that has been fought, or one that will be, but any war. And the enemies who struggle here do not exist, unless we call them into being. This forest, then, and all that happens now, is outside history. Only the unchanging shapes of fear and doubt and death are from our world. These soldiers that you see keep our language and our time, but have no other country but the mind.

Although Kubrick later dismissed his debut as 'a very inept and pretentious effort', the film nevertheless foreshadows his later accomplishments – revealing a personal vision that spans his career.[25] As the opening monologue suggests, *Fear and Desire* aims to tell an allegorical, even mythical, story. The principal characters (four

soldiers) are archetypal: they are not three-dimensional individuals, but are illustrative of certain ideas about human behaviour and the human psyche. Trapped behind enemy lines and lost in the wilderness, the soldiers become increasingly anxious, impulsive and, ultimately, savage. The film's action represents an internal drama, a conflict between different aspects of the human personality – as is made abundantly clear by the fact that the soldiers and their 'enemy' counterparts are played by the same actors.[26] At the same time, the film's natural landscape is made to appear dreamlike or otherworldly. 'Visually', Nelson suggests, '*Fear and Desire* shows Kubrick's talent for creating mental landscapes that alternate between grotesquerie and surrealistic beauty.'[27] In brief, the film creates a 'country of the mind' not only in the sense that it is fantastical, or detached from the real world and its history, but also because it dramatizes thought, transforming 'external' reality into an interior mindscape.

Throughout his career, in a variety of different ways, Kubrick has returned to the underlying themes and form of *Fear and Desire*, periodically exploring cinema's capacity to construct a subjective reality (as this relates to both his characters and his own conception of the world). Deleuze writes:

> If we look at Kubrick's work, we see the degree to which it is the brain which is *mise en scène*... For in Kubrick the world itself is a brain, there is identity of brain and world, as in the great circular and luminous table in *Doctor Strangelove*, the giant computer in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the overlook hotel in *The Shining*... The world-brain is *A Clockwork Orange*, or again a spherical game of chess where the general can calculate his chances of promotion on the basis of the relation between soldiers killed and positions captured (*Paths of Glory*). But if the calculation fails, if the computer breaks down, it is because the brain is no more a reasonable system than the world is a rational one.[28]

What Deleuze identifies in Kubrick's cinema is a repeated conflation of world and mind, wherein the external environment is literally or figuratively representative of a

conscious entity (be it human, artificial, or even supernatural). Furthermore, we should add, if Kubrick frequently depicts the mind through his *mise en scène*, then equally, stylistic features such as editing, framing, camera movements, music, and so forth, come to represent interior mental processes (and here there are clearly close parallels between Kubrick's cinema and Münsterberg's theoretical model of film thought). There is a scene in *A Clockwork Orange* where Alex, having returned to his room after his night of ultraviolence, plays a recording of Beethoven's ninth symphony, which exemplifies the way in which Kubrick subjectivizes external reality. As Alex listens to his music, his environment suddenly comes alive, animated by his imagination. A rapid succession of shots of different parts of his Christ figurines creates the illusion that they are dancing to the music. We are then given shots of the 'lovely pictures' that Alex imagines – which presage the fleeting visions of violence seen by Danny (Danny Lloyd) in *The Shining*. These are fully subjective images which depict a variety of brutal – yet highly artificial – fantasies: Alex as a vampire, a figure hanging from a gallows, and a series of catastrophic explosions that seem like stock footage from a Hollywood B-movie. Similarly, later on in the film, Alex has a fantasy of himself as a centurion, dressed in 'the height of Roman fashion' as he flagellates the condemned Christ. When Ciment asked Kubrick why he shot this latter fantasy 'like a bad Hollywood movie', Kubrick gave the simple reply, 'I thought Alex would have imagined it that way.'[29]

This last point is crucial. As we have already seen to some extent, Kubrick's representation of thought is deeply self-reflexive: for Kubrick, film is a means of expressing abstract, personal thought in non-verbal terms, but it is also the site of collective fantasies and ideologies. Neither Kubrick's thought nor the thought attributed to his characters is entirely autonomous, but operates in relation to a wider

cultural imagination defined by Hollywood's dominant images, moral assumptions, archetypal characters and narrative formulae.

The way in which Kubrick develops his cinematic thought in relation (and often opposition) to Hollywood is perhaps most significant in his later films, particularly *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. Ostensibly, these two films should be very different. Based upon a best-selling horror story by Stephen King, the former is generic and fantastical, and is arguably the most openly 'commercial' film in Kubrick's oeuvre. In contrast, the latter, adapted from Arthur Schnitzler's 1926 *Traumnovelle* (a fairly obscure novella prior to Kubrick's film), is a slow-paced, contemplative, psychologically-complex work exploring desire, fantasy and jealousy in relation to an apparently stable marriage. Yet when we begin to examine these films more closely, it becomes clear that they are similar in some very fundamental ways. Both films are, at times, deeply ambiguous in terms of how they blur the lines between reality and fantasy. In *The Shining*, we are, for much of the narrative, faced with conflicting explanations for the eerie occurrences in the Overlook, and remain unsure whether events are truly 'supernatural' or merely the products of psychosis and hallucination. In *Eyes Wide Shut*, the barriers between dream and reality similarly begin to dissolve (as is suggested in the film's title). Furthermore, the ambiguity regarding the ontological status of narrative events is complemented by way in which both films self-reflexively explore their extra-fictional dimensions. In *The Shining*, there is a constant movement between sincerity and parody, between horror and tongue-in-cheek humour, between genre and generic subversion, which continually forces us to reassess the status and meaning of the narrative. In *Eyes Wide Shut*, it is predominantly the casting of what was then Hollywood's most famous married couple, Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, as the fictional husband and wife that

prompts us to consider the boundaries between fiction and reality in more depth. Finally, like Kubrick's previous films, both *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut* are centrally concerned with the problematical relationship between rational and irrational thought, or consciousness and the unconscious, but in addition, both focus on the threat that irrationality and instinct pose to the family unit constituted by husband, wife and child.

These parallels, I believe, clarify the fundamental nature of Kubrick's cinematic thought with regard to his conception of the mind and his strategies for conveying ideas to the viewer in non-verbal terms. Kubrick's cinematic thought operates through Hollywood not by way of straightforward critique, subversion or parody. Instead, it operates according to the principle of estrangement, or more precisely, the 'uncanny' (in the specific Freudian sense of the term). The final section of this chapter will show how *The Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut*, in turn, represent a mode of uncanny thought that is essential to Kubrick's cinema as a whole.

Uncanny Thought

Freud's essay on 'The Uncanny' provided a direct theoretical basis for *The Shining*, as has been made clear by Diane Johnson, who co-wrote the script with Kubrick.[30] In this essay, Freud argues that when we begin to explore the nature of the uncanny (*das unheimlich*), it becomes apparent that it is by no means a typical manifestation of the frightening. This deeply unsettling feeling, Freud suggests, is not evoked by occurrences that are obviously outlandish or supernatural; rather, 'The uncanny... is in some way a species of the familiar'.[31] The uncanny relies upon the juxtaposition

of the familiar and the unfamiliar, or the distortion of what is most familiar – the homely – so that it becomes estranged and disconcerting. Freud identifies an array of fictional devices that he believes achieve an uncanny effect through their ambiguous mixing of the familiar and the unfamiliar, and which, it should be immediately apparent, are manifest in *The Shining*: the eerie repetition of events and motifs (the murders, the 1920s ball, the sentence 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy'), the representation of doubles or doppelgängers (Jack [Jack Nicholson] and the previous caretaker, Danny and his imaginary friend 'Tony', the murdered Grady girls), and the ambiguous depiction of automata, objects that may be either alive or inanimate (the Overlook itself). Furthermore, underpinning these uncanny motifs, Freud argues, is the conflict between two ways of thinking, or between two incompatible sets of beliefs – one derived from childish ideas and fantasies, which have never been fully surmounted, and the other from our adult scepticism, which is not as stable as it first appears. A narrative which plays upon the ambiguous line dividing fantasy from reality is, therefore, prone to induce a deep sense of uncanniness:

> an uncanny effect often arises when the boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred, when we are faced with the reality of something that we had until now considered imaginary, when a symbol takes on the full function and significance of what it symbolizes and so forth.[32]

There is a clear intersection between the different aspects of Freud's conception of the uncanny and the themes and form of *The Shining*, which should already be somewhat apparent from the previous brief discussion of the film. Firstly, of course, the blurring of fantasy and reality is evident up until the final section of the film: it is not until Jack is freed from the food locker by one of the hotel's ghosts that we are

presented with the film's first unequivocally supernatural event; before this, we are constantly left wondering whether the film's paranormal events are real or imaginary.[33] In addition, the film's reworking of the family unit, so that it becomes something *unfamiliar* and threatening, is a prime example of the uncanny. It is also another element in the narrative that juxtaposes two conflicting modes of thought. At first (albeit, very briefly), Jack is the conventional Hollywood patriarch who provides for his family (by working at the hotel) and protects them from any outside threat (making sure that the hotel is safe after Danny is apparently attacked by a 'crazy woman' in room 237). Later, he has himself become the threat, having transformed into the deranged, punishing father of Freudian childhood fantasy. At the same time, Kubrick's uncanny treatment of the father can be seen as a satirical commentary on the inherent ambiguity of patriarchal power and authority. When Jack meets the ghost of Grady (Philip Stone), the previous caretaker who murdered his wife and children, it becomes apparent that the rhetoric of fatherly authority and discipline is being used to mask a sadistic brutality. Euphemistically, Grady tells Jack that he has found it necessary to 'correct' the behaviour of his wife and daughters, and suggests that Jack consider doing the same.[34]

This instant, which ambiguously mixes horror and humour, also points up another way in which *The Shining* operates according to the paradigm of the uncanny. The horror that the film provokes relies, at some level, on a suspension of disbelief – a willingness to accept narrative events at face value. Contrarily, much of the film's humour relies on self-reflexivity and parody – events become comedic when we recognize their excess and artificiality. In constantly blurring the line between genuine emotion and parody, and between reality and artificiality, *The Shining* again juxtaposes two conflicting modes of thinking, achieving another form of uncanniness.

