

# *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*

---

*Volume 1, Issue 1*

2002

*Article 7*

---

## Choreographies of the Screen

Barbara M. Kennedy\*

\*

Copyright ©2002 by the authors. *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress). <https://ir.uiowa.edu/ijcs>

# Choreographies of the Screen

Barbara M. Kennedy

a face is a layout of cavities. It is by puncturing  
a sphere, a pumpkin, an arc, drawn with a  
careless stroke or a pool of light on the movie  
screen with dark holes that one makes a face.

—Alphonso Lingis

from the beginning it was never anything but chaos.  
It was fluid which enveloped me, which breathed in  
through the gills . . . in the substrata, where the moon  
shone steady and opaque, it was smooth and fecundating.  
Above all it was a jangle and discord . . .

—Henry Miller

Contemporary film theory is at an exciting crossroads. A tradition of ideological, sociological, cultural and libidinal concerns has left film theory devoid of attention to affectivity and the aesthetic. It seems that a cultural studies approach to film has rendered it a form of representational images and sounds through which to discern some overall sociological or ideological understanding of our realities. For example, questions of representation have highlighted political debates around gendered

Barbara M. Kennedy is Senior Lecturer in Film and Cultural Studies at the University of Staffordshire, U.K. She is the author of *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation* (Edinburgh, 2000) and co-editor of *The Cybercultures Reader* (Routledge, 1999). E-mail: b.m.kennedy@staffs.ac.uk or barbramk@davidbowie.co.uk.

*Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* 1 (Spring 2002)  
Copyright © 2002 by the University of Iowa

subjectivities or have provided discourse around the politics of identity. Consequently a cultural studies paradigm has primarily considered film a political form through which to critique and to challenge dominant ideological discourses to do with class, race, or gender. Similarly, within film studies itself, theories from psychoanalysis have been acknowledged as a paradigm through which to understand the pleasures and desires of the cinematic experience, specifically in relation to subjectivity and gendered identities. However, as I argue at length in *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation*, such discourses have been premised upon binary thinking and structuralist linguistics, thus containing debate within the confines of language and too often a phallogentric language and style which have maintained rational and logical argument through linearity. Furthermore, psychoanalytic debates have restricted understandings of desire and pleasure to psychical structures whereby subjectivity is explained through recourse to Freudian and Lacanian concepts. However, the pleasures and desires experienced through cinematic encounter may also lie outside the restrictions of a psychically constructed subjectivity. The aesthetic and material capture of the cinematic experience might better be understood through different trajectories that might be creatively explored through the auspices of philosophical discourse. My recent work, premised specifically on the continental philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and the neo-aesthetic, has offered a different understanding of the cinematic experience and a concern with “film-philosophy” where the aesthetic is rethought through recourse to Deleuzian concepts beyond structuralist linguistics. Indeed, language itself becomes part of an experimental mode of assemblaged experience which this paper, too, playfully and creatively mobilizes through its unique choreographical style.

Whilst I present a “different” thinking which choreographs rational and logical thought with creative and affective play and poetic style to consider film theory in my larger text on Deleuze and cinema, I also in this article stutter, dance, and play through the intricacies and delicacies of a choreographed space, to mobilize through language the spaces of the screen. Deleuze’s premise that language and psychoanalysis have been too restrictive to account for affective temporalities and proto-subjectivities offers instead the concept of the “abstract machine.” The “abstract machine” offers an approach to cultural analysis which is quite different from structuralist linguistics. Deleuze conceives thought as an effect or process which participates, colludes, and collides with other processes to make up what he refers to as a “machinic assemblage” (Kennedy, *Deleuze and Cinema* 23). These processes function with other components, for example space, time, bodies, or matter. Thinking in this way distanciates the idea of language as based in a specific form of logic which can only be used in specific ways. This methodology then enables a move away from thinking about the cinematic experience as purely focused in the image.

Consequently, language which has contained meaning within binary strictures need no longer be prioritized in considering the material experience of the cinematic. Film theory might take a lead from Deleuze by reconsidering language outside of dialectical thinking. For example, the mind/body dichotomy might be reconsidered as a machinic or assemblaged and technologized form enabling new configurations for thinking and feeling beyond structuralist positionalities.<sup>1</sup> This

