

Practising Timespace-Collage: Art as Material Complex

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Abstract

This is a thesis on the artwork as 'Material Complex'. The written element is a critical enquiry into the ideal of totality and homogeneity for artistic production, and a critique of this ideal as orthodoxy. I consider the idea of aesthetic judgement in relation to its ideological investment, and challenge the idea of normalised readings for its assumption of universality via an understanding of individual perception as practice. Although I realise the impossibility of escaping an eventual collective (aesthetic; ideological) intelligibility, I argue that the motivation to do so nevertheless produces criticality. I am starting from the position that the judgement of an artwork is produced in the performance of a Hegelian sublimation (*Aufhebung*) of its conflicting material elements. I stage the ideological import of this sublimation via Christian Metz. This focuses the enquiry in the first instance on audio-visuality. The thesis thus commences with a cross-reading of Sergei Eisenstein's position on montage with Roland Barthes' ideas of the symbolic and signifying. I develop this critical trajectory in the second part, where I theorise my viewing of Robert Smithson's film *Spiral Jetty* and of Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* via Julia Kristeva and Jean-François Lyotard respectively. Thereby I identify the method of 'collage-montage' and, in a critique thereof, I advocate 'temporal-collage' as a strategy that provokes, through its deliberate non-resolvedness, complex individual productions. The last part of the thesis tests this strategy on concurrent contestations of the network age in dialogue with concerns of '70s Conceptual Art. In conclusion I come to propose 'timespace-collage', produced continually in 'subjective ideality'. The concerns of the text element are informed by, and developed in, my studio practice. Here I am working with sonic and visual material to produce complex expressions that provoke a sensorial practice rather than an intellectual judgement.

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Introduction

Art as Material Complex

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Synopsis

This introduction offers an insight into the motivation and methodology of this research project: my art practice, questions of aesthetic orthodoxies of ideality and totality and their ideological investment. The main theme of my critique is staged through the notion of 'sublimation' (a Hegelian 'Aufhebung'): synthesising and condensing conflicting material elements (e.g. image and sound) and their sensory perception into an objective totality. Initially I stage this problematic via the film theorist Christian Metz. In particular I take up the argument developed in his 1975 essay 'Aural Objects', which acts as an entry point into this enquiry. Metz' argument that hierarchical differentiations between sound and image in audio-visual articulations produce normalised readings and signal a greater ideological interest, read within a Hegelian ideal of totality, frames the motivation for my research. The conjunction between phenomenology and structuralism, which according to Metz lies at the basis of any perception, and which gestures towards Hegel's aesthetic theories, delineating as they do the conjunction between a structural, historical, and a phenomenological judgement, is shown to inform the general methodology of this project.

Introduction

This research project begins in my studio. There I work with sonic and visual material toward an artistic expression, which does not work along fundamental givens: my practice does not support a pre-determined relationship between sound and image, nor does it produce a homogenised conflation of the two. Rather, my aim is to produce audio-visual work as 'Material Complex', which escapes and challenges prejudices of material perception, whatever they may be, and which questions the sublimation of one sense to an other. In saying so, I am setting out with the idea that there *are* prejudices of perception and that these involve certain hierarchical judgements, which flatten-out and neutralise the complexities of a work's material combinations.

A hierarchy between visuality and sonicality, or between different materials and their sensory perception in general, is an idea that, in the terms of film theorist Christian Metz, signals a greater ideological issue. In his 1975 essay 'Aural Objects', originally titled 'le perçu et le nommé' ('the perceived and the named', *my translation*), he discusses the idea of a preference for the substantial, the visible and tactile, which he identifies as primary senses above smell and sound, which are thus qualified as secondary and attributal.¹ He locates this valuation within a notion of stability and ephemerality of image and sound respectively, and articulates the source and consequence of such a prejudice for the production and theorisation of film on a cultural and ideological level. I draw on Metz' claim and adopt his theorisation for my investigation into the artwork as material complex. Thus my project entails a sensibility to the ideological interests and cultural prejudices of valuation. It is from an awareness of the power of ideology, and its hierarchies of perception, that this

¹ In this essay Metz correlates this hierarchical order with a capitalist orientation in the West. He talks about a 'primitive substantialism', which according to him, reflects the Western philosophical tradition since Descartes and Spinoza. This tradition, to him, is apparent in the subject-predicate structure particular to Indo-European languages, where the noun of the sentence orientates and determines the predicate, which is thus sublimated to this noun. He identifies the visual as the stable and primary, the noun, whilst the sonic is its changing attribute. Metz argues this hierarchy with regard to its construction and consequence for the production and theorisation of film-making. I understand that a similar sensibility can be argued for audio-visual art practice, or practices of any material combination, in general.

I understand the original title of this essay, 'le perçu et le nommé', to foreground the distinction between a semiotic account and an experiential engagement. I argue that the differentiation between 'the perceived' and 'the named' clearly marks out a distinction between a culturally coded, named, understanding of the (visual) thing as sign, and a contingent production (of the sonic) in a perceptual process. I develop the criticality of such perceptual processes in relation to art via Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva later on in this project.

research takes a look at materiality and attempts to formulate a critical strategy to produce 'complex' artworks, which reveal and challenge concurrent ideological determinations.²

Following Metz' discussion I focus on the centrality of cultural and ideological prejudices for the production and perception of audio-visual work, and place these issues at the core of my project. I also pick up on the epistemological question of structuralism or phenomenology that is implicit in his differentiation. In this I emulate Metz when in 'Aural Objects' he states:

It seems to me that the semiological project in its entirety, because of its initial anchoring in a concern for the perceptible signifier and its perceptible transformations, defines itself in a certain way as the continuation of phenomenological inspiration. (Metz, 1992a, p315)³

Throughout my project both methods, structuralism and phenomenology, are played with, for and against each other, in the quest to understand in their correlation the ideological force that prejudices production, and to survey the challenges to a systemic valuation that an experiential perception can pose.

I contend that the notion of prejudices connects ideology to the subsuming dynamic of one material within the other and identifies it as the driving force behind the hierarchies involved in material production and perception. I am referring back to Metz here and presume with him that there are such hierarchies and that these are culturally determined. From here my project follows a Hegelian (dialectical) trajectory in suggesting that the notion of domination, of one material over the other, is motivated by the ideal of a homogenous expression: an ideal totality, which dialectically supersedes each individual expression in the quest for a higher order

² When considering the artwork from a perceptual angle, as this project attempts to do, and when acknowledging that there is no such thing as an isolated sensory perception, then, we can argue that any artwork includes more than one sensory material and presents thus a material complex. Consequently any artwork can be subject to this research. Therefore, this project is one about material complexity in general rather than audio-visuality in particular. However, in the first instance, my focus stays on audio-visuality. It is audio-visual practices that are initially investigated for their specific combination of two different materials in the production of a work of art. Only later in the project, when extending its premise into the digital realm, and considering digital re-evaluations of materiality and subjectivity, do I open the discussion to include material complexes in general.

³ Throughout this text, wherever more than one essay, book or article has been published by the same author in the same year I use the convention of adding a letter to the date in order to distinguish between them. The alphabetical order of these letters relates to the organisation of my bibliography.

exposition.⁴ This supposition locates the first assumption concerning the hierarchical organisation of sound and image philosophically. The idea of a progressive ideality identifies the material hierarchy in objective terms. This makes apparent why material differentiations present themselves as an issue to me in the first place. I argue that ideality understood in relation to an (objective) progressive drive, directs any (subjective) experience, and thereby limits the scope of experientiality to an intended ideality and its ideological remit.

The notion of an ideal totality, I argue, suggests that for something to be considered a successful artwork, heterogeneous complexities have to be overcome, and one homogeneous whole -one medium or one hybrid medium- has to be conceived. An amalgamation of -sonic and visual- material has to be produced that can be read together as one totality, rather than ceaselessly presenting the viewing and listening subject with incongruous material complexes. Whether this homogenisation takes place on the material expression -intentioned by the author- or in the process of perception -produced by the audience- is a different, but related issue, which importantly links the notion of homogeneity/totality back to the correlation between material and the subject producing and perceiving it: audience *and* author in his/her ideological and cultural milieu.⁵ Consequently it is apparent that the investigation of the artwork in terms of its material complexity involves a consideration of subjectivity also: the role of the subject producing and perceiving the work, as a totality, or as an incongruous complex, is a critical issue of this project.

An evaluation of the relationship between different materials and their mediatic arrangement as heterogeneous or homogeneous, and in extension the declaration

⁴ In his *Berlin Aesthetic Lectures of 1820s* Hegel sketches out the notion of an ideal state of beauty at the moment where art has overcome in sublimation (*Aufhebung*) the '*Widerspüchlichkeit*' (the antagonistic contradiction) between inner necessity and outer appearance, and has resolved the Idea, the content and form, its configuration of sensuous material in one total expression. He states that 'art has to harmonise these two sides and bring them into a free reconciled totality.' (Hegel, 1979, p70) In his terms the Ideal of the true unity of necessity, articulates an aesthetic synthesis in the sense of a coherent whole that resolves any incongruity between material elements, rather than exposing their incompatibilities, for the purpose of a stable sense of actuality as a higher order manifestation. Thus his aesthetic judgement outlines a dialectic, progressive, motion of sublimating (two) complex elements for the purpose of one ideal and objective totality.

⁵ Which one of the material dictates the terms of composition I understand to be at least potentially variable. However, following Metz, in the context of current Western practices and discourses of perception and production, at least, I understand it to be vision, which organises sound to its demands of expression and perception. I understand that for expediency we privilege that which gives us everything at once within a clear frame of reference -vision- over that which happens in time and is less controllable in terms of its spatial expansion and hence its totality -sound.

of 'ideality' and 'totality', and the subject making this evaluation, collective or singular, evokes the notion of aesthetics. Aesthetics as a method of material judgement, analytically works on the sensations of perception, and organises them according to concurrent ideological and cultural values. Aesthetics juxtaposes the experiential with a frame of reference and thereby, I argue, controls its phenomenological aspect in a structural order. I understand the hierarchies along which the materials are amalgamated as aesthetic choices, which we produce or reproduce in our perception, as aesthetic subjects, and which are driven by concurrent ideological interests. Central to this research is the pursuit of autonomy of production in the perception of the artwork. In this articulation, individual agency of perception and the collective determination of such individuality, in an objective totality, are perceived to be in constant struggle with each other. The notion of aesthetic judgement enters this struggle between material and subject. It points to the foundation of their duality and evaluates them both.⁶

In order to clarify the relationship between an objective aesthetic judgement and the singular perception of the artwork's sensory material, this project investigates the complexity of audio-visual combinations initially, and later opens its scope of research to consider a wider realm of artistic practice in respect to notions of material complexity. It does so by observing and theorising materiality as an issue of perception. I debate material production and correlating conceptions of aesthetics and subjectivity via my individual perception of particular artworks. Thus I attempt to formulate a critical art practice, which challenges the aesthetics of an ideal combination and its ideological interests. The aim is to articulate a strategy for an art practice, which does not settle in a homogenised reading, but instead continually unsettles a combinatory totality via an individual and generative perception.

My practice exists in various contexts: single screen, projected and monitor based video works and audio-visual installations in the gallery space, sound pieces on CD and radio, as well as in the form of textual contributions to magazines and conferences.⁷ In every instant the aim is to contest the apparent homogeneity and

⁶ Here I acknowledge the difficulty of investigating and challenging aesthetic orthodoxies of production and perception due to the viewing and listening subject being always already an ideologically involved subject. My project is staged in acknowledgement of this difficulty in chapter one via Louis Althusser's notion of the subject as 'spontaneously' and 'naturally' ideological (Althusser, 1993, p45).

⁷ Another venue for my single screen video work is the commercial television (aesthetically though I am thinking of Mainland European rather than UK television). Television, like radio, is a means of distributing the work into the living room, the domestic space. There, I believe

consensual intelligibility of the artwork, and to challenge the limitations of a naturalised and conventional perception via a material complexity. Totality and a consensual (narrative) sense are kept at abeyance, and the material artwork is reformulated as a space of engagement, where the contingent perception produces a temporary individual (narrative) sense. In principle my practice aims to provoke the viewer and listener to expand the work in his/her imaginative perception and to produce an always-temporary and 'site-specific', in other words contingent, 'reality' thereof. In this continuous action of perception, I understand the subject to be contesting fixed descriptions of materiality -aesthetics- and subjectivity -identity- alike, and to thereby continually question any concurrent ideology invested therein.

a spirit of inattention can be plugged into, where imagination proliferates more easily than in the environment of the gallery and its aura of concentration and deference.

Chapter One

In-Between Material; Sound and Vision in Dialogue - Audio-Visual Montage

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Synopsis

In this first chapter my research in 'Art as Material Complex' is initiated via an investigation of the audio-visual combinations proposed by the Russian film-maker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein. His theories of a 'montage of conflict' and a 'montage of attraction', serve to introduce and formulate a hypothesis on the relationship between the aesthetic appearance of a material composition and its ideological intent. Also, his montage theories make possible an initial consideration of the role of the subject vis-à-vis the material complex that is the artwork, and the cultural specificity of any such engagement. In particular, I discuss the dynamic of Eisenstein's dual motion of montage; 'nonsynchronisation' and 'orchestral counterpoint'. I stage my interest in the first motion, and pronounce a critique of the second. Subsequently, in consultation with Roland Barthes' ideas on the semiotic and the symbolic, I develop my agreements and disagreements to formulate a hypothesis for an alternative strategy of a complex material practice.

Introduction

In this first chapter I introduce my investigation into the artwork as a complex material assemblage by considering the audio-visual assemblage of film. The desire for complex configurations of sound and image arises from my studio practice. It reflects the concerns staged in the introduction regarding the sublimation of sound and image according to material hierarchies, articulated as aesthetic judgements, which neutralise the work's material complexities for the benefit of a homogenous totality. To stage my argument, I posit the interests of my practice vis-à-vis existing audio-visual theories and practices concerned with the interplay between sound and image. In the first instance, I introduce this investigation via Sergei Eisenstein's theories of audio-visual montage. I base my choice on Eisenstein's lasting influence on art film and video making, his sensitivity toward sound, as well as his critical relationship to narrative conventions.^{8 9} In the course of this investigation I critique

⁸ I understand Eisenstein's theories, perhaps more than his actual works, to have influenced and still today, at least indirectly, to influence the practice and discourse of art- film and video making. This is particularly apparent in reference to work from the 1960s and '70s, the time of the first film-makers' coops in New York and London. The theorists and film-makers from these decades, in their concern for formal material composition and pace, pay direct homage to Eisenstein's montage and its dialectical materialism. Here I am thinking particularly of American film-makers, who subsequently influenced British and Continental Europe's artistic output and theoretical discourse. In this sense, I understand the compositional formalism and montage dynamic of work's by among others Maya Deren, Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage and Jonas Mekas, to pay tribute to this connection, which, on the other side of the Atlantic I understand to resonate in work by David Hall, Gerry Schum, Jan Dibett, Peter Kubelka, Chris Marker, etc.. This connection is reflected, I argue, in the Marxist concerns of film theory in the '60s and '70s. Most notably this connection is articulated in the writings of Christian Metz, Peter Wollen, Laura Mulvey, Peter Gidal, etc. .

I contest that it is only recently, in what can arguably be considered as postmodern practices, that the prior focus on material processes has lost its supremacy in favour of an emphasis on film and video as media rather than material. In other words the focus has shifted from the manipulation of material to the manipulation of content and context. I contest this shift in focus is apparent in the work by artists such as Douglas Gordon and Annika Larsson. Gordon's re-working of Hitchcock's *Psycho*, and the subsequent trend of re-cycling material from mainstream films, and Larsson's high-production-value-aesthetics which evoke fashion shoots and life-style-advertisements, take the focus away from the relationship between the material, which is the principal interest of materialist montage, and instead opens a relationship with the work to the media industry of film and video making.

I understand my own video work to sit in-between these two influences. My practice is sensitive to the visual and sonic material as materiality, and pays attention to issues of composition and formal arrangement, even if in critique of an Eisensteinian montage. However, at the same time, I am aware of my work in relation to the context of a film industry, and also acknowledge a televisual influence, even if a European rather than American output.

⁹ My consideration of narratives in relation to Eisenstein's montage does not aim at investigating narrative theories, or a particular narrative sense. Rather, I read his writing against conventions of narrative production as a critique of conventional modes of sense production. I employ the term narrative to denote sense-making processes in general, rather than in relation to particular systems of narrativisation. The investigation of narrative vis-à-vis Eisenstein's montage theories is, then, an investigation into sense processes: collective or

the ideological investment of his theory of montage via Roland Barthes' ideas on sense and artistic production. Eisenstein and Barthes set the stage for the written aspect of this project. I critically evaluate their ideas on materiality, spectatorship and the role of the artist, to stage my concerns. Their writings enable me to produce a methodology for the evaluation of audio-visual practices in regards to their aesthetic parameters and their ideological investment.¹⁰

Throughout my project I discuss how ideological dynamics either produce the material complexities as homogenised expressions or act as enablers of less certain, more temporal and individual experiences. Whilst critiquing the first for its implicit Hegelian ideal totality, I search art history for instances of the latter, and undertake to ascertain and debate their criticality and radicality in relation to concurrent valuations of materiality.

In my own practice I strive to develop audio-visual artworks that forge a dynamic and complex non-totally. My project aims at developing the practice and theorisation of complex works that forge temporal and individual experiences, rather than pursue an objective totality. As a corollary, in the course of trying to articulate such a heterogeneous strategy and its conceptual objective, my research investigates perceptual prejudices and hierarchical processes of production and perception, which determine material assemblage in the guise of a concurrent aesthetic. Such an investigation involves the consideration of an aesthetic demand for totality/harmony and meaningfulness, consensual sense, and brings with it reflections on subjectivity also.

I show how harmony/totally and meaningfulness, *sense*, are easily re-produced and thereby re-affirmed in the negative as disharmony and meaninglessness, *nonsense*. My project aspires to propose a material complexity not in direct opposition to consensual sense and totality and therefore neither easily rendered total and meaningful through a dialectic reversal, nor marginalisable as irrelevant and

individual; generative or analytical, rather than a consideration of a particular narrative meaning or convention.

¹⁰ I am then, at least initially, focusing my investigation into the artwork as a material complex on audio-visibility. However, I demonstrate in subsequent chapters, how the concerns highlighted in this initial investigation are transferable to a wider realm of art practice. In this sense, the central issue of this project is neither the material particularities nor the relationship of sound and image per se. Rather, I aim to pursue an investigation into the ideological dynamics that order artistic production and perception in a more general sense: intention, sensation and its valuation in an aesthetic judgement. Audio-visibility is merely the particular concern of my practice, which allows me to begin this investigation.

meaningless nonsense. Instead, I aim to critique a nominal idea of sense and totality per se.

I first argue the danger to criticality posed by the 'trap of the negative', in reference to the dialectic dynamic of Eisenstein's montage. Working through Eisenstein's theories of 'montage of conflict' and 'montage of attraction', I focus on their dialectic dynamic. I show how his audio-visual montage is based on the dual motion of 'nonsynchronicity' and 'counterpunal orchestration', which, in a conflictual/dialectical move, work towards the film as an ideal totality.

In relation to this, I contest Eisenstein's montage theory with reference to his desire for directing or 'attracting' the audience towards an intended reading. His ideas of attraction and persuasion enable me to point towards the ideological interest and teleological character of his 'total montage'. I argue that, according to him in montage, the listening and viewing subject is encouraged to participate and produce the work against existing ideologies and in terms of a 'true' meaning. The state of 'trueness', I contend however, comes out of a 'new' but nevertheless ideologically determined ideality of the author's intention.¹¹

I present that, although challenging a concurrent aesthetic system, and thus questioning an ideological notion of the (politically) real of the time, Eisenstein replaces rather than eradicates the notion of a shared and thus nominally

¹¹ Ideality is understood and argued in the whole of the project in the sense of the Hegelian notion of *Idealität* of an 'ideal objectivity', which for him decides the beauty of art as an absolute beauty. In the introduction to this research project I have presented how Hegel's aesthetic formulates a conflictual relationship between discord and harmony and how his judgement of the beautiful, his aesthetic theory, depends on the ideal resolve of the two. (*Berlin Aesthetic Lectures of 1820s*, 1979, p70) In turn, the desire to resolve discord and achieve harmony, is the driving force for artistic production. In the *Tätigkeit* (production) of an expression the *Widerspruch* (antagonistic contradiction) between discord and harmony can be overcome in sublimation (*Aufhebung*), and an ideal objective state can be reached, which is understood as ideal spirituality. In practice this ideality is never achieved but remains forever a process of production. Hegel understands the drive for this relentless production to lie in the hope to achieve freedom from our animalistic needs, through the overcoming of the inner necessity (the animalistic needs) by an outer appearance which is the appearance of perfect beauty of an ideal objectivity in spirituality. Although an objective ideality is never really achieved, as a motivation, it marks the production of the artwork as a progressive and intentional production and its ideology as an ideology of totality. The notion of its objectivity proclaims the idea that there is a shared world history in which the subject is fully realised as a spiritual ideality constructed and aimed at in such a relentless *Tätigkeit* (activity) between the *Widerspruch* (antagonistic contradiction) and its *Aufhebung* (sublimation). In relation to this, my research project aims to articulate an artistic production which challenges such an ideal art practice and its judgement. However, at the same time I am aware of the influence aesthetic theory has on my evaluation of artistic expression. (*Vorlesungen in der Ästhetik vol. 1 – 3*, 1980) (my translation of Hegel's terminology).

naturalised reality. I argue that his production is ideological, and show how in its method it is dependent on a particular political, historical and geographical context/identity of the subject viewing the work.

Implicit in this critical analysis of Eisenstein's montage theories in relation to sense and totality is an investigation of the subject producing and perceiving the work. His (inter-)active subject of montage, I argue, is not an autonomous subject, but is an aesthetic subject in the sense of a collectively determined subject. Aesthetics is involved here as a rationalisation of sensorial experience in a systemic judgement. I am critically investigating the appropriation and manipulation of aesthetic vocabularies and subjectivities in relation to Eisenstein's audio-visual montage. I acknowledge, via Louis Althusser, that we are always already aesthetic and ideological subjects.¹² I concede thus that when challenging Eisenstein's subject for its ideological pre-determination there is no subject position outside ideology: We are always already socially determined, even in our singularity. Hence, my proposal for an autonomous and singular subject perceiving the artwork as a material complexity understands and works with this equivocation. However, even if this fundamental collectivity renders futile my trying to achieve a critical singularity that is not in a dialectic relation to the collective, I argue throughout the project that the motivation to do so nevertheless articulates a criticality.

Eisenstein theorises montage according to the properties of the ideogram. His adoption of a linguistic concept facilitates my discussion of his theories in relation to the idea of vocabularies of perception, and their arrangement of differences and similarities. The ideographic concept of his 'montage of conflict', and later Barthes' evaluation of Eisenstein's montage as a symbolic semiotic, enables me to make a link between the experience of audio-visual combinations and referential systems (vocabularies) of reality. In this sense, my investigation into the homogenising

¹² In his book *Essays on Ideology*, Louis Althusser, before going on to discuss the interpellation of the subject in ideology, informs the reader that:

In order to grasp what follows, it is essential to realize, that both he who is writing these lines and the reader who reads them are themselves subjects, and therefore ideological subjects, (a tautological proposition), i.e. that the author and the reader both live 'spontaneously' or 'naturally' in ideology in the sense in which I have said that 'man is an ideological animal by nature.' (Althusser, 1993, p45)

Following him, I acknowledge the position of the viewing and listening subject as an always already, ideological subject, 'spontaneously' and 'naturally' so. However, rather than letting this inevitable and 'spontaneous' position hinder my articulation for a beyond, I use it to

strategy of montage questions the value and status of reality and its relationship to materiality *and* the subject.¹³ I recognise in the notion of a 'reality of experience', a structural and a phenomenological worldview situated vis-à-vis each other; one determining a 'reality' of the world through prior knowledge and ideological intent, the other producing an experientially 'real' world in a continuous process of determination. Both these philosophical methods are employed throughout the project, in order to, between them, find a useful re-assessment of materiality and subjectivity beyond an ideological and cultural pre-determination.

In particular, in this chapter, the formal aspects of montage are investigated via a re-consideration of its semiotic status by Barthes. Barthes identifies Eisenstein's montage as a symbolic semiotic, and pursues the critique thereof via a notion of 'signifying' that points to a phenomenological 'accent' at the limit of the work's structural meaning. This notion of 'signifying' allows me to discuss the material complex that is the artwork in reference to a limit of (structural) meaning. I adopt Barthes' ideas of the 'accent' and the 'filmic', which are, according to him, posited against such limits. For Barthes from such accents the work extends beyond its structural identification into an individual experience. I propose that it is at this junction between structural meaning and the notion of its own limits in experience that a preliminary discussion for the criticality of montage can take place, and where the staging of a possible alternative strategy for audio-visual practice begins. I argue that the location of the accent provides me with a point from which to cross-examine the material composition and its subject to re-assess notions of aesthetic judgements and their ideological investments. In this sense a consideration of Eisenstein's writing read via Barthes' critique thereof, provides me with a framework in which to position and develop my ideas on material combinations of sound and image.

Eisenstein's Audio-Visual Montage; issues of form and motivation

I start this investigation by considering the moment when the development of sound-film urged a re-assessment of a solely visual montage practice. This point of entry enables me to reason the use of formalist film theory as my initial focus of

position my provocation exactly. It is not the identification of the individual as ideological, but the nature of that ideological identification, which I aim to re-negotiate.

¹³ The status and appearance of a concurrent reality becomes a particularly pertinent issue in the later chapters of this project.

investigation. The formalist making of film from 'within' the material, in relation to its processes, cutting splicing, exposure, development, etc., (rather than as a transcription of a literal narrative), I argue, lends itself to this research into the hierarchies of perception, which determine material combinations. I contest that the formalist sensitivity to material specificity and process implies a careful consideration of every element of a film. This specific emphasis, I argue, aids me to elucidate aesthetic processes and their ideological investment and is thus useful for my investigation into the artwork as a material complex.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, at the dawn of sound film, S. M. Eisenstein, V.I. Pudovkin and G. V. Alexandrov produced ideas about working film as sound and image in relation to each other. In 1928 they wrote a 'Statement [on Sound]', which, I argue, manifests their sensitivity to material particularity:

THE FIRST EXPERIMENTAL WORK WITH SOUND MUST BE DIRECTED ALONG THE LINE OF ITS DISTINCT NONSYNCHRONIZATION WITH THE VISUAL IMAGES. And only such an attack will give the necessary palpability which will later lead to the creation of an ORCHESTRAL COUNTERPOINT of visual and aural images. (Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandrov, 1992, p318)

Their statement makes apparent their passionate belief that the coming of sound-film is vastly significant for the development of montage. The notion of sound and image in 'DISTINCT NONSYNCHRONIZATION' articulates their acknowledgement of the singularity of each material. They do not want sound as an 'adhesive' to the image. They feel that this would destroy the particularity of visual-montage, which seeks not to show, but to construct at the cut, in-between the frames, the expression of the whole film. They do not want to see sound destroying their method of film-making. Rather, they want to work with sound so as to develop and further complexify montage as the guiding principle of film form. Montage is the general strategy used by all three authors to combine the diverging parts of a film. For my investigation I particularly focus on Eisenstein's theories of a 'montage of conflict' and a 'montage of attraction'.¹⁴

¹⁴ As stated in the introduction, I argue this emphasis on the basis of Eisenstein's theories' lasting influence on art film and video production. It is crucial to note here however that I am not considering his film work but his film theories. I contest that the political, historical and geographical particularity of his films hinders a critical investigation of the aesthetic and conceptual interest of its production. By contrast, I understand his theories to be transferable to current contentions of material production.

Eisenstein famously describes montage as a material strategy of combining the diverging parts of the film, the shots or frames, by juxtaposing them. In his text on 'The Dramaturgy of Film Form' he announces:

I should call cinema the 'art of juxtapositions'... because it shows not facts but conventional (photographic) representations (...). For the exposition of even the simplest phenomenon cinema needs juxtaposition (by means of consecutive, separate presentation) between the elements which constitute it: (Eisenstein, 1998, p36)

Thus Eisenstein theorises montage film as the 'art of juxtapositions', because, in his terms, film shows nothing but conventional representations which only achieve their real expression in their relationship to other such representations. It is, according to him, therefore, not in the individual elements, but in-between them, that the cinematic phenomenon is constituted. The juxtapositions of shots or frames provoke another understanding of the material presented in either shot, from the 'conflict' that arises in their collation. In this sense, I argue, his montage theory focuses on an immaterial in-between.

This emphasis on an immaterial in-between, a third term, I understand to be re-stated when Eisenstein writes: '*montage is not an idea composed of successive shots stuck together but an idea that DERIVES from the collision between two shots that are independent of one another (the dramatic principle).*' (Ibid., p95) The strategy of so constituting the whole film is posited by Eisenstein in reference to Gestalt theory, where the whole is thought of in relation to each part: Each frame or shot, creates, in juxtaposition with another, more than what would be available to the audience within one shot, and in the total of juxtapositions the film produces more than what is presented in the sum of its frames.¹⁵ The whole of the montage film is accordingly not produced as a chain of frames but as 'chains of association' originating from between the frames (ibid., p36).

In relation to the invention of sound cinema, the invention of sound 'married' to the picture track and 'synchable' to its image, this emphasis on juxtaposition suggests new ideological as well as material challenges to Eisenstein's existing montage

¹⁵ For this correlation of terms I am referring to Eisenstein where he writes that 'it has been said: The whole is more than the sum of its parts. It is more correct to say that the whole is something else than the sum of its parts, because summing is a meaningless procedure, whereas the whole part relationship is meaningful.' (Eisenstein, 1977d, p17)

theories.¹⁶ In this sense, reflecting on Eisenstein's method of montage, at the advent of a technological novelty -sound film- affords me a great starting point for my speculation on art as complex combinations.¹⁷ I claim that the problems that arise for the artist working as a 'montageur', when 'adding' an extra material to his/her practice, in this particular instance when adding sound to film, and thereby complicating the dynamic of his/her material juxtapositions, offers an opportunity to evaluate montage in terms of its claims to complexity.

All three authors of the 'Statement [on Sound]', are fearful of the American development of synch sound film as a commercial venture. They understand such sound film to support the illusion of one reality, which, in their terms, asks no questions about its ideological construction. They understand 'talking films' to simply add sound to a visual object or movement, making it seemingly more 'real', more 'naturalistic'. They distrust the simple realisms that they see to be thus constructed. The source and ideological foundation of this distrust is made apparent in a quote from Eisenstein's essay on the cinematographic principle:

Both in painting and sculpture there is a periodic and invariable return to periods of the establishment of absolutisms. Displacing the expressiveness of archaic disproportion for regulated "stone tables" of officially decreed harmony.

Absolute realism is by no means the correct form of perception. It is simply the function of a certain form of social structure. Following a state monarchy, a state uniformity of thought is implanted. Ideological uniformity of a sort that can be developed

¹⁶ The introduction of 'married' and 'synch' sound to cinema highlights issues at stake in the aesthetic valuation of sound and image vis-à-vis each other. I note a distinction here between synched and married sound. Married sound does not necessarily have to be in synch with the image, but is simply fixed on the sound strip of the picture track. By contrast synch sound faithfully accompanies the action of the visual. This lack of autonomy, I argue, confounds, if not entirely prevents, the juxtaposing strategy of montage. I argue further that the difficulty to define sound in terms of shots, or frames, consequently produces another difficulty to propose a juxtaposing montage of the sonic material. This brings to the fore the issue of having to, in some way, define sound-shots (horizontally and vertically defined sonic units) in order to be able to juxtapose them to visual shots. The difficulty of such a delineation of sound in turn forces me to re-think the juxtaposing dynamic per se. Thus, the introduction of sound, I argue, necessitates a re-evaluation of the 'visual' principles and processes assumed in visual montage also.

¹⁷ The consideration of art practice, parallel to the advent of a technological innovation, I argue, offers an opportunity to re-think artistic criticalities, and permits an evaluation of broader issues of materiality, subjectivity and their aesthetic framework. As a starting point it is particularly valuable in respect to a concurrent situation of digital innovation. Thus similarly, later in this project, I re-assess audio-visual work with regard to the development of digital technology. I understand technological novelties to provide an opportunity to re-evaluate the ideologies that drive these innovations and the correlations thereof to changing notions of subjectivity: author- and audience-ship.

pictorially in the ranks of colors and designs of the Guards regiments. (Eisenstein, 1992a, pp131-32)

In parallel to the passionate articulation of a 'distinct nonsynchronisation' in the 'Statement [on Sound]', this quote reveals at the basis of montage a sharp critique of the institutional investment of uniform and single realities that its authors understand synchronised audio-visual work to construct and support. Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandrov are wary of what they call the 'wrong' use of sound. For them this wrong implies an attributal use of sound; one which supports the expression of the visual but which carries no autonomous articulation, and is hence unable to complicate the visual. In a critique of such a wrong use of sound they propose the development of a sound-montage that is worked according to the principles of visual-montage, which can then be juxtaposed to that visual-montage, establishing an audio-visual montage. In this way sound as well as vision presents complex articulations that work in conflict with each other, not resolving but complicating vision even. They understand that sound, which is denied its autonomy, undoes the invention of montage, and renders film an uncritical 'satisfaction of simple curiosity' (Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandrov, 1992, p361). In their terms such film shows a normalised reality and verifies 'pictorially' the absolutism of that 'reality'. In other words such film presents a tautological sense of the real as absolute. Instead, they desire a film which questions the veracity of any such absolute 'real' and its ideological investment.

I understand this critique of attributal combinations to imply that any audio-visual practice which does not treat the elements involved in its expression with 'disjunctive' consideration, but instead subsumes one material to the other, produces synthetic conjunctions which render its composition a simplifying representation.¹⁸ The criticality of such a practice, I argue, is forgone in favour of the

¹⁸ As an illustration of the ideological difference between film as a simplifying synthetic construct, or as a complex montage piece, I am thinking of Howard Hawks' film *Criminal Code* (1930) in comparison to Sergei Eisenstein's film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). Both films deal with an instance of rebellion against an establishment. The first presents the uprising and discontent of a prison population in an American prison, the other deals with the rising of the people in Tsarite Russia. Whilst the first *represents* the revolt through talk-tracks and 'audible objects' (synched door slamming, etc.), along the lines of what Eisenstein and his colleagues term a 'naturalistic' use of sound, added to the image-track, the second constructs a *sense* of uproar through the juxtaposition of independent image and sound tracks. Both films convey meaning, but the way in which it is produced differs crucially. In the terms of a formalist critique, Hawks, constructs a pictorial representation of revolt. He portrays a simple realism. The viewer reads the quasi reality of the film as an absolute reality and enjoys it as a spectacle, from outside the material. By contrast, Eisenstein's material

satisfaction that lies in easy intelligibility and relies on the belief in an absolute real (a consensual sense). Eisenstein's montage theory articulates a challenge to such an absolute reality. Conversely, in my own practice, I am trying to work on the relationship between material elements -sonic and visual- towards complex and heterogeneous articulations that provoke through their absence of absolute meanings a rethinking of material and conceptual certainties and corresponding notions of sense and subjectivity.