An excellent example of exactly how the film ambiguously mixes reality and artificiality occurs early on in the narrative, when, at the end of the job interview, Ullman (Barry Nelson) tells Jack about the Overlook's violent history. Ullman's exposition of the story of the Grady murders veers sharply from being genuinely horrifying to unintentionally ridiculous: he reveals the chilling details of the homicides – Grady 'killed his family with an axe, stacked them neatly in one of the rooms of the west wing and... put both barrels of a shotgun in his mouth' – before bathetically concluding, 'the police thought... it was what the old-timers used to call cabin fever.' Similarly, Jack's reaction seems to mirror the unlikely trajectory of the story. At first, he stares silently at Ullman, his face displaying an appropriate degree of solemnity and shock. When the story is over, Jack's characteristic grin returns, and, he reassures Ullman that he is still willing to take the caretaker job despite the hotel's recent bloody history. 'As far as my wife is concerned,' he adds, 'I'm sure she'll be absolutely fascinated when I tell her about it: she's a confirmed ghost story and horror film addict.' The rapid oscillation in this sequence between the 'real' and the self-consciously artificial, between horror and humour, is typical of the film's narrative (and Nicholson's performance) as a whole. At the same time, it represents something fundamental to Kubrick's cinematic thought, which constantly seeks to unsettle and unnerve, to replace ideological or narrative certainty with ambiguity and ambivalence.

Finally, it is worth considering how the notion of the uncanny also informs the film's most basic stylistic operations. If we again focus on the two components of the uncanny emphasized by Freud – the estrangement of the familiar and the ambiguous representation of events – it becomes clear that *The Shining* frequently achieves a kind of stylistic uncanniness. Kubrick's innovative use of the Steadicam (a relatively new piece of equipment at the time) certainly contributes to the film's ubiquitous

sense of the uncanny. The gliding camera that pursues Danny through the labyrinthine corridors of the Overlook evokes an ambiguous point of view. On the one hand, the camera indirectly presents Danny's vantage point: it is low to the ground, mimicking the five year-old's perspective, and shows a good deal of what Danny sees in his field of vision. On the other hand, the camera also represents an independent, alien perspective: it embodies the unseen, supernatural malevolence of the 'Overlook' itself, whilst also foreshadowing Jack's later perspective as he pursues his son through the hedge maze (after he has been 'possessed' by the hotel's evil spirit). Kenneth Johnson suggests that *The Shining* repeatedly disrupts the usual relationship between character and camera by having the camera move semi-independently with regard to the demands of the immediate action it is recording: the camera 'slightly exceeds' its conventional role as the invisible transmitter of narrative information.[35] The sense of something alien and unsettling within the narrative thus relies on the subtle estrangement of what is stylistically familiar and conventional. As Johnson argues: 'When the camera... wanders, we become aware, because our "classical" expectations have been disrupted, of a foreign presence.'[36]

There are two further, specific instances where *The Shining* disrupts classical expectations through its ambiguous depiction of space and point of view, which will serve to illustrate the film's general stylistic uncanniness. First, there is the scene in which Jack gazes over the model maze (in the 'Colorado Lounge') whilst, simultaneously, Wendy (Shelley Duvall) and Danny attempt to solve the full-sized hedge maze outside. After a shot of Jack looking downwards, we cut to what is apparently a point-of-view shot of the model maze – but the shot is 'impossible': it depicts the tiny figures of Wendy and Danny moving through the centre of the maze. In this ambiguous sequence, classical editing is used to problematize space and point

of view, so that we cannot commit to a single interpretation of what is happening within the narrative, and again cannot decide whether we are dealing with the supernatural or merely a stylistic 'trick'. The second instant where classical space is disrupted, with uncanny effects, occurs during a scene in the Gold Room bar, when Jack finally seems to succumb to his psychosis. Seated at the bar with his head bowed, Jack suddenly looks up towards the camera and begins to talk. Subsequently, a reverse shot reveals the ghostly barman who has appeared from nowhere, and whom Jack is addressing, but before this, there is a precise moment of uncanniness, when we unexpectedly lose our bearings within the narrative. The 'taboo' glance towards camera has the effect of being both disorientating and unsettling, as we are suddenly made part of the film's frame of reference through Jack's maniacal stare. Presaging a crucial sequence in which the boundary between fantasy and reality (or the paranormal and the psychological) is again blurred, the film's style becomes profoundly uncanny.

It should by now be clear that the notion of the uncanny provides a model for both the content and the form of Kubrick's cinematic thought. Kubrick's style defamiliarizes and disorientates, while at the same time, his narratives concern conflicts between rationality and irrational forces, between our conscious beliefs, morals and assumptions and the apparently alien impulses and desires that dwell in the unconscious mind. In one way or another, his films all convey a deep sense of estrangement from everyday 'normality' (often through their evocation of a narratorial perspective that is, in some sense, aberrant, perverse, delinquent or monstrous). Yet it is perhaps *Eyes Wide Shut*, Kubrick's final film, that best illustrates how the principles of estrangement and uncanniness operate in his cinema.

Like *The Shining, Eyes Wide Shut* achieves a sense of uncanniness firstly through its ambiguous blurring of the boundary between fantasy and reality. As Rodney Hill notes: 'Both Schnitzler's novella and Kubrick's film navigate the treacherous, gray area between waking life and dreams, between 'reality' and fantasy... between the conscious and the unconscious.'[37] The film's foray into the fantastic begins when Alice Harford (Nicole Kidman) confesses to her husband, Bill (Tom Cruise), that she recently fantasized about infidelity after experiencing an unexpected, and almost overwhelming, desire for a naval officer she saw whilst on holiday. Tormented by the image of his wife with another man, Bill spends several hours wandering around New York, half-heartedly seeking some form of sexual revenge. Yet ultimately, because of both circumstance and the ambivalent nature of his feelings, he is unable to go through with his plans and remains faithful to Alice.

While Bill's night-time odyssey is ostensibly presented as a real experience, there are several ways in which it achieves an oneiric and uncanny quality. As in the original novella, the protagonist does not seem to be fully in control of his actions, and the night's events unfold with a kind of fateful determinism. The night's erotic opportunities present themselves as if in response to Bill's unarticulated fantasies, linked together through a series of coincidences. He is propositioned by three different women – the daughter of a recently-deceased patient, a prostitute, and the costume shop owner's daughter. He does not plan or actively seek out these potentially-erotic encounters – they are presented as random occurrences. Similarly, although Bill chooses to attend the masked orgy, he only finds out about it through a series of coincidences. After wandering the streets aimlessly for some time, Bill finds himself outside the jazz club where Nick Nightingale (Todd Field), an old friend from medical school, is performing. After his set, Nightingale tells Bill about the orgy.

Again, this opportunity presents itself not because of Bill's actions or conscious intentions, but seemingly in response to his unconscious thoughts – as the kind of wish-fulfilment that Freud identifies as the founding logic of dreams.

Eyes Wide Shut also achieves a dreamlike logic through its subtle repetition of events and motifs. For Freud, the seemingly unfathomable repetition of the same thing is intensely uncanny, and 'recalls the helplessness we experience in certain dream states.'[38] Again, the uncanny is implicitly linked to a kind of cognitive dissonance, where we can no longer clearly differentiate fantasy from reality, the familiar from, the unfamiliar, and anxiety from desire. Involuntary or surprising repetitions, Freud argues, seem uncanny because they suggest a hidden purpose or design that is beyond our conscious control and understanding, but may at the same time be a product of our unconscious beliefs, attitudes and wishes. This is precisely the case when Bill consciously rejects the prospect of infidelity when it first occurs (spurning the daughter of the deceased patient), but finds himself confronted with eerily similar situations, in which new opportunities for infidelity proliferate. There are also repetitions that link Bill's night-time experiences to the events of the previous day. At the Zieglers' party, Bill flirts with two models who promise to take him to 'where the rainbow ends'. The following night, he finds himself attempting to hire a mask and cloak from a shop called 'Rainbow Fashions'. Furthermore, the shop bears an unlikely similarity to the Zieglers' house in terms of its décor: both are decorated with strings of pale yellow light bulbs. In addition, we should note that Bill's conversation with the models is cut short when Ziegler (Sydney Pollack) discreetly calls him away to tend to a prostitute who has overdosed upstairs. This again presages Bill's odyssey of the following night, which is instigated when he is unexpectedly called away on a medical matter, and is marked by a series of encounters with prostitutes (the woman

who propositions him on the street, the masked prostitutes at the orgy, and the girl in the costume shop, whose father twice accuses her of being a 'whore'). Finally, the entire masked orgy sequence can be seen as an uncanny inversion of the Zieglers' Christmas party. As Ciment astutely observes, there is a strong sense of symmetry uniting the two sequences, with each lasting for eighteen minutes.[39] Moreover, each sequence is ritualistic, and depicts illicit activities: prostitution, extramarital sex and drug-taking. At the Zieglers' party, these activities are out of sight, concealed by a weak façade of social ritual and bourgeois propriety; at the later party, they have come into the open.