paper, then, based upon an actual performance piece, also works as a technologized capture and it seeks to re-situate and re-configure corporeality and the corporealized experience of the cinema as body. This enables a resituating of the “body” through the spaces of our cultural, aesthetic, and material experiences: a space “between” in Deleuzian terms, the spaces of feminisms, philosophies, and critical theory. I shall do this through the application of such theoretical paradigms to popular cultural formations, textual spaces, and bodies such as the cinema, fashion, and the material body. This is accommodated by refiguring texts as bodies, as machinic assemblages, by utilizing in a paradoxical non-Deleuzian way Deleuze’s concepts of faciality, the haptic, and haecceity. The ways in which we understand identities, affectivities, subjectivities, bodies, and texts—lived bodies and lived texts—through spaces, pleasures, sexuality, and desire are here transformed through new ways of thinking and new images of thought. Identities and subjectivities are destabilized through immanent processes of becoming. Identity is subsumed to a process of difference and repetition. Encounter is prioritized over recognition. This is particularly important to a re-evaluation of the cinematic experience as a material capture. I shall thus consider the implications of corporeality across the pleasurable spaces of the body, the facialized body, through film, fashion, and the city’s dioramas. Therefore, questions will concern problematizing subjectivities, identities, and questioning corporeality and embodiment. The disembodied gaze of the cinematic viewer is aligned between the spaces of a corporealized and embodied observer. Corporeality and embodiment, the “bodies” of texts, humans, and machines, involve other bodies in technologized assemblage. There is no longer any definite separation of a field of reality, a field of representation, and a field of subjectivity. Rather, in Deleuzian terms there is an integration across these previously disparate areas into an assemblage connected by a perceptual semiotics of the haptic, the felt, and the synesthetic. The perceptual semiotic of the haptic is significantly more resonant within my work both in this paper and in my wider discourse on machinic alignments and assemblage. This synthesizes with the ideas of Elizabeth Grosz, who argues that “[t]exts, concepts, do things, make things perform actions, create new connections, bring about new alignments. They are events . . . situated in social, institutional and conceptual space” (104).

My text here works as a nomadic text and an assemblaged machine to offer voices, spaces, images of thought, forces, sensations, and plateaus with which you will connect or not, feel or not; alignments which are created and experienced outside the confines of reason and logical discourse. It performs as a refrain, or thinking between, at an interstitial plateau. In Deleuze and Guattari the subject is not an “entity” between mind and body but is subsumed through and within a series of flows, energies, movements, and fragments which are capable of being linked in ways which do not lock it into identity. Subjectivity is relational and machinic. I want to show through this text, not an academic text but a performance in choreographed energies, how we can re-think the idea of proto-subjectivities beyond identity through the sensory and perceptual interface. This is the space between the zones of our cultural, material, and aesthetic formations: bodies, faces, cities, and spaces. I therefore mobilize rather than mediate, a synthesis of Deleuzian and

Baudrillardian critique through an in-between and rhizomatic style. This technologizes plateaus of intensity across the vistas and screens of the cinematic, the body, and the molecularity of the material. Our experiences of cultural formations may lie outside the representational within the “machinic assemblage” between our bodies and other bodies. There is no longer any definable separation of a field of reality, a field of representation, and a field of subjectivity but as Deleuze indicates a connection between these previously disparate areas into an assemblage. This machinic assemblage is technologized by a perceptual semiotics of the haptic, the mimetic, the aleatory, and the synesthetic. Semiology itself is only one regime of signs according to Deleuze and it is not necessarily the most important or the most appropriate paradigm through which to understand our experiences (Deleuze and Guattari 111). The perceptual semiotic of the haptic and the neo-aesthetic are significantly more resonant within my work, both in this paper and in my wider research generally. This text “performs” without a subject as a range of variously formed matters, speeds, and intensities, allowing participation as expression and experience as aleatory or corporeal affect. It performs a choreography as a rhizomatic text, flowing through the cityscapes and bodies of contemporary cultural formations: T.V. music, dance, fashion, advertising, film—where these connect and assemble; where their own forces and intensities create new thoughts between, new feelings between, outside Cartesian patterns of logical discourse or structuralist linguistics. My text exists as a choreographed machine or an assemblage, connecting and questioning concepts and ideology. The images of thought and representational tropes I shall discuss from cinema may lie outside ideology or they may not. Signification is deterritorialized across new mappings through different images of thinking, innovative perceptions, and creative mimesis. Semiotic chains are not only linguistic but operate outside and through the perceptual, the affective, the gestural, and the mimetic. How else does the language or material capture of film and the visual offer such jouissancial experiences? Such visual experiences—filmic, photographic, and digital—do not merely represent, but rather they form what Deleuze refers to as an “aparallel evolution” between the representation, the image, and the world.<sup>2</sup> They operate as simulacra or molecular particles with which our bodies/minds relate, infuse, intensify, and connect as machinic assemblage. “Simulacra are like false pretenders, built upon a dissimilarity, implying an essential perversion or a deviation” (Deleuze, *Logic of Sense* 256).