I argue (along with Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandrov) that sound, taken as an attribute, cannot be worked through autonomous processes of montage. Thus, it cannot complexify the material relations of a film. Attributal sound instead, flattens out the montage of the visual even; tying over the cuts, and presenting film as a series of easy correspondences ('chains of frames'). The synching of the sound of the voice to the movement of lips, or the sound of steps to the visuals of moving feet enables the easy intelligibility of the material expression as a sealed unit.¹⁹ The material becomes representative. It presents the viewer with its literal content, rather than focusing the audience as viewers *and* listeners in-between the material, on the conflict, at the cut, sonic *and* visual, at which an audio-visual montage is being constructed through 'nonsynchronisation'. I contest that at this nonsynchronous conflict, in the absence of easy correspondences, the audience is forced to engage conceptually, in Eisenstein's terms, the audience is producing chains of associations. This notion of a nonsynchronous production from which an immersive and active subject position is evoked issues the main focus of my critique. In the next part I go on to develop my argument from this initial understanding.

Issues of Perception and Conceptualisation

The process of montage, according to Eisenstein, demands our attention in-between frames, visual and sonic, where there is no synchronisation but complex

polemic draws the audience into the film. He does not represent an absolute whole, but instead demands the viewer to produce the film from between the shots in a conceptual engagement. I contest that his nonsynchronised elements don't offer a pictorial rendition, and in the absence of such clarity force a material engagement.

¹⁹ I am using the notion of synch sound in a general sense to include not only literally synched sounds but also those sounds of the sound-track which are fitted to the visual without clear synch points such as atmos-tracks and other environmental sounds. They are not 'spotted on' but are nevertheless held in place by the image's co-ordination of a linear (narrative) development.

juxtapositions.²⁰ The collision between montage parts produced in such complex juxtapositions presents an absence which provokes (re-)engagement in association: the moving lips that find no vocals beg for an imaginary dialogue to be produced by the viewer, the sounds of steps that have no corresponding picture challenge the imagination of the listener. I understand the absence of easy correspondence to put demands on the imagination of the viewer. Such absence also poses questions about any possible presence of the meaning as a consequence of a (teleological) narrative. I understand Eisenstein's criticism of synchronisation to imply that a seamless relation between vision and sound does not complicate the visual expression through absence, but 'resolves' it, gives it what it demands: the vocals to the lips, the sound of steps to the feet. In Eisenstein's terms it at once grants the satisfaction of 'seeing' the whole and disables any other reading, thereby affirming the absolute veracity of what is seen. His understanding of absolute presence and 'engaging' absence, I contest, describes the distinction between sense produced in a tautological narrative, synched film production, and sense produced in an (inter-)active narrative, montage film production. (My use of the term narrative does not imply a focus on plot line and denouement, but pertains to the processes of sense production.)

²⁰ The fact that sound, at least non-musical sound, sound not organised within bars or equivalent systems, does not present itself in actual frames (delineating a clear vertical and horizontal unit), which can be juxtaposed as clearly as images, points to structural thinking as a prerequisite of the montage-project. Eisenstein's push for an audio-visual montage must necessarily suggest that he perceives sound as frames, as structural units. By contrast, if we take Eisenstein's view, American film treated sound so easily as an attribute, rather than push for a complex sonic montage in juxtaposition to the visual montage, because they employed no such systemic valuation. This presents me with a paradox. It seems that in order to articulate a critical use of sound as an autonomous artistic material, according to Eisenstein's montage principle, one needs to formulate a structural identification of sound. One needs to be able to reflect on sound as a 'cell' in order to free it from its dominant context: the visual.

I understand this process in relation to accousmatic music, which undertakes a phenomenological reduction of sound to its 'pure state'. Accousmatic music divorces sound from its source-distinct attack, the starting point of a sound, in order to prevent a structural identification with its (visual) source and to enable its working compositionally as an autonomous unit. In his *Guide des Objets Sonores, Pierre Schaeffer at la Recherche Accousmatic*, (*Guide to Sonic Objects Pierre Schaeffer and Accousmatic Research, my translation*) Michel Chion describes the accousmatic reduction of sound produced in order to systematise it sonically, as an 'objet sonore' ('sonic object'), rather than in relation to its (visual) source.

I further evaluate the paradox of this structural identification of montage-sound as cell later on in the chapter via Barthes' notion of a semiotic symbolic. I also more tacitly evaluate this paradox throughout my project in the juxtaposition of a structural and a phenomenological methodology.

According to Eisenstein, synchronisation pre-empts the productive imagination of the viewer, and pre-determines their reading through pre-existing signs: lips to speak, feet to walk, and in so doing hinders a re-assessment thereof. In his terms, in the synthetic production, there is no conflict between the individual shots, and the reality represented remains singular and solid. I am interested in the status and conceptualisation of this *absolute real* of the synthetic film in relation to the *associative reality* of the montage film produced through the juxtapositions of its shots, posited as montage 'cells'. However, I do not position the result of either film practice as sense or nonsense, but identify either sense according to its processes, understood as narrative processes.

Instead of producing an absolute reality, a consensual narrative sense, through material correspondence, Eisenstein situates at the point of this nonsynchronous junction, the idea of an 'unexpected' 'fourth dimension' of the film. I am referring in particular to his essay on 'the Unexpected' in the Japanese Kabuki theatre, which largely informs his montage strategy. In this text he discusses how Kabuki does not combine but juxtapose its expressions in a '*monism of ensemble*'. He expresses his admiration for this technique by stating that 'the Japanese have shown us another, extremely interesting form of ensemble -*the monistic ensemble*. Sound-movement-space-voice here do not accompany (nor even parallel) each other, but function as *elements of equal significance*.' (Eisenstein, 1977e, p20) Thus these elements display no differentiating hierarchy. They forge no perspective of perception but produce a non-differentiated simultaneity of sensation. Adopting this characteristic from Kabuki, he promotes that the materials, sound and image, in montage too *do not accompany* each other (as in 'parallel ensembles') but are *elements of equal significance*. He argues accordingly that the nonsynchronous cuts of the film, produced as monistic ensembles are 'non-perspectival', in the sense that they are non-hierarchical combinations which produce unexpected junctions.

I understand his use of sound and image as *elements of equal significance*, to propose the film as a model of 'simultaneity'. And understand this simultaneity to imply that for Eisenstein there is no surveying differentiation: there is no one perspective, which determines perception to privilege one material over another. I argue this suggests that there is no linear thread, which works toward one (teleological) narrative sense. Instead, the narrative is the process of a simultaneous production which achieves a conceptual sense, at the cuts in-between the material. For Eisenstein there is no formulation of a hierarchical differentiation, which

constructs the experience of the perceived material and guarantees it through its demarcation by the choice of a controlling perspective. 'In other words, in our new perspective -there is no perspective but a multitude of 'unexpected junctions' (Eisenstein, 1977c, p82).

According to Eisenstein, in its multitude of unexpected combinations, the montage work demands a sensorial engagement; the film is *sensed* rather than *viewed*. Instead of "I see" or "I hear", the notion of "I feel" is being provoked (Eisenstein, 1977a, p71). I understand the "I feel" to suggest that nonsynchronous combinations push the work into an experiential realm where the subject produces the film in an emotive perception, rather than according to a conventional (linear narrative) reading. The monistic treatment of the material of the film or theatre is thus identified not as producing one consensual meaning. Rather, as Eisenstein states: 'The film-frame can never be an inflexible *letter of the alphabet*, but must always remain a multiple meaning *ideogram*.' (Ibid., p65).

I am interested in the potential for flexible and multiplicitous combinations that he alludes to via a nonsynchronous, monistic complex, in critique of a linear absolute, produced within the overall narrative drive. However, the association with the systemic quality of the ideogram, I contest, frames the multiplicity. Eisenstein specifies these multiplicities when he goes on to say that they can only ever be posited in particular juxtapositions. Since in his terms, 'an ideogram acquires its specific *significance, meaning* and even *pronunciation* (...) only when combined with a separately indicated reading or tiny meaning -an indicator for the exact reading-placed alongside the basic hieroglyph.' (Ibid., pp66-67) Although working with a sensorial rather than an intellectual reading, Eisenstein is interested in an 'exact reading'. He achieves this through a strategy related to this statement: 'Orthodox montage is montage *on the dominant*, i.e. the combination of shots according to their dominating indications.' (Ibid., p64) In other words, montage film works its multiplicity within a guiding principle that brings the juxtapositions, their perceptual and unexpected conjunctions, to a (consensual) ideological significance on the level of the whole film.

His insistence on exact meaning, I argue, restricts the actual multiplicity of such combinations. The engagement by the audience is revealed not to be truly multiplicitous, but to be directed, not linearly, as in synch-sound film, but nevertheless teleologically, according to a particular intention. By adopting the notion

of the ideogram, the flexibility of the material is subordinated to a sense of context and to the purpose of signification. Any notion of multiplicity, I argue, thus comes to be identified in relation to the limit of that context and purpose of signification, and thereby loses its potential for 'true' multiplicity.

Going back to the very first quote of this text, from the 'Statement [on Sound]', in which Eisenstein and his colleagues outline their manifesto for an audio-visual montage, I understand this limitation on flexibility in relation to the identification of the second step of montage: 'the creation of an ORCHESTRAL COUNTERPOINT of visual and aural images.' (Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandrov, 1992, p318) I thus recognise montage as a dual motion; moving between NONSYNCHRONIZATION and an ORCHESTRAL COUNTERPOINT. This duality of montage allows me to distinguish between the motion of nonsynchronisation and the move towards the whole film in an orchestral counterpoint. This distinction offers me the opportunity to in part agree with Eisenstein, but to identify the limitations of his overall intent also. Further, I am able to argue the usefulness of either action in relation to the development of my conception of the artwork as material complex.

I contest that the first step, the nonsynchronisation of the individual elements of montage, allows, at least hypothetically, for a conceptual and (inter-)active production of the material by the viewer who is in turn identified as a singular and experiential subject. The method of NONSYNCHRONISATION, I argue, critiques a systemic reading according to an absolute authority. Instead its incongruous juxtapositions foreground the production of the significance of the material from a perceptually and sensorially individuated experience. In this sense the first step of montage provokes the idea of a conceptual narrativisation of the material from the cut, in-between the frames. Thus I understand it to question the notion of a linear, consensual narrative reality, determined by the connections made in relation to a nominal aesthetic judgement. I wish to pursue the potentiality of montage as an idea of 'unexpected junctures' produced in the multiplicity of material juxtapositions. In this regard, nonsynchronisation inspires my own practice. However, I understand the second step of montage to confine this criticality within a specific intention of unexpectedness.

I contend Eisenstein's method of ORCHESTRAL COUNTERPOINT in conjunction with the earlier mentioned desire to combine the nonsynchronic 'shots according to their dominating indications.' (Eisenstein, 1977a, p64) This conjunction reveals a

clear intent and ideological directive motivating the second step of montage. The counterpunal method does not negate the idea of an absolute reality, but rather persuades the audience towards a particular outcome. This outcome might be different from the 'naturalistic real' of American sound film, but, I argue, it is no less teleological, singular and solid. I contest that the counterpunal method pursues an organisation of the 'nonsynchronic' material towards the experience of the film as a total film. I contend that the intention of directing the viewer in-between the shots 'according to their dominating indications' gives the experience of this total film a notion of 'the' ideality expected. Thus I understand that although the first step proves useful to me in my attempt at articulating the artwork as material complex, the second relativises this complexity in its insistence on perceiving the whole film as a total and ideal, 'exact reading'.

In the next part I stage and debate these understandings, and evaluate them through an exposition and discussion of this counterpunal use of the (nonsynchronous) material in montage in relation to the notion of the ideogram. Thus I consider the orchestral counterpoint as 'synthesis' and discuss it in relation to 'nonsynchronisation', and vis-à-vis (American) synch-sound film, which Eisenstein identified as the 'synthetic' production of uniform and single realities.

The Synthesis of Counterpunal Orchestration versus Nonsynchronisation

In Eisenstein's essay on 'The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram', in which he develops his particular ideas on the future of audio-visual combinations, he explains in detail the 'collision' that marks the relationship between the individual 'cells' -visual and sonic shots- as montage, and the dramatic principle, which ultimately brings about the concept of the film as a whole.

If montage is to be compared with something, then a phalanx of montage pieces, of shots, should be compared to the series of explosions of an internal combustion engine, driving forward its automobile or tractor: for, similarly, the dynamics of montage serves as impulses driving forward the total film. (Eisenstein, 1992a, p134)

This quote demonstrates the dual dynamic of montage, moving between 'nonsynchronisation' and 'orchestral counterpoint': one refusing a representational relationship within and between sonic and visual material shots, the other working this nonsynchronous material toward the appreciation of the total audio-visual film.

Eisenstein insists that his 'total' film is distinct from the 'total' American (narrative) film. He proposes that the dynamic between nonsynchronous parts leads to a harmony of an order that is not representational of a simple reality, supporting a uniform reading, but rather provokes as 'a dynamisation of the inertia of perception – a dynamisation of the 'traditional view' into a new one.' (Eisenstein, 1998, p94)

Eisenstein explains the dynamic complexity of montage's harmony through an identification thereof with the ideographic character of hieroglyphs. In his terms the single elements of a hieroglyph can be substituted by the notion of his 'cells', the sonic or visual frames or shots, understood as molecules of the whole. By juxtaposing these cells he forms the montage film according to the workings of an ideogram. (I noted this identification earlier. I do find it crucial to reconsider its relevance in light of his notion of conceptuality, however.) In this sense, I read the following passage describing the ideogram as a description of audio-visual montage.

The point is that the copulation (perhaps we had better say, the combination) of two hieroglyphs of the simplest series is to be regarded not as their sum, but as their product, i.e. as a value of another dimension, another degree; each separately, corresponds to an *object*, to a fact, but their combination corresponds to a *concept*. From separate hieroglyphs has been fused -the ideogram. (Eisenstein, 1992a, p128)

I understand Eisenstein to suggest that the combination of diverging material, in his counterpoint method, is not a material combination, but a conceptual combination. He does not undertake a synching of the nonsynchronous material, but rather effects a conceptual synchronicity. The mute image of moving lips is not simply furnished with a voice. Rather, another sound, for example a musical crescendo, might give the movement of the lips a *conceptual synchronicity*. Such a counterpoint orchestration of sound and image does not *present* a combination, but *proposes* combinations through its context and arrangement. Consequently, the harmony of the counterpoint, is not a material but a conceptual harmony, produced perceptually by the audience. In Eisenstein's essay on the 'Synchronization of Senses' he stresses that 'it is important to keep in mind that our conception of synchronization does not presume consonance.' (Eisenstein, 1977c, p72). According to Eisenstein the dissonant collisions find harmony in their conceptual perception without becoming consonants in their material experience. I argue that this suggests a conceptual narrativising: proposing sense and harmony as a conceptual process rather than a representational quality. However, the actual dissonance of the montage collisions, I argue, remains relative to the film as a

whole. Consequently, the scope of the conceptual (narrativising) process, I contest, is delimited by the setting of the film as a totality.

I am interested in this contradictory relationship between Eisenstein's enticement to perceptual conceptualisation, and the ideological totality of the film, which, I argue, acts as a (narrative) directive and limits the scope of any conceptualisation within its frame of reference. Although I find his motivation to work against the inertia of 'traditional views' useful, I remain critical of his intention to establish a 'new' tradition.

Eisenstein's model for film is the 'cinematographic ideogram':²¹ Its parts are diverging (nonsynchronous) depictions of an *object* or fact, which in combination produce an expression which is more complex, more advanced, than either part. The notion of a 'value of another dimension', I claim, reveals the dialectic character of such a conceptual description (Eisenstein, 1992a, p128). The synchronic whole is the synthesis of a higher order, produced conceptually between two cells or shots positioned as thesis and anti-thesis. Out of their conflict arises the montage film as a superior level of expression. This identification of montage as a dialectic dynamic, plus the notion that its harmony is not a material but a conceptual harmony, I argue, confirms Eisenstein's montage as aspiring to a Hegelian ideality; a spiritual rather than a material ideality.²² The progression towards such an objective ideality, I contest, is in disagreement with the notion of 'multiplicity'. Instead, the ideographic

²¹ Eisenstein's use of term 'ideogram' is a key-element for my employment of his theory and work in audio-visual practice. It enables me to stage my idea of the artwork as a material complex vis-à-vis his dual notion of montage: at once producing my affiliation with his idea of 'nonsynchronisation', which in accordance with Saussurian linguistics I understand as working on the level of 'signifier', whilst also enabling me to criticise his notion of the counterpunctal use of the material, as 'signified', into the film as ideogram, as 'sign'. I elaborate on this identification through Barthes' (linguistic) criticism of Eisenstein's montage later on in the text. From the specificity of Eisenstein's position vis-à-vis language theories, in this research project, I attempt to articulate a different approach.

²² Despite this identification of montage as working along the lines of a Hegelian dialectic, however, I argue that the functionality implicit in the ideological directive marks montage towards a Marxist dialectic also. Eisenstein's films do not aspire to beauty in the sense of an objective, spiritual ideality beyond a human '*Mangelhaftigkeit*' (lack). Rather, they are propaganda pieces, which mark the individual as part of the collective, and the collective as a necessarily political and material collective. The ideality of montage on that level is a political ideality. I am unsure whether this articulates yet another paradox, or merely presents the interdependence of materiality and spirituality, and the inevitability of their reversal. It appears to me at this stage that Eisenstein's montage films, understood as a particular realisation of conflict, conflictual at once materially and in terms of their content, necessarily display both, a Hegelian and a Marxist dialectic; at once promoting a 'higher order' and placing it within the material. The question that comes up here is whether or not the artwork, due to its spiritual foundation, remains always in conflict with a Marxist functionality, even when 'portraying' its aims? This question remains at the periphery of my investigation. However I consider it nevertheless interesting in terms of my investigation into the status of the artwork as a dialectic modality.

description identifies Eisenstein's approach to film form as a conflict between existing homogeneities and budding heterogeneities, which in their dialectical relativity, however, forever articulate homogeneous wholes.

Eisenstein states that 'by the combination of two "depictables" is achieved the representation of something that is graphically undepictable.' (Ibid., p128) I am interested in Eisenstein's notion of an undepictable as it suggests to me the idea of multiplicitous productions in individual experience. I further aim to pursue the potentiality of this elusion of representation, and the implied suggestions of an experiential, conceptual component in the montage film. However, I maintain that the identification of this undepictable within the progressive drive towards a spiritual ideality, refutes an unchallenged multiplicity and limits an experiential individuality. The nonsynchronous conflicts 'are impulses driving forward the total film', which is not their sum but crucially, still, a perceived whole *product* (ibid., p134). The conflict between the depictables, the cells, as staged by Eisenstein, is an ideal conflict. It is overcome in the construction of the cinematographic ideogram as a conceptual synthesis. This synthesis, I contest, is found in the 'proper' perception, a perception according to the ideological directives impressed by the montageur in relation to the montage film as a whole.

According to Eisenstein, the montageur works from the 'dominant' within a frame, or the 'guiding-shot' within a sequence, and influences the audience to experience the whole film according to his intentional (ideological) directive. Eisenstein is very clear on this point of direction when discussing his 'montage of attractions'. For him film and theatre are not media that are 'revealing the playwright's [director's] purpose'. Rather, they produce sense in the 'agitation through spectacle' (ibid., p31). In this articulation I understand him to affirm his disagreement with 'American' realism. His films do not reveal but produce. However, I argue that the intent of their production is not truly multiplicitous in the sense of being open to contingent and autonomous productions by the audience. I contend that the moment of multiplicity is staged in order to be manipulated by the author. Thus I argue, his films are not (tautologically) 'real', in the sense of producing a narrativising representation, but they are 'real' according to his (authorial) intention. For Eisenstein, the first task of cinema is the '*influencing of the audience in the desired direction* through a series of calculated pressures on its psyche.' (Ibid., p35) He works the openings between the

nonsynchronous cells, according to his intent, towards the conceptual organisation of the parts into a total, persuasive whole: the ideographic film.²³

Eisenstein uses films as propaganda tools. His montage films intend to persuade, away from a concurrent ideology of realism, but not away from an authorial ideology per se. His work might question the hierarchy between sound and image as employed and re-affirmed by American sound film. However, I argue that the material autonomy he is proposing is a false autonomy, subordinated and thereby relativised, to the greater scheme of the film as an ideographic sign manifesting his intended totality. I argue that the potential opening between the cells of montage is limited by its total production as an ideogram. The stress on context implied in such a linguistic identification hinder a truly open production: the ideographic identification signals the cultural and ideological context, which delimits the multiplicity of perception.²⁴ The ideogram entails a teleological progression towards communication, and thus stresses the (ideal) objectivity of its material combinations.

I argue that the 'ideographic' drive towards an orchestral counterpoint invites the undepictable back into depiction through a negative assessment thereof. Absence of depiction between the frames comes to be identified as the negative to its presence in the shot, the cell, and is immanently redeemed as conceptually present in relation to the total sense of the ideographic film. Thus, rather than opening up representational meanings to infinite re-assessments, Eisenstein's 'undepictable' proposes another form of closure; a conceptual rather than material one, but crucially still *one* closure.²⁵ This closure, I argue, again negates heterogeneous

²³ I concede that I am developing an argument for multiplicitous productions motivated by intent. However, I argue that this intent is not bound to an objective (ideal) totality of form. Rather, it is motivated towards the contingent production of the artwork.

²⁴ Later on in this chapter, I consider in more detail the issue of cultural specificity implied in the linguistic, formal and propagandistic premise of Eisenstein's strategy. Throughout the project, I consider the paradox between the relevance of a cultural specificity, and the desire for a global expression. These ideas hinge on the acknowledgement of the subject perceiving and producing the work as an ideological and aesthetic subject, which is singular only in relation to its position as an always and already collective subject.

²⁵ This distinction itself I construe to be problematic given its dependency on a sure notion of materiality. My emphasis on the ideological valuations, which determine a particular material reality, staged earlier via Eisenstein's criticism of simple realisms produced and affirmed in synchronic film making, make apparent that the differentiation between the material and conceptual is not clear-cut. I develop and contest this distinction in subsequent chapters, when an investigation into the technological developments of the digital surveys and re-assesses concurrent aesthetic notions of the material and the immaterial. In this sense, later on in this thesis, I probe the definition of a material and a conceptual practice vis-à-vis 'new' notions of materiality introduced via the aesthetic and ideological parameters of digital technology.

complexities in favour of single realities, representing unified truths in accordance with their respective ideological circumstance.

Thus I argue the cut is never 'felt' as an absence, and hence does not evoke a sensorial and individual engagement. Instead, the absence it creates is a representation of absence rather, which is 'filled' in relation to the (ideological) narrative concept of the film. The dialectic sublimation of Eisenstein's montage theory enables me to critically consider this Hegelian method of dialectic thinking *per se* in order to contemplate the aesthetic judgement and ideological investment involved in such a sublimation. The issue foregrounded thus is one about dialectic 'inevitability'. I am motivated by the question of whether or not it is possible to work from sonic and visual nonsynchronous juxtapositions toward an undepictable that is non-recuperable: an undepictable that is not representationally undepictable but experientially undepictable.²⁶

I am interested in the notion of an undepictable that engages the subject's imagination beyond consensual meaning making processes, without affirming these in a dialectical opposition. In other words I want to propose the notion of an undepictable that escapes recuperation. In my attempt to meet this problematic, I am working from Eisenstein's montage strategy and gauging the criticality and usefulness of his notion of an undepictable to my project. My attempt to articulate a position, *vis-à-vis* his project subsequently leads to a continued critique thereof.

As regards his 'ideographic' totality I disagree, not with the logic of his argument, but with the necessity of narrative collectivity, consensual sense processes, as a call for a critical practice. The nonsynchronous conflict however, which produces an undepictable I want to pursue further. I believe that the notion of a graphically undepictable, which Eisenstein positions at the fusion of its 'cells', in the 'form' of the film, allows me to extend the criticality of audio-visual montage beyond its

²⁶ I am juxtaposing the notion of representation of an 'undepictable', with the notion of an affective and particular experience which is 'undepictable'. One formulating a structural description, the other achieving a phenomenological 'fallout' (falling out of the structural order). With the notion of representation or experience, of an undepictable, I argue, Eisenstein's montage theories continually interrogate the relationship between a) a phenomenological and a structural perception, and b) the tension between the subject as an individual or a collective subject. I understand that my investigation into the artwork as material complex necessarily highlights and considers this conjunction of subjectivity. I am problematising the duality of the subject having a private and non-reflexive experience in relation to a shared representation (sense) throughout this thesis.

harmonious return. I want to exploit the term undepictable, and query its production for an open, multiplicitous and individual perception of the material arrangement as complex. My motivation to formulate a strategy for an art practice that works as a material complex without admitting itself to consensual harmony, either of a conceptual or a material kind, ensues from the dilemma staged via Eisenstein's montage. The seeming futility of this attempt, I understand rather than frustrating the production of complex artworks, presents the motivation to produce such work exactly. I acknowledge this futility, and at the same time acknowledge it as a motivation to produce work, which continually remains a provocation rather than an (objective) realisation.

Thus I continue my interest in this undepictable, and re-evaluate my agreement with nonsynchronicity in the next part of this chapter. I recognise here that my position of affiliation at the point of nonsynchronisation, identifies my practice within structural criticism, whilst my non-affiliation with the synthesising dynamic signals a criticism of structuralism's dialectic quality via an experiential, phenomenological, engagement. I pursue my investigation from an acknowledgement of this dual position.

Art as Conflict

The discussion of Eisenstein's montage-film so far has revealed at its basis a dynamic concept of contradiction between the incongruous part, and its relationship to the aesthetic [linguistic] system it is positioned in through the identification of montage as an ideographic principle. What I recognise as the most crucial issue of debate is the dynamic nature of the conflict that characterises and produces this dynamic, and which provokes a desire to overcome its oppositionality in the production of a harmonious consensual sense.

In the 1929 essay 'A Dialectic Approach to Film Form', Eisenstein, following Marx and Engels, explains this dynamic concept of antagonistic opposition within the notion of a 'dialectic materialism'. In his terms, such conflictual mechanisms between the parts and the whole, hold in all fields of (artistic) material production. According to Eisenstein it is, then, not only the audio-visual montage of film but any 'thing', and art in particular, that is based on a dynamic concept of conflictual oppositionality. For him '*art is always conflict*' (Eisenstein, 1992b, p138).

Eisenstein understands the world at large according to his 'montage of conflict'. He describes the world as a constant struggle of conflictual expressions and their resolution in a higher order synthesis of consensual sense, which is immanently part of a conflictual situation yet again. Talking about the antagonism implicit in such a conception, Eisenstein states that:

The foundation for this philosophy is a dynamic concept of the things:

Being -as a constant evolution from the interaction of two contradictory opposites.

Synthesis -arising from the opposition between thesis and antithesis.

A dynamic comprehension of things is also basic to the same degree, for a correct understanding of art and of all art-forms. In the realm of art this dialectic principle of dynamics is embodied in

CONFLICT

as the fundamental principle for the existence of every artwork and every art-form. (Ibid., p138)

According to Eisenstein's 'dynamic concept of things' the artwork is a continuous 'Being' rather than a finished project. In his terms conflict produces the artwork in constant 'evolution' rather than as fixed object. His artwork is continually produced in the 'interaction of two contradictory opposites'. In agreement with the texts discussed earlier, these contradictory elements are the material cells of a work, which produce at their unexpected junctures what is graphically undepictable. That this dynamic is the fundamental principle of every artwork, I argue, suggests that the undepictable, which arises out of this conflictual opposition, too, is a fundamental principle of every artwork. In this sense, the dynamic quality that drives this continual production, provides me with the undepictable that I want to pursue. However, his 'Being' is not simply a continuous production but a progressive development: the notion of a dialectical, higher order, synthesis marks this development as a purposeful ideal.

In order to critique Eisenstein's progressive purposefulness, and to formulate the provocation for an unlimited undepictable, I turn to Roland Barthes. In particular I consider Barthes' critique of Eisenstein's montage films vis-à-vis my critique of his montage theories as staged so far. The notion of 'Being' tacit in Eisenstein's dynamic concept, I argue, compares to Barthes' ideas of 'signifying', in the sense that they both highlight a perceptual engagement. Thus in the next part of this chapter I parallel Eisenstein's conception of '[montage] art as conflict' with Roland

Barthes' notion of 'art as signifying'. I compare the perceptual dynamic suggested in Barthes' 'signifying gaze' with Eisenstein's 'dynamisation of the 'traditional' view'. This affords me a clearer identification of the methodological and ideological status of Eisenstein's 'dynamic concept of things' and allows me to scrutinise this 'conflict' in order to extend its outcome beyond a dialectical return.

In his essay 'The Third Meaning', Barthes discusses Eisenstein's work in reference to its montage strategy. Barthes concerns himself with the still image in Eisenstein's films. He considers the dynamic concept *within* the individual frame. He discusses the individual images in relation to what he considers a first level semiotic meaning, a second level symbolic meaning, and finally a third level of meaning in the 'filmic' where, according to him, sense is made in a singular 'signifying' practice. This text will become central to my argumentation against the counterpunctal method and in favour of nonsynchronous practice provoking the perception of an undepictable. I adopt and extend Barthes' critique of Eisenstein's theories of montage within the *still image* in relation to a theory of the *moving image*. Barthes' mode of critique, the notion of 'art as signifying', developed beyond the still image, aids me to stage my argument for a singular and nonsynchronous art practice and against a counterpunctal method of combination. However, in order to stage Barthes' ideas vis-à-vis Eisenstein's theories of the moving image, I am in the first instance not focusing on this particular text, but turn to other texts in which Barthes outlines the notion of art as signifying in a more general way. This aids me to position Barthes' ideas of 'signifying' in the still image, alongside Eisenstein's ideas of 'conflict' between moving images, and helps me to situate my practical ambitions in relation to both methods.

Barthes versus Eisenstein; beyond the conflict of montage, towards the artwork as a signifying complex

In his essay 'Right in the Eyes' in which he considers the gaze within artistic production, Barthes comes to pronounce that 'the arts in general derive from signifying.' (Barthes, 1991, p237) He comes to this acknowledgement via a consideration of the gaze, specified as the perceiving mechanism of art, in relation to the recognition of a sign. In the text, elaborating this problematic, he states that:

A sign is what repeats itself. Without repetition there is no sign, for we could not recognize it, and recognition establishes the sign. Now Stendhal notes, the gaze can say

everything but cannot repeat itself, “word for word”. Hence the gaze is not a sign, yet it signifies. What is this mystery? It is that the gaze belongs to the realm of signification whose unit is not the sign (discontinuity) but signifying [signifiante], whose theory Benveniste has proposed. In opposition to language, an order of signs, the arts in general derive from *signifying*. (Ibid., p237)

Barthes, following Benveniste, identifies art’s making of meaning beyond the realm of the ‘sign’ in the process of ‘signifying’.²⁷ This quote presents his differentiation between a (collectively) readable sign, and an experiential moment of signifying, which according to Barthes falls outside shared language, and rests in the realm of a singular perception. In this sense, the gaze is an action, a continuity that cannot repeat itself, and hence cannot produce what it sees as a sign: collective and solid. Rather, it is forever signifying; producing itself continually. The concept of a continuous signifying, similar to Eisenstein’s philosophy, also expresses a ‘dynamic concept of the things’. Rather than trusting the solid state of the ‘thing’ as a sign, it urges on beyond its (linguistic) categorisation: ‘its space of action is located beyond appearance: it implies at least that this “beyond” exists, that what is “perceived” (gazed at) is truer than what is simply shown.’ (Ibid., p240). This sensing of a ‘truer’ reality, I argue, resonates Eisenstein’s distrust of simple realisms. However, Barthes’ ‘truer’ does not arise from ‘the interaction of two contradictory opposites’ (Eisenstein, 1992b, p138). Rather, it rises, as a matter of perception, out of the material. Although this perceptual beyond is still set in opposition to a structural recognition, I argue, Barthes’ oppositionality is not necessarily antagonistic. Thus it offers a means to critique Eisenstein’s conflictual oppositionality, and its consequent resolution in a consensual (narrative) sense.

For Barthes too, however, art identified as signifying, at once elaborates a systemic position and swiftly negates it. I argue that Barthes ‘beyond’, staged in structural terms, remains necessarily in relation to the ‘shown’, leaving any elaboration or criticism of its suggestion in the structural realm. However, I understand Barthes’ dialectical relation to be more critical of its own method than Eisenstein’s, and thus more useful to my project of elaborating the possibility of a experiential beyond in the material complex. The continuous production of signifying is structural, its substance however, refers to the field of the signifier and not to signification. It is perceptual rather than formal, and implies a continual motion of ‘non-resolving’ production (deferral of meaning), without insisting on an orchestrated, consensual,

²⁷ Emile Benveniste *Problèmes de Linguistic Générale vol. 1 & 2*, 1966 & 1974

second step of (re-)organising the nonsynchronous material, the cells, into a total sign, a total film. Referring back to an earlier footnote in which I identified Eisenstein's notion of nonsynchronisation, in accordance with Saussurian linguistics to be working on the level of the signifier, I can now, within Barthes' semiotic project propose nonsynchronisation as a continual signifying action of non-resolution. This affirms my interest in the first step of montage, the nonsynchronous juxtapositions. However, this identification also re-stages my disagreement with the counterpunctal use of its diverging parts in relation to the whole of the film. Rather than allowing the subjects to produce the work in their individual perception, Eisenstein's montage formally guides the signifying of its conflict by 'exercising emotional influence over the masses' (collective audience) (Eisenstein, 1998, p35). The intention to 'influence', delimits the nonsynchronous moments of conflict within a purpose. Thus Eisenstein's conflictual signifying is idealised and arrested vis-à-vis consensual sense.