As well as creating a series of uncanny echoes and inversions, the repetition of events and motifs from the previous day strengthens the dreamlike quality of Bill's night-time odyssey. As in *Wild Strawberries*, there is the suggestion that the 'day's residues' have been transformed into the raw material of the 'dream' narrative. The notion that the incidents from Bill's night are in some way oneiric or fantastical is further reinforced when he returns home and awakes Alice from her 'real' nightmare. As Alice quickly relates the details of her dream, it becomes apparent that it shares certain characteristics with Bill's recent experience. In Alice's dream, she and Bill find themselves naked in an unknown place – just as Bill recently found himself in an unknown house in which the group of masked men menacingly demanded that he remove his clothes. Alice's dream centres on Bill's humiliation and emasculation, as he is forced to watch his wife copulating with the naval officer and a series of other men. While the physical details clearly call to mind the orgy sequence, the emotions that Alice describes – anger, resentment, fear and shame – recall Bill's shifting feelings in the previous scenes.

The parallels between Alice's dream and Bill's night-time experiences create a further blurring of the boundary between the real and the imaginary. While Alice's recollection of her dream emphasizes the oneiric qualities of Bill's experiences, it simultaneously draws sustenance from those experiences, attaining a significance that exceeds its ostensible status as a purely imaginary narrative. The paradoxical 'reality' of Alice's dream is reinforced by her reaction to it, which contrasts with Bill's lack of reaction to his real-life drama. When Bill returns home, he seems a little shaken by the night's occurrences, but does not convey any obvious signs of emotional distress, keeping his face and voice largely passive. Contrarily, upon recounting her dream, Alice is extremely emotional, and cannot hide the extent to which she has been affected by her imaginary experiences. Once more, we are subjected to processes of estrangement, disorientation and defamiliarization, as the normal relationship between fantasy and reality is disrupted.

In *Eyes Wide Shut*, the evocation of the experience of the uncanny is linked to a single perspective: that of Bill Harford. More than anything, the sense of uncanniness that develops through the course of the narrative is a reflection of Bill's loss of his bearings with regard to his marriage and his own sexual identity. The shift from 'normality' to the uncanny is initiated when Alice directly challenges her husband's unquestioning and slightly arrogant confidence in himself and in the stability of their marriage. Feeling neglected by Bill's apparent lack of concern over the fact that she has been propositioned by another man at the Zieglers' party, Alice asks, 'You are very, *very* sure of yourself, aren't you?' She then relates the story about her brief infatuation with the naval officer, instantly destroying Bill's self-assurance and forcing him to re-examine his most fundamental assumptions regarding his marriage. From this point on, the film's uncanniness – its defamiliarization of the everyday

world and its questioning of what is real and what is illusory or fantastical – mirrors Bill's psychical experience.

Insofar as the uncanny or dreamlike facets of its narrative reflect Bill's point of view, *Eyes Wide Shut* provides another reworking of the 'first-person' perspective that was implicit in *A Clockwork Orange* and in certain aspects of *Lolita*. Indeed, specific stylistic and thematic elements of *Eyes Wide Shut* can be linked to Kubrick's previous experiments in subjective narration. Notably, the Ligeti piano music that recurs throughout the second half of the film shares a function with the music in *A Clockwork Orange*. Claudia Gorbman pithily describes the recurring Ligeti motif as 'point of view music' for Bill.[40] Yet unlike the classical music in *A Clockwork Orange*, the Ligeti piece is used with little sense of ironic detachment or critical distance:

> The Ligeti piano music dramatically, and entirely without irony, marks some key moments in Bill's emotional fall… Its moments of extreme loudness and extreme softness seem to mirror the leaps in Bill's consciousness at these junctures, as he is now struck with panic, now questioning and exploring, now hit with the full force of shame.[41]

In *Eyes Wide Shut*, the dissonant Ligeti music intricately renders those moments of uncanniness that demolish Bill's self-confidence and sense of social assurance. It first occurs at what is perhaps the film's most unsettling moment, when Bill is led unsuspectingly into the room of ominous, grotesquely-masked figures who have discovered that he is an impostor at the orgy. The Ligeti music is immediately linked to Bill's perception of his shameful 'unmasking'. A similar subjective meaning is attached to the music's final occurrence when Bill returns home to discover Alice asleep next to his misplaced mask, the symbol of his attempted infidelity. In both cases, the music evokes a moment of self-consciousness, when Bill's deceptions and

self-delusions become unsustainable and he is forced to abandon his protective, carefully-constructed persona.

The idea of the mask itself forms a powerful continuity between *Lolita*, *A Clockwork Orange* and *Eyes Wide Shut*. In *Lolita*, Humbert adopts a public persona, feigning paternal feelings for Lolita so as to hide the true nature of his desires. In *A Clockwork Orange*, the mask functions in precisely the opposite way. Although Alex wears a grotesque mask ostensibly to hide his identity as he commits crimes, the mask also reflects his deepest sense of self: if Alex is, as Kubrick suggests, 'the creature of the id' – entirely lacking in morality or social scruples – his carnivalesque mask is wholly appropriate. These contradictory functions of the mask are brought together in *Eyes Wide Shut*. In the early stages of the film in particular, the confident public persona that Bill projects is represented as something inherently artificial and mask-like – as an illusory facade of masculine authority and self-assurance that quickly begins to crack after Alice's revelations. Later, attempting to reassert his lost sense of power, social status and sexual identity, Bill wears a physical mask that is akin to Alex's. This mask promises him entry into a hedonistic world, where everyday inhibitions and social codes cease to exist, and where women are again simply the passive objects of male desire. Yet for Bill, this mask proves equally inauthentic and unsustainable. In *Eyes Wide Shut*, the mask problematizes the relationship between appearance and inner identity, and, therefore, acts as an objective correlative to Bill's subjective experience. The mask motif is another expression of the uncanny: it suggests Bill's estrangement from his normal sense of self and further blurs the boundaries between what is real or authentic and what is artificial, illusory or fantastical.

Undoubtedly, the artificial qualities of Bill's character are emphasized by Tom Cruise's highly unusual performance in the role (which at no point appears either naturalistic or 'comfortable'). For the most part, Cruise's performance seems stilted and extremely self-conscious – but deliberately so. His extremely measured acting lends a sense of calculation – indeed, of performativity – to Bill's everyday social interactions. Yet Cruise's suitability in the role of Bill is not, of course, merely a product of his inherent capabilities as an actor. Like *Lolita*, *Eyes Wide Shut* draws heavily on the Hollywood personae of its stars as a means of manipulating audience expectations and generating meaning. The crisis of masculine identity that *Eyes Wide Shut* depicts is given additional depth and significance through the careful subversion of Cruise's familiar persona. And again, insofar as this subversion relies on the estrangement of what is ostensibly familiar, and blurs the relationship between fantasy and reality, it is designed to produce a sense of disorientation and uncanniness – reflective of Bill's subjective experience.

Tom Cruise's star status was really cemented in *Top Gun* (Scott, 1986). In this archetypal Reaganite fable, the heroic masculinity of Cruise's character is emblematized by the twin tropes of his military and sexual prowess – which are effectively conflated in the narrative (by the end of the film, Cruise's character has defeated the Soviet enemy and won the affections of the 'love interest' [Kelly McGillis]).[42] Cruise's later roles in films such as *Mission: Impossible* (De Palma, 1996) further developed his credentials as a sexually charismatic, self-assured action hero. Clearly, *Eyes Wide Shut* draws upon this masculine persona in order to debunk it – to represent Bill's sense of emasculation whilst also challenging the ideological fantasies of masculine identity disseminated in Hollywood. Early on in the film, Cruise's persona is essential in characterizing Bill, and seems a reasonably

unproblematic facet of Bill's 'natural' identity, but as the story progresses, this public face appears increasingly artificial and unsustainable. As Naremore astutely observes:

> At Ziegler's Christmas party, where Bill tries to play the role of the successful young doctor, we glimpse the trademark energy and vitality of the Cruise persona – the action-hero intensity, the 1,000 kilowatt grin, the hearty back-slapping and hugs, and the sexual charisma. After Alice tells the story about the naval officer, however, Bill becomes a kind of sleepwalker, who seems to drift into a series of sexual encounters and near-comic sexual frustrations.[43]

Additionally, we should note that the central incident that emasculates Bill – Alice's admission of desire for the naval officer – further suggests a metaphorical displacement of the Cruise persona. The figure of the naval officer clearly recalls Cruise's role in *Top Gun* – but, paradoxically, this role is evoked to suggest the disconnection of Cruise's familiar persona from his fictional character.[44] Bill Harford's emasculation is rendered through the problematization of Cruise's 'macho' persona. In this context, the scene where a gang of college students mock Bill with homosexual jibes – a reworking of an incident in the source novel where the protagonist is accosted with anti-Semitic insults – is particularly noteworthy, for it purposefully recalls the real-life rumours of Cruise's homosexuality, which have recurred periodically throughout his career.