If semiology is only one regime of signs we should return to pragmatics to utilize new concepts of thought outside of universality. In place of the sign the semiotic chain of the rhizome suggests that the question is not what a given sign signifies but “to” which other signs it refers. The rhizomatic agglomerates across diversities within language: the perceptive, the mimetic, the gestural, and cognitive. Such signs create a network without beginning and without end as an “amorphous continuum.” “It is this amorphous continuum that for the moment plays the role of the signified but it continually glides beneath the signifier, for which it only serves as a medium or wall” (Deleuze and Guattari 112).

What we experience in cinematic and visual cultural formations is an atmospherization or a mundanization of the contents of the image. We experience

a perceptual semiotic which is a haptic sense of “feeling.” This is not mediated by transcendental states of pleasure located through psychoanalytic regimes and subjective modalities, but mobilized through immanent “becomings” and non-subjective spaces of differential singularities of the material: what Deleuze refers to as “haecceity.”<sup>3</sup> An haecceity can last as long and even longer than the time required for the development of a form and the evolution of a subject. In one specific sequence in the movie *Blade Runner*, the chase of Zhora by Deckard through the streets of L.A., our material encounter with the screen is grasped as a series of affective temporalities and sensibilities—a “becoming imperceptible” which appropriates a Dionysian inexhaustible will.

*Blade Runner* evokes Paul Virilio’s “overexposed city,” a hyperreality where geographic space implodes into screening interfaces. Depth, surface, space, and distance become “pure surface” in a reduction of space into time and a face-to-face encounter with terminal screens and terminal masks. Our own experiences of millennial consumerism, from Coca-Cola to Atari, interface with future configurations. Our bodies interface with the city: New York cityscape—L.A. replicants. We move through molecular linkages of the chaotic *mise en scènes* both within the body of the film and our own bodies. The city, both in this film and in reality, becomes the screen for the body’s cultural saturations, a place/non-place where the body is recreated, technologized, transformed, contested, and re-inscribed. This re-orientates the sensory and the perceptual. The pleasures of the chase of Zhora sequence in *Blade Runner* emanate from a perceptual semiotic: the haptic sense of movement-image and affection-image. What I mean by this is that the visual image of movement, in this case Zhora running to escape Deckard, is also a “felt” experience, whereby the tactility of the image is perceived beyond a purely visual format, through an affective and aleatory space of perceived physical touch: a haptic (touch and sight collide) space of visuality and tactility. We are choreographed through the cartographies of the screen in a haptic dance where movement is a processual and durational transition from one form to another: from poses to movements in an immanent liquidity of affective temporality. Movement is both a mobile section of duration and yet it is also a transformation through space. In Bergsonian terms, vibration emanates from the duration of these movements (Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 56-61). Deckard searches for the identity of the snake-skinned creature, an image which was earlier framed, reframed, enhanced, and positioned as the image itself. This sequence exudes synesthetic pleasures in a haptic sensuality from the sequined flesh of Zhora’s costume, erotically sensual, tactile, febrile, volatile—purveying a luminosity of shades, tones, and intensities across a *mise en scène* which is diffused with vaporized lighting and fluorescent highlighting. The warm air of the hair-bubble energizes the static fluidity of her body in the shower into an alien, erotic creature outside the human or the machinic: flesh against flesh, flesh against metal—a fluidity of silk against the rigidity of plastic. The cold cruelty of her metallic costume emphasizes the delicious delirium of her cool plastic raincoat against the alabaster flesh of her body. She tries to strangle Deckard, evoking the cyborgian or molecular woman such as we see in *Mona of Romeo is Bleeding* or Heddy in *Single White Female*.<sup>4</sup> Such cyborgian creatures exist beyond the confines of the Ma-

donna/whore dichotomy as fin de siècle femmes of multiplicity and molecularity. Chaotic camera movements and a cacophony of musical sounds trace and vibrate the chase sequence through Virilio's overexposed city: movement becomes energy—becomes vibration in molecularity. Textures, colours, and sounds connect and contrast with the fleshy fragility of Zhora's body. Zhora, a fin de siècle femme and machinic cyborg, has similar simulations in several sequences in science fiction movies. The perfection of her body is more than real . . . hyperreal. Her marked and pierced skin exudes the scarification of Bataille's excess through libidinal cathexis. The ultimate penetration of flesh by glass produces a symbolic penetration of the image "outside" of representation. What is evinced is an example, not of desire as libidinal through psychoanalytic configurations, but desire as processual, as movement, process, and immanence—movement-image. As Bergson indicates in *Matter and Memory*, image equals movement and every image is indistinguishable from its actions and reactions. This is universal variation:

My body is an image, hence a set of actions and reactions. My eye, my brain, are images, parts of my body. How could my brain contain images since it is one image among others? External images act on me, transmit movement to me, and I return movement: how could images be in my consciousness since I am myself image, that is, movement? And can I even, at this level, speak of "ego," of eye, of brain and of body? Only for simple convenience; for nothing can yet be identified in this way. It is rather a gaseous state. Me, my body, are a set of molecules and atoms which are constantly renewed. (Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 58)