By contrast, Barthes understands signifying to declare 'a field of infinite expansion in which meaning overflows' (Barthes, 1991, p237). There is, according to him, 'an object (or an entity) whose being inheres in its 'excess'', beyond structural signification (ibid., p238). He calls this variously: the *grain*, the *punctum*, the *accent* or the *filmic*.²⁸ In every instant the terms describe aspects of the artwork at which the material escapes the collectively signified reading, and comes to exist continually in the subject's individual experience thereof. It is particularly in his book *Camera Lucida*, in reference to the photographic image, that he investigates the artistic production at the limit of structural meaning. In the introduction to this text, he describes looking at a photograph of Napoleon's younger brother, Jerome. He focuses on Jerome's eyes and writes how he could never communicate to anybody their hold on him:

Sometimes I would mention this amazement, but since no one seemed to share it, nor even to understand it (life consists of these little touches of solitude), I forgot about it. My interest in Photography took a more cultural turn. (Barthes, 2000, p3)

²⁸ In his essay on the 'The Third Meaning' (where Barthes acknowledges the theoretical influence of Julia Kristeva's notion of the 'unsayable'), Barthes calls this location of material configuration an 'accent' and the 'filmic' ('Third Meaning' in *The Responsibility of Forms*, 1991, p41 ff). In other essays he refers to these locations of signifying as the 'grain' or the 'punctum' ('Musica Practica', in *The Responsibility of Forms*, 1991, p261 ff; and in *Camera Lucida*, 2000). I use the term 'accent' in acknowledgement of these other locations. In the next two chapters, Kristeva's notion of the 'signifying practice of the text' develops this articulation of a structural critique at the limits of structuralism.

This articulates a something in the photograph -or in extension in the artwork at large- that is not reducible to a systemic representation and hence to the categorisation and organisation of its units for communication. This 'something-point' of material configuration produces continually an absence of all structural (consensual) meaning, which leaves Barthes alone in his appreciation of the image, the artwork. This 'solitude', I argue, opens up the possibility for every meaning. According to Barthes, the 'punctum is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole- and also a cast of the dice. A photograph's punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).' (Ibid., p27) Such an accent '-subverts not the content but the entire practice of meaning.' (Barthes, 1991, p56) It is where the work is signifying: provoking sense processes in the field of the signifier without ever attaching them to a signified. Thus, for Barthes, art identified in this way is always and continually signifying, never proposing a complete sign. 'I do not know what its signified is, at least I cannot give it a name, but I can clearly see the features – the signifying accidents of which this heretofore incomplete sign is composed.' (Barthes, 1991, p42). In his terms at the accent (the punctum, the grain or the filmic) the sign is incomplete and continually involves the subject in its realisation. Signifying defined as such a process of provisional and continuous realisation declares the space of art as an active space of meaning making: a space of infinite production in perception. I argue that in signifying there is neither collective sense nor nonsense, Rather, it challenges the dialectical oppositionality between sense and nonsense and proposes 'non-sense' as phenomenological sense, instead.²⁹

I propose that in principle Barthes' accent, is comparable to Eisenstein's notion of the undepictable. However, whereas Barthes' accent enables an infinite production in perception, the directive quality of Eisenstein's montage theory undermines such a perceptual infinity. I articulate and confirm this idea via Barthes' and Eisenstein's different valuation of repetition. Whilst Barthes denies the artwork repetition

²⁹ I am using the term 'non-sense' here via Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In a collection of his essays brought together in the book *Sense and Non-Sense*, Merleau-Ponty articulates 'non-sense' not in reference to rational sense, as its nonsensical opposite, but rather describes with it a sense that comes out of 'sensation'. Non-sense, then, is sense produced by a phenomenological subject, who exists in the world produced continually through his/her sensorial existence in it; a priori outlining a 'life world' and 'intersubjectivity'. In this life world the intersubjective subject produces sense through sensory motor actions towards this world. According to Merleau-Ponty, these motions are motivated by doubt, rather than knowledge; sensation rather than rationality - and so, I argue, is the idea of signifying. Merleau-Ponty's ideas of doubt and uncertainty driving the human relation to his/her life-world and the consequent notion that he/she makes sense of this world, and him/herself, as non-sense, is particularly articulated in the central essay of *Sense Non-Sense*, 'Cézanne's Doubt' (orig. 1945). (Merleau-Ponty, 1964a)

understanding it to be instead, like the gaze, a signifying continuum, Eisenstein understands repetition as central to montage. Repetition and rhythm, for him, being the 'dramatic principle', which intensifies the conflict toward the organisation of a counterpunal whole. I argue that the issue of repetition marks the fundamental distinction between their projects and allows me to formulate a clearer criticism of the limit of Eisenstein's 'conflict' and consequently the limit of his undepictable.

Repetition Destroys the Expanse of Signifying

Comparing his theories of montage with concurrent techniques of musical composition, Eisenstein quotes from René Guilleré's essay on the 'Jazz Age' to express his affiliation with the new aesthetic of musical structuring through repetition.³⁰ He suggests that 'modern esthetics is built upon the disunion of elements, heightening the contrast of each other: repetition of identical elements, which serves to strengthen the intensity of contrast.' (Guilleré quoted in Eisenstein, 1977c, p80). This strengthening of 'the intensity of contrast' is, according to Eisenstein necessary to progress to the synthesis that is the total film. He appreciates Guilleré's notion of repetition as a key principle for the dynamic concept of montage. The montage film as a whole is created through the repetition of colliding juxtapositions. Repetitions serialise the conflicts between incongruous cells. Such serialisation creates the 'dramatic principle' of the montage film; intensifying the conflict and propelling it towards a higher order resolution in synthesis.

For Eisenstein, then, the repetition of contrasting juxtapositions, establishes the intensity of the work and ultimately leads to the 'overcoming' of that (intense) conflict in the total film. In this sense repetition stabilises the film, which 'is almost invariably derived from a struggle of opposites, linked by the unity of conflict.' (Eisenstein, 1968, p157) Montage affirms a system of signifier and signified, working between difference and similarity. Their repeated duality, I argue, sutures meaning in the ideographic sign that is the film, which consequently offers a consensual (narrative) meaning.

I believe the difference of opinion, between Eisenstein and Barthes, with regard to the status of repetition, lies not only on a formal level, concerning material repetition, but rather highlights an important conceptual difference. With the disclaimer for

³⁰ René Guilleré, 'Jazz Age', in *Le Cahier Bleu*, No 4, 1933

repetition in the artwork I understand Barthes to describe his idea of art as a 'true' temporality, an infinity, beyond the structural project, working continually at its limits. If the sign needs repetition, in order to attain solidity, and the artwork at the accent is denied this stabiliser, then the accent can never be a sign but is forever signifying. By contrast, I understand Eisenstein's embracing of repetition to affirm his work as producing a stable sign. I argue that repetitions support the intentions of the author to intensify the 'dominant effects', which formulate the attraction of montage. This identification clarifies the dynamic philosophy of 'montage of conflict' not to produce an actual non-perspectival infinity. Rather, the perspective, understood as a perceptual hierarchy, is produced via the ideological directive of the author, supported and solidified by repetition. The montage film's conceptual synchronicity is rendered actual, in the sense of effectual and consensual, in this authorial insistence. It is realised by the audience, assumed as an ideological audience, perceiving the total film according to dominant effects of the author's ideological intent. I contest that as a consequence of this intensified directive, Eisenstein's undepictable does not propose an accent in the sense of Barthes; it does not present an actual undepictable. Rather, the focus on repetition confirms Eisenstein's montage as intentional, working towards the recognition of a *certain* undepictable.

To verify my articulation of Eisenstein's undepictable as a certain undepictable, I turn to Barthes' text on 'The Third Meaning'. Thus, I elaborate Barthes' notion of a third level of meaning at the accent, in relation to his notion of a symbolic (collective) sense in Eisenstein's still imagery. From there I query the notion of an undepictable at the cut, vis-à-vis this symbolic and this third meaning respectively. This re-assesses the undepictable in Barthes' estimation of the accent and in relation to the semiotic project, and brings my articulation of Barthes' signifying dynamic of the artwork in direct contact with Eisenstein's dynamic of conflict.

In his text on 'The Third Meaning' Barthes differentiates between three levels of semiotic meaning. The first level semiotic is identified as a primary semiotic: informational and intentional of communication, establishing a denotative level of meaning. The second level by contrast describes a plane of symbolism. Symbolic referentiality is not achieved in the sense of the meaning of the primary semiotics [where signifier and signified refer to each other horizontally in the making of a readable message – according to the Saussurian definition of *associative relations* of the parts to each other]. Rather, as an elaborated science the symbol refers to context and origin at once [horizontally and vertically – according to the Saussurian

definition of *syntagmatic relations* in which the relation of the part to the whole is as important as the relation between parts].³¹ The science of the symbol considers material configuration and (semiotic) placing as a whole, and comes to signification through its totality. Barthes understands this symbolic level as a double determination, at once expressing an artistic intention as well as performing a translation of a common lexicon of symbols into material configurations. The symbolic level thus designates the viewer/listener as an individual recipient, whose individuality however is defined in relation to the collective he/she is a part of. The viewer and listener understands the work at once through his/her perception as an autonomous subject, and also reads it through the cultural lexicon he/she is defined by. But then, Barthes describes a third level of meaning produced continually at the earlier mentioned accent in the process of signifying.

I am not certain whether my reading of this third meaning is justified -if it can be generalized- but already it seems to me that its signifier possesses a theoretical individuality. For on the one hand, this signifier cannot be identified with the simple *Dasein* of the scene; it exceeds the copy of the referential motif, it compels an interrogative reading -an interrogation bearing precisely on the signifier not on the signified, on the reading, not on intellection: it is a "poetic" apprehension. (Barthes, 1991, p43)

For Barthes, Eisenstein's still images cannot be identified as producing such a 'third meaning'. For him Eisenstein's imagery does not include an 'interrogative' accent. By contrast, in that he defines Eisenstein's art as a system of displacements and substitutions, he understands it through his ideas on symbolic semiotics. This definition elucidates Eisenstein's frames as working on a diegetic, historical and ideological symbolism (the symbolic origins of its visual and sonic cells), displacing them from their symbolic origin (in a process of 'vertical uprooting') and soon reconstituting them in relation to a new symbolic meaning.

I employ Barthes' theories of the accent in the still image not in relation to (the actual) images represented, Eisenstein's cells, but in relation to the conceptual associations produced in-between these cells. Eisenstein claims that at the cut a non-representable, associative undepictable, is produced by the engaged subject. This proposal seems comparable to Barthes' notion of a singular understanding produced at the accent. However, as a consequence of my articulation of

³¹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 1986, p122

Eisenstein's montage theory as producing a total film via its ideological context (propaganda), I contend that his undepictable does not produce a 'third meaning'. It does not propose an 'interrogative' accent. Instead, it works on a dynamic of displacement and substitution of the symbolic semiotic: nonsynchronisation leading to a conceptual displacement of the signifier, which eventually, through substitution, in a counterpunal arrangement is lead to a 'new' signified, expressing the undepictable as another symbolic sign, hence rendering it depictable. Ultimately the serialisation of such symbolic displacements and substitutions articulates the whole film as a 'new' symbolic sign. In this sense my identification of Eisenstein's dialectic dynamic of montage as a structural progression that moves towards an ideal (objective) totality, is affirmed within the context of Barthes' symbolic semiotic. Its material strategy is identified at the level of a symbolic signification of the whole, where meaning is made in the totality of its context, and recognition is forged via repetition: the serial displacement and substitution of symbolic signifiers. In this sense Eisenstein's films force one perspective; a symbolic hierarchy and orientation.

I believe that this identification of Eisenstein with the symbolic, and the symbolic as presenting one perspective, forging one signification, undermines the promotion of Eisenstein's work as provoking continually a multiplicity of productions. In this I follow Barthes, who, in reference to the single image, suggests that thereby 'we see that Eisenstein's "art" is not polysemous: it selects meaning, imposes it, belabors it' (ibid., p45). I contend that, due to Eisenstein's focus on the cut, the conflict between cells (the still images), not only the potentially polysemous relations *within* these images but also *between* these images in time is 'belabored' and 'imposed' upon. In this sense Barthes' evaluation applies to montage theory as a theory of the *moving image* not only to the single *still frame*.

Consequently I argue that the context of the symbolic is the signifying realm of Eisenstein's montage film. The absence between frames is not really an open absence rather, it is a recognisable absence whose potential ambiguity is resolved through the symbolic signification of the context (the collective of the audience and the film as a whole). Understood in this way, montage articulates a structural absence between differences, resolvable within a dynamic of similarity, articulated through the lexical system of the film. Thus I contend that Eisenstein's films are artistic productions of equivalences, for which comparison (to the vertical and the horizontal simultaneously) is the leading dynamic. His films are, then, maybe not conventionally narrative and perspectival (according to a dominant ideology and

supporting a concurrent hierarchy of material valuation/aesthetics), but they nevertheless express the investment of an ideological and consensual, narrative sense.

The intentional ideology of Eisenstein's undepictable as a representation of undepictability rather, I argue, renders the undepictable produced in the conflict of montage an *aesthetic* undepictable rather than an *experiential* undepictable. It is identified immanently within the system of its validation. I contest thus that the cells of montage, in collision, do not perform their collision course to infinity but to an infinite end. This 'end' is intended by the artist and is qualified by the symbolic circumstance of the viewing and listening subject and the work. Eisenstein's material dissonance is an aesthetic articulation of 'irregularity', which 'shall evoke in the consciousness and feelings of the spectator, reader, or auditor, that same initial general image which originally hovered before the creative artist.' (Eisenstein, 1977d, p33). This confirms the authority of the artist, and assumes the subjects as (symbolic) aesthetic subjects, who follow authorial conventions. In this sense the nonsynchronous moments in Eisenstein's montage theory are clarified as discernible, symbolic, 'irregularities', which are re-aligned, via the overall symbolic context of the film, to produce a consensual (narrative) closure: the film as objective ideality.³²

I contest that the 'simple gratification' of *synthetic realism*, which Eisenstein along with Pudovkin and Alexandrov, in the 'Statement [on Sound]', criticised for its advertisement of one naturalised reality, is replaced through a *symbolic realism*. The material elements -vision and sound- may remain dissonant, the readings in-between the frames, at the cut, however are assured as consonances through the classification of the material in relation to its particular symbolic lexicon, as well as through the identification of the viewer/listener in his/her affiliation to such a lexical register. This symbolic frame of reference foregrounds the relationship of the film to its particular cultural and ideological circumstance, which, I argue, ensures its transparent readability.³³ In this sense I confirm that Eisenstein's montage theory,

³² I understand the notion of an objective ideal to arrest the critical development of a more complex art practice, which could criticise its symbolic foundations and forge more complex material *and* conceptual expressions. In my project I aim to articulate this assessment further. In particular it is in the tacit juxtaposition of G.F.W. Hegel's 'ideality' and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's 'doubt', that a clearer understanding of the relationship between ideality and subjectivity is being sought later on in this thesis.

³³ There seems to be a paradox in Eisenstein's ideality with regard to the national confines and the international aspirations of his montage theory.

although attacking a concurrent (American) hierarchy of material valuation and its absolutism, instantly proposes a new hierarchy and totality.

Eisenstein's idea of 'conflict' constructs 'The Filmic Fourth Dimension', but crucially it is one distinct dimension, rather than open-ended n-dimensionalities. For Eisenstein the idea of open-ended, n-dimensional, and individual impressions are 'that dreadful swamp of inexpressibles in which you sink when you have no clear aim or when your purpose is not cast in a firm compositional form, expressing one basic idea.' (Eisenstein, 1968, p162) In relation to my earlier debate, his notion of an undepictable, then, is affirmed not as an actual space of inexpressibles. It does not constitute such an 'inexpressible swamp'. Rather, it is assured in its expression within the symbolic framework of the film.

The consequence of Barthes' identification of Eisenstein's montage as a symbolic semiotic is crucial to my project. I argue that the symbolic foregrounds the correspondence between the individual subject perceiving the work and his/her constitution as a social subject. It ties the work to a geographical, cultural and political context: to the ideological circumstance of the work. The undepictable identified as a symbolic undepictable orientates it within the drive of the total film and its symbolic circumstance. This is in stark contrast to Barthes' 'accent', which constructs a 'third meaning' that is not derived as a consensual meaning. It is neither semiotic nor symbolic. Rather, in the accent, Barthes proposes a perceptual autonomy. Similarly, I attempt to articulate the artwork as a material complex, which provokes the subject to realise it in his/her individual experience thereof, beyond conventional hierarchies of perception, and without being guided by the ideological

The COUNTERPUNTAL METHOD of constructing the sound film will not only not weaken the INTERNATIONAL CINEMA but will bring its significance to unprecedented power and cultural height.

Such a method for constructing film will not confine it to a national market, as must happen with the photographing of plays, [which is what they understand the 'adhesive' sound films to become necessarily] but will give greater possibility than ever before for the circulation through the world of a filmically expressed idea. (Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandrov, 1992, p319)

I argue that this quote elucidates Eisenstein's beliefs that his method of audio-visual montage will open filmic meaning up infinitively, divorcing it from a local context, and make it accessible globally. However, my investigation of his montage practice via Barthes' notion of the symbolic reveals montage not as *an absence of meaning enabling all meaning*, but rather as a representation of absence imminently leading to an identification within its symbolic framework. In this regard, my investigation of Eisenstein's writings, I contest, make apparent a paradox between his desire for a global project of film-making, and the suture of his method of montage in the symbolic, which confines its reading to a local situation.

intentions of the artist. This presumes that the subject has the possibility to be autonomous, and that a material expression can escape recuperation into a shared context of meaning, semiotic or symbolic. Both these issues are central to my subsequent investigation into the artwork as a material complex.

With my project, then, I want to promote an artistic strategy which is continually challenging hierarchies, ideological and aesthetic, and which refutes both vertical and horizontal recuperations. What I am seeking to explore is a (non-dialectical) nonsynchronisation of material in order to produce undepictables of n-dimensional kinds, and to involve the subject as a contingent and autonomous subject. I call this strategy 'disjointing' and stage this term in relation to Barthes' signifying.³⁴ The verb to disjoin evokes the motion of atomising [aesthetic] hierarchies, whilst the present participle implies the perpetuity of this action. From here I move on to enquire whether Barthes' notion of signifying at the accent presents a critical strategy in respect to my ambition.

³⁴ I am careful to differentiate my notion of disjointing from Giles Deleuze's notion of a 'disjunctive synthesis'. Discussing the 'Sensible' Deleuze suggests that every sensation is synthetic. He understands the sensible (artistic) material as series, which are always relative to each other. In *Logic of Sense* Deleuze differentiates between three distinct types of synthesis involved in sensation: the 'Connective Synthesis', the 'Conjunctive Synthesis' and the 'Disjunctive Synthesis'. (Deleuze, 2001, pp175-77) Whilst the first two describe the sensation in the synthesis of one series or of converging series, the third considers the forced synthesis of a divergent series. I differentiate my 'disjointing' from his 'disjunctive synthesis' on the basis that his term implies a relative continuity as the principle characteristic of the sensible. Thereby all elements are always already in relation to each other and any synthesis, connective, conjunctive or disjunctive is, I argue, tautological. To bring this critique of relativism to bare on audio-visual production, I refer to Deleuze's book *Cinema 1: the movement image*. There he calls the individual shots (Eisenstein's cells), image-mouvement. He describes that all people, places and things, 'in' the image-mouvement are in motion. However, this motion is not an autonomous fluidity. Rather, in this motion all people and things are relative to each other confirming the 'plan of the film'. In relation to this, the 'Sensible', for Deleuze, forms a series that are connecting, conjunctive or disjunctive. In either case they stage a 'unity in mobility'. In relation to 'the plan of the film' they are recognisable as a 'temporal-perspective', a relative fluidity. I argue that this notion of a 'temporal-perspective' renders all 'disjunctions' unified in their relative positions in time. (As such they are negative to a fixed cinematic interpretation.) (Deleuze, 1997, pp1-28) Eisenstein's montage-film understood as a Deleuze's 'Sensible' seems to correspond to 'disjunctive synthesis'. In turn, 'disjunctive synthesis' reflects on Eisenstein's conflicting juxtapositions in montage, where a synthesis is reached by force, from diverging series. For Deleuze this unity of mobility is the great achievement of montage. By contrast, it is in critique of this unity that I position my idea of 'disjointing'. As a corollary, this differentiation allows me to make explicit my critique of relativism. My project does not work on the pre-supposition of a relative continuity between the complex elements, as series, of an artwork. I suggest that this forecloses any complexity outside the series. This critique of relativity is more relevant to chapter two and three, where the idea of sense, nonsense or non-sense is being discussed in relation to the complexity of artistic production.

Barthes' Obtuse Signifying

Barthes' notions of 'third meaning' and 'signifying' investigated in parallel to Eisenstein's idea of a 'montage of conflict' and his notion of the 'undepictable', clarifies the ideology and ideality of Eisenstein's montage project vis-à-vis symbolism. Barthes understands the symbolic to articulate an 'obvious' meaning, suturing the artwork. He promotes the idea of a 'third meaning', an 'obtuse' meaning, produced in the practice of 'signifying'.

Barthes identifies this 'obtuse' meaning, which is continually signifying, at the location of the 'accent', the 'punctum', 'the something in Jerome's eyes'. It is in this accent that, according to Barthes, perception exceeds the referential motif and the artwork does not follow a '*compositionally controlled*' expression. Instead it configures an experience which he says is too tenuous to be intentional on the part of the artist but rather encourages an 'emotive' participation on the part of the individual viewer. In this obtuse, the work does not pre-empt itself through the intention to (re-)organise its material articulations via a symbolic order. In the location of the something which escapes structural articulation, the artwork does not arrest its expression in representation, but continues to signify infinitely. Thus, I argue, structural hierarchies of signification, dependent on temporary closures in the signified, break down.

The 'breakdown' of meaning in the 'obtuse' is not overcome and determined through a lexical (ideological) symbolism. At the accent, the sign, Eisenstein's cinematographic ideogram, remains incomplete, and does not perform a synthesis. Rather, according to Barthes, it compels the viewer to 'inhabit' the image (the artwork). He suggests that 'this longing to inhabit, if I observe it clearly in myself, is neither oneiric (...) nor empirical (...); it is fantasmatic.' (Barthes, 2000, p40) In relation to the image of Jerome, Barthes positions himself, *in* these eyes, in complicity with the work, engulfed by its materiality, rather than at a distance from it. Barthes argues that the lack of a structural reference compels his *sensitive* body into the work, rather than indexing him as a structural subject (an aesthetic subject), judging the structural whole of the work.

He acknowledges that he borrows his methodology from phenomenology.³⁵ I understand him to suggest that at the accent the photograph is understood in terms of an intersubjective 'life-world'; where the subject is constituted in relation to the accent and the accent in relation to the subject, continually in the present.³⁶ The term signifying implies a continuous engagement with the work. The subject extends the material expression through his/her imagination and both come to exist continually in this engagement. It is this individual sensitivity that, according to Barthes, at once reveals and critiques structural limitations.

I understand that the phenomenological process of the artwork at this point of material configuration achieves 'simultaneity' of being: the emotive process of signifying produces a simultaneous production of the subject and the work. This phenomenological simultaneity is opposed to the differentiation defining the semiotic perspective, which makes visible the sign through processes of systemic equivalences and differences: codes, symbolic lexica. By contrast, in developing the idea of the accent, Barthes does not call on a symbolic context to find his way around this simultaneity but rather proposes an individual engagement. Thereby, he at once, reveals the unified reading of Eisenstein's simultaneity as a symbolic orientation, and proposes a level of criticism that works from a more singular position *inside* the work. Barthes' signifying does not produce a material simultaneity, using the material -sound and image- as '*elements of equal significance*'. Rather, Barthes' signifying produces a *conceptual simultaneity*, which clarifies Eisenstein's simultaneity as an ideal, a *representational simultaneity*. Eisenstein's model for simultaneity is a combinatory organisation of material cells,

³⁵In *Camera Lucida* Barthes contextualises his discussion of the photograph at the punctum by stating that 'in this investigation of Photography, I borrowed something from phenomenology's project and something from its language.' He admits that 'it was a vague, casual, even cynical phenomenology' (Barthes, 2000, p20). To me it presents nevertheless a phenomenological consideration, however vague and cynical.

³⁶ I am referring to Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenological project. In the *Primacy of Perception* he describes the world as a 'life-world', which I create through my being in it, and which in turn creates me as an intersubjective subject continually at the moment of this interaction. Merleau-Ponty talks about the concrete and abstract movements and gestures with which we approach the world and through which we construct and are constructed in that world. In this 'life-world' we grasp space through our bodily, intersubjective, situation. He writes that 'I grasp myself not as a constituting subject which is transparent to itself, and which constitutes the totality of every possible object of thought and experience, but as a particular thought, as a thought engaged with certain objects, as thought in act.' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964b, p22) In relation to Barthes, I understand it to be such a grasping, actively engaged intersubjectivity which constructs the photograph in the accent. I develop my use of phenomenology for a complex art practice in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

which produce the work through their superimposition.³⁷ The subject is not involved in this superimposition, and merely watches it from his/her pre-determined ideological position *outside* the work.

The loss of perspective in Eisenstein's nonsynchronisation is re-aligned for Barthes via invisible nominals of the symbolic (collective) register, never really abandoned as an organising principle in the first place. By contrast, Barthes loses his surveying perspective by placing himself within the work, by inhabiting it as a phenomenological life-world. In this way, his signifying processes propose personal and singular interpretations of the work from inside the accent. This seems to him 'to open the field of meaning totally, i.e., infinitely.' (Barthes, 1991, p44). However, beside the celebration of this engagement, he also mentions the futility of its infinity:

Analytically there is something ridiculous about it; because it opens onto the infinity of language, it can seem limited in the eyes of analytic reason. It belongs to the family of puns, jokes, useless exertions; indifferent to moral or aesthetic categories (the trivial, the futile the artificial, the parodic), it sides with the carnival aspect of things. (Ibid., p44)

His assertion that on this level the work is 'indifferent to moral and aesthetic categories' I understand to suggest that the (obtuse) work exists outside consensual aesthetic qualifications and is therefore not, or at least not exclusively and singularly, ideologically invested. The artwork in the obtuse presents, then, I argue, not a specific 'four dimensionality', but opens itself to n-dimensionality. These n-dimensionality offer me the possibility to articulate the artwork as material complex. Such complexity is produced in relation to multiple positions, accents,

³⁷ To dispel the idea that frames amicably 'blend' into each other, forming sequential organisations, which are differentiable, Eisenstein insists:

For, in fact, each sequential element is perceived not *next* to the other, but on *top* of the other. For the idea (or sensation) of movement arises from the process of superimposing on the retained impression of the object's first position, a newly visible further position of the object. (...) From the superimposition of two elements of the same dimension always arises a new, higher dimension. In the case of stereoscopy the superimposition of two nonidentical two dimensionalities results the stereoscopic three-dimensionality. (Eisenstein, 1992a, p141)

Acknowledging the dynamic of conflict at the basis of his production and pursuing this to its logical extension, the superimposition of a two-dimensionality -vision- with a nonidentical three-dimensionality -sound- would result in the expression of a four dimensionality. Fourth Dimensionality, temporality, I understand to be questioning laws of spatial orientations - perspective- and promote a kind of simultaneity in which all stimuli are present at once instead: a four dimensional space-time continuum.

which open the work towards contingent meanings, produced by the subject engaged as a sensitive body. This potentiality allows me to articulate individual sense not as nonsense, dialectically opposed to consensual sense. Rather, it acknowledges any sense as meaningful in its sensitive contingency.

However, the remainder of the quote hints at the question of the tenability of such a disjuncture of the work, and its subject, from its (symbolic and semiotic) collective/analytical register: 'Analytically there is something ridiculous about it' (ibid., p44). The notion of the ridiculous and the futile implicit in the attempt of the singular and infinite, relates back to my earlier acknowledgement of the futility of a beyond, implied in the dialectic nature of things. With Barthes, I acknowledge that the idea of a 'totally open field of meaning', produced in the material assemblage that is the artwork, is futile in the face of the dialectic dynamic that organises analytic reason. It seems inevitable that any singular expression finds its way back into a shared 'language' and is thus defined in the negative to such an eventual (shared) expression. However, as I stated earlier, the futility of such an attempt at total openness, I understand, rather than frustrating the production of complex artworks, presents the motivation to produce such work exactly. In this sense my choice of terms: the 'complex artwork' and 'disjointing', come to be clarified in their distinction to a total artwork, produced intentionally through a synthetic material assemblage.

Conclusion

The question that remains central to my research into the sensitive contingency of sense, produced in the individual perception of the artwork as a material complex, then, is, how, a singular and private notion of experience is conditioned, given that there is no such thing as a private language, and given that we are all, at once, singular *and* relative to a collective? The articulation of a private experience brings to the fore the relationship between the singular subject and his/her collective affiliation in the moment of production and perception of the accent. I go along with Barthes' notion of the accent in signifying. However, can Barthes' experience the accent as the location of the something, which, apparently, has no semiotic or symbolic meaning, remain really a radically individual experience?

This question highlights the issue of interdependence between the author and audience, as well as between materiality and its collective cultural framework of production and perception, at the core of my project. It probes the dialectic dynamic

of structural, analytical, sense making processes; material and linguistic. Can there be a radical accent in the obtuse, in which I singularly and emotively experience, make sense of, the work? Conversely is the accent, my sense of it, always opposed to the obvious, and bound up in the dialectic with its semiotic and symbolic register, and hence consensually meaningful as the negative of that obvious? These questions formulate the central issues of my research. In this sense they articulate the problematic of the subsequent chapters. Thus to answer these questions, in the next chapters, I tacitly query the 'overflow' and 'excess' of meaning, which Barthes positions in the obtuse moment, in relation to the (obvious) structural system it apparently overflows.

In conclusion to this first chapter, I acknowledge that the unexpected junctures of Eisenstein's montage, interpreted as continually produced undepictables, experienced at the junctions of the material assemblage, are useful to articulate my strategy of the artwork as a material complex. At least initially they are, if the junctures are understood not as ideal unexpected junctures, but as junctures that are unexpected in the sense that they produce temporary and singular undepictables, then, Eisenstein's montage theory is useful in developing my own ambition for an 'open-ended' art practice. However, the ideological investment of Eisenstein's project negates this possibility. Instead its ideological interest (propaganda) proposes only one reading, one undepictable per pre-determined unexpected junction. This undepictable is acknowledged as a fourth dimension, but crucially it is still one recognisable dimension, referencing a clear system of orientation in time and space.

I have shown that the depictable created in this fourth dimensional perception is not a material but a conceptual depictable. However, decidedly, its conceptuality is determined via a symbolic order, assuming as a corollary a symbolically determined subject. Hence it produces, at least in theory, one total meaning, one objective ideality. (Whether his films really manage to guide the audience exclusively to the propaganda message that the author, Eisenstein, intends, or not, is another matter.)

Barthes' accent seems to propose a more multiple and individual experience of the artwork. He does not purport an ideal conceptualisation, but understands the subject to be engaged, individually and emotively, in the production of the artwork. Barthes is not afraid of a 'swamp of inexpressibles'. Rather, he seems to celebrate the emotive experience in the obtuse. At the accent Barthes' subject extends the work

from his/her imaginative engagement with it. I am interested in this extension of the work by the subject. I am particularly interested to gauge the scope and consequence of this extension in the face of the apparent futility to overcome the dialectic recuperation of the material and the subject into the collective mould. With my suggestion for the artwork as a material complex, then, I want to provoke such an emotive and singular engagement. This engagement I understand to propose infinite, n-dimensional, extensions of the artwork, from the material junctions, in all directions, into the sensitive and contingent imagination of the subject.

Thus I aim to develop a strategy for art practice that works with the material as a simultaneous, non-hierarchical complex, and engages the viewer without directing him/her within a pre-given system of referentiality or in negation thereof. In other words, I want to provoke undepictables that are like accents, extendable (signifying) infinitely and personally *and* which exist not simply in contradiction to a structural whole. Rather, they are produced continually in the imagination of the subject, who in turn is identified as a contingent rather than an aesthetically unified subject also. To do so I develop Eisenstein's nonsynchronisation into a non-ideologically driven continually disjointing effort of perception. A priori I propose the artwork as produced in centrifugal motions, from the material junctions, into the emotive and singular circumstance of the viewing and listening subject.³⁸ This shifts the focus from production to perception and challenges thus the status of the author and the ideological intentions bound up in the artwork's production.

Despite my earlier agreement with Eisenstein's nonsynchronicity, at the end of this chapter, my strategy finds no identification in the symbolic framework of Eisenstein's montage. Rather, at this stage, Barthes' signifying processes help me to mark out my ideas. I identify with the present participle of signifying and the promise of its

³⁸Eisenstein considers such a centrifugality decadent:

It is only in periods of decadence in the arts that this *centripetal movement* changes to a *centrifugal* movement, hurling apart all unifying tendencies that are incompatible with an epoch that places an over-emphasis on individualism. (Eisenstein, 1977c, p84)

By contrast I am excited by the notion of an 'incompatibility' of sensation, and an 'over-emphasis' of the individual. I understand incompatibility, rather than to shut down communication, to propose an awareness to the fragility of its exchange. I believe the notion of incompatibility enables me to assert a critique of the totalising ideology which facilitates Eisenstein's assumed solidity and unity, and to instead stress the contingency, and individuality, the heterogeneity, of any exchange. This articulates my motivation for this project. *I seek to investigate the ideal of totality and homogeneity for artistic production, and critique this ideal as orthodox, in order to challenge concurrent ideological determinations of sense and value.*

continuity.³⁹ However, rather than staying with signifying in the accent, which still suggests a reference to the systemic whole, I instead propose the term disjoining as a non-ideal nonsynchronicity. Disjoining seeks to articulate a radical and non-intentional nonsynchronous signifying that does not aim at an orchestral counterpoint, *and* remains speculative about Barthes' identification of the accent also.

Thus I work on the articulation of an individual sense produced in a continual disjoining (an atomising) of consensual (narrative) meaning. The material elements as well as the subject are identified in their discrete particularity rather than in relation to a totality. In this way I am trying to produce a critique of the relationship between material elements -vision and sound- their hierarchical arrangement, its aesthetic judgement and the impact thereof on notions of materiality and subjectivity.

It is, then, from an experimental and critical location of disjoining as a strategy of atomising nonsynchronicity, taken up through Barthes' notion of signifying at the accent, that I propose an opening of the artwork at the limits of structural determination, toward a more individual and contingent evaluation. The subsequent chapters develop this affiliation and test the scope of its realisation as well as its consequence for artistic production and perception. In particular, chapter 2 concentrates on the material composition of Robert Smithson's film *Spiral Jetty* (USA, 1970). I develop the proposal of the artwork as a material complex, as articulated in this chapter, via the consideration of the perceptual complexity of Smithson's film. Observing my contingent and particular viewing of *Spiral Jetty* I problematise its form between the heterogeneous complexity of its scenes, and the homogenous totality of the film as a whole.

³⁹ This hybrid term highlights the *actuality* and the *continuity* of the present participle. My strategy of disjoining seeks to realise both these characteristics.