In a sense, *Eyes Wide Shut*'s narrative takes advantage of the public's palpable interest in the private lives of film stars. Its exploration of its protagonist's identity crisis, and of the relationship between fantasy and reality, is deeply reliant on Cruise's persona – both on and off the screen. Equally, the way in which the film depicts the Harfords' marriage inevitably evokes and draws upon the spectre of the Cruise-Kidman relationship. It is reasonable to suggest that in the early stages of her career, Nicole Kidman's inherent capability as an actress was largely overshadowed by her

status as 'Tom Cruise's wife'. Her talent (and independent star status) was not widely recognized until after *Eyes Wide Shut*, and after she and Tom Cruise had divorced. The sense of imbalance in the Cruise-Kidman relationship dovetails with the gender politics underpinning the Harfords' troubled marriage in *Eyes Wide Shut*. While Bill is a successful doctor, Alice, we learn in passing, used to run an art gallery – before it went out of business. Initially, Alice seems to lack an independent identity – she is simply the passive object of Bill's desire, and, in effect, another symbol of *his* success. The very first shot of the film shows Alice/Kidman slipping out of a dress, briefly baring her body to the camera, which leads Naremore to suggest that 'in traditional movie fashion, Kidman is offered up for the visual pleasure of the male audience.'[45] Yet if Kubrick does objectify Kidman early on in the film, this is in order to problematize her passive image in a wider narrative context. The film's pivotal moment occurs with the affirmation of Alice's autonomous desire – when she recollects her sexual fantasy – which transforms her from the pacified object of male desire to the independent desiring subject. Subsequently, Bill is repeatedly tormented by the fantasy image of Alice with the naval officer. In essence, Kidman's image has been transformed so that it is no longer 'offered up' for voyeuristic pleasure, but denotes a failure of male fantasy. Again, the narrative aligns our perspective with that of Bill through its disorientating effects and estrangement of what is cinematically familiar, whilst, at the same time, critiquing a broader socio-cultural ideology.

From a very early stage, Kubrick had decided that he wanted a real life husband and wife to portray the story's married couple, with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman always being his first choice.[46] This, one presumes, was largely because of the very-public nature of their relationship, which afforded the potential to add another dimension to *Traumnovelle*'s complex exploration of fantasy (and its relation to

reality). *Eyes Wide Shut* flaunts the prospect of a graphic onscreen consummation of the Cruise-Kidman celebrity relationship – which, after all, effectively began onscreen, when the pair co-starred in *Days of Thunder* (Scott, 1990). Yet this prospect remains unfulfilled. The first frames of the film (as noted above) provocatively reveal Alice/Kidman removing her clothing, and in the final line of dialogue (just before the screen turns black and the credits roll) she tells Bill that the one thing they must do as soon as possible is 'fuck'. Kubrick ultimately denies his audience this sexual spectacle, which, in some sense, becomes the unrealized fantasy underpinning the narrative. In this respect, the similarities between *Eyes Wide Shut* and *Lolita* are remarkable. In each film, the narrative is constructed around a forbidden sexual spectacle, which is implicated as an inevitable point of speculation framing the film's reception. Both films utilize the prohibition of an erotic encounter to address the nature of fantasy and to reflect the protagonist's subjective experience. In *Lolita*, the lack of (overt) sexual fulfilment helps to convey a sense of Humbert's thwarted desire and unreciprocated love for the eponymous heroine. In *Eyes Wide Shut*, the trajectory of the implicit Cruise-Kidman fantasy reflects, and comments on, the protagonist's fictional situation in a more oblique manner. The spectre of a Cruise-Kidman sex scene is repeatedly evoked but never realized. Similarly, Bill's fantasies of infidelity frequently seem on the verge of fulfilment, but never develop into anything concrete. In *Eyes Wide Shut*, as in *Lolita,* the denial of the tantalizing fantasy both frames and permeates the entire narrative, aligning our experience with that of the protagonist and confronting us with a simple truism: fantasy is that which cannot be realized, which, to a large extent, is the source of its power.

There is a final similarity between *Lolita* and *Eyes Wide Shut* that we should note. As with *Lolita*, many critics responded to *Eyes Wide Shut* by questioning Kubrick's

handling of his material, and suggested that the film was in some way disappointing or deficient. Hill argues:

> Critics... failed to recognize the film's keenly sophisticated exploration of the emotional and psychological complexities of a marriage and a couple's relation to the outside world. Instead, negative reviews faulted the film for not being what the reviewers had expected: a quasi-pornographic, erotic thriller.[47]

As Hill suggests, *Eyes Wide Shut* raised certain expectations before its release – assumptions concerning what the film might, or even should, be like – and was subsequently criticized when these somewhat ill-founded expectations were not fulfilled. Yet it should now be apparent that the immediate critical response to Kubrick's work has always been marked, to greater or lesser extent, by this pattern of expectation followed by bemusement, disappointment and hostility.[48] Throughout Kubrick's career, critics have repeatedly denounced his latest release as a 'failure', and have identified some form of fatal disparity between the director's assumed intent and the film's actual meaning as a way of validating this diagnosis. This recurring pattern of critical response, in fact, reveals a great deal about the fundamental nature of Kubrick's cinema and the conceptual disorientation it seeks to provoke. It therefore seems appropriate to conclude this section by exploring one of the more disparaging responses to Kubrick's final film.

In her *New York Times* review of *Eyes Wide Shut*, Michiko Kakutani argues that the film was 'an unfortunate misstep at the end of a dazzling career.'[49] She criticizes the film because of the two-dimensionality of the characters and the baffling lack of screen chemistry between Cruise and Kidman, and concludes that Kubrick's directorial sensibility – cool and calculating – was fundamentally at odds with the demands of the erotic and emotional source material. 'Alice and Bill', she asserts, 'are

not meant to be caricatures like the blackly comic characters in *Strangelove* or faceless cutouts like the astronauts in *2001*. They're supposed to be fairly ordinary, albeit privileged, New Yorkers...'[50] Clearly, Kakutani does not 'misread' the film in a conventional sense; on some level, she recognizes *exactly* what Kubrick is doing in terms of characterization. Yet her criticism is deeply flawed because it rests upon a set of assumptions regarding what the film is 'meant' to be like – assumptions that Kubrick's work resolutely undermines. In a similar manner, Kakutani suggests that, just as Kubrick's characters lack depth, a sense of artificiality and sterility pervades many of the domestic scenes: Kubrick's 'stately' camera movements and 'precisely lighted tableaux' seem incongruous in a domestic setting, and consequently, the film becomes 'generic and hokey, like a tendentious art house version of a holiday television commercial.'[51]

In a retrospective analysis of Kubrick's final film, written one year after its release, Stefan Mattessich responded to the myriad criticisms levelled at *Eyes Wide Shut* (including those of Kakutani), arguing that 'The film conjures "fashion shoots" and "holiday television commercials" because it reads the world it depicts not as exceptional to these spectral aberrations but as modelled on them.'[52] Mattessich's reinterpretation of the film, I believe, provides a much more viable position from which to understand the various ways in which the film feels problematical (or slightly 'off'). Throughout *Eyes Wide Shut* there is a deliberate sense of artificiality. The film is extremely stylized – not only in terms of how it is lit and shot, but also in the profound feeling of performativity that frequently suffuses the dialogue and interactions between characters. Furthermore, this lack of 'realism' is certainly not at odds with Kubrick's source material. In *The Stanley Kubrick Archives*, Alison Castle draws attention to a critical study of Arthur Schnitzler owned by Kubrick, in which

the director has underlined a passage analyzing *Traumnovelle*'s protagonist: 'As he moves deeper into this strange world he thinks back with affection to the stable world of his everyday realities... [He] feels the orderly social reality to which he belongs is some kind of monstrous sham.'[53] In Kubrick's film, we share Bill's perspective: his growing sense of estrangement is akin to our own, as we are tacitly encouraged to look back on his everyday reality, with its familiar social codes and rituals, as something inherently artificial, bizarre and *un*familiar.

Kubrick spent almost thirty years attempting to bring *Eyes Wide Shut* to the screen, and when he had assembled his final cut, he reputedly said that he felt it to be the best work of his career.[54] Whether or not we agree with this evaluation, the film certainly epitomizes what is unique, and fundamental, to Kubrick's cinematic thought. We might finally ask ourselves whether the source novel's conception of reality, as something of a sham, is not also *the* central idea underpinning much of the director's work. Kubrick's cinema aims to unsettle and disorientate. It is profoundly uncanny in the sense that it blurs the line between the authentic and the artificial, between what is real and what is illusory or imaginary. His cinema does not aim to depict an 'objective' world, but shows a world suffused with artifice and supposition, a world deeply marked with its own ideological myths. Ultimately, Kubrick's cinema generates a perspective from which some of our most deeply embedded cultural assumptions are dissected and defamiliarized.