Thus, if we consider this set of images in *Blade Runner* as a plane of immanence, the image itself is matter just as the body is matter. Movement and rhythm create the pleasures of a corporeal and embodied gaze. The dissipated lighting, repetitive shapes, sounds, and colours create an alien world of pleasurable sensuality. Zhora's escape through the screen of her simulacrum through to the other side technologizes an escape from representation beyond image into the movement-image and affection-image. There is a pedagogy of the image whereby it is not just something that is actually "seen." As Deleuze indicates in *Cinema 1*, it is also legible and felt. In such a deterritorialization of the image the frame provides the lines of flight through which the perceptual and the haptic are choreographed. This affection-image is therefore a deterritorialized image, effectuated through a collusion of atoms and light going beyond representation and identity. Deleuze discusses how affection is "what occupies the interval" (65). This interval lies between perception of the image and a preceding hesitant action. In Bergsonian terms it is a coincidence of subject and object. A result of this coincidence is a feeling of movement as a lived state and as a specific quality of duration. Some element of movement is absorbed and refracted by the perceptive centers of the subject/object of the representational image. Images are thus not just visual renditions of the world, but they are mobilizations through tiny cellular movements of our worlds and bodies. Following Spinoza, the body might be regarded neither as a locus for the conscious subject nor as an object. Rather, the body can be seen in terms of what it can do, the things it can perform, the linkages and machinic con-

nections it forms: the body in becoming and in affirmation. Following a strongly Spinozist line, Grosz says, “Bodies are not defined by their genus and species, nor by their organised functions but by what they can do, the affects they are capable of in passion and in action” (187-213).

Desire emanates across the chase sequence in *Blade Runner*, not from the purely visual but from a vertiginous viscerality of filmic image as movement/assemblage; the film as body where bodies in movement evoke machinic energies. Desire is not fixed or located within a representational space, neither is it abyssal or negative as we see in psychoanalysis. Desire is what makes things, forges connections, creates relations, produces machinic alignments. The clone’s (Zhora and the spectator) isolated psychoanalytic abyssal positioning is projected differently—through immanence—by virtue of movement and rhythm. Desire is a processual effectuation rather than specific satisfaction. It is an aleatory and processual duration. A liquid perception in this sequence is created by virtue of a simultaneity of movements/rhythms and performativities: a materiality composed of waves and molecules. The pleasures of the visual are corporealized through the duration and affective temporalities of the movement-image/affection image. The snow evokes a material and liquid perception, a rhythm which transports our bodies through the viscosity and viscerality of the sequence, through the screen, the glass, the image, and beyond. Thus the movement goes beyond a specific image to its material energetic movement, from liquid perception to gaseous perception (Deleuze, *Cinema I* 84). The power of rhythm is considered to be deeper than that of vision or audition. In an article on sensation, Dana Polan writes that “beyond figuration and representation sensation comes from a pure power that overflows all domains and traverses them. This power is that of Rhythm, which is deeper than vision, audition, etc . . . a logic of the senses that is as Cezanne says, ‘non-rational, non-cerebral’” (240). Filmic shots themselves become rhythmical durations and fractured cellular bodies. “The filmic shot becomes pure movement where all surfaces are divided, truncated, decomposed, like the thousand faceted eyes of an insect” (Deleuze, *Cinema I* 23). As Deleuze continues, “the perspective of the outside is the perspective of the inside, a multiple perspective, shimmering, sinous, variable and contractile, like the hair of a hygrometer” (23). Thus there is what we might consider to be some fracturing into a “hystericization” or a dissimulation of subjectivity; a subjectivity that is broken, fragmented, traversed, and even subsumed through intensities and energies. Deleuze acknowledges that concepts are physical operations working as an abstract machine and not just ideal abstractions. Therefore, his discussion of force, energies, and intensities is a materialized one. Such fracturing of forces and energies in painting, for example, is based upon direct intensities of contraction, vibration, and resonance in a sensation of colours, lines, shapes, tones. This is a form of hystericization and is similarly operative in a material filmic experience and also in our corporeal and physical experience of spatial zones, such as the cityscape and pleasure zones of dance culture.

The night club experience of millennial urban cityscapes certainly exudes the pleasures of abjection, through the pleasureable and desirous spaces theorized through a psychoanalytic framework. However, music, sounds, colour, and shapes



also connect beyond the psychoanalytic regime of libidinal cathexes, through deeper rhythmical, kinesthetic, and synesthetic intensities; a body of lines and colours like paintings liberated from any organic representations. Indeed, in the club scenario, both in filmic diegeses and in reality, music captures the chromatic intensities of painting, film, and movement. The synesthetic derives from the material encounter with several elements rather than one force. The colours of the night club cyberscape provide the modulations of synesthetic pleasures. The jouissancial experience of the club scene is prevalent in the chase sequence described and several other sequences from *Blade Runner*. The jouissancial experience of trance-dance emanates all of the haptic visions. Colorism does not, according to Deleuze, “consist only of relations of hot and cold, of expansion and contraction, that vary in relation to the considered colours. It consists also of the regimes of colour, of the connections between the regimes, of the accords between pure tones and broken tones . . . haptic vision is precisely this sense of colours” (Polan 252). This hapticity is both optic and tactile; the visual becomes felt. The felt connection between eye and hand is felt as a coagulation of sight and touch.