Chapter 2

Spiral Jetty; Audio-Visual Collage as Artistic Strategy

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Synopsis

*In this chapter I stage and develop the designation of the artwork as material complex via an engagement with Robert Smithson's film *Spiral Jetty* (1970). I come to describe the film as a 'collage-montage'. First I contend the film presents a complex material expression on the level of the scene (this complex scene I identify within the term collage). Second I contend this complexity is resolved through the insistent ideological drive of the film, which organises collage's centrifugal production in an ideal combination (this motion I identify within the homogenising quality of montage). To stage this argument I employ Kristeva's ideas of the 'signifying practice of the text' along with her ideas on the symbolic. I contest the term collage within her 'text', and, distinguishing her symbolic from Symbolism, I discuss *Spiral Jetty's* material complexity in relation to a 'tendential' symbolic rather than a symbolic 'order'. This highlights the centrality of the subject in its contingent circumstance of viewing, and leads me to critique the ideological specificity and dominance of montage within 'collage-montage', and to propose the idea of a 'temporal-collage' instead.*

Note to the reader:

This text has been written distinguishing between my contingent viewing of the film *Spiral Jetty*, and my theoretical analysis thereof. The viewing commentary is printed in standard font, whilst the theoretical investigation is typed in bold font. This serves to allow for two different readings: one concentrating solely on the observation of materiality, which is anecdotal and makes no claims to be justifiable beyond my individual and contingent viewing, and a theoretical analysis, which follows the strictures of an academic argument.

Introduction

This chapter takes up and develops further my contestations on the complexity of audio-visual combinations as performed in the first chapter. The central question elaborated in chapter one, namely whether or not a Barthesian 'accent' in the 'obtuse' enables a singular and emotive experience of spectatorship, is further evaluated here. The relationship of such a singularity to a consensual reading is queried through Robert Smithson's film *Spiral Jetty*, theorised via Julia Kristeva. In particular her 'signifying practices' and her ideas on the symbolic, are useful to stage this theorisation. What is queried is the status of signifying's individual production vis-à-vis shared (symbolic) sense making processes.

The framework of this enquiry is formed by a particular viewing of Robert Smithson's film *Spiral Jetty* (1970). This film was seen as part of the exhibition entitled 'En pleine terre' ('On Bare Earth') 'Eine Wanderung zwischen Landschaft und Kunst, Spiral Jetty und Potsdamer Schrebergärten' ('A Journey Between Landscape and Art, Spiral Jetty and Potsdamer Allotments'). This show featured a range of 'Land Art' projects from the late '60s to the present day. It was curated by the Museum für Gegenwart Kunst, in Basel, Switzerland, and run there from the 16th August to 16th November 2001. I am interested in my individual and contingent perception of this film as material complex. Thus this chapter investigates the film not as a historically and culturally (semiotically and symbolically) verified artwork, and pays no attention to Smithson's, or his critics', statements on the work. Rather, I concentrate on my individual and temporary perception of the film at the moment of viewing. I understand that this focus on the particular, contingent, perception rather than on the artwork as it exists within art-historical discourse, allows me to re-consider its aesthetic complexity and hence its criticality now. The individuality and contingency of my perception, I argue, allows me a fresh look at the material interplay within the work, beyond an aesthetically validated and unified reading of the film.

For this methodology I am taking my cue from Julia Kristeva's essay 'The Imaginary Sense of Forms'. In this essay, Kristeva describes and discusses a particular viewing of sculptures by Alain Kirili's which she views 'in the midst of the Gulf War' at *Commandement XI*, in Paris. I am inspired by her idea that sculpture, the artwork, 'lends its geometry to our projections, body and soul.' Rather than insisting on making her perception coincide with an art-historically verified reading, she understands the material 'lends itself to the most unsayable aspects of our corporeal

experience.' (Kristeva, 1991, pp29-30). I take measure on her method of viewing an artwork, and aim to perform just such a contingent projection, 'body and soul', in relation to *Spiral Jetty*.

I contest this method of viewing, and its issue of the singular and the collective, in relation to a Symbolist notion of a subjective perception. Edvard Munch's text 'on subjective vision' (1889) taken from his *Notebook and Diary Entries 1889-92*, allows me to draw such a connection.

The thing is that at different times you see with different eyes, you see differently in the morning than in the evening.

The way in which you see is also dependent on your state of mind.

It is this which makes it possible for a motif to be seen in so many different ways, and it is this which lends interest to art. (Art in Theory, p1041)⁴⁰

In my viewing of *Spiral Jetty* I investigate Symbolism's subjectivity in relation to signifying's singularity. Thereby Kristeva's positioning of the symbolic vis-à-vis her signifying practices is investigated also. Subsequently the conflation of Kristeva's ideas on the symbolic with Symbolist philosophies and practices aids me to clarify the status of the symbolic in relation to a private experience and enables me to probe this private experience in regard to sense making processes.

Barthes' critique of Eisenstein's montage principally centres around its symbolic investment and the consequent foreclosure of its material organisation according to a symbolic lexicon forging an intentional legibility. I develop this critique via Julia Kristeva's philosophies of the symbolic. Her notions of the symbolic are brought to bear on Smithson's film. Distinguishing her symbolic, from Symbolism, I identify the film's material complexity within the notion of a neo-symbolism: a symbolism after modernity, which finds no recourse to a symbolic lexicon but only shares in a 'tendential' symbolic.⁴¹ This conjunction is useful to clarify the status of the artwork as a material complex vis-à-vis montage's limitations identified by a Barthian symbolic semiotic.

⁴⁰ This text has not been published elsewhere. The excerpts printed in *Art and Theory 1815-1900* were selected from documents held at the Edvard Munch Museum in Oslo, Norway, translated by Ingeborg Owesen.

⁴¹ I am employing the term 'tendential' consciously as an attribute. In the role of the adjective, tendency denotes a quality produced in perception rather than a quality intrinsic to the material perceived. It suggests the material as a perceptuality and thus, I contend, involves the subject perceiving it.

In the process of this investigation I am re-evaluating my strategy of disjuncting in relation to Smithson's film, and in the terms of Kristeva's signifying. In this enquiry I bear in mind my critique staged regarding the totality and authorial intentionality in Eisenstein's montage theory. As a consequence of the ideological investment identified, in the last chapter, as preventing a truly complex practice of montage, I investigate the film *Spiral Jetty* with regard to (authorial) ideological intentions. Principally, I explore the sequencing of images, the framing, lighting, colour, pace, the sound-track and centrally the relationship between image and sound as the material elements of an aesthetic and ideological organisation. In this exploration the film's aesthetic valuation and ideological investment are tested by my particular viewing of its material complexity. Kristeva's ideas on the signifying practice of the text includes a consideration of the autonomy of the subject, working beyond the intention of the author and any stable registration of the artwork, producing the work continually in its perception. This idea becomes crucial to my encounter with Smithson's film.

However, in this attempt at a perceptual individuality, I acknowledge the moderation of my experience as an always already ideological, and hence always already aesthetic subject, and thus accept the problem, and possible futility, inherent in my attempt at an originary reading.⁴² However as a principle rather than in the particular, the motivation to do so, I argue, performs a shift in artistic sensibility from judging the work as an authorial product, to considering it as a production in perception, which has the potential to challenge a concurrent ideology.

I understand my desire to investigate the work in my contingent experience rather than in relation to its art-historical verification, in conjunction with Land Art's philosophy of the entropic and the temporal. My reason for choosing Smithson's work, and in particular to focus on his film *Spiral Jetty*, reflects his claims that his work is unconventional and challenges ideas of fixed monumentality that mainstream artwork acquires in the museum space.⁴³ I understand his stance

⁴² In the first chapter I clarify my position as a subject within Louis Althusser's notion of the subject as living 'spontaneously' or 'naturally' in ideology (Althusser, 1993, p45). For Althusser this ideological position is tautological: the subject understands the world through his/her ideological position within it. Following him I argue that the aesthetic subject is tautological vis-à-vis Art's ideology. To break such a tautological position and to investigate the potential for a subjectivity which is not ideological, or at least not tautologically so, in its perception and evaluation of an artwork, is an aim of this research project.

⁴³ In a sense I am counteracting Smithson's paradox which lies in making a filmic document of something he then states is an entropic monument. In his text 'Entropy and the New Monuments' printed in the *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, Smithson emphasises time and

against the monumental and the gallery, against 'The Establishment', as articulated in his 'Void Thoughts on Museums', comparable to Eisenstein's claims regarding the critical position of his montage theories.⁴⁴ Where Eisenstein states that his montage stands in critical contrast to the 'satisfaction of simple curiosity' afforded by the establishment of American narrative film, Smithson identifies his work in opposition to an institutionalised Gallery practice (Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandrov, 1992, p361). Both artists understand their work to critique a dominant (traditional) ideology.

Planning the Spiral Jetty

Spiral Jetty, 16mm film, colour, sound, Robert Smithson, 1970

1

The film starts with colourful textures and patterns which are moving rhythmically over the screen. The impression is one of having dived into a microscopic world. The textures have a cell like appearance. I am reminded of a biological programme on television, where single cell organisms, moving in a liquid substance, are observed under a microscope. The soundtrack, which runs parallel to this visual material, strengthens my impression of observing a fluidly moving micro-organism: a

decay rather than space and longevity as the central characteristics of the 'new' artwork. He stages how the contemporary artist works in materials that 'are not built for the ages but rather against the ages. That are involved in a systematic reduction of time down to fractions of seconds, rather than in representing the long spaces of centuries.' (Smithson, 1979, p10) In relation to this embracing of decomposition, his move out of the Gallery, onto a salt lake in Utah, to build the Spiral Jetty, presents itself as a conscious effort against a monumental and lasting work. He knows, that within time, his sculpture will be submerged by the lake and rendered 'non-existent' again: it is entropic, following the reversibility of the second law of thermodynamics. By contrast, the film, I argue, proliferates rather than decomposes the work. To develop and practice this critique, in this chapter, I am foregrounding the temporality and contingency of my perception of the film *Spiral Jetty*.

Smithson points out that film, since it can be played backwards as well as forwards, confirms this entropic reversibility. In his essay 'A Tour of the Monuments of the Passaic; New Jersey', from the same collection of his writings, he states that 'of course, if we filmed such an experiment we could prove the reversibility of eternity by showing the film backwards, but then sooner or later the film itself would crumble or get lost and enter the state of irreversibility.' (Ibid., p57) Despite this redemption of film into his general philosophy of entropy, I nevertheless understand Smithson's motivation to make the film, rather than leave the entropic monument decay, away from the Gallery, if not contradictory, then at least duplicitous. However, it is not his artistic integrity that I am interested in here.

⁴⁴ Smithson articulates a critique of the museum as a space for art in his essay 'Some Void Thoughts on Museums'. There he writes that 'visiting a museum is a matter of going from void to void.' (Ibid., p58) He discounts it as a space of experience and instead identifies it as a place of representation where art is not alive, a space of action, but dead and buried in its 'tomb'. He illustrates this thought colourfully in his essay 'The Establishment' where he states 'in the museum one can find deposits of rust labelled 'Philosophy', and in glass cases unknown lumps of something labelled 'Aesthetics'. One can walk down ruined hallways and see the remains of 'Glory'.' (Ibid., p79)

mixture of electronic sounds and the noise of wind compose this track. The stable rhythm and low pitched quality of the electronic sound supports the idea that something is moving inside a liquid. The slow and rhythmic repetitions of this track and the sound of howling wind enhance the movement of the imagery, and bring the micro-organism-like patterns to life in my imagination. Particularly, the wind adds to my sensation of life-ness. It brings a sense of energy and a notion of life-forces to my perception. In this way the sound-track creates the physical context of what I am seeing and extends it beyond the screen. I perceive the electronic composition as a rhythmic and low pitched synthetic thudding. The artificiality and compressed pushing quality of this sound-track supports my sense of looking at something very small blown-up under a microscope. In the same way that the visual focuses in on and enlarges a miniature world, the sounds too seem to amplify something very delicate and almost inaudible: the cell-like patterns appear to be near invisible to the naked eye; the low compressed thuds of the sound-track seem to refer to a source at the threshold of audibility. This gives me the impression of hearing the isolated and boosted sound of micro-organisms through a stethoscope. This sensation coincides with the visual observation through the binocular of a microscope. Everything seems to be happening at the same time. In this density of events a particular and separate world is being constructed here, both on the visual as well as on the sonic level.

This observation of a separate and microcosmic world is interrupted, and paradoxically strengthened, through a male voice-over saying: 'Utah'. I am forced to leave my position as a 'scientific observer', in a quiet laboratory, peering through a microscope, and find myself looking out of the back window of a car instead. The sound of howling wind has taken on a more biting character. I am outdoors. The wind is now connected with the force of a car rather than with the energy of a microscopic world. The imagery presents me with a gravel road, the sand whirling up from the force of the car driving on it. I hear the engine noise and the road sounds from inside the car. I am in this car, I am part of the image I am observing. I am sitting here, right in the middle of the frame, moving somewhere without a clear direction.

Torn-out pages are flying all over the road. A wooden, clock like ticking impresses its rhythm. The same male voice-over from earlier enters again. This time the voice narrates something about pages. It works around the rhythm of the tick-tock sound with its own particular, rather monotonous, rhythmicity. I am not really

concentrated on the content of the voice-over, and cannot focus on what the voice is telling me in particular about these pieces of paper. Something about the process of writing and reading is being said. What seems more important is the relationship between the sound of this voice and the imagery seen. The pages are outside, whirling about in the wind, whilst the voice is recorded in the studio. No wind is interfering with the quality of the recording, the voice talks in a steady and calm rhythm, away from the agitation of the visual scene, in an 'acoustic shelter'. I experience not a contradiction but a simultaneity of spaciality. My attention is focused on the visual pages spinning around in the wind, my imagination extends the relationship between these pages as paper material, and the materiality alluded to by the wooden tick-tock sounds, conjuring up a sensorial texture of sound and image. The image goes close-up onto these pages, flying about in wood-like surroundings. I cannot quite discern where I am. Somewhere between the voice in the studio and the pages outside in the woods.

But I am soon back on the road. Again I am looking through the back window of the driving car. The tick-tock sound of the wooden rhythm stops here for a while, leaving me to find another rhythm in the visual and sonic elements of the scene. Then, from this position inside the car, I am presented with a map of Utah. The camera is slowly focusing in on it. The tick-tock sound is back accompanying the imagery. It is slower and lower now, as if the action on screen has lost some of its wild and random force, and become more focused and concentrated in its pursuit. The voice-over talks about the relationship between the Salt Lake shown on this map and the sea. It narrates the myth of this Salt Lake and places this myth in a historical origin.

After this visually static and interlude-like image I am back in the car. This time I am facing the road ahead, the surface of which is always as yet undisturbed by the car driving through it. The next shot focuses in on a stack of books. The sound of wind is overlaid and then slowly replaced by the mechanic sounds of a Geiger-counter. The subtle sliding change of place between wind and counter presents me with the possibility of connecting the visual and sonic material in this scene differently. For a moment I am focusing on the books, the Geiger-counter soundtrack pulls on their stillness, and propels my imagination beyond sound and image.

The noise of this radiation search-equipment continues. I am again inside the car, looking through the rear window. The Geiger-counter sounds and the imagery of the sand whirling up from the road behind the car find a rhythm together. I perceive a

moment of conjunction: the wind, the force of driving, the spinning micro-particles, notions of radiation, books, pages and detection technology all become connected. Coinciding with this connection the film seems to lose its speed, the image and sound seemingly halt. This is not a literal halt, the Geiger counter sounds go over into the next image, and the film keeps on running (I am watching a video projection, not the original 16mm projection), but the pace seems slowed down, and the footage arrested, at least conceptually. I experience a pause, as if the scene comes to an end here.

For the purpose of the theoretical analysis I distinguish the above staged film sequence as a temporal scene. Admittedly this scene involves more than one mis-en-scène, more than one camera position. However, I justify my identification by stating that the images and sounds form part of one four dimensional moment, of one four dimensional mis-en-scène.⁴⁵ Even though the elements evolve in the time rather than in the space of a mis-en-scène, I nevertheless argue that everything seen and heard belongs to this one set up. All the elements, sonic and visual, relate to each other in a temporal arrangement. However this arrangement is not necessarily linear. There is no dominant drive which orders my perception towards a consensual narrative. Rather all elements of this mis-en-scène produce a (non-linear) simultaneity.⁴⁶ This impression of simultaneity, I argue, foregrounds the film's sculptural quality. All the material is available to my imagination as happening at the same time, how I order it is up to me. I contest that it is only the slow-down, at the end of this scene that enforces a linear development. The conceptual stoppage point, I argue, marks a cut that signals the end of the scene. At this end point the complex sonic and visual elements gain a purposeful orientation. The delineation of the scene organises them in hindsight. Of

⁴⁵ Eisenstein's theories of montage celebrate audio-visual montage's four dimensionality as a critical development. In chapter one I contend that his four dimensionality lacks criticality since it still defines a *certain* spatio-temporal context. By contrast via Barthes I argue for n-dimensionality produced in individual perceptions. I propose that in signifying the artwork is not a specific 'four dimensionality', but opens itself to n-dimensional imaginations. As a consequence of this argument my articulation of the four dimensional character of Smithson's mis-en-scène hint at a contradiction between Smithson's theoretical concepts and the actuality of his work. This contradiction is argued between the terms collage and montage throughout this chapter.

⁴⁶ The term simultaneity is imported from chapter one. As a consequence of my elaboration of Barthes' notion of a phenomenological 'simultaneity' of the subject with the material in the 'accent', I can now articulate the *Spiral Jetty* scene as such a simultaneity. Following Barthes' phenomenological description I understand this scene to allow me to 'inhabit' its audio-visual material. I am complicit with the footage and peruse it in my contingent imagination.

course this insight only lasts a short moment, since soon my concentration is back on the screen, watching more of the audio-visual material unfold. However, I contest that this moment of closure organises the footage viewed. I take the sense enforced in this organisation with me into the next scene. In the next part of this chapter I debate how this end constructs a denouement that relativises the complex (non-linear) material elements in relation to a consensual (narrative) order. To stage this argument, in the first instance, I discuss the role of the *symbolic lexicon* in creating this denouement, and then consider the *symbolic quality* of the material elements in the scene.

Starting from the point in the car, when 'the Geiger-counter sounds and the imagery of the sand whirling up from the road behind the car find a rhythm together' it appears that a specific relationship is being foregrounded. The slowed-down juxtaposition between the images of first books, then spinning micro-particles and the mechanical soundtrack of the search equipment references science, divergence/radiation and searching. This reference, I argue, closes the complex perception of the scene. The synthesis of image and sound at this point sublimates (*aufheben*) the specificity of each element, and instead presents one particular sense. I understand this consensual sense of science and searching is produced in relation to a notion of *the film as a whole*. I contest that the slow-down and eventual cut of the scene references the material elements to the context of the film. I argue that at this moment of closure the material becomes organised in the sense of a Barthian semiotic symbolic as argued vis-à-vis Eisenstein's theories of montage in chapter one.

I contest that this focus on (a symbolic) context drives and determines the relationship of the parts to the whole, supposedly the whole of the film. I come to perceive the images and sounds in their relation to (the) film as a higher order reference. The notion of this higher order framework, I argue, organises the material horizontally: each element is a context for each other, and also vertically: each element refers to the historical, aesthetic and ideological actuality of film. The filmic context becomes symbolic context. The footage, the material complex, and all the imaginary extensions performed by the viewer 'before' this 'symbolic instance', I argue, become organised in relation to its lexical register. The non-linear (phenomenological) simultaneity which allows me to play with the footage in my imagination, producing my own

conjunctions and establishing my own emphasis, is being forcefully (re-)organised at this point. In this (re-)organisation a linear development is willfully imposed, and the footage attains a consensual (narrative) structure.

I am being reminded of the 'grand narratives' which support such a consensual reading: the film *Spiral Jetty*, Film in general, Art, Nature, etc.. These symbolic narratives, I argue, come to influence and limit my perception. Thus the individual elements: the soundtrack of the Geiger-counter, the thudding electronic music, the images of books, the sand, the road, the car, etc., insist on a consensual sense produced by me as a collective (symbolic) subject, rather than allow for an imaginary production through each individual and contingent viewer and listener. Following Barthes, I read the end of the scene as a symbolic juncture which articulates an obvious meaning, suturing the artwork.⁴⁷ I cannot stray anymore, or else...and anyway, any imaginary fooling about would always be re-captured as a negative to this lexical orientation, simply confirming it in its negation.⁴⁸

This sublimating re-organisation of simultaneous material complexities brings me back to Eisenstein's theory of montage. I contend Smithson's film to be following an Eisensteinian strategy of montage, where simultaneous, complex, material expressions, suggestive of Eisenstein's nonsynchronous cells, are organised and rendered legible according to the grand narrative identified as the cultural, geographical, political, i.e. the ideological circumstance of its viewing. Thus conflating Eisenstein and Barthes via Barthes' symbolic semiotic in an encounter with *Spiral Jetty*, I could pursue

⁴⁷ According to Barthes:

The symbolic meaning (...) compels my recognition by a double determination. It is intentional (...) and it is selected from a kind of general, common lexicon of symbols; it is a meaning which seeks me out -me, the recipient of the message, the subject of reading- a meaning which proceeds from Eisenstein [the author, i.e. Smithson] and moves *ahead of me*. It is evident, of course (...), but evident in a closed sense, participating in a complete system of destination. I propose to call this complete sign *the obvious meaning*. (Barthes, 1986, p44)

⁴⁸ The negative is understood in terms of Hegel's 'negative'. For him the negative: death, destruction, decay, etc. is not an autonomous action which finishes the relationship of the subject with life, the nation-state, growing etc.. Rather, the negative is a necessary stage in the forever-being of the totality of life and the nation-state. This forever is expressed in the Idea. 'What is true is eternal in and for itself, neither yesterday nor tomorrow but now in the sense of absolute presence, in the Idea, what may seem lost is eternally preserved.' (Hegel, 1953, p95). One of the questions of this project is to enquire whether or not it is possible to

the identification of *Spiral Jetty* as a montage film. However, before settling on this identification, and calling *Spiral Jetty* strictly within Eisenstein's theory of montage I consider the material complexity of the film 'prior' to the moment of denouement and its backward operating organisation. I argue that the complexity I encounter is not analogous to the intentional nonsynchronicity of Eisenstein's first step of montage. Rather I contest that on the level of the scene, *Spiral Jetty* works along a different complexity and according to a different symbolism. I develop the notion of such a different complexity in the term collage and contest the particularity of its symbolism in the next part of this chapter.

The audio-visual material prior to its symbolic organisation offers itself to the viewer's imagination. I contest that the scene, without the closure, and hence its (narrative) organisation in reference to the whole of the film, invites imaginary play and centrifugal motions.⁴⁹ On this level, the material is simultaneous. I am complicit with the film, in Barthes' terms, I inhabit the material. There is no ideal organisation that determines my reading position. I am producing the material as a phenomenological rather than a structurally indexed subject, from my position within it, and in my contingent circumstance.

What I am initially suggesting here then, is that on the level of the scene the film appears to be working in relation to Barthes' 'third level of meaning', as discussed in chapter one. This third level, where the 'signifier possesses a theoretical individuality', Barthes calls the 'obtuse' (Barthes, 1991, p43). He explains it to be produced continually in the process of signifying. An obtuse sense is produced through a subjective and experiential practice of the material. This experience is, according to Barthes, crucially, not an 'intellection' but a "poetic" apprehension' (ibid., p43). Further, although the closure, to borrow his terms, 'belabors' the material and 'imposes' a symbolic (consensual) meaningfulness, my experience of the material prior to this point, I argue, is similarly, sensorial rather than intellectual, individual rather

produce an expression of material complexity, which is forever-being, without being tied up with the positive totality of the Idea.

⁴⁹ In chapter one I propose the artwork as produced centrifugal motions of perception. I suggest that the artwork is perceptual rather than a product, and that the audience works from the material presented centrifugally into his/her contingent circumstance of perception. Here I develop this term and I contest it in relation to the perceptual complexity of the simultaneous material in *Spiral Jetty*.

than collective, and practical (ibid., p45).

I argue thus that my perception of the scene, prior to its organisation in the symbolic, is too tenuous to be intentional on the part of the artist in the same sense that Barthes identifies the accent to be too tenuous for such intentionality. For Barthes the accent is the moment in the artwork which refuses a shared sense. It is the point in which he remains solitary and unable to articulate his sensation. Following his argument I am tempted to understand the scene as a 'tapestry of accents', which I inhabit as a phenomenological subject. I connect these accents and extend them imaginatively, unperturbed by (authorial) intentionality, and uninterested in a collective, symbolic and lexical reading thereof. However, I am aware of a problem of tenability here. In the conclusion to my first chapter I ask 'how a singular and private notion of experience is conditioned, given that there is no such thing as a private language, and given that we are all, at once, singular and relative to a collective?' The question of a private experience brings to the fore the relationship between the singular sensation and the collective sense, the symbolic, the aesthetic and its ideological investment. This points to the conflation of the subject as a singular and collective subject, and the difficulty of producing sense outside the collective without confirming its viability from that outside position. This (re-)issues the problem of the negative.⁵⁰ The apparent futility to overcome this problem is my motivation to understand the relationship between the complexity of the scene and the sublimation of such complexity in relation to the whole film *Spiral Jetty*, in the denouement of the scene.

I am aware that Barthes' third meaning stands in relation to a first and second meaning. His theory does not critique and remove the primary semiotic and the symbolic semiotic, but finds in the third meaning only an occasional position which escapes rather than refutes the first two. His accents are, in his terms, an overflowing of structural meaning, and are thus identified in relation

⁵⁰ The dynamic I am pointing to is the dialectic dynamic described earlier via Hegel's negativity. This dynamic predicts that any position taken up in denial of another necessarily implies not a total negation of that position but rather involves both, the negative and the positive position, in the formation of a new totality. If I say 'no' by implication I acknowledge the position of 'yes'. My no, according to Hegel, does not abolish the idea of yes. Rather, the two are carried together as potentialities within the Idea, their conflict forever pushing transformations towards a higher totality of Spirit, the essence of which is this action of conflict and transition. (Hegel, 1953)

to a flow of meaning. The scene understood as a tapestry of accents, I argue, would identify the scene within this negativity also. However, I understand my perception of the material complexity on the level of the scene not in excess of the (symbolic) sense produced at its closure, confirming its consensual meaning in the negative. Instead, I argue that the material elements possess a perceptual autonomy. Consequently, rather than calling the material simultaneity a tapestry of accents, I propose it as a 'temporal-collage': a four dimensional assemblage of complex simultaneous elements. I suggest that such assemblages are 'opened' in a disjuncting-like effort by the complicit subject experiencing the work in a 'bricolaging' production of perception.⁵¹ My perception produces the sonic and visual elements of this scene: the sound of wind, the force of driving, the flying particles, notions of radiation, books and detection technology. In this phenomenological engagement it is not the nominal objects (books, particles, technology, etc.), that I connect to each other in my perception, rather, it is the perceptual objects (my contingent experience of the books, the particles, etc.), that I bring together in my viewing. I contend that my viewing of these elements does not produce a horizontal or vertical organisation (semiotic or symbolic), rather, I 'build' (*bricoler*) them together as simultaneous sensorial elements and extend them

⁵¹ I employ the term 'bricolaging' bearing in mind Claude Lévi-Strauss' use of '*bricoleur*' and '*bricolage*'. In his book *The Savage Mind*, Lévi-Strauss employs *bricolage* in relation to mythical thought. In his terms 'the "bricoleur" is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but unlike the engineer he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project.' Rather, for Lévi-Strauss the process of *bricolage* is contingent, the *bricoleur* makes do with 'whatever is at hand'. (Lévi-Strauss, 1970, p17) In my use of the term I am employing this sense of a contingent and individual production of the artwork as purposeless 'raw material'. Adopting his ideas I seek to stress the process of production rather than the outcome, the *bricolage*. In the context of my research project, then, the verb *bricoler* (to bricolage) is employed to articulate the idea of perceptually building the artwork from its discreet sensorial elements. I use the verb in its present participle, bricolaging (*bricolant*), to denote the continuity of the activity of producing, through cutting and pasting different material elements, in this case sonic and visual footage, a temporal-collage work. I am arguing that the subject experiencing a collage, plastic or audio-visual, is complicit in its production via his/her bricolaging, cutting and pasting, effort of perception.

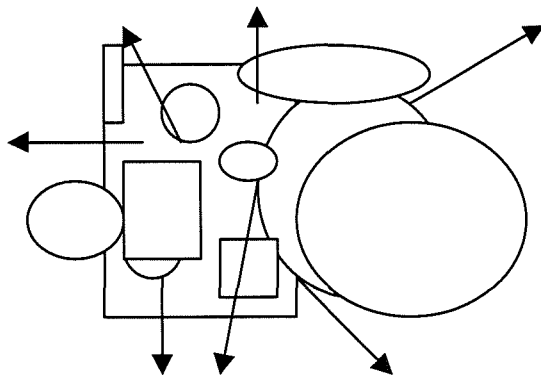
Also, with this term I import Derrida's sense of it as criticality. In *Writing and Difference*, commenting on Lévi-Strauss' notion of *bricolage*, Derrida articulates the idea 'that bricolage is critical language itself.' (Derrida, 1978, p285) Again however, I understand this critical activity of *bricolage* not in reference to the 'building' of a myth, the production of a poetic meaning, but in terms of its processes of critical engagement. Bricolaging in my terms denotes a critical practice in perception. In this sense, the conflation of *bricoler* with disjuncting is neither an accident nor a contradiction. Rather, in order to signal that the interest is not in bringing *bricoler* to a conclusion, to a distinct *bricolage*, the continuous effort of disjuncting, which takes apart and restages any connected material, is part of its practice. The interest is not to produce an object, but to continually produce, from parts but not in relation to a whole.

'outward' in my imagination.

In this way I differentiate between a tapestry of non-dialectical accents on the level of the scene and the moment of closure, which organises this tapestry in relation to the whole film. Whilst the first presents a complex material expression, the second resolves this complexity through its ideal combination. This latter mode of production, I argue, confines the sensorial elements, as (semiotically) nominal objects, within the film as a symbolic whole. In this way it produces the material within the homogenising quality of *montage*. In distinction, I call the complex sensorial assemblage on the level of the scene a 'temporal-collage'.

Fig. 1

Temporal-Collage



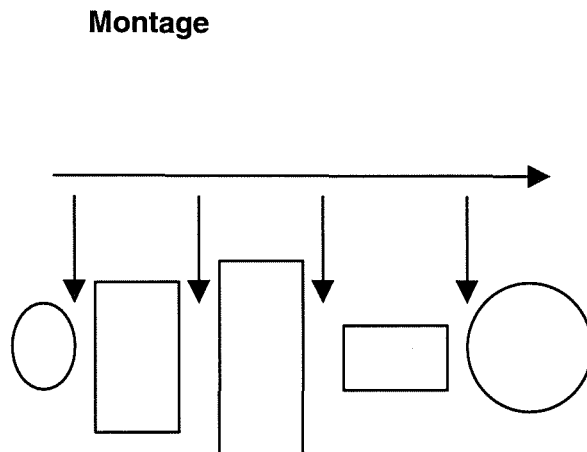
Key

The outward pointing arrows illustrate the centrifugal motions in which the subject produces the artwork. The material is extended in his/her contingent and imaginative perception. This elucidates the term 'temporal' in relation to an individual process of perception (continually disjuncting and bricolaging the material complexity).

The assemblage of differently shaped and over- and under-laid elements illustrates the complex heterogeneity of the artwork. This elucidates the term 'collage'. The organisation of these heterogeneous elements is proposed as contingent and individual.

The subject is complicit in this process. He/she is simultaneous with the material. In collage temporality refers to the non-linear time of individual perception.

Fig. 2



The downward pointing arrows illustrate viewing and listening as an 'inward' orientated perception where the focus is on the relation of the elements to each other (rather than in relation to an 'outside', an individual and contingent circumstance of the subject). This focus on the cut, between the material elements, explains the term 'montage'.

The tension is between the material and leaves the subject in a distanced (meta-) position. The horizontal arrow illustrates this position. From there the cuts between heterogeneous elements are organised according to the intentions of the author, realised in relation to a symbolic register, achieving a homogenised perception by the (symbolic) audience. In montage temporality refers to a linear time line produced collectively according to the 'directions' of the author.

This differentiation presents the main basis and methodology for the examination of Smithson's film in this chapter. I stage the film between this idea of a temporal-collage, the simultaneous and non-differentiated production of the material complex of the scene, and montage, the moment of closure which delineates and orders the scene in relation to the film as a whole. I engage and elaborate on this initial understanding in my analysis of the film's material expression to test the tenability and consequence of its proposition. To do so I investigate the individual scenes which compose the film *Spiral Jetty*. I consider the positioning of these scenes in relation to each other, and in relation to the film as a whole.

In the next part, then, I re-articulate the film's collage and montage moments in regards to their aesthetic strategies of assemblage: I contest the relationship between their two modes of material practice, and come to a clearer understanding of their respective function within this film. To do so I further contemplate the film's material composition and investigate *Spiral Jetty* vis-à-vis Kristeva's four signifying practices: 'narrative', 'metalanguage', 'contemplation' and 'text'. In particular, for the next part, I develop Barthes' signifying accent, and my initial identification of collage as a tapestry of such

accents, via Kristeva's notion of signifying as a textual practice.

2

The sound of the Geiger-counter which constructed the symbolic denouement of the last scene, gets taken up in an electronic composition in this next scene. I am in a museum-like space now. Presumably I am in the paleontological department of a natural history museum. But this could also be the rooms of a collector's stately home. I am presented with skeletons of dinosaurs standing and hanging against a red background. The camera is slowly panning around the room. The low lighting and red tinge of the imagery gives the scene an intensity and discomfort. The electronic soundtrack is sombre and low, almost scary in its terse composition and dark timbre. The potential of this collection being private adds an overall sense of spookiness and tension. The obsessiveness, which a private display of dinosaur skeletons suggests, makes me uneasy. The voice-over, which breaks into the imagery at this moment is talking on a very personal level. The voice narrates in the first person singular. Rather than talking about the skeletons and referring to the dinosaurs in a scientific manner, as might be expected from the visual setting, it relates a more personal story about existence and change. In the meantime the camera singles out, and starts to circle around, one particular dinosaur skeleton in a glass-box.