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[1] Baxter (1998), p. 164.
[2] See for example, Ciment (2001), p. 36.
[3] Kolker (2000), p. 98.
[4] Baxter (1998), pp. 240-3.
[5] See Guy Phelps, *Film Censorship* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1975), p. 237. Concerns over getting theatres to book *A Clockwork Orange* were also reflected in the relatively modest budget of $2 million that Warner Brothers assigned to the movie.
[6] For an extended analysis of the expressionistic devices that Kubrick uses to suggest Alex's mental landscapes see Nelson (1982), p. 143.
[7] See Kawin (1978), pp. 3-22.
[8] Kubrick, cited in Andrew Bailey, 'A Clockwork Utopia', *Rolling Stone*, 20 January 1972, p. 22.

[9] Royal S. Brown, *Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1994), pp. 239-40. Chion presents a similar argument in relation to *2001*'s soundtrack, noting that, contrary to the conventions of Hollywood sound editing, *2001*'s music 'is *exhibited*, and rarely mixed with sound effects, more rarely still with dialogue; it refuses to melt in or make common course with other soundtrack elements' (Chion [2001], p. 71).

[10] Michel Chion, *Audio-vision: Sound on Screen*, trans. and ed. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 33-34.

[11] Anthony Storr, *Music and the Mind* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), pp. 24-5.

[12] Ibid, p. 24. It is also worth noting that Storr cites Hitler's use of Wagner at the Nuremberg Rallies as a good example of how music can be utilized to provoke a powerful emotional response and sense of group identity whilst minimizing the listeners' capacity for rational judgment.

[13] Claudia Gorbman, 'Ears Wide Open: Kubrick's Music', in (eds.) Phil Powrie and Robynn Stilwell, *Changing Tunes: The Use of Pre-existing Music in Film* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 4.

[14] Paul Zimmerman, 'Kubrick's Brilliant Vision', *Newsweek* (January 1972), pp. 28-33. Reprinted in Castle (2005), p. 416.

[15] Kolker (2000), p. 146.

[16] Kubrick, in Penelope Houston and Philip Strick, 'Modern Times: An Interview with Stanley Kubrick, *Sight and Sound*, (Spring 1972), p. 62.

[17] In a very interesting interview with Ciment, Kubrick addresses the way in which *A Clockwork Orange*'s morality is, to some extent, dependent on its unflinching depiction of Alex's brutality: 'If we did not see Alex first as a brutal and merciless thug it would be too easy to agree that the State is involved in a worse evil in depriving him of his freedom to choose between good and evil. It must be clear that it is wrong to turn even unforgivably vicious criminals into vegetables, otherwise the story would fall into the same logical trap as did the old anti-lynching Hollywood Westerns which always nullified their theme by lynching an innocent person. Of course no one will disagree that you shouldn't lynch an innocent person – but will they agree that it's just as bad to lynch a guilty person, perhaps even someone guilty of a horrible crime? And so it is with conditioning Alex' (Ciment [2001], pp. 162-3).

[18] Cited in *Empire*, December, 1993, p. 71.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] See Tom Dewe Matthews, *Censored: The Story of Film Censorship in Britain* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), pp. 208-9.

[23] Christiane Kubrick, in *The Last Movie: Stanley Kubrick and Eyes Wide Shut*, C4, UK, 5 September 1999. Cited online in Rod Munday, ' The Kubrick FAQ', *visual-memory.co.uk*, 14 June 2006, <www.visual-memory.co.uk/faq/#n1s1> See also Ciment (2001), p. 163 for (Stanley) Kubrick's comments on screen violence, criminality and the mass media's response to these issues.

[24] Kubrick, 'Now Kubrick Fights Back', in *The New York Times*, February 27 1972. The original article attacking *A Clockwork Orange* (Fred M. Hechinger, 'A Liberal Fights Back', in *The New York Times*, February 13 1972) and Kubrick's response are also available online at <http://www.krusch.com/kubrick/Q47.html> (accessed 14 June 2006).

[25] Baxter (1998), p.56. Some of Kubrick's self-criticisms are certainly valid (the film is far from perfect). Yet considering its miniscule budget and lack of technical resources, the film is not nearly as 'inept' as Kubrick suggests.

[26] From this description, it should be clear that in some ways Kubrick's experimental debut presages Bergman's later cinema, with its split identities and its representation of psychic states in place of 'external actions'.

[27] Nelson (1982), p. 21.

[28] Deleuze (2005), p. 198.

[29] Ciment (2001), p. 151.

[30] Ibid, p. 293. In the same interview (with Ciment), Johnson suggests that Kubrick's fascination with Freud was also central to his interest in Schnitzler.

[31] See Freud (2003), p. 134.

[32] Ibid, pp. 150-1.

[33] Naremore notes that before Kubrick decided to film *The Shining*, he had considered adapting Diane Johnson's novel *The Shadow Knows*, a psychological mystery that similarly 'makes the reader wonder whether the central character is mentally disturbed or truly in danger.' (Naremore [2007], p. 187.) The

parallels between the two novels were, of course, probably significant in Kubrick's decision to co-write *The Shining*'s screenplay with Johnson.

[34] As a piece of satirical dialogue, this closely parallels a speech in *Paths of Glory*, in which General Broulard (Adolphe Menjou) advises Dax (Kirk Douglas) that 'troops are like children: just as a child wants its father to be firm, troops crave discipline... One way to maintain discipline is to shoot a man now and then.'

[35] Kenneth Johnson, 'The Point of View of the Wandering Camera', *Cinema Journal*, vol. 32, no. 2 (Winter 1993), p. 55.

[36] Ibid, p. 56.

[37] Rodney Hill, *'Eyes Wide Shut'*, in Castle (2005), p. 492.

[38] Freud (2003), pp. 143-4.

[39] Ciment (2001), p. 260.

[40] Gorbman (2006), p. 11.

[41] Ibid.

[42] In this context, it is worth noting that Kubrick repeatedly satirizes the connection between military might and sexual prowess in *Full Metal Jacket* (released the year after *Top Gun*). Firstly, the drill sergeant (Lee Ermey) instructs his recruits to give their rifles women's names and take them to bed. Later, he leads the recruits in a chant in which they refer to their penises as 'guns'.

[43] Naremore (2007), p.237.

[44] It is important to note that in *Traumnovelle*, Schnitzler does not specify the vocation of the man whom Albertine (equivalent to Alice in the film) admires on holiday. Her fantasy lover is recollected, somewhat ambiguously, as 'a young man... who had been sitting with two officers' (Arthur Schnitzler, *Dream Story*, trans. J. M. Q. Davies [London: Penguin, 1999], p. 6). Kubrick and his co-writer Frederic Raphael chose to make this character a naval officer and, furthermore, to strengthen the significance of Alice's fantasy within the film's narrative.

[45] Naremore (2007), p. 234.

[46] See Hill, in Castle (2005), p. 487.

[47] Ibid, p. 492.

[48] As Ciment notes, even those films in Kubrick's oeuvre that have, in the long term, proven to be some of the most widely acclaimed – *2001*, *Barry Lyndon*, and *The Shining* – were, upon their release, greeted with a distinctly hostile reception in certain sections of the critical establishment. In *Harper's* magazine, Pauline Kael memorably described *2001* as 'A monumentally unimaginative movie', while in *The Village Voice*, Andrew Sarris initially branded the film 'A disaster' (Ciment [2001], p. 43).

[49] Michiko Kakutani, 'A Connoisseur of Cool Tries to Raise the Temperature', *The New York Times*, July 18, 1999. Accessed online, 12 July 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/library/film/071899kubrick-films.html>

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Stefan Mattessich, 'Grotesque Caricature: Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* as the Allegory of Its Own Reception', *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2000, p. 8.

[53] See Castle (2005), p. 484.

[54] Hill, in Castle (2005), p. 486.

Conclusion

Drawing upon Jean Mitry's analysis of different forms of filmic subjectivity, Christian Metz critiques the idea that cinema can adequately convey a character's internal perspective or mental images:

> The cinema is... too 'real' to translate effectively the imaginary views of its characters. Besides 'views' of this kind are by definition difficult to know in detail, and filmmakers who undertake to 'render' them fall consciously into the arbitrary and gratuitous. (One has only to remember all those highly improbable 'dream sequences!') Even if the *content* of the 'vision' were knowable and adhered to, Mitry says, its objectification by the filmic image would nonetheless constitute an irrevocable 'betrayal' since it would divest the imaginary objects – transformed into objects of perception – of that coefficient of felt-absence which is precisely what gives them their whole psychological specificity.[1]

Mitry's position with regard to subjective images in film, we should note, is somewhat more complex and nuanced than Metz's brief synopsis suggests.[2] Yet leaving this problem aside, Metz's critique of the representation of thought in film provides a useful restatement of some of the key issues and questions that this thesis has sought to address: can film be used to represent thought adequately or authentically? If so, does film possess any advantages over other media (such as literature) in depicting subjective experiences? Are there certain aspects of thought or consciousness that film is particularly able to capture? Finally, what purposes are served by the cinematic representation of thought? In summary and conclusion, I will attempt briefly to answer these questions, addressing Metz's various criticisms of direct depictions of film thought.