In the sequence I have just discussed, viscosity enhances abjection. The horror and melancholy of Zhora’s body, eviscerated, dissipated, torn, and bloody . . . destroyed by fragments and shattering shards of glass, which like the ashes blown to the wind, disintegrate, “become imperceptible,” as a valorization of spectacle, waste, excess, and defilement. The scene epitomizes the jouissancial pleasures of excess, ritual, and death, as we again see later in Priss’s bloody death. Batty’s replicant pain, alien in its human and machinic proclivities, is carnivalized through the abominations of a machinic body which is eviscerated as flesh and blood. The sequence evokes the writings of Céline, who according to Kristeva speaks from “inside” the horror (149). Kristeva’s love of Céline, whose narratives are a form of hyperrealism, is exemplified by the passage she quotes from his novel *Death on the Instalment Plan*, which is specifically appropriate to Batty in *Blade Runner*: “He sticks his fingers into the wound . . . He plunges both hands into the meat . . . he digs into all the holes . . . he tears away the soft edges . . . he pokes around . . . he gets stuck . . . His wrist is caught in the bones . . . Crack!” (560).

Are fin de siècle femmes merely simulacra? What signs can we take from their hyperreal configurations into other regimes: political, familial, cultural, and sexual? The signs within the film and this sequence in particular connect with the fantasies of our realities. This is a Baudrillardian world of fashion, costume, and the masquerade, the tactility and sensuality of the post-modern, where the marked body and the pierced body exist in and of themselves, visceral, symbolic, an enchanted fairytale, where the déjà vu of an earlier time evokes the eternal return of Nietzsche’s Dionysian will-to-power. Such signs circulate and spiral into other zones of our experiences: personal, familial, social, libidinal, and cultural formations. Everything is connected in a chaosmotic assemblage of machinic intensities. All elements have singularly differential relations within a continuum of those spaces. Instead of the body as representation, the body becomes locomotion.

Deleuze and Guattari indicate that the pure redundancy of the signifier could not even be conceptualized if it did not have its own form of expression, what they

refer to as “faciality.” This concept is located within the mobilities of affectivity. When our bodies absorb the movements of the screenic images instead of reflecting them, our activity can be described as “effort,” or in Bergsonian terms “affect.” There is a definite link between affection and movement. It is through the concept of faciality that Deleuze articulates this connection (*Cinema 1* 88). This connection is discussed in *Cinema 1* through the idea of the affection-image. The affect, or that by which we feel, is entity. Affect is that which describes feeling.<sup>5</sup> But it is not an emotional state. Texts, visual or literary, have until recently been explained and theorized through signification. How can we begin to explain why theories of “affect” have currently become more significant to visual cultures, specifically film, than theories of signification if we are constrained to work within structuralist linguistics. Affect has been a way of describing emotion. But there is a discernible difference between these two terms. Affect and emotion are conjoined but not synonymous. An “emotion” has a subjective element. A subject operates as the experiencer at an individuated level, as personal experience. It is crucial to Deleuzian ideas to theorize the difference between emotion and affect. Affect is not ownable by an individual agent in the same way as emotion (Massumi). How then can we critique affect if it is indiscernible to an agent, to a subject? Deleuze uses Spinoza’s “Ethics” to ground the term affect. Spinoza’s philosophy explores the difference between affect and emotion. Brian Massumi explains that according to Spinoza, affect has an irreducible bodily and autonomic nature. Affection is in fact a suspension of action-reaction circuits and linear temporality into what might be called “passion” (Massumi). Furthermore, according to Deleuze, affectivity exists within the molecularity of a material consilience across brain/bodies and proto-subjective intensities. Affect can be defined as an emotionless state but still a state of feeling. Affection-images, then, are entities. Entities are events of molecularity, so that affectivity resides beyond any subjective space within the pre-singularities of a proto-subjective state. This proto-subjective state is a state of differential speeds and movements or what Deleuze refers to as singularities, which function through a complex mechanism of differences and repetitions of molecular movements. We, as humans, are composed of elements, such as water, air, or earth, and affective intensities are effectuated through the transitional zones of repetitions of tiny, cellular, and molecular resonances.<sup>6</sup> Affects, then, are events and cannot be described as emotions, although they are still feelings: thus the affection-image is effectuated through durational and processual entities and not through emotional identity. True entities are events, not concepts. What expresses entity is faciality or faceification of body/object.