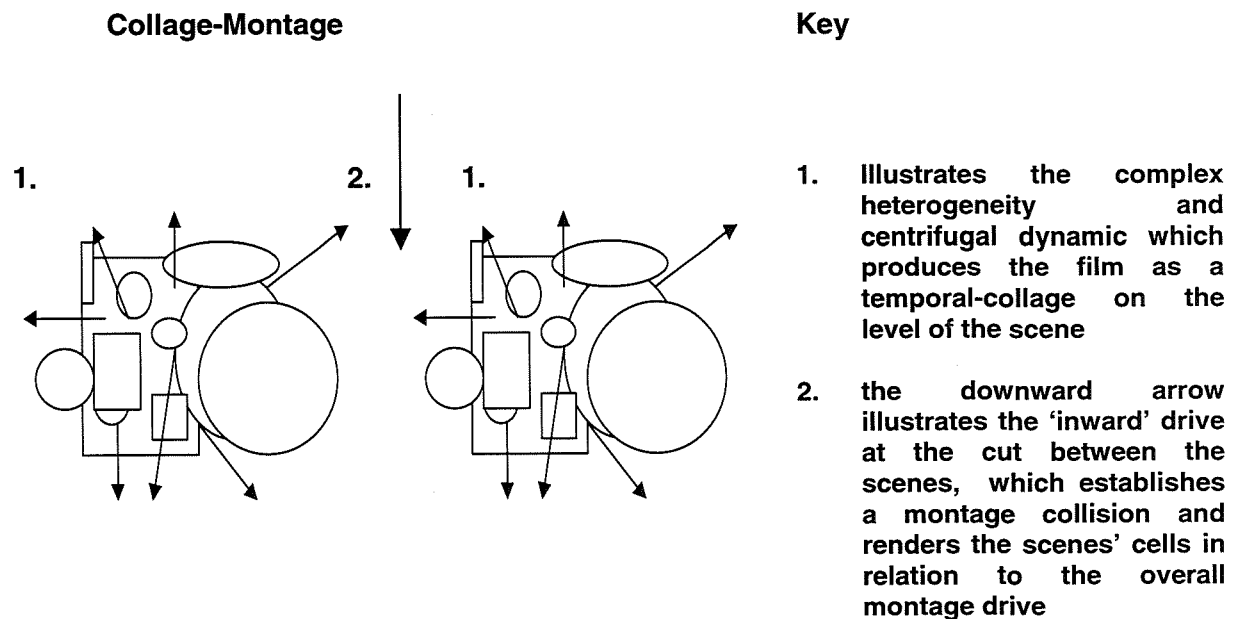
3

A short while after that we are back on the road. The colours and the lighting seem very bright now. I am looking through the windscreen of the car. The driving ahead takes away some of the stuffiness and austerity experienced inside the 'museum'. I am being shown a map of the area. It seems to be an old map. The voice-over draws my attention to the fact that the salt lake is not marked on it. There is no lake visibly marked on the map despite the fact that I am looking at a plan of its very location. This presents me with the temporality of the lake's situation. It leads me to assume that the lake was not always here as a distinct lake, separate from the sea, suggesting also that it might vanish, and become part of the sea again. I am confronted visually with the idea of change and existence. An electronic soundtrack runs simultaneous to the image. This track is uncomfortable, composed of low frequency sounds with higher pitched tones interrupting its flow. I am presented with a newer map now, showing the Salt Lake in its present state. The voice-over talks about the Salt Lake seen on the map in a very scientific manner and starts to describe where the Spiral Jetty will be constructed. I am following the visual surface

of the map whilst listening to this voice-over talking about the origins of the Salt Lake and the planned design for the Jetty. The electronic sound-track, although fading down a little when the voice is talking, builds a stable background to this sequence, bestowing the two dimensional image a spatial extension. Now the film presents the image of pink water parallel to the undulating sound of water. A voice-over explains the scientific reasons and data of the pink colour of the lake. This explanation is mixed visually with the image of a man's shoes, walking. I am watching this man surveying the area, whilst the voice over informs us about the planning of the Spiral Jetty.

I understand this part as two scenes, two 'temporal-collages' juxtaposed according to the principle of montage, performing a montage of collaged material: a 'collage-montage'.

Fig. 3



As a consequence of my critique of Eisenstein's montage theory with regard to the dialectic dynamic imposed at the cut, I am critical of the cut between the scenes in *Spiral Jetty*. I contest that the conflictual juxtaposition directs my understanding of the two scenes toward an ideal resolution. Such a resolution, I argue, limits my effort of disjointing and bricolaging to the purpose of an ideal (consensual) sense. This purposefulness hinders my imaginative proliferation of the material elements. The 'museum-scene' is

delineated and orchestrated by the 'outdoor-scene' (the images of the Salt Lake), and vice-versa. The centrifugal extensions, expressed as arrows, and the simultaneous materiality, presented by the assemblage of different shapes, are arrested and sublimated at the moment of montage. I contend that at the 'ideal juncture', where the scenes meet, a homogeneous (collective) sense is forged at the expense of more varied sense making processes.⁵² To develop my critique of this sublimation I recall my experience of the scenes in themselves and consider them in relation to collage as a strategy which challenges the totalising dynamic of the montage principle.

I have previously argued that the complex and seemingly unintentional material assemblage of the scene provokes a simultaneous position. I 'inhabit' the museum; I 'inhabit' the car. I contest that the scene's visual and sonic material is understood from this inhabiting position. I extend the material from this complicity in a bricolaging and disjointing effort, imaginatively. I come to this assertion via Barthes' signifying in the accent. However, I realise that thinking via his accents, I still confirm a consensual thread (first and second order semiotic meaning) underpinning and delimiting my imaginings. At the accent my perception is not autonomous, but only in excess of this thread that holds me to the collective and threatens to imminently recuperate my individual and contingent sense making process within the grasp of consensual meaning. Thus although initially borrowing Barthes' idea of signifying, and siding with its active continuity, I acknowledge the need for a different theoretical position if I want to avoid such a dialectic recuperation.

I contest that Julia Kristeva offers me a tool to re-think and develop Barthes' signifying and accent, via her own consideration of signifying practices. In her thesis on the *Revolution of Poetic Language* she formulates four different signifying practices: narrative, metalanguage, contemplation and textual. Whilst the first three work on the basis of a collectively redeemable expression, the fourth seems to propose a more complex, temporal and individual engagement. It is this fourth practice that I want to discuss in conjunction with the term temporal collage. But first I need to rule out the other three in relation to collage.

⁵² In the previous chapter I argue that the unexpected junctures of the cells in Eisenstein's montage theory are ideal rather than unexpected, since they are determined in relation to the film as an objective totality.

According to Kristeva in the signifying practice of the 'narrative' 'material discontinuity is reduced to correlations between opposites (high/low, good/bad, inside/outside) which delineates narratives geography, temporality, plot, etc.' (Kristeva, 1984, p90). I dismiss her narrative in relation to collage, since, as she says, despite the fact that this signifying practice may include various materialities and sensations, these are ultimately 'poured into the rigid molds of a nondisjunctive structure.' (ibid., p90) I understand this 'rigid mold' of the narrative to corroborate my articulation of the grand narrative, produced in the symbolic moment at the cut between the scenes. I understand this to clarify the dynamic of montage as a nondisjunctive but homogenising practice.⁵³ For Kristeva, the narrative is delineated as a weak signifying process as it centres on an axial position. I adopt this idea of weakness here also for montage, since the montage moment too organises the complex material axially, and weakens the potential to roam. The horizontal arrow in my figure 2 illustrates this axial, nondisjunctive structuring of various materialities in montage.

The second practice, 'metalanguage', according to Kristeva, is the guarantor for the symbolic system. It places the subject as a fixed subject outside the text: 'he hovers above it' and is 'absent from it' (ibid., p95). For Kristeva the symbolic systematicity eliminates heterogeneity and forges omnivalence. Conversely the fixed position of the subject is the only guarantee for the symbolic to work. I read her to suggest that the symbolic demands as well as constructs the subject as a fixed subject. This subject is confined to the socio-historical context of his/her symbolic register and reads the text from this 'meta'-position. This fixed and detached position of the subject differs from my notion of a contingent and active subject inhabiting the text, the artwork, as collage. I understand Kristeva's metalanguage in relation to montage's ideological specificity. It clarifies the symbolic closure at the

⁵³ Thus following Kristeva's description of narrative practice, I clarify my conclusion on montage as possessing a homogenising quality which erodes the complexity of its parts into a dialectic synthesis, within her term nondisjunctive structure. Eisenstein's (unexpected) junctures are idealised ultimately in relation to the orchestrated homogeneity, the total film. This totality, I argue, secures the context or structure of these junctures and thus renders them nondisjunctive, in the sense of only relatively disjunctive within the framework of the total film. I have argued this relativity in relation to Deleuze's 'disjunctive synthesis' in chapter one. Here I can confirm, via Kristeva, that the cut never really produces unexpected junctures, but only ever 'correlations between opposites' within the 'plan of the film' (Deleuze, 1997, pp1-28). This, I argue, achieves montage's (consensual) narrative character, and forges the ideological homogeneity of its expression.

moment of the cut between scenes and confirms montage's symbolic lexicon as a systematicity which constructs and limits its material within a notion of omnivalence and consequently delineates its subject as a historically fixed and context bound subject at a distance.⁵⁴ This clarifies my criticism against the contextual rigidity of montage as articulated in chapter one. Later in this chapter, I am re-considering this fixed symbolic order in relation to Symbolism as a 'tendential' quality, inviting a generative rather than a lexical reading.

But to remain within Kristeva's signifying practices for now, the last to rule out as a model for collage is 'contemplation'. It is in relation to contemplation that Kristeva employs *Aufhebung*, sublimation. It is precisely this term which I introduce as the central problem of this thesis in my introduction. I place this term more particularly in relation to montage in chapter one. The problem of sublimation lies in the very conception of the symbolic. Kristeva writes 'this *Aufhebung* of the instinctual *chora* is always already inevitably and inseparably symbolic.'⁵⁵ The *chora's* closure within contemplation condemns contemplation to meaning, disarticulating it, only to return to it, disenchanting.' (Kristeva, 1984, p96) This sketches contemplation as a dialectic activity; negation continually arriving at a positive, thesis and antithesis. Any particularity of expression is 'swallowed' continually in this circular dynamic, which she calls a 'ring': 'eternally returning, perpetually trapped.' (Ibid., p95) The material is secondary to this dynamic, sublimated by

⁵⁴ The notion of historical and contextual specificity of montage is pointed out as a paradox in chapter one. There I state how Eisenstein's desire for an international practice of film-making seems to run counter his own theory. Montage, I argue, dependent as it is on a symbolic register for the communication of its ideological message, particularises the viewer in his/her social-historical context rather than allowing for it to be received by any viewer, anywhere. Its insistence on omnivalence via the symbolic determines the subject locally. In relation to this montage is identified as a metalanguage as articulated by Kristeva. The paradox of locality and globality, which such a metalinguistic understanding implies, is clarified and developed in relation to the context of the network age in chapter 5.

⁵⁵ The '*chora*' is the key idea of Kristeva's semiotic. It is the basic principle that allows individual expression whilst securing it within (consensual) sense. Kristeva articulates this dual role of the semiotic *chora* when she describes it as 'a nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated.' (Kristeva, 1984, p25) For Kristeva the *chora* is the pre-condition of language. It is a semiotic device which pre-cedes consensual expressions and permits them at the same time. Through the semiotic *chora* the subject is 'always already involved in a semiotic process' (ibid., p25). Thus it is in relation to this *chora*, closing it temporarily, that the subjective expression attains consensual meaning. According to Kristeva it is in relation to this idea of the *chora* that the subject works the signifying practice of contemplation; depending on it as well as refusing it. However, as negativity in a Hegelian sense, the refusal is not a denial, but part of the forever dynamic character of the *chora*.

its symbolic totality. Contemplation, according to Kristeva, is responsible for producing and keeping the ideological, hierarchical status quo of the state, or any other ideological apparatus. She concedes that the signifying play within contemplation shifts and changes, drifting (*dérive*), without however, ever breaking the 'communicative function'. In this same sense I concede montage shifts meaning and re-articulates expressions. However, due to the fact that it remains tied down to the symbolic register, montage too is 'condemned' to (consensual, narrative) meaning; any disarticulation returning back into a collective articulation all the time, whilst the particular nonsynchronous material elements are sublimated to this dialectic dynamic.

I contest that all three signifying practices articulate characteristics so far established and discussed in relation to montage: the narrative supports the axial nondisjunctive structuring of montage; metalanguage identifies its distantly fixed subject; and contemplation explains its sublimating quality and dialectical dynamic. I understand that all three signifying practices are tied up with each other through their interdependence with the symbolic register. This dependence also identifies them in relation to montage. I contend that although the first scene of *Spiral Jetty* mainly highlights the narrative and metalinguistic characteristics of montage, the juxtaposition of the last two scenes, elucidates contemplation's dialectic dynamic, and re-presents all three qualities.

I thus reiterate my initial statement on the montaged relationship between these last two scenes and suggest that the symbolic directive and homogenising quality of montage renders them a signifying practice, corresponding to Kristeva's narrative, metalanguage and contemplation. The two scenes are brought into a moment of conflict that orchestrates and subordinates the complex material of either scene in favour of a homogenised reading. I am forced to view the 'museum-scene' (2) in a conflictual juxtaposition with the 'outdoor-scene' (3), 'the driving ahead takes away some of the stuffiness and austerity experienced inside the 'museum''. What becomes emphasised is the indoor/outdoor relation: stuffiness/fresh air, culture/nature. This nondisjunctive structure produces homogeneity. The sensation of homogeneity is tied up with the symbolic systematicity of the film as a whole, which in turn determines the sublimation of incongruous elements within the scenes. I contest that this moment confirms the grand

(ideological) narrative, and places me, the subject, in a fixed spot at a distance. This allows for nothing but an ever returning and perpetually trapped contemplation of the material sublimated in a symbolic order. The downward-pointing arrow in my figure 3 illustrates the 'interiority' of this intentional symbolic systematicity of montage. Every point, all complex material elements, are turned inwards. The individual cells, shots or scenes, are experienced in relation to a symbolic system which renders their juxtaposition tautological. It enforces one reading, rather than enabling a proliferation of meanings in the individual imagination of the contingent subject 'outside' the film. By contrast, the arrows pointing outwards, in all directions, in figure 1 and 3, illustrate such an individual and imaginative centrifugal proliferation from within the scene.

The scene itself I understand within her fourth signifying practice: the 'text'. Kristeva introduces the text as radically different from its contemplative simulation, as well as from metalanguage and narrative. I discuss and apply her contestation of this distinction and its consequence to materiality and the subject in relation to my articulation of temporal-collage. Later on, I discuss her 'practice of the text' in association with writings on collage as a particular strategy of assemblage, to confirm this conflation.

The text, is distinct from the other three signifying practices, according to Kristeva since the 'real object is never posited as lost' (ibid., p99). I understand this to suggest that the material complexity of the text is never sublimated and homogenised into a discontinuous structure. 'Although rejection posits them as elements, the reactivation of rejection traverses these elements and knots them in a dynamic interdependence.' (Ibid, p99) Hence the sublimation that does happen does not create a lack, does not reject in synthesis, but rather points to 'an endless mobility', positing elements and reactivating them in ever new 'knots of interdependence' (ibid., p99).⁵⁶ I find

⁵⁶ According to Kristeva, this 'endless mobility' is not a deconstructive, post-structural, motion of endless deferral. Rather, in marked distinction to deconstruction, which always still produces consensual sense, objectivity, even if this sense is temporal and contingent, the text's endless mobility does not engage in consensual meaning but produces singular sense processes. In comparison, I understand Kristeva's contemplation as a signifying practice of deconstruction. Contemplation includes the *dérive*; the drifting, shifting and changing of the material without ever breaking with the communicative function. Kristeva refers in her definition of contemplation to Hegel's notion of totality, which she understands 'probably gives the best account of this device: the entity and difference of opposites, implying the endless excavation of the Idea on the path of self-consciousness.' (Ibid., p98). Thus, in

her 'knots' offers a useful replacement of Barthes' accents. I want to stress their 'endless mobility' by proposing them as the 'knotting points' of a complex materiality.⁵⁷

The text 'involves *combination*: fitting together detaching, including, and building up "parts" into some kind of "totality".' (Ibid., p102) Crucially, however, this totality is not a communicative totality, not an objective totality.⁵⁸ 'This practice has no addressee; no subject (...) can understand it.' (ibid., p101) The text is a solitary practice, which does not function communicatively. This secures the subject a relative autonomy in his/her knotting process. At the same time the knotting points come to be identified as non-objective, non-dialectical accents. The ideological and material hierarchies are not abandoned, but relaxed in this practice. According to Kristeva the hierarchies are fluctuating and 'its members are relatively independent of that code or authority.'⁵⁹ (Ibid., p99) The fluctuation marks this as a contingent and temporal process, dependent on updating the laws and boundaries which demarcate it all the time.⁶⁰

The text is a process. this process breaks up the totality of the envisioned object and invests it with fragments (colors, lines, forms). Such fragments are themselves linked to sounds, words, and significations, which the process

contemplation, self-consciousness, self (one's own) sense, is a path without an end. Its goal, the Idea, can never be attained, positioned as it is within the 'ring' of contemplation. In this way contemplation clarifies deconstruction as essentially Hegelian. Accordingly I understand deconstruction not to critique the dialectic dynamic of Hegel's 'objective ideality'. It only quarrels with its notion of ideality without however questioning the objectivity of its process. Hegel's dialectic, I argue, is always already deconstructive; the notion of ideality only suggesting a progressive motivation rather than a goal. The critique I aim to pursue however is not a critique of the term ideality, which I understand to be structural as well as post-structural. Rather I aim to critique the notion of objectivity: consensual meaning. (This exploit clarifies how my notion of a complex material practice does not align itself but critiques post-structuralist deconstruction rather).

⁵⁷ As with the terms 'disjointing' and 'bricolaging', the present participle of 'knotting' points to the continuity (continuous actuality) of such knots as process.

⁵⁸ Or as Kristeva clarifies: 'It (the text) does not instigate the "process-of-becoming-a-subject" of the masses.' (Ibid., p102) I understand this to propose that the text is a subjective/singular rather than an objective/collective process, producing a 'subjective ideality'. The status of this subjective ideality in relation to the text is contested in chapter 3 in an investigation of the details of its signifying process.

⁵⁹ 'Metalanguage' and 'narrative' as well as 'contemplation' are the tools and the scaffolding of this system but crucially not its content.

⁶⁰ The notion of this signifying process as 'contingent and temporal' explains the 'temporal' in temporal-collage in relation to perception. The signifying practice foregrounds the temporality of the perceptual process rather than the time of the material unfolding on screen. This shift of focus allows me to extend my notion of temporal-collage beyond time-based work, and enables me to apply it to a wider realm of art practice.

rearranges in a new combination. The combinatory moment, which accompanies the destructive process and makes it a practice, is always produced with reference to a moment of stasis, a boundary, a symbolic barrier. Without this temporary resistance, which is viewed as if it were insurmountable, the process would never become a practice and would founder instead in an opaque and unconscious organicity. (Ibid., p102)

The signifying of the text is explained as a process of combinations. Between 'detaching, including, and building up "parts"' a rearrangement is being forged. The detaching and including allows me to situate temporal-collage's tandem of bricolaging and disjuncting within this practice of the text, one continually building up, the other incessantly ripping apart. What is clarified here, in distinction to montage, is that the 'fragments' that are being taken apart and rearranged, are invested in this process rather than sublimated for a higher order totality. No higher gestalt is being thought, no ideal synthesis. Rather, this heterogeneous formation is a continuous passing beyond systemic limits, assuming an infinity of process, which does not seek to overcome complexity in a higher order resolution: objective ideality. The concentration is on the practice of the fragment rather than on a sublimation of the fragments in a totality.

I understand Kristeva's viewing of the sculptures by Alain Kirili to perform such a textual practice:

The heterogeneous and clashing material resound with different timbres: I hear them more than I see them and the libido they provoke soon involves all my senses in a series of *jouissances*, of complex pleasures, now opaque, now soft, sharp, hot, porous, cold, condensed'. (Kristeva, 1991, p29)

The context of her viewing, the (first) Gulf War in 1991, mentioned in the essay and which resonates in her experience of the work, illustrates the issue of 'the laws and boundaries', which provisionally frame her perception and which she has to break to practice her own experience of the work. The war provides the particular setting in which she practices her textual perception and which she breaks with in that practice by extending the material into her own

particular rhythm.⁶¹ Referring to a piece called *Méditerranée* she declares:

As if Matisse's paper cutouts were infiltrating the realm of volume, setting it in motion, summoning the eye even more than the touch, and thereby inviting a body, excited from the retina to the flesh, to plunge into the blue matter of a northern sea. Air and water, left and right, high and low, the locus and reference-point of an undulation restored to me by my revery, according to my own aggressive or peaceable rhythm. (Ibid., p29)

Accordingly, I experience and produce the complexity of the 'museum-scene' (2): the red tinge, the odd camera angles, the weirdly personal voice over, the spooky soundtrack, the awkwardness of place, etc.. These are all fragments that I attach and detach in my viewing of this scene. All my senses are involved in this heterogeneous complexity. What Kristeva terms *jouissance* I could term *unease*, but what remains of the term are the senses of complexity and intensity that go beyond the material presented and connects with my particular circumstance of viewing. It is my 'aggressive and peaceable rhythm', which constructs the material emphasis and which brings an 'extended sensibility' to the work.

Kristeva practices Kirili's work in a continuous process of "*appending territories*" (Kristeva, 1984, p102). She performs an extensional process according to her 'rhythm' into her field of experience. I argue that this 'appending' process is being undercut at the moment of montage. At this moment textuality is reined-in by the other three signifying practices, which force a communicative function onto the material extensions and arrest its individual rhythm in objectivity.

Kristeva's understanding of the textual practice as an appending, extensional process links up with my desire for the art work as a complex materiality to trigger a centrifugal production in perception. It also links to William C. Seitz' understanding of collage. In the next part of this chapter I bring together Kristeva's signifying practice of the text, my understanding of the scenes in *Spiral Jetty* as such signifying practices, with Seitz' ideas on 'The Realism and Poetry of Assemblage'. Thereby I develop a clearer argument for my use of collage in the term temporal-collage, and assess my requirements for a non-

⁶¹ Her text foregrounds the particularity of war. I contest that she consciously parallels the

dialectical, non-objective, practice in this term.

Building the Jetty

4

From this planing and observing stage, which constitutes the first part of the film, we move on to the actual building of the Jetty. The next scene consists of images of building works, visuals of water and picture book representations of dinosaurs. All three elements force themselves upon me as distinct expressions. Only after a while do I start to connect them in time. I see huge building machinery digging out earth and constructing the jetty. A sound track of heavy machinery runs simultaneously, out of synch, and out of proportion in terms of volume, with the footage seen. I see the motionless, pink water of the Salt Lake. All I hear is a quiet gurgling and splashing of water. But this quiet lasts only a moment, as I am soon pushed back to the loud construction work undertaken at the water's edge. The water-takes seem to exist in relation to, but are somehow oddly removed also from the dynamic of the mechanical actions. These takes grant calming moments, apart from the culmination of strength and size, whilst at the same time they are very much part of the same building process. The images of calm water show an always as yet not built upon stretch of water.⁶² The particular visual pairing of calm water and heavy construction work is repeatedly brought together. The composition of this emphasis is complicated through the interlacing of still images of dinosaurs taken from picture books, and a voice-over talking about the geological consistency of the jetty material. The film here is composed as a conglomeration of sonic and visual material of 'dinosaurs', 'water', 'machinery' and 'geology', still and in motion, producing the sequence as a non-linear assemblage. This assemblage compels me into production. At one time I am loosely connecting the building machinery and the shapes of the dinosaurs from the picture books. In another moment I am concentrating on the link between the machinery and the geological data, or the water imagery in relation to the heavy machinery, etc.. I bring my perception

lawlessness of the war with the 'lawless', unorthodox, practice of her own perception.

⁶² This 'always as yet not built upon stretch of water' links up to the driving sequence in the first scene, filmed through the windscreen, onto the 'road ahead, the surface of which is always as yet undisturbed by the driving through it'. This juxtaposition across scenes, I argue, works as a repetition which strengthens the latent symbolic register of the film, and forges in-between the two scenes a montage action. This serialised montage juxtaposition, I contest, does not enable a collaging impulse, which invites varied connections and individually driven sense productions. Rather, it works toward the enforcement of an objective meaning. It wills an ideological totality, which enforces a clear symbolic and ideological meaning: the conquering of new territory.

together in temporal and individual associations.

I am working these sonic and visual elements as fragments, detaching and attaching them in my concurrent circumstance of viewing and listening. Following Kristeva's suggestion of 'appending territories', my centrifugal practice produces 'outward connections' in my perception. Both the bricolaging and disjointing effort, as well as the centrifugal motion thereof, I contest, assert the scene as a textual practice. William C. Seitz' conception of assemblage enables me to contest the link between Kristeva's signifying practice of the text, and my practising of the scenes in *Spiral Jetty*, in the sense of temporal-collage.

In his essay 'The Realism and Poetry of Assemblage', which was originally written for the catalogue of the *Art of Assemblage* show in the Museum of Modern Art, in 1961, Seitz discusses his view on assemblage as 'a method with disconcertingly centrifugal potentialities.' (Seitz, 1989, p82) I relate the 'centrifugal' to perception, and understand his 'disconcertingly' in the sense of disturbing a material homogeneity, disabling a total comprehension.⁶³ Reading his essay, I identify my notion of temporal-collage within his definition that in assemblage 'physical materials and their auras are transmuted into a new amalgam that both transcends and includes its parts.' (Ibid., p81) Likewise, I argue that in temporal-collage the material elements are exceeded imaginatively in the contingent perception of the viewer, but their sensorial qualities nevertheless remain specific and simultaneous. No homogenous whole is being produced in a sublimating assemblage. Rather the 'new amalgam' does not resolve but practices their complexity. In this sense I understand, along with Seitz, that assemblage offers a potential for anarchism, and agree with his ideas that 'intrinsic to the medium of assemblage is an entirely new relationship between work and spectator' (ibid., p80).⁶⁴

⁶³ Seitz does not elaborate on this exclamation. I feel therefor free to interpret 'disconcertingly' as I understand it in relation to the signifying practice of the text. Meanwhile, Seitz' use of the term 'centrifugal' allows me to develop my use of it as staged vis-à-vis Eisenstein's assertions on the decadence of centrifugality in chapter one, and to bring it in direct relation to temporal-collage. (Eisenstein, 1977c, p84)

⁶⁴According to Seitz 'assemblage has become, temporarily at least, the language for impatient, hypercritical, and anarchistic young artists.' (Seitz, 1989, p85) He does not elucidate his specific understanding of such an anarchy or its consequences. On my part, I understand this notion of anarchy to suggest a truly individual practice which critiques the idea of an objectivity totality. In this sense I stage it in relation to Hegel's idea that the refusal

However, it is where he makes the general case for assemblage as 'poetic rather than realistic' (ibid., p81) that I realise important discrepancies between our understandings of assemblage and start to dissociate my notion of collage from his description of assemblage. I argue that the differentiation between the 'poetic' and the 'realistic' hints at a negative relation where the loss of one thing is ultimately substituted by another. Referring to the complexity of material elements in the last scene as poetic, I argue, suggests not an *open* (individual and imaginative) *perception*, but a new and different, but always already *consolidated* (consensual) *reading*: the 'machines', the 'water' and the 'dinosaurs' connected as poetic elements, lose their primary symbolism, but regain solidity of representation already in a new (symbolic) configuration. I argue that the issue lies in the term poetic. I come to my interpretation of the poetic via Barthes' use of the term.

Barthes employs the term poetic in reference to his accents where he calls the understanding of the material 'an interrogation bearing precisely on the signifier, not on the signified, on the reading, not on the intellection: it is a "poetic" apprehension.' (Barthes, 1991, p43) Barthes' use of quotation marks, I argue, is crucial in relation to the status of the term poetic. Barthes presents his accent as beyond a collective semiotic understanding, in an emotive and singular experience, which he posits within the 'poetic'. However as a third meaning, his accents are invested in meaning (consensual sense), presenting as they do the overflow and excess of the semiotic. This negative relationship renders them ultimately representational, and thus his poetic comes to be clarified as a representation of overflow rather than a supposedly individual 'poetic'. In this sense I argue that the poetic delineates the representation rather than the perception of material complexity. Consequently it produces meaning rather than triggers sense making.

of the objective leads to 'the form of subjectivity-selfishness and corruption in the unbound passions and egotistic interests of men.' (Hegel, 1953, p93) I encourage the practice of temporal-collage as a production in perception, which does not consider socio-historical unity but rather opts for 'unbound (subjective) passion'. However, I am aware of a conflict between my consideration of temporal-collage as text and as anarchic here. Kristeva, considering Hegel, posits the text and its subject not as anarchic, but always still in relation to its socio-historical context. The potential to be anarchic and the notion of anarchy is thus dependent on its dialectical identification in relation to this context as the Idea. To investigate the possibility of a non-dialectical 'passionate' subjectivity, I undertake a consideration of Kristeva's subject in process/on trial, as a radical subject practising the text in chapter 3. There I am investigating her textual practice and temporal-collage in relation to Lyotard's subject of enunciation and its 'coup-inattendu' (unexpected game move). This clarifies the status of anarchy in relation to temporal-collage and its subject.

Seitz makes a general case for assemblage as poetic, promoting various and multiplicitous material conjunctions. However, as a consequence of my interpretation of Barthes' 'poetic' as representational, I argue, Seitz' conjunctions continually re-attain consolidated (consensual) sense via their dialectic relation to a primary symbolic association. When he talks about the multiplicitous conjunctions that can be established between elements in assemblage he refers the connections back to an assumed nominal relation between those same elements in their 'original' setting. This posits his poetic conjunctions in the negative, and clarifies his notion of assemblage as a *poetic system*, within which any new connections are consolidated vis-à-vis a primary symbolic identification, even in their multiplicity. To argue this critique I turn to Kristeva's poetic, I refer back to the knots in her text, elaborated by me as knotting points. This re-affirms my critique of Barthes' poetic and reasons my critique of Seitz' notion of a poetic assemblage. Further, these arguments allow me to specify the term collage for my project. The ensuing contestation of a multiplicity, which is not consolidated in the poetic, enables me to clarify and re-stage my critique of a dialectic aesthetics.

The poetic, according to Kristeva, formulates the break with the symbolic order of things. In her terms the symbolic constitutes the basic condition of things: it positions the subject and constitutes the necessary basis of (consensual) meaning as it presents the order on which its processes depend. In relation to this, she positions the semiotic as breaking with the symbolic in a so-called poetic practice. The symbolic is breached by the semiotic. In this transgression the symbolic is activated, moved on, and ultimately a new symbolic is constituted.⁶⁵ For Kristeva it is the primary status of symbolisation, which makes the heterogeneity of this process possible without it threatening (consensual) meaning. I understand her to propose that since at the basis of things there exists a symbolic order, the poetic break does not truly destroy meaning, but only moves it on in semiotic motility. Kristeva understands art as performing such a poetic break. In her terms art

⁶⁵ According to Kristeva the symbolic positions the subject, and depends, on a socio-historically fixed subjectivity. By contrast, the semiotic is the pre-thetic. It precedes the positioning of the subject and breaks the symbolic order and thus moves it on to ultimately re-stage a new symbolic 'reality' to be breached imminently again. Kristeva explains this peculiar relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic in the terms of a poetic practice. She writes that 'the semiotic -the precondition of the symbolic- is revealed as that which also destroys the symbolic' (Kristeva, 1984, p50).

disrupts the thetic by introducing an asocial drive into the symbolic order.⁶⁶ According to her, the gap that is opened by such a practice invites the fetish to replace the loss of the understanding of the object as real.⁶⁷ The artist's break is thus identified as relative to the thetic, which continues to ensure the signification of this break. In this confinement, the artistic drive is positioned as a negative to a social system, and is thus re-assured in the poetic. The poetic remodels the symbolic rather than really breaking with it. Only 'the residues of first symbolizations' are removed, the symbolic order remains intact (Kristeva, 1984, p69).

I interpret her notion of a fetish replacement in terms of an aesthetic consolidation, or what she terms an 'aesthetic fetishism'. Such an aesthetic judgement stops the asocial drive. It does so in Kristeva's terms, '...in order to keep the process signifying, to avoid foundering in an "unsayable" without limits, and thus posit the subject of a practice, the subject of poetic language [the aesthetic subject] clings to the help fetishism offers.'⁶⁸ (Ibid., p65) Fetishism is a displacement, which assures collective signification and which presents the asocial drive that produced the gap as a negative to be immanently overcome in poetic meaning. Such a fetish replacement, I argue, performs an aesthetic stoppage, which arrests the generative process of perception and consolidates the artwork's complex elements in a poetic system rather than allowing for them to exist in true disarray.

⁶⁶ According to Kristeva all enunciation is thetic. The thetic phase 'contains the object as well as the proposition, and the complicity between them.' (Ibid., p44) In other words, the thetic enables communication by offering the basic ingredients for signification and by giving a 'space' for its coming together. The thetic is the realm which sets up enunciation and thus it is the realm of signification. The thetic phase marks the threshold between the semiotic and the symbolic. In reference to the poetic practice articulated above, the artwork according to Kristeva, is not yet ordered as an enunciation, its object and proposition are not made compliant to each other; it is semiotic until the poetic bestows its lack a symbolic function.

⁶⁷ For Kristeva the fetish 'is a displacement of the thetic on the realm of drives' and 'fetishism is a telescoping of the symbolic's characteristic thetic moment and of one of those instinctually invested stases (bodies, parts of bodies, orifices, containing objects, and so forth). This stasis thus becomes the ersatz of the sign. Fetishism is a stasis that acts as a thesis.' (Ibid., p64) In relation to art practice the fetish is the replacement of that which is destroyed in poetic practice. 'Aesthetic fetishism' consolidates the by the artwork contested thetic. In the terms of my project, the fetish replaces the imaginative perception of the material element, and consolidates it within the artwork as a whole. I can refer this identification to Seitz's notion of the poetic understanding of the material element in assemblage, which according to him takes the place of the original understanding of it as real. (Seitz, 1991, p80)

⁶⁸ I read her avoidance of 'a foundering in an "unsayable" without limits' as an avoidance of the boundarilessness of a relative meaning and identity (Kristeva, 1984, p65). I articulate my own critique of such a relative position or non-position rather in chapter one via Deleuze, and continue to pursue this argument in chapter 3, via the proposition of a subjective ideality.

This brings me back to Barthes' criticism of the symbolic certainty in Eisenstein's montage theory. Barthes describes Eisenstein's montage as 'a system of displacements and substitutions' (Eisenstein, 1991, p43). His definition elucidates montage as working on the diegetic, historical and ideological symbolism of its cells (the symbolic origins of its visual and sonic cells), displacing them from their symbolic origin ('vertical uprooting'), but eventually, through substitution, leading them together in a counterpunal arrangement (signifieds) for the expression of another total, symbolic sign: the film. In this sense my earlier suggestion of the dialectic dynamic of Eisenstein's montage, and its identification within the context of Barthes' symbolic semiotic is further clarified in relation to Kristeva's idea of a symbolic order. I can now articulate montage's material strategy as an, in Kristeva's terms, asocial practice, which breaks with the symbolic order, opens a gap between its cells, severing original conjunctions, in order to immanently suggest a fetish replacement to fill the gap and close the junctions. The prosaic meaning is destroyed, but a new, poetic meaning is assured. The semiotic motility is arrested in an aesthetic (fetishism) consolidation, and the asocial is redeemed within the social (objective sense) that it brings to the fore.