In the above quote, Metz addresses the most strongly subjective mental images – those depicting characters' 'imaginary views' – and argues that the nature of

cinematic representation prevents these images from attaining the specific psychological qualities that the filmmaker (implicitly) wishes to convey. Incontrovertibly, the cinematic image is always present and perceptual – and for Metz, this problematizes any direct filmic representation of thought, which will necessarily lack any sense of authenticity. Yet, as I have argued throughout this thesis, the qualitative difference between film images and mental images does not present an insurmountable problem for cinematic thought. Numerous filmmakers have achieved the kind of mental realism that Metz dismisses as impracticable. The best examples of cinematic representations of thought attain exactly the sense of 'felt-absence' which Metz identifies as the definitive characteristic of mental imagery. Many of the memory images in *Hiroshima mon amour* have an ephemeral and a diaphanous quality that precisely captures the nature of visual thought. Similarly, the fleeting mental image that recurs throughout *Eyes Wide Shut* (Bill's tormenting fantasy of his wife with the naval officer) attains something akin to a sense of felt-absence. In both films, there is a rapid movement back and forth between the protagonist's inner life and external reality, between imagination and perception, and this helps to suggest both the insubstantiality of mental imagery (its felt-absence) and its importance to the protagonist as an ongoing, ubiquitous obsession.

These films clearly challenge Metz's central argument concerning cinematic representations of thought, but we should also question some of the basic assumptions implicit in his comments. In particular, his failure to differentiate the various types of mental imagery is problematical. 'Felt-absence' may be a quality that suffuses mental processes such as imagining, visualizing or remembering, but it should not necessarily be attributed as a characteristic of dream imagery. As I have suggested (particularly in the chapters on Bergman), dream is unlike other imaginary processes in two crucial

ways: it is inherently much more perceptual than waking thought processes and, usually, one is unaware that the dream is the product of one's own imagination (Freud, like many other commentators on dreaming, describes dream images as 'hallucinations' rather than imaginings). Consequently, the criteria by which we judge the 'authenticity' of a dream sequence should not be the same as those we use to assess other depictions of mental imagery. In films such as *Wild Strawberries* and *Providence* the realistic rendering of the dream primarily depends upon the narrative structure, the organization of space and time, and the relationship between the dream's symbolism and the dreamer's waking experiences. Certainly, it is reasonable to suggest, as Metz does, that a large number of filmic dream sequences seem, by any standard, 'highly improbable'. Yet the failure of many of these sequences should not lead us to conclude that the attempt to represent dream (or any other type of thought) is futile. If numerous filmmakers have relied on 'arbitrary' or 'gratuitous' stylistic markers in their attempts to differentiate the mental image from the real (or perceptual) image, this is precisely what directors such as Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick have sought to avoid. Instead, they have founded their stylistic choices for representing thought on their personal comprehension of the essential characteristics of different forms of mental experience (the 'felt-absence' of the memory image, the hallucinatory qualities of the dream, and so on).

This last point touches on another issue raised by Metz: if the 'content' of thought is by nature difficult to define or understand in detail, how can the filmmaker translate this content accurately or convincingly? As I suggested in the introduction (also drawing on Mitry's analysis of filmic subjectivity), there is no reason to accept that, in order to attain some level of authenticity or believability, the cinematic representation of thought must replicate or mimic 'actual psychological reality' with absolute

fidelity. Even if we cannot know the 'content' of thought in detail, there are certain qualities and characteristics of thought that are clearly identifiable. This, in fact, is partially implicit in Metz's argument. The notion that mental imagery has the quality of 'felt-absence' already suggests some ideas about the basic nature of thought. Similarly, when Metz dismisses the typical dream sequence as 'highly improbable', presumably this judgment rests upon an intuitive understanding of what dreams are really like. 'Imaginary views' may be difficult to examine, define or comprehend with scientific rigour, but this does not mean they are inherently incomprehensible.[3] Many of the films I have examined suggest that personal mental experiences can be comprehended and defined with a reasonable level of precision, and can subsequently be represented or replicated cinematically. As I have shown, Bergman's cinematic thought in particular is founded on the aesthetic 'reconstruction' of autobiographical subjective experiences such as dreams and memories. In a sense, by sharing the intricacies of subjective experience, his films purposefully demystify the 'content' of the mind, rendering it more tangible and knowable.[4]

The filmic representation of thought is, in Mitry's terms, a matter of finding 'aesthetic equivalents' that evoke specific qualities of subjective experience.[5] Throughout this thesis, I have suggested that there are specific properties of cinema and cinematic narrative that make the medium particularly capable of evoking and depicting different mental processes or aspects of thought. These properties, I believe, help to counter Metz's objection that cinema is 'too realistic' to depict intangible thoughts, or that it is in some way disadvantaged in comparison to other artistic media. Firstly, as I have started to suggest above, film is unrivalled in its capacity to juxtapose images and ideas, to move swiftly between disparate locations, objects, perceptions, memories, and so forth (which is what allows it to capture the transient

quality – the felt-absence – of mental imagery). It is able to replicate the natural speed of thinking. Again, Kubrick's cinema is replete with instances in which rapid editing (or juxtaposition) is crucial in effectively capturing or mimicking the movement of thought: the cut from bone to satellite in *2001* and the hallucinatory images of the murdered twins in *The Shining* provide two clear examples. Similarly, longer sequences in Bergman and Resnais' work (such as the opening of *Persona* and the 'speculative' mental images of *The War Is Over*) illustrate the potential of film to represent the rapid evolution of a complex thought process.

In his study of Resnais, Haim Callev identifies several additional advantages that film possesses when it comes to depicting thought. As well as noting the potential of film to move swiftly between the real and the imaginary through cross-cutting, and to connect different ideas and images in a clear and precise manner (in a form of 'free association'), Callev argues that film is uniquely advantaged because it can utilize two distinct channels (visual and auditory) when representing thought.[6] This point strikes me as particularly important. As Callev observes, through devices such as voiceover and voice-off, film can overlap the real and the imaginary, simultaneously representing a thought process *and* the present moment (the reality) in which this thought is unfolding.[7] In *Hiroshima*, the soundtrack communicates a present moment in which the French woman is telling the Japanese man about wartime Nevers, while the images depict her memories, the content of her imagination. For Callev, this method of anchoring the subjective images in a concrete, readily-identifiable present moment helps to clarify the status and meaning of those images.

Yet, we should add, the fact that film can utilize two autonomous channels affords further creative possibilities for representing thought. Sound and image can work in concert to strengthen our identification with a character's immediate subjective

experience (when, for example, interior monologue is combined with a memory image or point-of-view shot). Alternatively, voiceover can provide a kind of critical commentary that scrutinizes or reflects upon the subjective image – as occurs in *Providence* when Clive Langham comments on his own dream images. Finally, image and sound can also interact in a more complex manner, producing distinct, conflicting perspectives, or a type of 'dualistic' thought. As we have seen, *A Clockwork Orange* illustrates the way in which the relationship between music, voiceover and images can be complex: the music provides an ironic and satirical counterpoint to the image whilst simultaneously helping us to identify with Alex's perspective.

In exploring the different formal properties that allow cinema to convey thought effectively, we also begin to address the final question I raised at the start of this concluding chapter: what purposes are served by the cinematic representation of thought? Metz does not confront this question explicitly, but his comments imply that the representation of thought is, in some sense, an end in itself. The 'purpose' of the filmic depiction of thought, Metz suggests, is simply to portray the mind and its processes in a convincing and authentic manner. Undoubtedly, this is a major – and worthy – goal of cinematic thought. To a significant extent, all of the filmmakers I have analyzed seek to elucidate the fundamental nature of the imagination – to hold a mirror to the mind and illuminate its workings. Contrary to Metz's argument, I believe that I have demonstrated that this goal is achievable, and has been achieved definitively in films such as *Wild Strawberries* and *Hiroshima mon amour*.

Additionally, we should recognize two further purposes that are clearly served by the filmic representation of thought. Firstly, as I have noted at various points, it can foster an unusually close identification between viewer and character. For Mitry, this is the primary goal of film thought: its purpose is 'to give the audience... the

impression that it is seeing or feeling "as though" it were the character in the drama.'[8] Through subjective shots and sounds, film can place us in the position of the thinking or perceiving character – which is integral to the notion of 'first-person' cinema explored in the Kubrick section. By sharing a character's inner life, we are often encouraged to identify with that character on a very deep level. Secondly, while encouraging identification, representations of thought also, inevitably, deepen characterization. In films such as *Cries and Whispers*, our knowledge and comprehension of character is greatly enhanced by the intermittent representation of dreams, memories and fantasies.

Finally, though, we should acknowledge that cinematic depictions of thought need not be 'authentic', and may not necessarily strive to achieve this quality; equally, when a filmmaker represents a character's subjective experience, identification or psychological depth may not be his or her primary goal. The rendering of thought or subjective experience can also provide a powerful means for critiquing or dissecting a certain cultural, historical or ideological perspective – and this use of subjectivity, I have argued, is one of the key things that distinguishes the films of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick. In Bergman's work, subjective experience is used to explore identity, sexuality and morality (both secular and religious) in relation to contemporary social attitudes (society's 'scruples and laws'). In Resnais' cinema, the exploration of subjectivity becomes a means of addressing the relationship between personal memory and the dominant 'collective memory', and of challenging the veracity of the 'objective' representations of history found in other films and discourses. For Resnais, the rendering of subjective experience necessarily entails a certain amount of self-reflexivity: to explore thought in film is also to explore the fundamental nature of cinematic representation. Similarly, in *A Clockwork Orange* and *Eyes Wide Shut*,

Kubrick uses thought in a self-reflexive manner to address cinematic narration and representation, which is integral to his wider examination of Hollywood's ideological foundations and our assumptions concerning morality and psychology.[9]

In the cinema of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick, to identify with a character's subject position is also, potentially, to experience a form of alienation – to become estranged from daily reality. In films such as *The Silence, Muriel* and *Eyes Wide Shut* we are shown the world as it is refracted through a different point of view that is in some way idiosyncratic or aberrant. In all of these films, character subjectivity is used to defamiliarize the external world, and to question some of our most basic assumptions about the reality we experience every day.