In an analogous example, all language is accompanied by the durations of faciality traits. The face, as sociologists and art historians have written, has evoked discussions of emotional and passionate regimes. Garbo’s face, to Roland Barthes, is a case in point. The “face” is also a body: the body a “face” in Deleuzian paradox. The “face” culturally, sociologically, and historically has been of great interest from psychoanalysis to psychologists, from Freud to Isakower and Spitz. Deleuze and Guattari see the face as part of a system where the head is included in the body but the face is not. “The face is a surface: facial traits, lines, wrinkles;

long face, square face . . . the face is a map . . . the face is produced only when the head ceases to be part of the body” (170). In the film *Seven*, the horror of the impact when the “head” is discovered and positioned in a small square box, removed from its body, lies in its final epitomization of “face” which in this film involves a range of emotional, moral, and ethical confrontations for Brad Pitt. His effacement by the killer makes him “face-up” to his own moral and ethical dilemmas and paradoxes. Across all semiotic systems what lies at their center, at their intersection, is the face. “A broadface with white cheeks” (Deleuze and Guattari 167) . . . white clown, white mime, angel or . . . Priss? The screen, cinematic screen, or televisual screen may also be the face, the face the screen, since the face constructs the plane that the signifier needs to mobilize across other sign regimes in aparalletic evolution. The face creates the wall, the frame, and the screen. Consequently, in cinema the filmic images of fin de siècle femmes become screens of simulacra or masks. The mask does not conceal the face, it becomes the face. The frame of the screen itself then becomes “mask.” As fin de siècle creatures of cyborgian assemblage, we millennial beings exhibit, wear, or inhabit a multiplicity of faceless masks, heteronyms, and strange personae. We become pure simulacra when we enter into the immanent planes of the aesthetic, outside of the real, but also more than real. The dream-scape delights of an immaterial life permeate the advertising images we see on T.V. selling us lipsticks, cars, clothes, or the naked faces of our “selves.” The dream is simulacrum: felt, haptic, and corporeal but not representational. It’s happening outside . . . . The music is “outside.”

Who is Rachel? What is she? A fin de siècle femme? The femme-fatale is an icon of the problematic, never what she seems, consistently a simulacrum, a threat outside of the legible. The fin de siècle resonates through the works of Theophile Gautier (and Gaultier?), with Baudelaire and artists such as Gustave Moreau and Rossetti providing icons of the decadent. We see an example when we first experience Rachel in long shot floating towards Deckard, an image of decadence utilized and appropriated by advertising images for perfumes like Chanel. This effectuates the hedonistic, the symbolic, and Art Nouveau in a persistent icon of modernist configurations. How can she also be post-modern? But paradox is sense and sense is also paradoxical. The fin de siècle femme is between the modern and the post-modern, in the interval and thus affective space of the machinic and the human. Through her decadence, excess, and simulations she moves away from the conflation of Freudian modernity through new post-modern figurations of simulacra, new media, and new technologies. The fin de siècle moment is the moment when masculinity loses access to the body, while woman comes to over-represent or, I would argue, to stand “outside” representation at all, in a fugitive space between the interstitial discourses of modernity and postmodernity. As we previously saw in the earlier discussion of the clip with Zhora, the image is not representational but exists in movement through a plane of immanence, not transcendence. The image does not exist outside its movement in/through time and the durationality of affective temporalities. I refer the reader again to the earlier quote from Bergson. Whether replicant, alien, or human, Rachel in *Blade Runner* is both material and immaterial: she masks a range of multiple forces and flows, fin de siècle frissons of faceless

chimeras: imperceptible, molecular, outside representation. In one particular sequence we see her searching in vain for the mask through which to encapsulate the faceless zone of her imperceptibility, her anonymity. In the movie *Single White Female*, both Ally and Heddy synthesize the unidentifiable selves across similar masks and personae, one never conceding to the other, a construal of fluidity. Rachel is an unfounded pretension concealing a dissimilarity. Just as Bridget functions in the film *The Last Seduction*, Rachel operates “not” as representational image but as pure simulacrum in locomotion. She searches in vain for the right mask . . . but there is none . . . she is both mask and screen and so much more. Deleuze and Guattari write, “There is no unitary function of the mask except a negative one . . . . Either the mask assures the head’s belonging to the body . . . or the mask assures the erection, the construction of the face, the facialisation of the head and body: the mask is now the face itself, the abstraction or operation of the face. The inhumanity of the face” (181).