I understand Seitz to perform such a stoppage of the poetic drive in his aesthetic consideration of assemblage. He reviews assemblage within a poetic aesthetic in that he understands it to replace one object with another: its original meaning as 'real' is replaced with a 'poetic' meaning. Thus he asserts himself as a poetic, aesthetic subject, rather than a subject of practice, who understands the material, real or poetic, always in reference to the symbolic order of the thetic. In his aesthetic judgement he acknowledges that assemblages change and transform their material elements, their objects. Crucially, however, they do not question (symbolic) meaning making processes. The object in assemblage remains undoubted in a systemic symbolic. For Seitz neither the artist nor the audience can 'sidestep the symbolic meaning of objects' (Seitz, 1989, p84).

As a poetic aesthetic, I argue, assemblage becomes a style, a language, rather than an activity. Its subject is socio-historically fixed vis-à-vis the symbolic context, and its material conjunctions are moved in relation to a symbolic order only. To read the 'outdoor-scene' (scene 4), within a poetic aesthetic

means to understand its individual elements, in a negative relation to their nominal, symbolic conjunction. The subject can break with this symbolic meaning in semiotic motility performed by an asocial drive, but ultimately, since the symbolic order remains intact, he/she arrives at another symbolic meaning. Identified within the framework of a poetic aesthetic, I argue, assemblage cannot transcend this symbolic consensuality.

This is why I can find only fleeting associations with other writings on collage. I can identify my term within Harold Rosenberg's idea that 'collage is a way of making art, but it is not a specific art form, nor is it a style.' (Rosenberg, 1989, p59) I, however, disagree with his inevitable aesthetic survey. I find affiliations with parts of various other descriptions but unavoidably come back to the point where aesthetic judgement stops 'the making of art', of collage, in 'poetic meaningfulness' (consensual sense). Thus, although I link my notion of collage with Katherine Hoffman's idea that 'the concepts of disintegration, fragmentation, and integration are perhaps particularly important for the medium of collage', her notion of historicity and the comparison of styles, rather than a consideration of a contingent perception, disables my identification with the argument she develops in her text (Hoffman, 1989, p3). The assemblage strategy which I seek to promote with the term temporal-collage defines a different motivation, that of a practice wherein sense is made in a contingent perception which is not arrested in a poetic aesthetic. In other words, I seek to articulate a perceptual practice that is not fixed in relation to a (collective) symbolic register.⁶⁹

I understand the complex elements of temporal-collage to be produced in a practice of perception rather than being appreciated in a poetic experience. The subject of temporal-collage is not an asocial subject, dialectically opposed to a social subjectivity. He/She is not a subject of irrelevant

⁶⁹ Florian Rodari, in his book *Collage Pasted Cut and Torn Papers*, discusses collage from the making point of view. He still ends up with a historical survey, considering the making processes in relation to their time and place of production rather than in relation to his (re-)production in perception now and here. What I consider interesting in relation to my attempt at formulating collage as a practice of perception, however, is his acknowledgement that 'stressing the breaks and discontinuities between its different components, the collage of cut-out, torn, or simply, "found" fragments seems to split up the act of seeing itself.' (Rodari, 1988, p8) I understand him to suggest that collage fragments not its object, material elements, but the viewing process. In this way it makes the viewing subject complicit in its production. According to Rodari it is his/her seeing process that is *affected* rather than a his/her vision *effected*. Following this suggestion, rather than presenting an artwork to the eyes, collage challenges the viewing and sense making processes.

nonsense, but one of individual sense, or, as earlier defined, phenomenological non-sense, which is continually produced in his/her particular experience. Here I am re-evaluating my use of the term experience so far and clarify the experience of temporal-collage, as a production in perception, a *practice*, rather than an *experience* of knowledge.⁷⁰ I relate collage back to Kristeva's fourth signifying practice, and critique the status of historicity, its aesthetic valuation and the meaning assured by the symbolic order in the poetic experience of assemblage via her practice of the text.

The text is completely different from the fetish because it *signifies*; in other words, it is not a substitute but a sign (signifier/signified), and its semantics is unfurled in sentences. The text signifies the unsignifying: it assumes [*relève*] within a signifying practice this functioning (the semiotic), which ignores meaning and operates before meaning or despite it. (Kristeva, 1984, p65)

According to Kristeva, in the text 'the real object is never posited as lost, lacking.' (Ibid., p99) It is never lacking and therefore is never 'replaced', but is always produced through the interdependent knotting of the individual elements. I contend that I practice the scenes of *Spiral Jetty* in the same sense. I am 'Building the Jetty': I am knotting together complex material elements, machines, noises, silences, dinosaurs, water, etc., and extend them centrifugally in my imagination. In this practice I do not extend in experience; I do not posit a replacement object, but rather I continually practice the object. I do not assess an aesthetic whole, as in a poetic experience, but produce a complex artwork. On the level of the scene *Spiral Jetty* is a temporal-collage, a complex artwork, in the sense of a textual practice 'when it is being carried out (and not when it is reified according to the exchange structures of a

⁷⁰ In this I am following Kristeva where, via Hegel, she makes the distinction between an experience and a practice of experience. She writes that

Hegel distinguishes the moment of the object's first and immediate appearance for consciousness -moment of pure apprehension- from the moment of true experience where a new object is constituted from that first object through the turning back of consciousness upon itself, through "our own intervention". (Kristeva, 1984, p196)

I borrow her distinction between an apprehended experience and a practical experience and identify the second in relation to the experience of the artwork as a temporal-collage. However, I remain critical of the socio-historical entanglement of her subject determined by her practice's relationship to the symbolic. I query this relationship further later on in this text via symbolism as a tendential quality, and also, in the following chapters, via a comparison of her practice to the involvement of the intersubjective subject of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

particular society)' (ibid., p104).⁷¹

So, even though I have refused to suggest a clear description of the term collage in relation to an art historical identification, I believe that defining it by comparison with poetic assemblage, in a textual practice, clarifies its complexity ideologically, and avoids a reproach for arbitrariness of terminology. Hoffman's idea of collage as 'disintegration, fragmentation, and integration', interpreted via Kristeva's practice, rather than in relation to her own art historical and aesthetic experience of collage as an end result, a poetic assemblage, seals this conflation.

My identification, via Kristeva, of the poetic as an aesthetic stoppage, confirming the symbolic through a replacement of its object, and the subsequent affiliation of collage with her text, leaves me to consider the status of the symbolic vis-à-vis the signifying practice of the text. The initial distinctness of the visual and sonic elements of scene 4 foregrounds this issue. The images and sounds of dinosaurs, stones, water, of the machines, etc., carry with them a heavy symbolism. I suggest that they impose on me an idea beyond these elements as representational elements and forge an understanding prior to the knotting effort of my collage perception whilst carrying this effort exactly. In the next part of this chapter I want to consider more closely the notion of the symbolic in reference to this scene. Therefore I contest the individual bricolaging/disjointing effort on the level of the scene in relation to Symbolism and the Symbolist 'subjective vision'. This contestation is staged in relation to Kristeva's ideas of the symbolic and its status vis-à-vis the practice of the text. To do so, I contrast her symbolic order to Symbolism as a practice, forged by a tendential symbolic, rather than a symbolic register.

5

A voice over pronounces "ripping the Spiral Jetty". I watch a close up of a machine ripping open the earth. The sound is maddeningly loud and overpowering. Too loud

⁷¹ If the text is a practice, and collage a text, then following Kristeva the subject has to give up its 'meta-'position'; it has to inhabit and practice the text, the collage, from the knotting points into centrifugal extensions. As a consequence of this identification of collage with Kristeva's text the subject in collage comes to be identified as her 'subject in process/on trial'. Thus I acknowledge that my emphasis on practice, collage as text, foregrounds the status of the subject: 'Caught up within this dynamic, the human body is also a process.' (Kristeva, 1984, p101) The status of this subject is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

in relation to the machinery presented and, added to this, the visual ripping motions and the engine noise are clearly not in synch. This non-synch adds to the intensity and peculiarity of the scene. I perceive an indifference between sound and image which opens a different space. I feel propelled into a wider context of strength and machines than the specific action I am being presented with. Apart from this ripping action, there are still-images, undulating sounds of quieter water moments and pictures of dinosaurs. They present a simultaneity and offer different levels of interaction. The machines are dinosaurs, the dinosaurs machines. I experience a fluid co-existence between the machines, the dinosaurs, the loud machine noise, the calm water. These sounds and images are detached elements in themselves. Their independence, I feel, compels me to playfully connect them, building different conjunctions and opening different spaces imaginatively.

There seems to be a symbolic quality in this scene, which compels my engagement. However, I contest that this quality does not limit my perception to a symbolic interpretation. Rather it seems to propel my imagination. The machine strength, perceived in this scene, I argue, is not simply posited as a symbolic strength. It is not forged from the conflict of its material elements, sound and image, in the sense of a montage of conflict. No orchestral counterpoint leads me to a consolidated understanding of the film as signifying, in an obvious symbolism, the undepictable in machine strength. There is no conflict in-between any of these sounds and images, which might urge a resolution. Rather, they are simultaneous and mobile. I am forming knotting points, and extend the material elements non-materially. In this process I do not feel 'directed' by the intention of the author. I do not feel 'seduced' to connect particular materials in a particular way, according to a symbolic register, in order to attain one ideologically driven resolution. Rather, the material complexity of the scene: water, dinosaurs, sound and images of machines, enables no such shutting down as I continue to perceive them. My spectatorship 'performs' the film in a more solitary and amicable play moved by a particular 'quality' of its elements. In the next part of this chapter I argue this quality as a tendential symbolism in distinction to a symbolic order.

I contest that the symbolic strength that I am producing in my perception of this scene, is not the symbolic of a horizontal orientation of Barthes' second order semiotic: the obvious. I am not following the intentional, ideological

directive of a semiotic symbolic. Rather, I am engaged in a relationship to a symbolic quality in a more general sense. I argue that the images and sounds -the industrial sounds, the water, the machines, the dinosaurs, the silence- bear a symbolic property, which triggers my engagement, but does not foreclose my understanding. These elements, I argue, display a tendential symbolic quality which I exploit in my perception. To clarify the status of this tendential quality in my perception of this scene, I articulate this tendential in relation to Kristeva's notion of the symbolic as order. This comparison explores the relationship between her signifying practice of the text and the symbolic order, and contests my conflation of her text and my temporal-collage in relation to the symbolic. To stage this argument, in the first instance, I consider the conventions and philosophical conception of Symbolism. This connects Symbolism's 'subjective vision' to Kristeva's subjective viewing of Alain Kirili's work and by implication, to the subjectivity of her practice of the text. Consequently I can relate them both to my subjective viewing of *Spiral Jetty*.

Following Albert-G. Aurier, Symbolism is a reaction to the objective ideality of realism. It aspires to bring out in the object not its real, scientific being, but rather treats it as a sign, a referent. In his essay 'Symbolisme en Peinture' (Symbolism in Painting) he expresses regret that the viewer, who is according to him not an artist, not a practitioner, 'se trouverait devant elle dans une situation analogue à celle de la foule devant les objets de nature. Il n'en percevrait les objets représentés qu'en tant qu'objets'. ('finds himself in front of it [the painting] in the same situation as the masses in front of 'real' objects. He perceives the represented objects as nothing but objects'.) (Aurier, 1893b, p214, *my translation*) He suggests that this must be avoided and that the object in painting must be a suggestion not a representation. He explains that:

Donc pour enfin se résumer et conclure l'œuvre d'art, telle qu'il m'a plu la logiquement évoquer, sera: (...); Symboliste, puisqu'elle exprimera cette idée par des formes; (...) et Subjective, puisque l'objet n'y sera jamais considéré en tant qu'objet mais en tant que signe d'idée perçu par le sujet. (Ibid, p215-216)⁷²

⁷²

Thus in order to summarise and conclude, the artwork, in as much as I have discussed

I find his definition of Symbolism useful in relation to my understanding of the symbolic 'suggestion' of the material elements of *Spiral Jetty*. It aids me to articulate the forms, the material elements of the scene, in relation to my subjectivity rather than to an essential being. The material elements are means that take form in my perception. However, I disagree with his understanding that it is only the artist who can appreciate the complexity of the object and who is able to perform a translation between a symbolic idea and the object on the canvas. This pre-supposes a hierarchy between the author and the spectator, and suggests a lexical understanding between the symbolic idea and the object. Translation elucidates Symbolism's practice as an intentional ordering of ideational complexity according to a lexical register. Thus viewing is not a practical experience but an apprehension of knowledge.⁷³

This vocabularic understanding is also expressed in Jean Moréas' *Le Symbolisme*, a literary manifesto, where he writes that Symbolism ought to produce sensible appearances that bring forth the affinity between the object and its primordial ideas. For the successful translation of this synthesis, he goes on to say:

il faut au symbolisme un style archétype et complexe: d'impollués vocables, la période qui s'arc-boute alternant avec la période au défailance ondulées, les pléonasmes significatifs, les mystérieuses ellipses, l'anacoluthie en suspens, tout trope hardi et multiforme: enfin la bonne langage.⁷⁴ (Moréas, 1973a, p32)

His notion of 'une bonne langage'; a good language, clarifies Symbolism as style. The symbolic form is worked into the object from a register, from a socio-historical specificity of archetypes, terms, phrases, etc.. In turn, the

it, would be: (...); Symbolist, for it expresses the idea by means of forms; (...) and Subjective, for the object will never be considered as an object but as the sign of an idea perceived by the subject. (Aurier, 1893b, p215-216, *my translation*)

⁷³ This re-asserts the distinction made earlier between experience as knowledge and experience as practice. Following Hegel, Kristeva distinguishes between the object's immediate appearance as knowledge 'moment of pure apprehension' and the 'moment of true experience', when the object is constituted in practice (Kristeva, 1984, p196).

⁷⁴

Symbolism requires a complex and archetypal style: unpolluted terms, phrases which rear up alternating phrases with undulating weaknesses, significant pleonasm, mysterious ellipse, suspended anacoluthons, all the bold and multiform tropes: in all a 'good' language. (Moréas, 1973a, p32, *my translation*)

viewing subject can be brought to its idea due to his/her affiliation with this lexical specificity.

By contrast, my perception of a symbolic quality in *Spiral Jetty*, refers to symbolism as a philosophy of production in perception. In this I embrace Aurier's 'subjectivity' and his notion of a 'means to form'. However, I do not distinguish between the artist and the viewer. Rather, I consider them both practitioners. Thus the hierarchy between author and spectator is problematised and the socio-historical fixity of either position challenged. Without this hierarchy and the socio-historical (symbolic) framework, I argue, the intention of the author becomes incapable of forging one particular understanding of the complex object in relation to one primordial register as style.

As a consequence of my problematising of authority and style, I read Munch's notebook entry on 'subjective vision' not as an instruction for the artist to paint, but for the viewer to produce in a generative practice of perception:

If you see double, then for example, you must paint two noses.

And if you see a glass slanting, then you have to make the glass slant.

Or, if you want to present something experienced in an erotic moment when you are flushed and amorous - Here you have found a motif which you cannot present exactly as you see it on another occasion when you are cold. (Art in Theory 1815-1900, 1998, p1042)⁷⁵

If I abandon the notion of style and the authority of the artist I can position the viewing subject as a subject of a perceptual rather than a poetic practice. Consequently, as such a practitioner, the socio-historical specificity of my viewing becomes contingent to my concurrent situation rather than to that of the work or the artist. In this sense the subjective characteristic of Symbolism, divorced from the socio-historical framework of production, lends itself to my notion of the material as displaying a tendential quality without referring it to a symbolic register. To develop this tendential symbolism in relation to temporal-collage as a practice of the text, I investigate Kristeva's text in relation to her understanding of the symbolic as order.

⁷⁵Exerpts in *Art in Theory 1815-1900* are taken from unpublished documents at the Edvard Munch Museum in Oslo, Norway, orig. 1889.

In her essay *From Symbol to Sign*, Kristeva articulates the symbol as referring 'to the object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas.' (Kristeva, 1986, p64) The symbol is thus, in distinction to the signifier, not arbitrary, but definite and socio-historically precise, involving a socio-historically precise subject position. The representation of meaning in the symbol is a functional relation, which has a vertical and a horizontal dimension. In Kristeva's terms, the social and the symbolic are synonymous: culture is based on the symbolic. Such a reading understands the symbolic as ordering. Its order can be broken into, and moved on through the semiotic, but due to its place within the thetic, it can never be destroyed completely. The symbolic represents the cultural contract. As discussed earlier it allows (the artist) to stage a transgression in the poetic, without the social contract being destroyed. Rather, this poetic transgression arrests the threat to the social order in representation (aesthetic fetishism).

By contrast, according to Kristeva the text never halts for representation. Rather, it is the practice of endless mobility 'positing elements (time of rest), reactivating the whirlwind (time of crossing).' (Kristeva, 1984, p99) This practice includes her other three signifying practices: metalanguage, narrative and contemplation.⁷⁶ 'It adopts them but then pushes them aside as the mere scaffolds of the process' (ibid., p101). I have shown how her first three signifying practices work within the symbolic order. Thus, by adopting them the text encounters the symbolic order, but as a practice it passes through it, pushing it away. The symbolic barrier is its motivation, but not its directing orientation. The materials of metalanguage, narrative and contemplation, only provoke its production, whilst the textual process designates an "elsewhere" beyond this trigger moment (ibid., p100).

I focus on Kristeva's idea of a momentary 'passing-through' to investigate the relationship of the text to the symbolic. I contest that the transient and appending connection articulates this relationship as tendential rather than

⁷⁶ In relation to contemplation Kristeva describes the symbolic sublimation as 'the eternal loop of a knotted signifier within the transference relation, which in fact offers no way out.' (Kristeva, 1984, p98) Withdrawn from social imbrication, this is the view of a symbolic register. By contrast, I am identifying the practice of temporal-collage with Kristeva's practice of the text. What I am after is symbolism as tendential quality, provoking an activity rather than providing the knowledge experience of a register. The symbolic register might trigger the symbolic understanding of the artwork as collage. However, I argue the knotting process

fundamental. In the practice of the text the symbolic order of the 'scaffold' presents a means to form, but the form is practised in the endless mobility of the text: it never settles in style. I understand that the symbolic 'residue' of the first three signifying practices in Kristeva's theory triggers and remains in the dynamic of the text as a tendential quality, but is never embodied as a Symbolist trope. Rather, the text 'sweeps along everything that belongs to the same space of practice' (ibid., p101). Thus the symbolic is the trigger but not the essence of the signifying practice of the text.⁷⁷

As a consequence of my identification of temporal-collage within the signifying practice of the text, it follows that in temporal-collage too the symbolic functions as a tendential quality, triggering a symbolic means, but not ordering the outcome of its form. This allows me to confirm a tendential symbolic in the material of 'Building the Jetty'. The quality of strength and power which I perceive in the visual and sonic material of the last scene (5) provokes my imaginative practice of strength and power as a textual practice, not however in relation to a certain symbolism thereof. I am knotting in an endless mobility, detaching, fragmenting and attaching the complex material elements provoked into action by a tendential symbolic quality which is never realised as a style. The work is not limited to an outcome: the film as sign in relation to its symbolic order.

This coincides with my a-historical, non stylistically ratified, view of Symbolism as staged above. Symbolism is thus not seen within its socio-historical context of the 19th Century and without the hierarchy between the artist and the viewer. Rather, it is emancipated from an underlying order and the insistence on a socio-historically fixed subjectivity and becomes a contingent and individual practice instead.⁷⁸

not as a process of tying practice down in relation to such a register, but of connecting up to release: 'to reconstitute the space of its formation.' (Ibid., p100)

⁷⁷ In this space of practice Kristeva stages the subject in process/on trial. Hers is not Aurier's aesthetic subject of Symbolism but a subject that produces him/herself and his her circumstance in the trial of perception all the time. 'Though it is made by one who is all, this practice does not claim all who would be One. It does not instigate the "process-of-becoming-a-subject" of the masses.' (Ibid., p102) I develop this subject becoming him/herself but not the subject of the masses in the next chapter.

⁷⁸ The notion of the tendential symbolic, provoking the practice of the text, and the temporal-collage of the scene identified as such a practice, focuses this investigation on the subject. The subject of temporal-collage is thus identified not as a symbolic (aesthetic) subject but as a tendential subject of practice. This practical position of the subject is developed in chapter 3.

Surveying the Work

6

The middle part of the film concludes with the building of the Jetty. Now in the third and final part, I am taking off in a helicopter to survey the work. The sound of the building equipment is now replaced by the sound of the helicopter setting off, and following the spiral shape of the Jetty. I am flying several times, from various directions, and at different heights, over the Salt Lake with its new feature, the Jetty. The visuals are shot from above and locate me inside the helicopter, in the air, at a distance, surveying the work. Unlike the earlier car scene however, the sound of the helicopter engine locates me outside of it, confusing my viewing position. I am at once inside and viewing from a distance, and outside and hearing this very viewing-position to be at a distance from myself. The image of the helicopter's shadow thrown onto the earth underneath, makes me doubly aware of the distance I am at visually. I can't help but feel a certain romantic notion influencing my perception. The vantage point high up in the air, and the vastness of land and lake underneath me, invites idea of heroic loneliness and the sublime.⁷⁹ Into this reverie breaks a voice-over which informs me about the geographical co-ordinates and the geological consistency of the Spiral Jetty. The voice-over makes lengthy and monotonous descriptions on the location and materiality of the Jetty, whilst the helicopter and with it my viewing position, circles higher and higher in the air above it, swinging out to the north and south, until I can see the whole Jetty at one glance. Having presented me with the whole work, the chopper swings round and starts to circle down again. For a while the voice-over accompanies this descent. But soon it stops

⁷⁹ **This elevated position makes me self-conscious about my viewing and listening. The distance and heroism of my position, high up in the air, and its deferential opposite, the man on the ground, trigger notions of the romantic sublime. The camera position opens a gap between the subject viewing the film and the subject represented on the Jetty, on screen. My distance to the figure on the Jetty, identifies me as a metasubject, the void between me and the figure on the Jetty at this point allows for metadiscourse, aesthetic theory, to fill this absence. This dynamic I argue produces my position as a romantic subjectivity. The romantic subject depends on absence, which is overcome, made present, through a replacement. I understand the process of this replacement in the sense of Kristeva's notion of a fetish replacement in poetic language (the first three signifying practices). I thus read the void as well as its replacement and the ensuing identity of the viewer within a romantic aesthetics. By contrast, I argue that the continuous and subjective mobility of the fourth signifying practice, which I have adopted for my strategy of temporal-collage, does not work along the lines of a romantic aesthetics. I have asserted temporal-collage within Kristeva's fourth signifying practice to allow neither for meta-positions nor to lead to fetish replacements. I thus argue that her textual practice and my temporal-collage, do not enable a romantic identity: one defined in relation to absence and its replenishment with a replacement fetish in an aesthetic theorisation.**

and instead the sound of the helicopter grows louder and louder, signalling its coming closer and closer to the Spiral Jetty. The colours of the photography are changing, taking on a reddish tint, as the camera focuses in on close-ups of its spiral structure. At the same time we start hearing the sounds of bird-song and a rhythmic low pitched synthetic thudding. This electronic sound-track is not unlike the one accompanying the cell-like imagery in the very beginning of the film. The allusion to micro-levels is here made not only via the close focus onto the rocky material of the Jetty, but also via the voice-over. Its text brings sound and image together by talking about crystals at the microscopic level of the Jetty's materiality.

The various sounds that furnish this filmic moment carry over onto the next 'image', which pulls my view back onto a wider stretch of the Jetty. I am observing a man, presumably Smithson, first walking than running along its shape. This male figure seems at first to be chased by the helicopter. His hair and clothes are blowing in the wind produced by the chopper right above him. He runs and stumbles as if on a hasty escape from the apparatus in the sky. At other times, however, it seems that it is he who is chasing the shadow of the helicopter, thrown in front of him, onto the Jetty. This struggle for assertion performed between helicopter and man ends when he arrives at the centre of the Spiral. Here he pauses and looks up at his adversary: the helicopter. Meanwhile, I, placed by the camera in the helicopter, am *looking* down at him, whilst *listening* with him to the engine noise. The man and the helicopter, give me two different positions for the perception of this scene: I sense the sound of the helicopter with him, and adopt his position in this listening experience, the visual position above in the helicopter detaches me and makes me observe his running and struggling from a distance. This double position creates a constant tension disabling an easy affiliative perception. When the male figure has arrived at the centre of the Jetty the two positions split. The helicopter pulls out, flies high up into the air and presents the whole jetty from far away. Up here the sound of the helicopter dominates and the dual position ceases. I am sonically as well as visually inside the helicopter now, enjoying temporarily a consolidated viewing and listening position. This position is however more and more at a distance from the man beneath, who has become part of the Jetty and invisible in its stony patterns.

This scene, I argue, deviates from the character of the film by including a montage dynamic within the scene. The conflictual relationship between the man and the helicopter, the view from above, the sound from underneath, presents me with a antagonistic juxtaposition which forges a synthetic

solution. I am not given material to unpack and play with anymore. The sudden working with a directive montage strategy *within* one scene, I argue, produces an acceleration and intensification of the artist's intention. The artist puts pressure on me to reach a particular understanding. The tension between the man and the helicopter produces a dialectic conflict. In response, as a resolution of this particular dialectic tension, I am given the view of the Spiral Jetty from above. Up here the Jetty becomes an image, the earlier tension with the ground level is consolidated in this aesthetisation from far away.

We are flying away from the Jetty now and are curving in-land and back, flying over it at peculiar angles. The Jetty becomes a total artwork, framed in the peculiar angles of the fly-overs. The diverse elements are held in a poetic frame. The fragmentary elements of collage are sublimated to this frame. My effort of practice is undermined in its ideological resolution. The closure of the footage in this one scene anticipates the reading of the whole film as an objective totality. The visual and sonic material: the stones, the water, the helicopter, space etc., come to be identified in relation to a lexical symbolism. The signifying practice triggered by a tendential quality is over-ridden. The individual elements are sublimated in favour of a consensual, symbolic reading. At the same time the viewer is re-positioned as a socio-historically fixed aesthetic viewer, and the film is identified in relation to a symbolic style.

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When the helicopter flies closer in, I observe the male figure on his way back to the land, and hear the engine picking up again. The voice-over starts to narrate something poetic about appearances. Whilst the voice is talking the helicopter sounds dip. This makes me aware that these sounds are never 'real' and in synch with the imagery. Instead they form an artificial synthesis, a sonic composition, which evens-out certain visual stutters. The uninterrupted engine sound of the helicopter smoothes over the gaps and ensures a constant listening plane, which assures my viewing position inside the helicopter to be constant also. The voice-over shifts slightly from the narrative on spiral appearances to analogues between spirals and headaches. Medical connections between the Spiral Jetty and the body are being drawn. An intensification of a physical experience by way of this analogy to pain is, if not experienced, at least signalled as an idea of the work. Finally the helicopter leaves the scene and flies away.

I am asking myself whether or not this voice-over challenges the apparent aesthetic closure that precedes it? In response I contend that this scene reasserts a collage strategy which allows me to work out of the context forged in the last scene. The foreclosure of the film achieved through the acceleration and intensification of montage in the previous scene (6) is arrested momentarily. This enables me to question its consolidated shape and to continue a contingent practice. However, the next shot relativises my autonomous practice yet again, and the film ends in a certain denouement, the ultimate folding back of its expression onto the mechanism and location of its production: the cutting table and a poster sized image of the Jetty above it.

8

The film cuts into the cutting-room. There is a cutting table and on the wall hangs an image of the Spiral Jetty. There is no sound in this scene apart from a rather oppressively silent atmos-track. It goes dark and the credits come up.

Conclusion

Formally this film works in four main parts: The planing phase, the building of the Jetty, the surveying stage and finally the revelation of the producing mechanism. These four parts formulate a complex presentation of sonic and visual material of water, rocks, machines, micro-particles, books, dinosaurs, etc.. Potentially these individual elements could be practised in varied connections, extending the work infinitely. However, I argue that in-between the scenes, montage moments produce conflicting juxtapositions, which forge a particular (synthetic) reading. The dialectic conflict imposes an ordering dynamic and stages a linear building process that constructs a consensual (narrative) plot. In relation to this narrative sense the material elements come to delineate particular themes and concerns such as energy, micro-levels, territory, myths, strength, geology, etc.. They are perceived in reference to a symbolic lexicon employed to substitute and replace the 'gap' produced at the junctures between scenes.

Via my affiliation to the symbolic order I read the film in an aesthetic appreciation, understood as a poetic stoppage. Any lack of consensual sense, I argue, is made up for by a symbolic (fetish) replacement. This replacement repairs the break with the symbolic order provoked by the textual complexity

on the level of the scene, and thus re-establishes a consensual comprehension, a (synthetic) poetic reading. The poetic aesthetic is thus clarified as a reading of the material in relation to a symbolic order. Whilst this assures a total understanding of the work, this aesthetic 'knowledge', I argue, hinders my practising of its material in perception. The intricacies, the play, the freedom and complexity of the material on the level of the scene is arrested. The centrifugal knotting effort with complex elements is sublimated to this objective (narrative) totality. The connection between the elements as themes, I contest, is a willful imposition of the artist's intention. The totality which is worked out between his intention and the symbolic register ensures the communication of the whole film but delimits any individual imagination practised in a sensorial engagement.

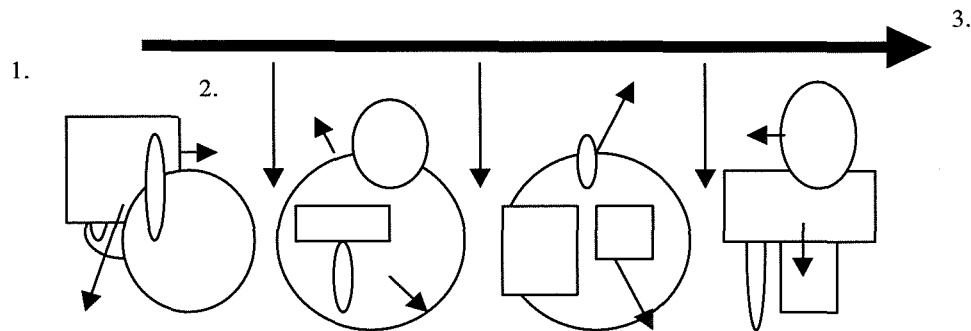
The framework of this chapter; the differentiation between my perception of the visual and sonic material presented, and the theoretical investigation of this perception, foregrounds this distinction between the material strategy experienced on the level of the scene, and at the point of connection between the scenes, where such scenes are juxtaposed in the production of the whole film. The scenes allow for an individuated generative sense. By contrast the montage moments undermine this individuation in the production of a consensual sense.

I contend that the last part of the film accelerates this montage sequencing and contextualises the understanding of the film in a final denouement: its machine of production, the cutting table, and the summarising still-image of the Jetty. The autonomy of the individual scene is thereby conclusively sublimated for the purpose of the whole film. Its production in perception is paralysed for the realisation of this totality. In conclusion I thus re-assert my interpretation of Smithson's film *Spiral Jetty* as a collage-montage.

Fig. 4

Collage-Montage

Total Film



Key

1. **Temporal-collage scene with complex material elements. Their tendential symbolic triggers a centrifugal practice of perception. This is an individual and generative practice, which imaginatively extends the material outward in the contingent circumstance of the subject (individuated and generative sense).**
2. **Montage moments in-between scenes. These moments organise the material 'internally' in relation to conflicting juxtapositions according to a symbolic register. Thereby the scenes' complex material elements are sublimated.**
3. **Subject position. The (aesthetic) subject rests outside the films poetic structure. He/she surveys the dialectic conflict from that 'meta-position' and is directed to perform a synthetic reading of the elements in relation to the poetic structure according to the montage pressures. The ideological drive of the author as montagueur achieves a sublimation of the complexity of the scenes in relation to the organisation of the film as an objective totality (consensual narrative sense).**

The basis of my critique of the moment of montage in-between scenes as constructing a denouement, is that it organises the complex material in hindsight. The montage moment in-between the scenes belabours the material, it locks it in relation to a symbolic order, and thus imposes a meaning upon the subject, who in turn is assumed as a collective symbolic subject also. The montage drive orders and sublimates any individual, imaginative ponderings as deviations from its grand narrative. By contrast, the scenes offer a material indulgence that I understand to undo the ideological certainty and drive of the total film and thus frees subjectivity to

pursue a centrifugal and generative practice. This I understand is the critical challenge of temporal-collage as I aim to pursue it.

Centrifugality suggests a dematerialization, in the sense of a conceptualisation, and such a conceptual understanding stresses the individuation of the artwork in perception. I thus conclude that at the same time as the whole film is striving towards a consolidated expression, the (temporal-collage) scene allows for temporary connections of the material, not in itself and not in strict reference to an ideological or symbolic order either, but in an emotive participation.

Thus, for the purpose of my strategy of a complex material practice, and instead of furthering an intentional production of the whole film as a total artwork, my interest remains with the level of the scene. I identify the scene as a 'temporal-collage'. The 'temporal' delineates collage as a perceptual process in time, and 'collage' establishes this process within Julia Kristeva's signifying practice of the text as a 'fitting together, detaching, including, and building' (Kristeva, 1984, p102). Her textual practice introduces a useful argument against the ideological dynamic of montage, and also establishes a critique of the signifying practice of Barthes' accent, ruled out early on, on the grounds of its inherent negativity. Kristeva's practice allows me to clarify the term 'disjointing', whilst collage enables me to partner it with 'bricolaging', and together they produce, in an endless knotting mobility, the artwork as a material complex. I understand the motivation for my own video work in relation to this quality of the scene. I engage the material, sonic and visual, in a complex assemblage, in order to enable the production of the work as a temporal-collage.

The understanding of the symbolic as a tendential quality rather than an order, too, is crucial for this practice. It allows me to think the material beyond the collective in a contingent perception and not as an overflow of signification. Symbolism as a tendential quality is a radical re-interpretation of the relationship between symbolism and Kristeva's text. I interpret her ideas of 'text' in relation to her other three signifying practices, in order to consider its relationship with the symbolic order and to produce a break with this order whilst remaining unaffected by the negative of this action: endlessly mobile. This allows me to consider a symbolic practice that remains individual in its

particular execution whilst also sharing the collective symbolisation as a tendential trait. In the same sense I understand my audio-visual work to enable a general realm for a particular symbolisation without a clear reference to a symbolic order.