The End of an Era?

Michael Herr, who co-scripted *Full Metal Jacket*, writes:

> The Art House Transmission that Stanley received so deeply in the forties was still manifesting in the early sixties, when I spent my nights and a lot of afternoons rocketing between the Bleecker Street Cinema, the Thalia, The New Yorker, and the Museum of Modern Art... And so if I got weepy when the end credits rolled on *Eyes Wide Shut* and the waltz played one more time, it wasn't just because the movie was over, or because it was the final work of a man I admired and loved, but because that tradition, with its innocence, or anyway naiveté, and a purity that only someone born before 1930 could continue, had come to a certain end, as most traditions do. It's gone and it won't be returning.[10]

Herr's elegy for Kubrick and the Art Cinema of the mid- to late-twentieth century raises important questions about the long-term impact of the types of art film that proliferated in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. These questions are particularly pertinent in

relation to the subjective narratives and filmic representations of thought that I have explored in this thesis, and I wish to conclude my study by finally considering the possible legacy of films such as *Persona*, *Marienbad* and *A Clockwork Orange* in contemporary cinema.

Undoubtedly, the cinematic representation of thought reached its apex in the 1960s and early '70s. This period saw the release of the films that effectively reinvented subjective cinema – not only the key works of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick, but also Fellini's *8½* and *Giulietta degli spiriti*, Antonioni's *Il Deserto rosso* and *Blow-Up* (1966), Buñuel's *Belle de jour* (1967) and *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972), and Bertolucci's *The Spider's Stratagem* (1970) and *The Conformist* (1970). It is these films in particular that define the Art Cinema tradition to which *Eyes Wide Shut* belongs. In his analysis of the latter film in *Sight and Sound*, Larry Gross picks up on precisely this point.[11] He likens *Eyes Wide Shut* to four films of the 1960s: *Last Year at Marienbad*, *Persona*, *Blow-Up* and *Belle de jour*. Each of these films, Gross suggests, is 'narrated' from a subjective perspective that is unreliable and potentially confusing: they give 'the uncanny impression of stories being told by mad-men.'[12] In each film, verbal exposition – the utterances of the central characters – does little to clarify the narrative, and often leads to additional complications and confusions. Finally, 'in all four films people of a certain privileged class travel in obsessive, repetitive circles through ominous landscapes with inexplicable symmetries and maze-like patterns, worlds so aestheticised, so overdetermined their reality is dubious.'[13] Gross concludes that in *Eyes Wide Shut* 'Kubrick is prepared to tell the audience that the things he and cinema were preoccupied with 30 years ago are more interesting than the things cinema is concerning itself with today. Is he correct? Who knows?'[14] Of course, whether or not

Kubrick might be 'correct' is unanswerable: it is a matter of opinion. We can, however, address Gross' underlying assumptions (which are similar to Herr's): that contemporary film is no longer 'concerned' with subjective narration or cinematic thought, and that *Eyes Wide Shut* is, therefore, in some sense anachronistic – a belated but decisive conclusion to a cycle of films that flourished three decades earlier.

By the late 1970s, European subjective cinema had certainly begun to lose much of its momentum. Directors such as Bergman and Resnais continued sporadically to address the subjective themes that had interested them earlier in their careers. In *Face to Face*, for instance, Bergman again returned to the subject matter of *Wild Strawberries*, exploring the relationship between dreams and waking life. Similarly, in films such as *Mon oncle d'Amérique* and *Mélo* (1986), Resnais continued to pursue his interest in memory and the workings of the brain. Yet these films lacked the acuity, vitality and inventiveness that distinguished the directors' earlier work.

At the same time, however, the innovations in subjective narration that emerged in European cinema in the 1960s had an important impact on certain aspects of American filmmaking in the following decade. In particular, we can identify American directors such as Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen who have been greatly influenced by earlier European cinema and whose work builds upon the subjective narrative forms developed in the '60s. In *Taxi Driver*, a variety of stylistic devices such as first-person voiceover and expressionistic *mise-en-scène* are utilized to render the subjective perspective of the psychotic protagonist, Travis (Robert De Niro). Similarly, in many of Allen's self-reflexive comedies, such as *Annie Hall* (1977) and *Stardust Memories* (1980), the protagonist's imagination is represented directly to the viewer. Yet while these films are clearly indebted to the subjective cinema of the 1960s, they also reflect a transformation (or shift in emphasis) in terms of how and

why thought is being represented. To paraphrase Resnais, films such as *Marienbad* and *Persona* attempt to capture and reflect the 'complexity of thought' – they explore the nature of the mind in a very direct manner. In contrast, in *Taxi Driver* or *Annie Hall*, the representation of thought is, in some sense, a secondary concern. In these latter films, subjective narration is utilized in the service of an underlying storyline that is more conventional, autonomous and linear. Although they are 'narrated' from a specific subjective perspective, these films remain grounded in an independent, objective reality, and unfold according to the normal logic of cause and effect. Of course, as I have already observed, the cinematic representation of thought need not be an end in itself, and many of the films I have analyzed – such as *A Clockwork Orange* – explore subjective experience whilst also telling a clear, chronological story. My point is that by the late 1970s, the experimental narrative procedures developed in the 1960s for representing thought or subjective experience had, to a certain extent, become conventionalized and integrated into more traditional narrative forms.

When searching for the legacy of the subjective cinema of the 1960s it is, therefore, important to recognize that even in films that are not primarily concerned with exploring the nature of thought, there are often subjective sequences that are, on some level, indebted to the earlier experiments in depicting thought cinematically. Films such as *Trainspotting* (Boyle, 1996), *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (Gilliam, 1998) and *American Beauty* (Mendes, 1999), for example, have incorporated boldly expressive subjective sequences in a particularly effective manner. Yet, in addition, there are recent films that have focussed on representing thought more systematically. Michel Gondry's comedies *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) and *The Science of Sleep* (2006) explore different aspects of thought (memory and dream

respectively), and insofar as these films largely concern psychic dramas, they belong to the same tradition as films such as *Marienbad* and *Providence*. Yet at the same time, Gondry's films are unlike Resnais' in that they do not attempt to scrutinize the mechanisms of thought, and do not primarily aim to represent mental processes in an authentic manner. Gondry's cinematic representations of thought are clearly intended to be comedic and fantastical.

All of these films share certain stylistic or thematic properties with the '60s films cited by Gross, but only in a limited sense. Unlike *Eyes Wide Shut*, they are not preoccupied with elucidating the nature of the mind, or exploring the ambiguous relationship between fantasy and reality. Nevertheless, there are recent films that can be more fruitfully compared to *Eyes Wide Shut* and the subjective cinema of the '60s. Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000), for example, offers an extremely acute and inventive exploration of memory. In *Memento*, the protagonist, Leonard (Guy Pearce), has suffered brain damage following an assault, and has lost the ability to make new long-term memories. The last thing Leonard remembers is the night of the attack, when two thieves broke into his house and raped and murdered his wife. Leonard managed to shoot one of the intruders, but the other escaped after knocking him unconscious. Since the police have abandoned the case, Leonard attempts to track down the second culprit himself, using extensive notes, photographs and tattoos to record his findings and compensate for his damaged memory.

The film is unusually successful in combining the action and suspense of a conventional crime thriller with a serious examination of the nature of memory. Furthermore, *Memento* provides an excellent example of how cinema can utilize an unreliable, first-person narrator. As well as using voiceover, internal monologue and flashbacks to evoke Leonard's thoughts, the film's narrative replicates the

protagonist's perspective (up to a point) by unfolding in reverse chronological order: effectively, *Memento*'s action is broken into discrete segments that are then reassembled back to front. Consequently, just as Leonard has no memory of things that happened a few minutes previously, the viewer has no knowledge of the events immediately prior to each new scene. The way in which the action is rigorously focalized through the film's protagonist recalls some of the *films noir* explored earlier, in which the viewer's comprehension of events is largely defined by what the central male narrator knows or understands at any given point. Yet in *Memento*, we are made to identify with the protagonist's psychological (and emotional) perspective to an even greater degree, and this process of identification is further intensified through the film's direct representation of memory images. When Leonard recollects his wife, we are presented with a series of fleeting images that convey his most intimate memories – 'the bits and pieces', his voiceover tells us, 'that you never bother to put into words.' In sequences such as this one, Nolan's representation of memory is comparable to that of Resnais in *Hiroshima mon amour*. Both directors are clearly concerned with depicting visual memory in an authentic manner, and both are successful in capturing that sense of 'felt-absence' that characterizes mental images. It is perhaps this authenticity that is particularly effective in anchoring our emotional identification with the protagonists of *Memento* and *Hiroshima*; for in conveying the felt-absence of their characters' memories, Nolan and Resnais also capture what is most poignant about those memories.