In one specific sequence, Deckard kisses Rachel. The “kiss.” Butterfly kiss . . . kiss of death, eternal kiss, kiss of the spiderwoman, spider, insect . . . insectoid . . . viroid, mantis religiosa . . . mantis-machine . . . Rodin’s kiss? The kiss already testifies to the integral unity of the face/mask and inspires within it the rest of the body; the facialized body (Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 99). Rachel says, “Kiss me . . . put your hands on me.” The tactility and sensuality of his kiss are facialised through her body outside of the mask beyond the simulacrum of her face, a contamination of erotogenic zones in aparalletic evolution. “Desire disperses from the Metropolis, but there is no becoming without the wasp and the orchid.”

There is no close-up of the face. The close-up is the face, but the face precisely in so far as it has destroyed its triple function—a nudity of the face much greater than that of animals. The kiss already testifies to the integral unity of the face and inspires in it the micro-movements that the rest of the body hides. But, more importantly, the close-up turns the face into a phantom, and the book of phantoms. (Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 99)

The face is a horror story! Phantom face . . . vampire . . . volcanic voracities, the fin de siècle femmes like Rachel, Zhora, Priss, Bridget in *The Last Seduction*, and Mona in *Romeo is Bleeding*—moi?—project the dilemma of fragmented, disturbed, destratified, and desubjectified femininities, disorientated through a cultural élan which bifurcates woman’s subjectivity into a range of molecular sexualities outside of gender and beyond identity. Mona in *Romeo is Bleeding* epitomizes this molecular sexuality.

The contemporary millennial city scintillates with music, dance, and the pleasures of fashion, music style, and commodified desires. Cultural theorists valorize the hedonistic pleasures of the gourmet of the city’s delights; a garden of Earthly Delights. The film *Prêt-à-Porter* portrays fashion as social phenomenon, a satirical treatment of the grotesque and the bizarre whilst paradoxically a kaleidoscopic beatification of the sensuousness and viscosity of silk and satin, from Nietzsche’s Salome to Schiaparelli. The film exudes a world obsessed with the “image.” But

there is no image. All is movement-image, temporality, and matter. European and Hollywood cinema have a tradition of films which have explored the fashion world, from Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad* to Antonioni's *Blow Up*. The supermodels of our new millennium now play the same kind of role as the movie stars of '20s cinema, as couture videos take their place on MTV. In the contemporary world of fashion, supermodels are clones. Black faces are whitened to highlight the luminosity of lipsticks. Hair is coloured and styled across an eclecticism of fantasies. An array of fragmentary, ossified, and destratified personae, such clones are simulacra, not copies of the real, not images but simulations of imagined and imaginal bodies. Such bodies connect, intensify, and reterritorialize across other bodies and other zones in an assemblage of machinic connections and intensities. Postmodern fashion with its eclectic and bricolaged mosaics of styles, textures, and periods, provides a collage of nostalgia which has indicated a desperate attempt to appropriate the past. But there is no history. There is only the present . . . this mapping of desires ossifies a genealogical desire for the trees! The seduction of postmodern style valorizes the simulacrum in a paradoxical Baudelairean and Baudrillardian celebration of maquillage, artifice, and ritual. *Prêt-à-Porter* provides a deconstruction and celebration of the system of fashion, replacing it by a symbolic exchange in a valorization of Bataille's "paroxysms of exchange": festival, waste, death, and the profane. The signs of the fashion world spiral into vertiginous arenas in a Deleuzian assemblage with other signs outside the linearity of time across the circularity of the eternal return. As Baudrillard writes, fashion is "the inexorable investment of every domain by the code" (*Symbolic Exchange and Death* 87), and it enables the "simulation of the innocence of becoming" (89), the pleasures and desires of abjection and death, through "the enchantment of simulation, the code and the law" (95).

*Prêt-à-Porter* shows us bodies in street style: Bond Street . . . Camden Lock. The contemporary cultural "body" is a body which is marked, written on, pierced, be-jewelled, machinic, and tribal, where bodily signs operate relationally with others beyond signification. Some sequences articulate a Baudrillardian order of simulacra, the third order of simulacra, where signifiers do not relate in signification but to other signifiers, in process, immanently not transcendently. Signification is denied and subverted. In *Seduction*, as Douglas Kellner expounds, Baudrillard substitutes symbolic power for real power, rethinking notions of the political and the libidinal economies of Marx and Freud with the "catalytic impulse" of seduction in a passion for game, ritual, and artifice. This is effectuated beyond restrictive economies of signification and psychoanalysis through the attraction of the void. In a parallel evolution with this perspective one could posit a Deleuzian "machinic desire" as immanence through a Spinozist love of passion through movement, force, and intensity, not through appearance and representation. In *Seduction*, the mask, the maquillage, the face, the "visage" but also the body as face, the facialized body, becomes part of the seduction through a radical metaphysics of appearance, not through representation. Seduction valorizes the simulacrum in a Baudrillardian celebration of maquillage. The facialized bodies of fin de siècle femmes become visceral, immanent, and haptic as part of the seduction which threatens the politics