Clarifying perception as practice, in distinction to the experience of knowledge, I have shifted the responsibility of complexity away from the artist onto the viewing and listening subject as a singular subject. What is thus elucidated as a central issue of my project is the status of the subject in relation to the artwork as a materially complex temporal-collage. This chapter focuses on materiality and neglects the subject, assuming its involvement at the periphery of the argument. This leaves me with the task of contesting the viability and nature of such subjectivity assumed here. The perceptual emphasis of temporal-collage foregrounds the spectator before the author or the text. In the next chapter I investigate this generative spectatorship after the death of the author, after modernism, in relation to Lyotard's 'Postmodern Condition' of perpetual practice. Chapter 3 investigates and clarifies such a subject in relation to the subject of Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*.

Chapter 3

Stalker; The Subject in Temporal-Collage

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Synopsis

In this chapter I clarify the subject of temporal-collage in relation to Andrei Tarkovsky's film Stalker. I parallel 'Stalker', the subject on screen, with the subject watching the film through Tarkovsky's mis-en-scène, 'the Zone'. Borrowing Barthes' notion of an 'écrivain', I identify Stalker and the subject viewing the film as transitive subjects, 'spectatants', producing the Zone and the film continually in a signifying practice. To argue the particularity of this perceptual activity, I stage the Zone as postmodern condition of here and now. This idea is investigated via the theorisation of postmodernity as discussed by Jean-François Lyotard. The playful enunciation of his subject is brought to bear on the filmic material, and also enters into correspondence with Kristeva's ideas on the 'subject in process/on trial'. The relationship between his rules of the postmodern game and her contract of the 'trial of sense and identity', renew a consideration of the symbolic. Thus, I argue for the Zone as a space of 'tendential' symbolism and stage the 'spectatant' as a symbolic subject after modernism.

Introduction

This chapter investigates and clarifies the subject of temporal-collage introduced in Chapter 2. This clarification is developed through Barthes' idea of an *écrivant*.⁸⁰ I investigate and borrow Barthes' notion of a transitive writer, and transpose its vernacular 'authority' onto the spectator. Thus I contest my understanding of the viewer-practitioner, as proposed via Kristeva in the last chapter, within the terms of a *spectatant*. I acknowledge the viewer as a transitive subjectivity, producing the film in perception. This argument problematises an interpretative discussion of the film *Stalker* and shifts the focus towards a consideration of interpretation as generative perception. Subsequently, this stresses the distinction between the conception of an authoritative, right, reading of a work of art, and its contingent production in perception, and problematises identity. Barthes' theory of writing allows me to re-think the authority of the film and the position of its viewer, and aids me to develop my investigation.

Having established the idea of the *spectatant*, I then bring its spectre into contact with the subject of Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*. I argue that on 'Entering the Zone', the central mis-en-scène of Tarkovsky's film, I become a subject *spectatant*. I contest this active and temporary subjectivity in relation to the activity of the 'Stalker', who I suggest is an *écrivant*. I then parallel Stalker as an active subject on screen, with the active subject watching the film. I argue that both have a transitive character and continually practise the Zone. In the Zone, 'apprehensional knowledge', in the sense of Hegel's 'moment of pure apprehension', is discounted. Only a temporary practice of perception, the 'moment of true experience', when the object is constituted in practice, produces the 'travellers' advancement through its terrain (Kristeva, 1984, p196). Following this distinction, I argue that the subject viewing the film, understood as a *spectatant*, produces the film through his/her practice of viewing. The notion of such a production in perception conflates the *spectatant* with my subject of temporal-collage and affirms its active identity within this terminology.

⁸⁰ In his text 'Écrivains et écrivant' (1960), Roland Barthes identifies the writer, the *écrivain*, and the person who is writing, the *écrivant*. Whilst the first is a recognised authority of writing, who uses as well as confirms the orthodoxies and conventions of literature, the second is a subject who is at this moment involved in the process of writing. The *écrivant* writes as he speaks, continually in the present without being self-consciously limited by the authority of traditions and conventions. His language is a device rather than an assured and critically ratified material in and of itself. In this chapter I elaborate on this distinction in relation to the spectator.

From here I argue the Zone as text, in the sense of Kristeva's fourth signifying practice. The focus on the subject aids me to re-stage and confirm my argument for the correspondence between temporal-collage and her textual practice. This correspondence re-stated, I comprehend the artwork's material complexity as constituted in the sense-making process performed in the action of perception. Thus I can conceive of both, the material and the subject, not as *objective entities*, fixed and identified, but as *transitive activities*. This conception is facilitated and framed by Kristeva's theories of the 'subject in process/on trial': her notion of a generative subject whose sense and identity is produced in the continual trial of articulation that is the signifying practice. This allows me to argue for a subject that is not bound up with the dialectic of a social and an asocial identity, and is not identified within the conception of a subjective relativism either. I want to avoid slipping into the negative and into relativism here. I do so by focusing on the singularity of the subject in its place and time specific, generative relationship with the object. In this, I particularly argue against Donald Kuspit, who, in his essay 'Collage: the Organizing Principle of Art in the Age of the Relativity of Art', articulates collage as a relativist strategy. Problematising his ideas, I argue that the subject defines itself continually through its perceptual particularity. Thus, rather than formulating a generalisation about subjectivity, I highlight particularity, spatially and temporally.

I investigate this particularity in relation to François Lyotard's 'Postmodern Condition'. I argue that Lyotard's positioning of the 'postmodern' as the here and now 'condition' of a game, offers a critical method to articulate a generative subject on trial that produces its 'reality' through doing, 'par le fait' (Lyotard, 1979). I agree with his critique of a modernist, romantic distantiation, and identify the signifying practice of the Zone (temporal-collage) in his continual here and now. I argue this contingent active production of reality in conjunction with the way in which Barthes' *écrivain* produces through writing, and my *spectatant* produces through spectating.

However, I then go on to articulate a critique of Lyotard's condition in relation to his separation between the game and its rules. This separation, I argue, inadvertently brings me (back), through synthesis, to a meta-position of discourse established in the dialectic recuperation. The separation between the moves of the game, and its rules, I argue, separates the subject's activity from its concurrent social contract, which is thus posited at its base. This realisation leads me to re-consider the issue of a symbolic order understood as a social contract underlying the semiotic motility of social expression in Kristeva's signifying practices.

The symbolic as discussed via Barthes assures a collective meaning. My consideration of Kristeva's textual practice has so far yielded a different understanding of the symbolic, not as an order but as a quality. However, the focus on the subject *spectatant* on trial producing the Zone re-evaluates this. I argue that her separation between the modalities of the semiotic 'drive' and the symbolic 'matter' in the enunciation of the speaking subject forges a dialectic in-between. This in-between is overcome in the (synthetic) formation of an ever new symbolic. Although Kristeva proposes a dynamic understanding that is 'endlessly mobile', I critique the 'foundational' nature of her position via my notion of a tendential symbolism. This symbolism, I propose, works not from a symbolic order, but considers the symbolic quality of things in relation to a particular and temporal realisation thereof by the subject understood as a subject *spectatant* on trial. This, I argue, critiques the notion of a consensual 'order' assumed on the basis of things, and thus disables the idea of totality.

To demonstrate this proposition, I argue the Zone as a space of tendential symbolism, and the travellers in the Zone are contested as symbolic subjects after modernism, a priori as neo-symbolic subjects. These travellers, I argue, produce the Zone in relation to the symbolic quality of their surroundings, but not in reference to a symbolic register. I further contest that the postmodern subject is not identified in relation to a collective symbolism. What is shared collectively is a tendential symbolic and social quality, and the desire to realise this quality rather than an actual order/register of symbolisation or socialisation. This assertion of a tendential quality marks the difference between my signifying practice of temporal-collage and Kristeva's signifying practice of the text, bound as it is to the notion of a symbolic order.

Viewing *Stalker*: Issues of Interpretation and Experience

In his book *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*, Mark LeFanu points out that although it might be profitable to follow a strictly interpretative discussion of *Stalker*, such a discussion in his terms would produce distortions. LeFanu suggests that a hermeneutic criticism over-explains the work and betrays its experience. He understands formalism to be the only mechanism which can truly elucidate the value of a work of art. For him formalism is thus (alas paradoxically), central to his discussion of the film *Stalker*. Following LeFanu's inquiry I contest that Andrei Tarkovsky's films in general, and his work *Stalker* in particular, pose a problem to

the critic who tries to grasp and conclusively interpret the filmic material. It is as if the complexity of Tarkovsky's audio-visual expressions gets in the way of a communicable interpretation. So much gets lost and flattened-out in the quest for shared comprehension that no understanding is achieved beyond what concerns the mechanism of interpretation itself. All we seem to be able to talk about is the formal arrangement of his work. The 'what' of experience, I argue, is produced in a more sensible and individual discovery.

In my own discussion of *Stalker* I am using a formal description. I do this not for the same reasons as Le Fanu however. My interest lies not in presenting the value of the film in the sense of its 'grandeur, importance and authority', nor am I interested in finding a conclusive and consensual interpretative understanding of the material presented (LeFanu, 1987, p92). Rather, the formal consideration allows me to reflect on interpretation as an individual pursuit. I argue that in the particularity of an individual and contingent viewing, interpretation is never a distortion but a production in perception. The form of the artwork, the film, is the platform of experience not however its limit. My use of formalism, then, is paradoxical too. However, the paradox lies not, as it does for LeFanu, between authority and form, but between form and individual experience. The individual interpretation of form, I argue, becomes its production in perception. The authority lies with the spectator, and the interpretation becomes the artwork as a generative action. Thus the value of the artwork lies in the conviction of its own interpretative production rather than in relation to presumed orthodoxies of valuation.

This turning away from an evaluative criticism, toward a production of the film in terms of perceptual processes, I suggest, is in keeping with my ideas about production in perception as contested in relation to temporal-collage. I stage this argument vis-à-vis Roland Barthes' notion of an *écrivain* (a person writing) as distinct from l'*écrivain* (the writer), and employ his terminology in reference to his declaration of 'La mort de l'auteur' in 1968 (the Death of the Author). In his text 'Écrivain et écrivain' (orig. 1960) Barthes debates two different forms of 'writing'. L'*écrivain* is the person who writes, for the term *écrivain* is a noun. According to Barthes, he is an author who uses and produces the institutional monopoly over language. He presents a literary tradition and institution, 'la grande langue française' (Barthes, 1964, p148). By contrast, l'*écrivain* is described as a different voice of action. The '-ant' denotes the present participle, thus the *écrivain* is writing; he is produced continually in the process of his own production. At the time Barthes

coined the term *écrivain*, authorship had not been taken apart entirely yet. In effect, I understand the shift from *écrivain* to *écrivant* as an important step towards its destruction. However, once the author has been declared dead, and the text, the artwork, has become foregrounded, the search for criticality has to take place in the realm of readership.⁸¹ I work with Barthes' terminology on the other side of the text: the author is dead and the text has attained an autonomous position, now I contest its reader: the spectator is opened to the problem of a transitive subjectivity. I investigate Barthes' subject *écrivain* in order to transpose it onto the spectator.

'L'écrivain accomplit une fonction, l'écrivain une activité' (The writer performs a function, the person writing an activity), (ibid., p148, *my translation*). What they have in common is '*parole*', spoken language. But the *écrivain* is the professional, who works this language through technique and artisanship, and for whom, according to Barthes, the material of language is its own end. Barthes calls his process tautological, and his motivation narcissistic: The writer answers his questions about the world through language, and thus language always also defines the answers.⁸²

l'écrivain conçoit la littérature comme fin, le monde la lui renvoie comme moyen: et c'est dans cette déception infinie, que l'écrivain retrouve le monde, un monde étrange d'ailleurs, puisque la littérature le représente comme une question jamais, en définitive, comme une réponse.⁸³ (Ibid., p149)

⁸¹ This shift from the author to the text and subsequently from the text to the reader, the spectator, is central to my project. Barthes' 'Death of the Author', aids me to stage and situate this shift. In his terms, once the author is removed, the idea that one can truly decipher a text becomes utterly useless. He suggests that it is the Author who gives the text 'un cran d'arrêt' (a cut off point, *my translation*), which assures the signification of this text. I understand this 'cran d'arrêt' in the sense of an 'aesthetic stoppage' as articulated in relation to the poetic in chapter 2. Barthes' suggestion that the critic needs this cut off point to estimate the value and meaning of the work, supports this connection. Without the author, without the institutional frame and value, to borrow further from Barthes, 'tout est à démêler, mais rien n'est à déchiffrer' ('Everything can be mixed, but nothing is there to decipher it'). Instead 'la littérature, (...), en refusant d'assigner au texte (et au monde comme texte) un "secret", c'est-à-dire un sens ultime, libère une activité que l'on pourrait appeler contre-théologique' ('Literature, (...) by refusing to give the text (and the world understood as text) a "secret", in the sense of an ultimate meaning, (...) liberates an activity, which one could call counter-theological') (Barthes, 1964, p66, *my translation*). I adopt the liberating characteristic of this activity in order to articulate the activity of the subject perceiving the work as temporal-collage. Disregarding the sense that comes from authorship and its institutional and conventional readings, I argue, the subject produces contingent 'senses' instead.

⁸² I contend that this tautological understanding of writing as produced by the *écrivain*, resonates the tautological character of Eisenstein's montage theory. Eisensteinian montage too produces an expression that works from the 'reality' of its own material expression toward its own 'reality' of the film, which is in turn legitimated within this totality.

⁸³ The writer seizes literature as an end, the world offers it to him as a means: and it is in this infinite deception, that the *écrivain* finds the world, a world which is unknown, until

For this writer, Barthes suggests, the verb writing is intransitive; the real is only ever a pretext for language and is explained from a distance. The benefit of this writing he sees in its ability to produce a vertiginous spectacle, a fiction. What the writer produces is literature and values: the notion of a '*bien-écrire*' (well written); the system of its aesthetic judgement.

By contrast, the *écrivain* has a transitive character. For him language, which Barthes in this instance calls speech, is a means rather than an end. In this respect Barthes calls his project naive:

il n'admet pas que son message se retourne et se ferme sur lui-même, et qu'on puisse y lire, d'une façon diacritique, autre chose que ce qu'il veut dire (...). Il considère que sa parole met fin à une ambiguïté du monde, institue une explication irréversible (même s'il admet provisoire), ou une information incontestable (même s'il veut modeste enseignant).⁸⁴ (Ibid., p151)

For the *écrivain* his expression is an individual and subjective expression, provisional and inquisitive possibly, but not ambiguous. I argue that it is made unambiguous due to the particularity of the subject *écrivain*. Ambiguity arises in the generality of language, not in the particularity of the action of writing. By contrast, for the writer his text is, in Barthes' terms, monumental, and thus open to interpretation. I understand this not as a paradox. Rather, I contend that if you are sure of your status as a writer you can accept subjective interpretations and ambiguous readings of your work without them destroying the underlying authority of its institutional language, and thus without interpretative ambiguity destroying the authority of your voice.

The writing of the subject *écrivain*, according to Barthes, due to its place at the margins of institutions and transactions, is much more individual. His writing is not justified through the notion of a *bien-écrire*. It is the urgent individuality of his unambiguously subjective speech that justifies its expression, rather than language as a homogenised aesthetic system. Such an urgent and individual speech seems

literature represents it in its questions, but definitively never as an answer. (Barthes, 1964, p149, *my translation*)

⁸⁴ He does not admit that his message returns and closes itself on himself, and that one can read in it, in a diacritical fashion, more than what he aims to say (...). He believes that his speech ends the ambiguity of the world, and institutes an irreversible explanation (even if it is admittedly a provisional explanation), or an incontestable information (even if, when he is modest, an enquiring one). (Ibid., p151, *my translation*)

to be forever in conflict with conventions of writing and cultural inertia.⁸⁵ The continuously present production of writing is what produces the subject *écrivain*, not his language (the system). I appreciate his disregard for ontological, pre-existing, values, and understand his individual fervour and engagement to lead continuously to a particular subjectivity.

I want to adopt these characteristics of the *écrivain* and transpose them on to the subject perceiving the artwork: the spectator. I argue that in relation to art practice too I can differentiate between the person who understands and produces the work from his/her substantive and intransitive position, the critic, and the person who produces the work continually from the urgency of his/her transitive subjectivity. I thus consider the spectator from two different positions. One is the substantive spectator, the spectator who is an aesthetic subject, and follows the '*bien-faire*' (well done) aesthetic and ontological conventions when appreciating a piece of art. The other is a transitive spectator, who produces the work in his subjective vision, disregarding conventions, and who is unambiguously individual. Following Barthes' terminology I call the first a subject '*spectateur*', and name the latter a subject '*spectatant*'.

In the next part of this chapter I discuss the aesthetic and ideological issues of such a subject *spectatant* in relation to the viewing of the film *Stalker*. The form of the film is understood as *parole*, the vernacular of film that both the *spectateur* and the *spectatant* share. The *spectatant* produces this form in an interpretative production of perception. I argue that the interpretation of *Stalker* by a subject *spectatant* avoids the distortions of a hermeneutic criticism through its unambiguous individuality; it ignores the 'grandeur' and 'authority' as searched for by LeFanu and establishes a temporary authority in the conviction of its own perception. Such an individual and generative interpretation produces the material as a means to an individual

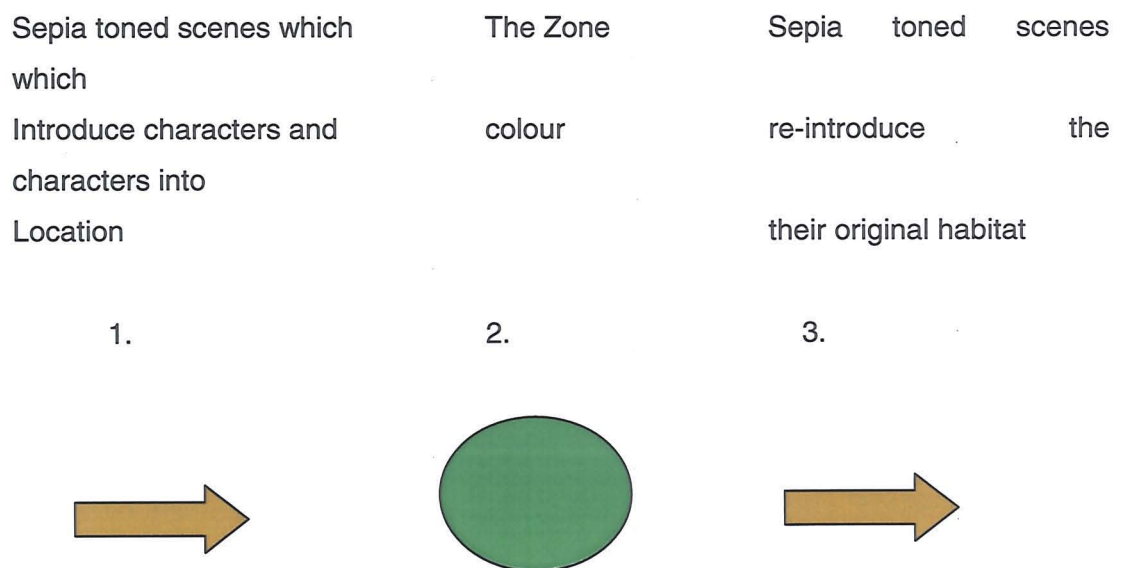
⁸⁵ According to Barthes it is the task of the *écrivain* to state without hesitation what he thinks; and in this urgency and subjectivity lies his criticality. At the same time, the function of the *écrivain* and his literary language is to transform such critical production into a commodity, to make it writable in a conventional sense. I understand that my notion of critical futility, which I argued repeatedly in relation to the notion of a singular subject, lies exactly in such a re-occurring transformation. Barthes concludes that today there exists the possibility to be an '*écrivain-écrivain*'. He suggest that one can become a 'bastard', and work on both sides of *parole*, as a writer and writing. In this sense he closes the cycle and accepts its dialectic as inevitable. However, he also acknowledges either use of language as worthy of critical consideration. Following his argument, even if I have to assume that any artistic articulation in a singular production, is always and inevitably brought back to a collective understanding, I argue that the action of the subject *écrivain* nevertheless explains the criticality and the necessity of its writing.

expression, rather than thinking of the material as a means to a (collective, evaluatively interpretative) end.

Entering the Zone: Becoming a *Spectatant*

Following my proposed methodology I stage Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* in relation to a formal arrangement. Formally, the film can be divided into three parts. Quite conventionally I can understand them as beginning, middle and end. Although they do not exactly perform these functions, this separation aids me to investigate my perception of the work. In a generative interpretation of this separation I work out my (narrative) sense of this formal arrangement, according to the conviction of my urgent and individual perception.

Fig. 1 (The Structure of *Stalker*)



1. The film starts with a sequence of scenes filmed in sepia tones. These are linear in organisation and introduce the viewer to the characters and locations. I view these first few scenes from a distance, following the film's unidirectional movement. The chronology of my reading and the distance of my position is particularly apparent in the domestic scenes. Stalker lies awake in his bedroom next to his sleeping child and wife, obviously uneasy and deep in thought. The ensuing domestic drama, the Stalker making himself ready to leave; his wife raging about her abandonment and in tears, I view from the

comfortable distance of a conventionally disaffected viewer. I have been led into this scene by a camera sneaking in through what must be a door or a window. I am invisible to the protagonists. I am a voyeur looking in, getting to know the characters, their emotional tensions and personal tragedies, without being exposed myself. The subsequent scenes, the meeting of, first the Writer, and then the Professor, the two characters Stalker is going to lead into the Zone, remain in the same 'tone'. I am at a distance getting to know the characters, their history and location. In the bar, where all three characters come together, I am literally outside the set even. Throughout the journey to the Zone, I remain in this distanced viewing position. I am engaged, gripped by the development of the narrative. I fear they will be captured, or shot, that they will not make it to the Zone after all. However, at this stage, I identify no more no less than in any narrative action film.

2. Once the film cuts from the close up of the head of the Writer, filmed in sepia tinted film-stock, to the lush, green *mis-en-scène* of the Zone my position changes. The protagonists start looking back at me. Their gaze draws me into their midst. I am here with them, a fourth character. Their conversations all of a sudden include me, as if I am meant to hear what they are saying and am very much counted in as a fourth party. I am differently involved in the film from this point on. I am not a voyeuristic spectator following a teleological narrative anymore. Whilst the first scenes could have played out without my viewing them, here my presence becomes central to the production of the film. I exist in the gaze of the Stalker, the Writer and the Professor, and my gaze produces the tension of the film. I know the Zone as little as them and have to accept that it is different all the time, unpredictable and changing. Even after viewing the film several times I hesitate, I can't remember. No prior knowledge is going to help them through the Zone. There are too few reference points for me to re-position any sense produced in a prior viewing. I too become afraid, anxious and uncertain about the path to take to the 'Room', which is the aim of the journey. Very early on it is mentioned that there is a linear path to that destination. But the travellers are prevented by the Zone (or their own fear?) from taking that path. Instead the Zone coerces them and me through its ever changing terrain.

The Zone transforms itself constantly. The Stalker needs to throw a metal nut in order to avoid the shifting pitfalls of the terrain. And although he is the

guide, he too is at the mercy of these changes. However, he seems to have a particular position in that he defends its processes in the face of the Writer's, the Professor's and my own frustrations about its apparent nonsense.

The changes of the Zone are dependent on one's own conviction and character. It is the Writer's and the Professor's unconscious attitude towards life that build the Zone and which will kill them or let them pass in the process of its production. It seems like a double bind until you let go and accept that there is nothing to do but to walk the path that you create yourself. In this sense the content and the form of the Zone are enmeshed in each other. The content reflects on the production processes. The walking of the Zone is produced in the viewing of the film in the same way that the Zone is produced in the walking of its terrain. My unconscious attitude of viewing produces the Zone as seen.

The Zone could just be a dream, it could exist solely in my imagination. My hold on a consensual (narrative) meaning is slipping: interpretation becomes imaginative production. Maybe I conjured up the characters myself. I am acutely aware of the detachment of these characters from nominal identities. Outside the characters' 'original' circumstance their titles -Stalker, Writer, Professor- lose their status. The protagonists are stripped bare and are left with nothing but their present being. Once I have abandoned their sure (analytically interpretative) identity, I cannot tell how much the characters are produced in my imagination and how much they are there, on screen. I too feel rather exposed and outside my habitual circumstance in this perception. This is not a viewing I can sit in as a Critic, I cannot produce a consensual interpretation to share with an audience. The value of my interpretative production lies in my contingent conviction. In the Zone I am a solitary viewer. The *mis-en-scène* is produced in my imagination: it is through my desires, my thoughts and my existential anxieties that I produce the characters' journeys and mine too. The film is a set up: you think you can view somebody else's existential struggle and are promptly confronted with your own.

3. The formal characteristics of the last scenes refer back to the beginning. They share the sepia tint of the opening scenes, and also their pace and feel of domesticity. However, having journeyed through the Zone with the Stalker I am now in a different position than at the beginning of the film. I remain in a

close relation to the audio-visual material. I am acknowledged as a viewer in the gaze of the protagonists. I perceive my position as less generative and imaginative than it was inside the Zone. However, I am not back in the position of a distanced viewer. Instead, I understand myself to be represented by the Dog who followed the Stalker out of the Zone. The Dog is sitting there at the edge of the frame. In a docile manner he follows the Stalker back to his place. Just like him, I am somewhere at the periphery of the image, looking on, but sharing the 'knowledge' of a 'moment of true experience' in the Zone (Kristeva, 1984, p196). The acknowledgement of my presence is sealed when, having put the tired, angry and disillusioned Stalker to bed, the wife tells me her story.

I argue that the sequence of scenes at the beginning produces the film in relation to conventions of film sense; a teleological and linear narrative progression leading to a denouement in consensual meaning, bound to a detached viewing position. The audio-visual material employed is worked through the orthodoxies of film-making; its systemic conventions. Consequently the film at this point exists in relation to a *spectateur*, an intransitive spectator, who queries the filmic material in relation to its institutional conventions and finds his/her reading within these conventions also. By contrast, once I am in the Zone, I cannot adopt such an intransitive meta-position. It is as if the Zone refuses the conventional methods of *reading* and provokes a continual *writing* by the spectator instead. I argue that the urgent and individual search for the fulfilment of one's 'innermost desire', which is after all the travellers' reason for entering the Zone and plodding a path to the Room, becomes the motivation that generates the journey as well its viewing. In the Zone it is my individual and generative interpretation of the material that produces my sense of the film. The 'value' of this sense, I contend, lies in my conviction rather than in an authoritative evaluation of the film in relation to a '*bien-filmer*' (well-filmed).

The understanding of this journey and its viewing formulates thus a very individual and in Barthes' terms a 'naive comprehension'; rejecting ambiguity whilst refusing to adopt consensual sense at the same time. My desire is not abated at the end of the film. It could never be. Instead it evolves in the process of walking and viewing. I understand the fact that neither the Writer nor the Professor ultimately step into the room that they have journeyed through such adverse territory for is testimony to this. The rejection of this room, which was supposed to fulfil their innermost desire, I understand as the rejection of a denouement. Every time I watch the film I want

them to step into the room, in fact I want to enter the room myself. The frustration of this non-fulfilment presents me with the fulfilment that lies in the continual journeying itself.

In the Zone I am a subject *spectatant*, producing the material through my own urgent and individual viewing. My sense of the journey is worked out through the practising of my own particular perception of the material in a generative interpretation. Whilst the Writer and the Professor are such *spectatants* also, I argue that the Stalker is an *écrivant*. I understand him as the residue of the Zone's author, he guides you through, yet, it is not really his to guide you through. He too is subject to its changes. His defence of these changes however distinguishes him from the Writer, the Professor, and myself.

The Stalker displays the naivety of the *écrivant* who cannot understand or allow ambiguity in his writing. He gets quite tearful and irate at the suggestion that the Zone is worthless or should be destroyed. He seems unable to articulate his obviously very strongly felt and particular sense of the Zone, which in many instances, seems like utter nonsense to his 'three' companions. The principle, articulated by the Stalker, that the fulfilment of your innermost desire is only apparent once you have left the Zone, is pertinent in this regard. Whereas the Stalker, the subject *écrivant*, understands the meaning of the Zone as he is writing it, what appears as nonsense to the *spectateurs* turns into individual sense, phenomenological non-sense, once we accept the transitivity of our sense and identity, when we become *spectatants* and stop seeking a denouement; a consensual resolve to the riddle of the Zone.⁸⁶

Once the Stalker gets home we are back in the sepia tinted and linear sequences. At home he begins to lament the lack of faith of the 'intelligentsia'. I understand the term intelligentsia to refer to the institutional, systemic subjects who produce and guard meaning as orthodoxies of science and language, i.e. the subjectivities of the Writer, the Professor and the Critic - the *spectateurs*. I relate to this rage from my own twofold viewing position: I am not anymore the distanced viewer of the beginning sequences. Having gone with the Stalker through the Zone I am at once

⁸⁶ In the introduction to this thesis, I refer such an individual sense, in distinction to consensual sense and nonsense, in relation to Merleau-Ponty's 'non-sense' understood as a sense established in intersubjective sensation rather than in a rational encounter. I persist with this differentiation between nonsense, sense and non-sense here, and elucidate it in more detail in chapter 4.

his confidant as well as a representative of the ideologies he is attacking in his disappointment at conventional meaning making processes and values. At this point in the film I am split between being a subject *spectateur* (a Critic) and a subject *spectatant* (viewing). I argue that my continual production of a particular sense of the Zone is now re-read through a general sense of aesthetic orthodoxies and systemic conventions. I have become a *spectateur-spectatant*. The viewing equivalent of the Barthesian *écrivain-écrivain*: the person writing brought back to the institutional text.

As a subject *spectatant* my subjective experience is not equivalent to a 'nominal category' in the sense of 'Writer', 'Professor' or 'Critic'. Rather, following Barthes, I argue that the legitimisation of my transitive subjectivity lies in my own continual, individual and urgent production. To fend off the suggestion that such a transitive subjectivity is asocial, and to ensure the sociality of the *écrivain's* expression and identity, Barthes relies on a foundation of *parole* and a dialectic dynamic between the *écrivain* and the *écrivain*, the *écrivain* ultimately redeeming the subjective speech of the *écrivain* by returning it to literary language, to make it writable in a conventional sense. I do not propose the generative sense and subjectivity of the *spectatant* as the negative to a consensual (narrative) sense or (categorical) identity. In this respect I distinguish my idea of the *spectatant* from Barthes' notion of a shared foundation of *parole*. However, neither do I promote the generative interpretation of the *spectatant* as producing a relative nonsense. Rather, I aim to avoid a relativist art practice, since, I understand that the relative ultimately leads to a negative relation between a systemic, foundational aesthetic interpretation of the film, and its urgent utterance (generative interpretation) in individuality.

To develop this rejection of a relativistic conception of the *spectatant*, and to link this argument to my articulation of temporal-collage as staged in the last chapter, I discuss Donald B. Kuspit's notion of collage as a relativist strategy. This juxtaposition problematises the relative and tacitly introduces the identification of the Zone as temporal-collage.

In his essay 'the Organizing Principle of Art in the Age of the Relativity of Art', Kuspit describes collage as 'relatively rather than absolutely art' (Kuspit, 1989, p40). For him, in collage, everything is related to each other and in a poetry of becoming. He equates this poetry of becoming with the poetry of relativity and stages it as the metaphor for universal becoming. In collage subjectivity and objectivity are lost

entirely, in his terms, and everything is relative to the point at 'which all choices of being are so relative as to be irrelevant' (ibid., p47). This relative understanding, posits collage in a negative relation to a 'positive' understanding of 'absolute art'. The dialectic relation reveals the relative to share in the same orthodoxies, conventions and ideologies as the absolute. At the same time, the notion of 'irrelevance' posits collage on the margins of sense, not as phenomenological nonsense, but as relative nonsense.⁸⁷

To avoid such a negative or irrelevant relativity, I must assume a different link between the individual and temporary generation of sense by the *spectatant* and collective sense making processes. In this sense I have to believe in a shared connection characterising this activity. The connection I am proposing, however, is not a solid and re-presentable foundation as is Barthes' *parole*. The sense produced in the activity of spectating, I argue, is assured through a tendential symbolic quality as introduced in chapter 2. I develop this tendential symbolism and match it to a tendential sociality later on. At this stage it is crucial to note that I am aware of the difficulty and seeming futility to propose a solitary subject generating sense outside the dialectic of communication, given that we are all always already ideological subjects, and given the dialectic dynamic of writing and viewing that I employ here.

⁸⁷ In Chapter one I differentiated my notion of 'disjointing' from Gilles Deleuze's 'disjunctive synthesis' on the basis that his term implies a relative continuity as the principle characteristic of sensation. In relation to film Deleuze suggests that all elements are in motion (the shot is an *image-mouvement*) relative to each other within 'the plan of the film' (Deleuze, 1997). I argued against such a 'relative unity' on the basis of its negative relationship with an 'absolute unity'. Here, I re-articulate this critique of relativism in relation to Donald B. Kuspit. Kuspit outlines his notion of collage as a relativist art practice, producing an 'incongruous synthesis'. He understands the idea of incongruity to keep 'in play (of) the possibility of the entry of the many into the one.' (Kuspit, 1989, p42) I understand Kuspit to attempt to promote a freeing of the material from categorical imperatives, and stereotypical subjectivities. I am inspired by his notion of a playful purposelessness. However, I argue, that to call this 'play' within the notion of relativity only ever achieves a fluidity of the material and the subject within nominal categories. Although he states that this becoming one is never achieved, there never is a completeness, I argue, that the drive of relating the individual parts to each other toward synthesis achieves an 'inwardness' in the sense of montage's internal relativity; where individual parts are perceived as series within 'the plan of the film'; the plan of the collage work. In this sense, his fluid purposelessness is immanently recuperated as the negative to a fixed, conventional, purpose.

Kuspit's understanding of collage as a relativist art practice portrays collage art as a mockery of what he terms absolute art. I argue that temporal-collage is absolutely art but this absolute is an individual production rather than an institutional, aesthetic judgement. The complex elements of temporal-collage are not produced relative to each other. They are autonomous in time and space. The practice of these elements in knotting efforts is not confined to a closed off (negative) relativity as in montage, and does not promote a 'creative flux of cosmic becoming' towards irrelevance either (ibid., p40). Temporal-collage is not a 'mockery of art', and neither is it an irrelevant production. Instead, temporal-collage produces complexities which are certain and relevant in their particular circumstance of production.