A second recent film that explores thought in a manner comparable to those films cited by Gross is David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* (2001). Indeed, *Mulholland Drive* shares particularly close similarities with both *Eyes Wide Shut*, in terms of its ambiguous mixing of fantasy, dream and reality, and *Persona*, in terms of its basic

plot concerning two women who, in some sense, 'exchange' identities. *Mulholland Drive* opens with a mysterious woman (Laura Elena Harring) fleeing from the scene of a car accident. Later, the woman awakes in an unfamiliar apartment, apparently suffering from amnesia, where she is befriended by Betty (Naomi Watts), an aspiring actress on the verge of stardom. Together Betty and the mystery woman, who assumes the name Rita (after Rita Hayworth), attempt to uncover the secret of the latter's identity. During their investigations, the two grow closer and eventually become lovers – at which point, the film's plot begins to unravel. In a figurative sense, *Mulholland Drive* seems to 'break down' (recalling Bergman's depiction of a literal cinematic breakdown in *Persona*.) The character introduced as Betty awakes with a new identity: in the second half of the film, she is a failed actress called Diane. Similarly, 'Rita' now has a new name and identity: she is now called Camilla and is Diane's *ex*-lover, having apparently left the latter for a film director (Justin Theroux). Consequently, the entire first half of the film can be interpreted as being some form of dream or jealous fantasy experienced by Naomi Watts' character. The relationship between the two sections of the film is certainly akin to the relationship between dream and reality, with one half of the film reworking the events and characters of the other according to the Freudian principle of wish-fulfilment. Furthermore, if the first half of the film is meant to represent a dream, then Lynch's refusal to differentiate clearly between dream and reality serves a clear purpose. As I have argued previously, unlike other mental phenomena, the dream is, for its duration, experienced by the subject as being real. The first half of *Mulholland Drive*, therefore, appears more like an authentic dream (as it is experienced by the dreaming subject) because its 'unreality' is not overtly signified (and, again, this recalls Bergman's later work). Alternatively, *Mulholland Drive* can be compared to Buñuel's early surrealist films,

which are not presented as being the dreams of a specific character, but instead obey a dreamlike logic and attempt to represent thought processes in a more general and diffuse sense. In any case, *Mulholland Drive* clearly explores the potential of cinematic thought in a manner that bears comparison with the most experimental art films of earlier decades.

These examples might suggest that Gross is slightly premature in arguing that contemporary cinema is no longer concerned with the forms and themes that proliferated in the Art Cinema of the 1960s. Yet films such *Memento* and *Mulholland Drive* are certainly atypical by contemporary standards. Furthermore, it is difficult to identify contemporary directors who are comparable to Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick in terms of their recurrent interest in subjective cinema – directors who have dedicated multiple films to exploring different aspects of cinematic thought (although Lynch is again something of an exception). We should, I believe, conclude that the type of cinematic thought that this thesis has been analyzing is firmly rooted in a specific historical period – just as literary modernism, with its streams of consciousness and other forms of radically subjective narration, is particularly rooted in the 1910s and '20s. The subjective cinema that flourished from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s reflects and responds to the era's rapid social, cultural, philosophical and political transformations. In this cinema, and particularly in the films of Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick, the representation of subjective experience is not simply a matter of narrative experimentation, but is also a means of questioning contemporary beliefs, values and ideologies. The best subjective art films of the '50s, '60s, and '70s discovered new ways of expressing abstract thought in audiovisual terms, and, ultimately, this is their abiding achievement.

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[1] Christian Metz, 'Current Problems in Film Theory', *Screen* 14 (Spring/ Summer 1973), p. 46.

[2] As noted in the introduction, Mitry argues that while film cannot objectively represent a subjective viewpoint, it can do the opposite – i.e. it can 'subjectify' the objective image, suggesting that it is the product of a particular viewpoint. See Mitry (1998), p. 209.

[3] On a related note, Nicholas Humphrey, a psychologist who has written extensively on the subject of consciousness, has suggested that we have an innate ability to understand the workings of the human mind, which has evolved through millennia of living as 'social' creatures, and which far outstrips the current scientific comprehension of everyday psychological processes. Writing about empathy, and our ability to imagine what it is like to be someone else (or to assess accurately someone else's thoughts and feelings in a given situation), Humphrey argues: 'When we say "I know what it's like to be another person", we are making a strange and mysterious claim. For we are saying in effect that we have an understanding of the human brain far superior to anything which scientific psychology yet has to offer' (Nicholas Humphrey, *The Inner Eye* [Oxford: OUP, 2002], p. 51). The view Humphrey endorses is that we are all 'natural psychologists', able to grasp intuitively the complexities of thought and emotion (in ourselves and in other human beings). It seems to me that this view should also apply to complicated mental processes connected to dreaming, remembering, fantasizing, and so forth. As intangible as these processes are, we can nevertheless claim a significant comprehension of them, gleaned from introspection.

[4] Of course, while personal introspection and intuition are central facets in the comprehension of mental processes, there are plenty of additional, external sources that can deepen or expand our understanding of thought. As I have indicated previously, Bergman, Resnais and Kubrick have all, to varying degrees, developed their own conceptions of the mind by engaging with different artistic, scientific and philosophical discourses concerning thought.

[5] See Mitry (1998), p. 209.

[6] Callev (1997), pp. 16-17. As noted in the introduction, Callev also picks up on the fact that film is suited to conveying the 'amorphous, pre-speech level of thought' – an idea that I have explored extensively, particularly in the section on Bergman.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Mitry (1998), p. 209.

[9] As Kawin notes, Bergman's cinematic representation of thought is also deeply self-reflexive, especially in *Persona*. See Kawin (1978), pp. 103-32.

[10] Michael Herr, cited in Naremore (2007), p. 1.

[11] Larry Gross, 'Too Late the Hero', *Sight and Sound*, vol. 9, no. 9 (September 1999), pp. 20-3.

[12] Ibid, p. 23.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

Filmography

2001: A Space Odyssey. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. MGM, 1968.

8½. Dir. Federico Fellini. Cineriz / Francinex, 1963.

L'Âge d'or. Dir. Luis Buñuel. Vizconde de Noailles, 1930.

American Beauty. Dir. Sam Mendes. Dreamworks, 1999.

Annie Hall. Dir. Woody Allen. United Artists / Jack Rollins, Charles H. Joffe, 1977.

L'Avventura. Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Cino del Duca P.C. / P.C. Europea / Société Cinematographique Lyre, 1960.

The Bank Dick. Dir. Edward Kline. Universal, 1940.

Barry Lyndon. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Warner Bros. / Hawk Films, 1975.

Belle de jour. Dir. Luis Buñuel. Henri Baum / Paris Film Production, 1967.

Blow-Up. Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Bridge Films/ MGM, 1966.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. Dir. Robert Wiene. Decla Bioscop, 1920.

Un chien andalou. Dir. Luis Buñuel. 1929.

Citizen Kane. Dir. Orson Welles. RKO/ Mercury Theatre Productions, 1941.

City Lights. Dir. Charles Chaplin. United Artists, 1931.

A Clockwork Orange. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Warner Bros., 1971.

The Conformist. Dir. Bernardo Bertolucci. Mars Films Produzione / Marianne Productions, 1970.

La Coquille et le clergyman. Dir. Germaine Dulac. Délia Film, 1928.

Cries and Whispers. Dir. Ingmar Bergman. Svenska Filminstitutet / Cinematograph AB, 1971.

Days of Thunder. Dir. Tony Scott. Paramount, 1990.

Il Deserto rosso. Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Duemila / Federiz,1964.

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie. Dir. Luis Buñuel. Greenwich Film Production, 1972.

Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Columbia / Hawk Films, 1964.

Double Indemnity Dir. Billy Wilder. Paramount, 1944.

L'Eclisse. Dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Interopa-Cineriz / Paris Film, 1962.

Entr'acte. Dir. René Clair. Ballets Suédois, 1924.

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind. Dir. Michel Gondry. Focus Features, 2004.

L'Étoile de mer. Dir. Man Ray. 1928.

Eyes Wide Shut. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Warner Bros., 1999.

Face to Face. Dir. Ingmar Bergman. Cinematograph AB / Sveriges Radio, 1976.

Fanny and Alexander. Dir Ingmar Bergman. Svenska Filminstitutet / Sveriges TV1 / Personafilm / Gaumont, 1982.

Fanny by Gaslight. Dir. Anthony Asquith. Gainsborough, 1944.

Fear and Desire. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Stanley Kubrick Productions, 1953.

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. Dir. Terry Gilliam. Universal / Rhino, 1998.

Full Metal Jacket. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Warner Bros., 1987.

Genuine. Dir. Robert Wiene. Decla-Bioscop AG, 1920.

Gilda. Dir. Charles Vidor. Columbia, 1946.

Giulietta degli spiriti. Dir. Federico Fellini. Rizzoli Film, 1965.

Guernica. Dirs. Robert Hessens & Alain Resnais. Panthéon Production, 1950.

The Hands of Orlac. Dir. Robert Wiene. 1924.

Hell's Angels. Dir. Howard Hughes. The Caddo Company, 1930.

Henry V. Dir. Laurence Olivier. 1945.

Hiroshima mon amour. Dir. Alain Resnais. Argos / Comei / Pathé / Daiei, 1959.

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