of production. Baudrillard's argument opposes seduction to production through the third order of simulacra: the simulation. Here, "cloning makes possible an extension and multiplication of the body, which transforms the very nature of the body, sexuality and human being itself" (Kellner 100-101). The clone pervades our popular cultural spaces. The supermodel epitomizes the facialized body of millennial clones. Clones become part of the ritual of games in narcissistic hypostasis. The clone is the materialization of the genetic formula in human form. "The digital Narcissus replaces the triangular Oedipus. The hypostasis of an artificial double, the clone will henceforth be your guardian angel, the visible form of your unconscious and flesh of your flesh, *literally and without metaphor*" (Baudrillard, *Seduction* 235). The clone marks the end of the Oedipal scenario; father and mother have disappeared to the profit of a matrix called a code. The facialized body becomes the clone in the end of the human body as we have known it, into the cancerous metastasis of a post-modern narcissism.

In the marginals or the in-between of Deleuzian and Baudrillardian critique perhaps we can begin to understand, experience, and reconsider the fin de siècle festival through facialization, faceification, vigagite. In the fin de siècle we live many worlds at once and only a post-modern, non-synchronic regime allows for the in-between spaces of our thinking, of our becoming, of our "living," of our "loving." In a non-Deleuzian but post-Deleuzian sense, the modernist writings of Miller, Baudelaire, Kerouac, Lawrence, the works of Gautier (not Gaultier) and Bacon have a non-synchronic significance to a paper which does not seek to "locate" and position theory but to energize, immanently, an assemblaged choreography of thoughts, intensities, and becomings. "If the face is a politics, dismantling the face is also a politics involving real becomings, an entire becoming clandestine" (Deleuze and Guattari 188).

I quote, to end my article, from Henry Miller's *Tropic of Capricorn*:

My eyes are useless, for they render back only the image of the known. My whole body must become a constant beam of light, moving with an ever greater rapidity, never arrested, never looking back, never dwindling. The city grows like a cancer. I must grow like a sun. The city eats deeper and deeper into the red: it is an insatiable white louse which is eating me up I am going to die as city in order to become man again. Therefore, I close my ears, my eyes, my mouth. (121-123)

## Notes

1. For a discussion of assemblage, see Barbara M. Kennedy and David Bell, *The Cybercultures Reader*.

2. "Aparalletic evolution" is a term in Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet's *Dialogues*. Deleuze expresses the concept of "aparalletic evolution" as the "becoming" that exists between two contrasting matters:

There are no longer binary machines: question/answer, masculine/feminine, man/animal, etc. This could be what a conversation is, simply the outline of a becoming. The wasp and the orchid provide the example. The orchid seems to form a wasp-

image, an orchid-becoming of the wasp, a double capture, since “what” each becomes changes no less than that which “becomes.” The wasp becomes part of the reproductive organs at the same time as the orchid becomes the sexual organ of the wasp. One and the same becoming, a single block of becoming, a parallel evolution of two beings, which have nothing whatsoever to do with one another. (2)

3. For a discussion of how film theory has premised desire and pleasure through psychoanalytic regimes of a transcendent subject and how Deleuze enables a different conception of desire through the concept of “haecceity,” see Barbara M. Kennedy, *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation*.

4. See Barbara M. Kennedy, “Post-feminist Futures in Film Noir.”

5. For a detailed discussion of affect, see Barbara M. Kennedy, *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation*.

6. See Barbara M. Kennedy, *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation*, for a detailed exploration of proto-subjectivities and singularities.

## Works Cited

- Baudrillard, Jean. *Seduction*. Trans. Brian Singer. London: Macmillan, 1990.
- . *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Trans. Iain Hamilton Grant. London: Sage, 1993.
- Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory*. Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. New York: Zone Books, 1988.
- Blade Runner*. Dir. Ridley Scott. Warner, 1982.
- Céline, L. F. *Death on the Instalment Plan*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. New York: New Directions, 1966.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London: Athlone and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- . *Logic of Sense*. Trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Claire Parnet. *Dialogues*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. London: Athlone, 1987.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Kellner, Douglas. *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989.
- Kennedy, Barbara M. *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
- . “Post-feminist Futures in Film Noir.” *The Body’s Perilous Pleasures*. Ed. Michelle Aaron. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. 126-142.
- Kennedy, Barbara M., and David Bell. *The Cybercultures Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Massumi, Brian. “The Autonomy of Affect.” *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Paul Patton. Oxford and Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1996. 217-240.
- Miller, Henry. *Tropic of Capricorn*. London: Panther, 1964.

Polan, Dana. "Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation." *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*. Ed. Constantin Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. 229-254.