The *Spectatant* as Subject in Process: Sense and Identity on Trial

In order to develop such a subject *spectatant* in its sociality, I draw a parallel between the Zone and Kristeva's text, and later link this parallel to my notion of temporal-collage. I propose that if the Zone is understood as equivalent to her 'text', the *spectatant* becomes re-articulated via Kristeva's 'subject in process/ on trial'. Consequently her notion of subjectivity and identity 'on trial' aids me to clarify the notion of a generative sense and subjectivity in the Zone. This re-consideration confronts both, the Zone/text and the subject, with their ideological positioning.

In chapter 2 I elaborated an understanding of Kristeva's text as a material complexity whose elements are never sublimated and homogenised from a static meta-position ('metalanguage'). I argued that the immersive practice of the text does not produce a nondisjunctive whole ('narrative'). I also contested, that the sublimation that does happen in the perception of this material complex does not create a lack, which is imminently filled and redeemed by a (fetish) replacement ('contemplation'). Her text instead points to 'an endless mobility'; positing elements and reactivating them in ever new 'knots of interdependence'.⁸⁸ As a consequence of this understanding I renamed Kristeva's 'knots' in reference to their endless mobility and staged them in the present participle as 'knotting points'. Further, via her notion of a poetic aesthetics, I argued that the text does not invite an 'aesthetic stoppage' but is continually produced through the knotting processes of complex elements in perception. The 'end' that is produced from the text is not a communicative totality, the text refutes address. Rather, it is a solitary practice. The text has no shared outcome, but remains forever a process. Kristeva suggests the textual practice as a contingent and temporal process, dependent on updating its laws and boundaries which demarcate it all the time. In her terms its heterogeneous formation is a continuous passing beyond limits without legitimating its sense systematically.

⁸⁸ The finity of this 'endless mobility' is re-assessed later on in this chapter when I consider Kristeva's signifying practice of the text from the point of view of her subject in process/ on trial. This focus shows her mobility not to be endless. It is not entirely without a break. I will show that there is a gap between the dynamic of the semiotic and the symbolic modalities of her 'endless mobility' which invites a (fetish) replacement, inserted in contemplation from a meta-position, and thus leads to a stoppage point in an aesthetic judgement. The acknowledgement of this break is the turning point in my use of Kristeva's textual practice. For now I remain in agreement with her text however. It offers me a model for the criticality of temporal-collage.

I argue that this understanding of the text corresponds with my understanding of the Zone as staged so far. I posit the Zone as a space of mobility, through which boundaries are updated all the time. I relate the inability to produce an aesthetic stoppage in the text to the impossibility to formulate a stoppage point in the Zone. The end that is eventually reached once I leave the Zone, or switch off the film, does not produce a communicative totality. It does not produce a consensual sense represented in the arrival at the Room: the denouement. I argue that a consensual sense of the film as a whole is produced in Kristeva's three signifying practices: narrative, metalanguage and contemplation, whilst the Zone is subject to the fourth signifying practice, the text. Its significance is produced continually in a particular perception.⁸⁹

To develop this correspondence and ultimately to bring it into contact with temporal-collage, I articulate the subject of the Zone, the *spectatant*, in relation to Kristeva's subject in process/on trial producing her text. According to Kristeva, the subject and meaning are only phases of the fourth signifying practice. On passing through the symbolic in a semiotic motility this subject and meaning take on form. However, this form is not a fixed and consolidated identity, but only exists in the dynamic of its own motility. She posits this subject as a body in process: a body whose parts are 'disarticulated' unless it is part of a signifying process. She suggests that 'outside the process, its only identity is inorganic, paralyzed, dead.' (Kristeva, 1984, p101)

I contest this identity in process in relation to the subject producing the Zone: the *spectatant*. The 'outside' identity of the Writer and the Professor, men of wisdom, prestige and authority, is disabled in the Zone. The nominal unity and totality of character that is being promoted in their professional title is, to use Kristeva's term, paralysed, dead even, and a 'new' dynamic comprehension of identity takes its place. It is then not only the terrain of the Zone, but the bodies travelling through it that are 'fragmented, unpredictable and changing'. I suggest that the correspondences between the text and the Zone rest on such a dynamic subject, whose knotting processes produce them both.

Kristeva arrives at her notion of a subject in process/on trial via her criticism of the

⁸⁹ It might appear paradoxical that I do not narrate such an individual and generative interpretation. However, my point is not the narration of one particular generative interpretation, e.g. mine, rather this text aims to propose a model for a generative perception, to be practised by the individual reader.

assumed unity of the speaking subject, as articulated in concurrent French theories of discourse. In particular she speaks against Edmund Husserl's transcendental ego, which she understands as the basis of his theoretical discourse.⁹⁰ She disagrees with Husserl's notion of a presupposed homogeneity for ego formation and positions her subject squarely in production. Referring to the motility of the signifying practice of the text she suggests that 'caught up within this dynamic, the human body is also a process.' (Ibid., p101) I read her focus on process, against transcendental values, in relation to Barthes' 'Death of the Author'; the author being identified as a trait of modernity, his death, called for by Barthes in 1968, I argue, challenges concurrent aesthetic valuations and necessitates a re-thinking of spectatorship.⁹¹

Kristeva grants the theories that work from a transcendental ego a pertinence with regard to the first three of her signifying processes, not however in regard to the signifying practice of the text. In particular, she critiques such theories of discourse and their homogenised subjectivity for their failure to take into account enunciations which expand the limits of what she calls the signifiable. She identifies poetry, music and the arts as such expanding enunciations. For her, in the signifying processes of the avant-garde, the text *and* the subject are on trial: neither of them is pre-given, or in a meta-position, and both are produced in a 'trial of meaning', a 'trial of sense'. In her terms, any metalanguage preserves the systemic understanding. By contrast neither the text nor the subject produces meaning within a pre-given system of sense production (transcendental aesthetic).

I am borrowing her notion of a 'trial of sense' in order to articulate the trial of sense and identity in the Zone. I argue that the Writer, the Professor, myself as Critic, and even the Stalker are on trial in the Zone. Any prior (apprehensional) knowledge, which might aid them through its terrain, is paralysed. At the same time any prior

⁹⁰ Kristeva critiques Husserl's transcendental ego since she understands it to imply the subject as a unified and knowing subject at a distance from its object. This, she argues, allows for a coherence of both the sign and syntax. Thus the Husserlian ego is not a subject on trial: It is not a dynamic subject produced in its signifying processes but precedes them.

⁹¹ In this respect Kristeva's articulation of subjectivity as process is useful for my positing of the *spectatant* in relation to issues of postmodern spectatorship. I understand her focus on process to confirm the importance to both, free the text from the author, the authority of a systemic language, and to free the subject from the authority of a systemic reading. This line of thought brings her text in contact with the notion of its (historical and geographical) circumstance of viewing and listening; the particular circumstance of spectatorship. Later on in this chapter I clarify this circumstance in relation to Jean-François Lyotard's 'Postmodern Condition'.

(apprehensional) knowledge, which might help my understanding of the filmic material, is in doubt too. In the Zone our sense of self, our identities, and our sense of the real, are on trial. To follow Kristeva, the trial of meaning and identity formulates a heterogeneous dynamic, which challenges the notion of rationality. I understand this to render the Zone not a space of irrationality, negative to a rational space and identity. Rather, I argue, the notion of rationality itself is on trial. I contest that (rational) sense can only be established temporarily in a provisional and particular relation between the individual subject and the text. Thus there is no (irrelevant and negative) nonsense in the Zone, there is only 'sense on trial' (phenomenological non-sense). However, to live on trial, to live without the narrative, metalanguage or contemplation, takes conviction. This is, I argue, the true challenge of the Zone.

Going through the experience of this crucible exposes the subject to impossible dangers: relinquishing his identity in rhythm, dissolving the buffer of reality in a mobile discontinuity, leaving the shelter of the family, the state, or religion, the commotion the practice creates spares nothing: it destroys all constancy to produce another and then destroys that one as well. (Ibid., p104)

The connection between Kristeva's text and my notion of temporal-collage bring this challenge to rationality, identity and conviction to temporal-collage also. I contest that when I juxtapose this identification of the Zone as text with my articulation of temporal-collage within Kristeva's textual practice, then, accordingly, the Zone becomes identified as temporal-collage, and its *spectatant* on trial becomes the subject of temporal-collage.

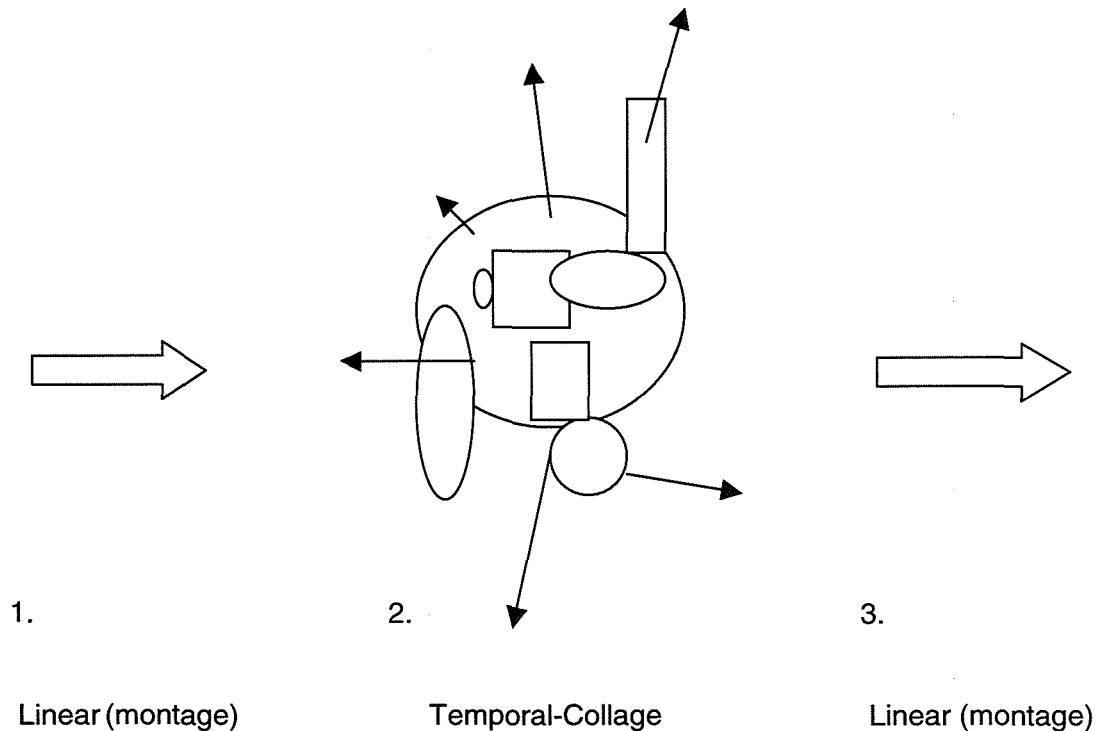
To demonstrate this articulation of temporal-collage within Kristeva's notion of trial I re-employ a graph used in chapter 2. The following illustration presents the quality of temporal-collage and stages it in relation to the formal construction of the film *Stalker*. This aids me to demonstrate again the heterogeneous and centrifugal qualities of temporal-collage and helps me to confirm these within the particularity of the Zone. I thus borrow fig. 1 of this chapter and illustrate the lush-green sequences of the Zone, with outward bound arrows and complex elements, to clarify the Zone as temporal-collage and to articulate the congruence between the subject of temporal-collage and the subject *spectatant* on trial in the Zone.

Fig. 2

Sepia toned scenes which introduce characters and locations

The Zone
green
colour

Sepia toned scenes which re-introduce characters into their original habitat



1. This part of the film is constructed according to a linear montage sequence, driving the narrative intention of the author. I am a subject *spectateur* who views the film from a meta-position. I relate to the images and sounds in relation to their ontological value and structure (tautological). I *read* the film in relation to shared narrative sense (teleologically). Thus I respect the authority of the author and of film in my construction of a theoretical interpretation. I contend that overflows of the consensual sense may occur in my personal imaginings, (place of Barthesian signifying). However, I argue that these overflows are, due to their negative relation to the consensual narrative sense, ultimately recuperated within consensual meaning.
2. These sequences present a non-linear but simultaneous assemblage of complex material elements. The Zone produces and is produced by me as a subject *spectatant* on trial. I *generate* the material seen and heard, as well as itself, continually in the trial of rationality, sense and identity that is spectating

without the system of a coded authority. Thus I produce the work in generative interpretations. The material is worked in centrifugal efforts of production, beyond the filmic authority, in the contingent circumstance of viewing. The sense produced thus is unambiguously true to its urgent particularity. The reference of any such urgent particularity of production to shared conventions does not hinder the generative quality of its centrifugal processes.

3. These sequences are again organised according to a linear montage, driving the narrative intention of the author. I return to a meta-position. However, having been on trial, my relationship to a coded authority is not subservient anymore. The institutional rationality and sense have been put into doubt. And despite the continuing belief in narrative processes I know that any denouement in the generation of sense and identity, is produced in my contingent circumstance of perception only. In this instance I am a *spectateur-spectatant*, the material is a poetic collage showing its transgressions of systemic objectivity, but already re-systematised within a new aesthetic framework.

This illustration clarifies the subject in the Zone as a 'subject *spectatant* on trial'. The transitivity and particularity of this subject re-articulates the process of production of temporal-collage. I argue that the centrifugal motions, the disjointing and bricolaging efforts, the continual knotting of complex material elements, all these individual processes that produce temporal-collage in an imaginative perception, are now clarified within trial of materiality and sense in the Zone. This allows me to propose temporal-collage and its subject as 'sense and identity on trial': the artwork is on trial; its materiality confirmed as a complexity; its sense continually in production.

The Zone as Postmodern Condition: The Condition of the Subject *Spectatant* on Trial

To further contend the subject *spectatant* on trial in relation to temporal-collage I focus on the circumstance of temporal-collage's signifying processes. I thus turn to investigate the condition which frames the production of the Zone within the signifying practice of temporal-collage. To do so I go back to my identification of the *spectatant* as the spectator after the 'Death of the Author', after modernism. To stage this conjunction I discuss the Zone in relation to the 'Postmodern Condition' as articulated by Jean-François Lyotard, and query its subject *spectatant* on trial vi-à-

vis his postmodern subject.

In his essay 'the Sublime and the Avant-Garde' Lyotard offers a clear explanation of how he understands the relationship between the author, the work, and the spectator after modernism. Discussing the sublime, which he understands as 'perhaps the only mode of artistic sensibility to characterize the modern' he states that:

Henceforth it seems right to analyse the ways in which the subject is affected, its ways of receiving and experiencing feelings, its ways of judging works. This is how aesthetic, the analysis of the addressee's feelings, comes to supplant poetics and rhetoric, which are didactic forms, of and by the understanding, intended for the artist as sender. (Lyotard, 1998b, p203)⁹²

According to Lyotard, the sublime and thus modernity, includes an over there and another time of being. It allows for a meta-position in time and in space.⁹³ By contrast the postmodern is only ever now, at this moment and in this place, and thus foregrounds the addressee. Barthes took the first step toward the postmodern by killing the author and in extension by getting rid of the notion of one authority, history and idea of (apprehensional) knowledge for the *production* of significance. Lyotard develops this, I argue, by negating the idea of one spatial and temporal location of authority, history and idea of (apprehensional) knowledge for the *perception* of significance. He shifts the focus from production to the moment of perception, and disallows any condition that is other than here and now to have any authority over the here and now.⁹⁴ I adopt his postmodern condition, which designates (aesthetic)

⁹² According to Lyotard, the sublime alludes to something that is not there to be shown but that is conspicuous in its absence. For him, this absence forces a theoretical presence, a presence of theory and judgement. The possibility of an absence, of nothing happening, induces too much anxiety and fear to just remain undiscussed. The theoretical discussion, however, renders it at once happening but also delimits the scope of nothingness in representation. Lyotard understands that it is from this apparent absence and nothingness that aesthetics asserted its critical right over art, and it is in that aesthetic of absence that romanticism and thus modernity is characterised. In other words, the modern is characterised by absence, made present in aesthetic criticism from a distance.

⁹³ I argue that the poetic didacticism, which Lyotard locates at this meta-position, describes a 'poetic stoppage' as I articulate it in chapter 2. There I suggest that assemblage understood via Seitz, as a strategy of replacing the object-reality with an object-poetics, performs a stoppage of (art) practice in an aesthetic consolidation of the (art-)work as a whole; a poetic totality. Therefore, now, I can clarify the 'poetic stoppage' as a modernist didactic aesthetic of intent.

⁹⁴ Later on in the text I scrutinise this condition of here and now and its relationship to authority via a consideration of Lyotard's 'game plan' and 'rules'.

value and authority to the here and now of perception, for a discussion on the continually present 'condition' of the Zone.

In an attempt to answer the question of the nature of the postmodern, Lyotard replies that 'postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant.' (Lyotard, 1994, p79) His postmodernism is thus not something in itself, but is simply the condition of presentness, continually transitive, and potentially anything as long as it is here and now. This condition of presentness problematises, in his terms, any attempt to legitimise and validate the now through a meta-discourse established in the 'grand narratives' of the enlightenment. According to Lyotard the idea of knowledge legitimisation in grand narratives leads to a unification of knowledge in the 'Idea' (the emancipation of humanity). In the Idea, knowledge is posited as an ideal and objective totality. Totality, however, is a notion which Lyotard considers as 'violence to the heterogeneity of language games' (ibid., pxxv). In response to this, he defines the '*postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives' producing an objective totality, and goes on to say that 'our incredulity is now such that we no longer expect salvation to rise from these inconsistencies' (ibid., pxxiv). In other words this is not a dialectical incredulity rendered immanently credible again in relation to the conventions and orthodoxies of the same grand narratives: the same institutions of knowledge. Instead, Lyotard suggests that postmodernity's principle is the 'inventor's paralogy' (ibid., pxxv). Thus in the place of the 'grand narrative' comes a local and '*petit récit*'.⁹⁵ This 'little narration' is not produced nor legitimated by a (enlightenment) metadiscourse, but *is* discourse. In his terms, it is not without rules, but is always locally determined.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ This '*petit récit*' is translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, as 'little narrative'. However, to emphasis the practical aspect of this little narrative I refrain from using this translation: A *récit* is quite particularly an oral account, a one off live event. It is a narration rather than a narrative. To call it a little narrative, I argue, takes away the clarity of this expression. So I propose to use the term narration since I would like to keep in mind *récit's* live character of narrating rather than the idea of a narrative

⁹⁶ The 'grand narrative' validates and legitimises knowledge in accordance with historical, scientific, political, etc., discourses. In other words, it judges and validates knowledge according to dominant ideologies. Its narrator is a metasubject, its narrative affirms, through metadiscourse, the power base of empirical science and institutional knowledge. (Lyotard's use of the term grand narrative re-stages and clarifies my use of the term grand narrative in chapter 2. There the notion of a grand narrative is used in relation to the symbolic base that underpins and enables the production of a consensual (narrative) sense of Robert Smithson's film *Spiral Jetty*.)

By contrast the 'little narration' it is an act of narrating that produces and legitimises knowledge through its practical performance, or what Lyotard terms a paralogical invention. This narrating does not produce a metadiscourse but *is* the practice of discourse. The narrator is not a metasubject but a subject of practice. I understand this transitive sense

I contest this critique of legitimisation through the grand narratives of emancipation, in favour of a local and 'little narration', in relation to my notion of individual and contingent particularity in the Zone. In the Zone I lose the ability to establish my position from a metadiscursive perspective. Here the scientific grand narrative of the Professor, the literary Grand Narrative of the Writer and the aesthetic grand narrative of the Critic, do not manage to provide an objective totality. The grand narratives are in crises, now a local determination constructs the Zone continually in the present. The Room, which the travellers aim to reach, since it supposedly fulfils one's innermost desire, is never entered. The objective denouement is abandoned. Instead the journey, its continuously present act of walking *is* its object. The focus on walking, I argue, keeps sense within a local and concurrent determination. What I have still to ponder is the relationship of this walking-sense to the 'rules' of Lyotard's little narration.

Lyotard equates the 'death' of the grand narratives with the abandonment of the ideology of systems. He argues that the apparent loss of consensual meaning in postmodernity is an acknowledgement that knowledge is not ontological and systemic anymore. It does not have the legitimisation of the grand (narrative) institutions. In terms of the Zone and its travellers, the grand institutions of history and identity do not get them to the Room, to a universally applicable denouement.⁹⁷ Thus the Room ceases to be a distinct goal, its authority is discredited. Instead it is the 'knowledge' produced in the act of walking that determines the purpose and sense of each individual traveller's journey. The fulfilment (provisionally) 'reached' is thus a subjective ideality, which lies in being rather than in relation to a having been or a going to be (in the Room).

Having abandoned the possibility of a legitimisation through systems and metadiscourse, Lyotard justifies the postmodern condition as game. He presents the little narration as the quintessential form of imaginative invention; and stages

production in relation to the urgent and particular writing of Barthes' *écrivain*, articulated on the other side of the text.

This distinction aids me to clarify the four different usages of the term 'narrative' as employed in my project: the grand narratives (symbolic, scientific, historical, ideological, etc..) enable a consensual 'narrative sense', whilst the little narration (the local and contingent paralogy) produces individual and temporal 'narrative sense making processes'. The different senses thus produced, however, are not entirely divorced from each other but interact in the contingent production of meaning.

⁹⁷ The sense produced in the Zone is a narrative sense but its narrative is produced in the transitive modality of narrating rather than as a consensual narrative sense produced in relation to the narrative of the grand institutions.

imagination as the force, which allows one to make '*coups inattendus*': unexpected moves in this game. He suggests that the emphasis on being now and here increases the joy of inventing new rules. Every "*coup*", every utterance, changes the rules of the game. Every meaning produced is thus accordingly an innovative game-sense rather than a systemic sense legitimised by a grand narrative. And every new *coup* changes this sense.

Lyotard's emphasis on an individual imagination producing such an innovative 'game-sense' allows me to try my understanding of 'sense on trial' in the Zone within his postmodern condition. Earlier I propose that it is each traveller's individual act of walking that produces the sense of the Zone. In other words I propose that the act of walking performs a 'narrating'. If I posit these walking acts as *coup inattendus*, and if I further position the Zone as the continually present condition of Lyotard's game, as the live event of the little narration, then I can clarify the sense produced on trial in the Zone within Lyotard's notion of a sense produced in (paralogically) innovative imaginations. The Zone is thus articulated as a changing-game in the postmodern *now*, and its trial of sense and identity is acknowledged as the playful production of its condition in innovative processes.

Lyotard talks about the playfulness of this changing game, and describes agonism, rather than antagonism, as the characteristic of the relationship between its different players and material elements.⁹⁸ I find Lyotard's notion of agonistic playfulness useful in order to re-affirm the amicable adversariness through which the subject *spectatant* on trial is producing him/herself and his/her environment. I contest that the knotting of temporal-collage's complex material elements are produced in such playful competition. The emphasis is on playing rather than on outcome. No result is forged which supersedes the difference between the material elements in an effort to achieve their sublimation in an objective totality. Instead, the particularity of the

⁹⁸ Although agonism describes a certain sense of adversariness, a certain tension, I understand Lyotard's use of the term not to set up an explicit conflict, which needs to be overcome in a higher ideality. Rather, I understand his agonism, in distinction to the dialectic conflict of montage to suggest a playful position *within* discourse. The tension of agonism, identified with the tension between the subject and the object of collage, is a particular and direct tension. I argue that in collage the subject and the object are constituted temporarily in this tension. In this sense the object as well as the subject are immersed and characterised by this tension, which does not however forge a resolution outside of itself. By contrast, I contest, that in montage the tension arises in an antagonistic way between two 'cells', two objects. The subject is placed outside of this tension, observing it, but not immersed in its production. Accordingly this tension forges a solution outside of itself, a third position which again the subject observes without his/her position being affected by it. (See appendix 1 for an illustration of this distinction).

individual perception, here and now, determines any (provisional) 'outcome' within the experience of playing.

This conjunction allows me to articulate the Zone as a postmodern narration: as something that is nothing in itself but is everything it is in the here and now of its perception. In other words the Zone is nothing in itself but *is* its signifying practice. I can articulate this signifying practice in relation to the imaginative movements of the postmodern play. In this way bricolaging and disjointing become identified as *coups inattendus*. At the same time I can re-stage the sense on trial produced in this signifying practice, within the notion of a sense produced in play. The subject *spectatant* on trial is the player who invents the moves in his imagination, and his moves in turn continually produce new sense. Accordingly I can understand his/her identity as a playful identity also.

However, whilst I find these ideas useful and adopt the verb play for the articulation of my signifying practice of temporal-collage, I avoid the noun game, which Lyotard uses to summarise and qualify the postmodern condition. According to Lyotard, there are rules, there is a game plan, a (social) contract, to which this game of postmodernism is complying, and thus, which determines the scope of its signifying practice. It is the notion of such a game plan, I argue, which distinguishes his playful condition of a here and now from the condition of the Zone as I am contesting it.

I contend that, similar to Deleuze's articulation of the relativity of all movement to the plan of the (montage) film, the game plan renders the moves relative to each other and in this relative unity they are negative to an 'outside', another realm where the grand narratives validate the work. Thus, aesthetic judgement and systemic knowledge position the game as plan, even if after the event. The term 'game', I argue, allows the critic to marginalize the playfulness as perverted or decadent, asocial or simply silly.⁹⁹ However useful I find his notion of playfulness, then, the

⁹⁹ Here I pick up on Lyotard's argument that the postmodern has 'no taste', 'no good forms' (Lyotard, 1994, p81). For him taste and good form imply a collective judgement, which is suspended in the game of postmodernism. The implication is that we will get it back when we stop playing. So there is always already the notion of an after the event, when taste can choose good form out of the mass of tasteless, decadent, silly, perverted, expressions produced during its run. For me this alludes to the idea that the postmodern is a phase, much like an adolescent abandonment of parental guidance, useful only in developing a new set of rules to be passed on to one's own children. This brings me again to the futility implicit in trying to avoid the dialectic inevitability of the social, the aesthetic. In relation to the film *Stalker*, I argue, this notion of a re-turn to taste and form is achieved in the third part, when we have left the Zone, but have kept some of its message and are now *spectateur-spectatant*. In the next part of this chapter I want to try and argue for a position that is not

idea of a game and its rules, I argue, is too determined.

In an attempt to clarify the relationship between the little narration of the artwork and the rules of the game, Lyotard explains the work of the postmodern artist by writing that:

the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgement, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. (Ibid., p81)

Following this statement the rules are not pre-determined and provide no system according to which the artwork is constructed. However, and here lies my critique of Lyotard: he states that the work of art is 'looking for' rules. According to Lyotard, the artist, the person performing a little narration, does not work from rules, but works out the rules in a searching performative production. The artwork seeks rules that exist prior to its production not visibly or knowingly, but they are still there in an over-there to be discovered and applied imminently in the over-here. His rules are not from within the game, but designate an outside which determines a before and thus achieves a thereafter.

To perform a piece of work according to Lyotard, I argue, means to look for rules and ultimately to look for an understanding of the material complexity in relation to these rules. If I view the Zone by searching for rules, I seek to equate, to find patterns, repetitions, series, any directive that gives me a sense of order and determination. Instead of *producing* the Zone as complexity in perception, I *find* the complexity in perception. This complexity is a relative complexity however, its elements are a complex unity relative to the game plan, the plan of the film. Within this game plan I find the rules which construct the Zone in my (searching) reading of it. This, I argue, renders my experience tautological rather than individually performative and inventive. Thus, although I find his notion of the continually present and local productions in innovative play useful to develop my articulation of the Zone as the playful and present condition of the signifying practice of temporal-collage, it is the seeking of rules in Lyotard's notion of contemporary art practice that

negative, that does not admit play and trial only as an 'adolescent' phase, but that truly remains playful and 'trying'.

distinguishes my understanding of this present condition from his.

Lyotard goes on to say that 'the artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*.' (Ibid., p81) The rules and the game are posited separate from each other. And it is, I argue, this separation, which allows him to come to a '*been done*'. This *been done* I understand, is the reading of the Zone from the position of the *spectateur-spectatant* of the last sequences (fig. 2, position 3). In this position I review the Zone in hindsight, when the game is played out and the cards are back on the table. And although Lyotard suggests that 'consensus is a horizon that is never reached' (ibid., p61), it is clear that in thinking of rules, he thinks of a consensus at the start of the game (even if this consensus only agrees on rules in a general sense). According to this, the consensus to seek rules in the Zone understood as game plan/film plan, is established in the first sequences of the film (fig. 2, position 1). Within this agreement the narration of the Zone is assured as a consensual (narrative) sense process. According to Lyotard the postmodern narration challenges the credibility of the grand narratives. However, it does not disable ideal objectivity. The separation of the rules from the game in his notion of a little narration allows Lyotard to critique the authoritative knowledge of the grand narratives, without losing the social contract which grants the artwork legitimacy via a consensual (narrative) shape.

I understand the need for rules separate from the game to be based in the desire for the sociality of the subject. The separation, I argue, allows for a return of the *coup inattendu*, the unexpected utterance, back into the game. At this stage it is clear that the *coup inattendu*, in its seeking nature, never left the game plan in the first place. The '*will have been done*' clarifies in hindsight the individual and unexpected process of production to the collective, and thus assures the social as possible. I too am interested in the sociality of the signifying practice of temporal-collage. However I remain critical of a contractual sociality.

Thus I critique the separation that Lyotard sets up in his game plan. I argue that his theory depends on a negative relation between the individual performance and its consensual interpretation. Lyotard positions the subject of narration between the game moves and the rules, the contract of play. His play however, I contend, is ultimately recuperated within a solid (contractual or foundational) consensus. I aim to critique the ideal objectivity which results from such a negative relationship between utterance and order. I stage this critique in relation to Kristeva's dynamic of

the semiotic and the symbolic in her fourth signifying practice and propose a different sociality for the subject *spectatant* on trial in temporal-collage, in critique of this negativity. Saying so I do not give up on the sociality of the subject *spectatant*: I don't aim for a subject of irrelevant nonsense. Neither do I propose a relative subjectivity ultimately negative to a fixed positive position. However, instead of contract and order to assure the sociality and identity of this subject, I contest that the social and the symbolic are tendential, and argue this tendential quality to assure sociality in the 'particular', rather than in relation to a socio-historical specificity and its grand narratives.

In the next part of this chapter, then, I re-stage and develop my proposal for a tendential symbolism in relation to a symbolic order understood as the rules of the social contract. This allows me to reflect on issues of consensus; the notion of stable systems; and the social determined by the notion of such systems. The pursuit of this argument borrows from the terms produced in the last chapter and develops their criticality through an emphasis on the subject. This focus on the subject re-assesses the signifying practice of temporal-collage in relation to Kristeva's signifying practice of the text with regards to the status of the symbolic.

Stalker as Neo-Symbolic Subject Postmodern, Working the Zone's Tendential Symbolism

Peter Green in his book *Andrei Tarkovsky The Winding Quest*, seems almost angry at Tarkovsky's refusal to accept his work as symbolic. He points to what he considers as an inconsistency between his theory and his practice when it comes to the matter of symbolisation. He tries to present in examples how there is a contradiction inherent in Tarkovsky's claim that in none of his films anything is symbolised. What Green points to as a contradiction I understand as a struggle to define the symbolic per se. I do not want to take up Tarkovsky's argument or try to understand his relationship with the symbolic, however. I believe this would counter any suggestion that 'the author is dead'. Rather, what I want to suggest is that the inconsistency perceived by Green points to the impossibility of agreeing on the symbolic if you do not accept it as a lexical register but work its quality in a particular production. To argue this generative particularity, instead of seeking a consistency of symbolisation in relation to a symbolic register, I propose a re-thinking of the symbolic as a quality.

I understand there to be a symbolic quality, or maybe a symbolic tension, apparent in the film *Stalker*. Rather than assuming an analytical position and attempt to argue details of such symbolisations, however, I am interested in the characteristic of this symbolisation. My interest in the symbolic quality, then, lies not in establishing an understanding of the film *Stalker* via a collective symbolic referentiality. In fact I expressly argue against the possibility to claim such a referentiality in the postmodern condition: when the author is dead, and when the authority of the grand narratives has lost its credibility, then, in the here and now of postmodernity, sense and identity cannot arise from a collective symbolic referentiality but must come from a symbolic practice instead. In this I confirm my argument against Barthes' 'sciences of the symbol'. Barthes considers the symbolic in relation to its material configuration and placing as a whole. According to him it participates 'in a complete system of destination' (in relation to a horizontal and a vertical orientation, context and order) and comes to signification through this totality (Barthes, 1991, p44). Barthes posits this symbolic level as a double determination: at once expressing an artistic intention as well as a translation of a common lexicon of symbols into material configurations. Both, the authority of intention as well as a collective register are disabled in the postmodern. Thus I argue his symbolism cannot aid the subject *spectatant* on trial to understand the film *Stalker*, or Tarkovsky's work in general.

I problematise this process of understanding the film *Stalker* via Kristeva's subject in process practising the film as 'text' in the 'endless mobility' of its trial: the semiotic motility of its expression continually breaks with the symbolic order, not however to instate a new symbolism, but to continually put it on trial. I adopted Kristeva's notion of trial for my characterisation of my viewing of the Zone as well as for the characterisation of the acts of the travellers walking through its terrain. In the condition of the Zone myself and the travellers are articulated as subject *spectatants* on trial. However, in the same sense as I agreed with Lyotard's playfulness but could not agree with his game plan, I now have to acknowledge that although I agree with her practice of trial, I disagree with the details of this practice. I argue that the focus on the subject clarifies the passing through the symbolic of the fourth signifying practice as a dialectical movement. What appears as one motion in reference to the material of the text, comes to be understood as a split action when focusing on the activity of the subject.

The issue again is one of separation. Although Kristeva speaks of an 'infinite-indefinite sense' that is produced in this 'trial of sense', and although she talks about the 'endless mobility' of this trial, she still separates the semiotic and the symbolic and thus immediately encounters a dialectical opposition (Kristeva, 1984, p99 ff). She articulates the symbolic as 'matter', as a system of meaning, whilst the semiotic is the 'drive', which in the impetus of 'speaking' breaks down the matter of the symbolic. The trial, she argues, happens exactly at the interaction of these two modalities. At this point the subject and the symbolic break down, according to Kristeva, and need to re-articulate themselves. For Kristeva, this moment of break down, of transgression, is the key moment in practice. It is her point zero from where a new (symbolic) sense and identity is produced continually. I argue that this point marks a break in mobility, which elucidates the dynamic of the semiotic and the symbolic modality as dialectical; forging progressively one totality of sense and identity. The process of her trial is idealised in this totality. It is a subjective and heterogeneous totality of practice, but nevertheless a totality. This, I argue, limits the scope of its infinity and mobility in relation to the 'matter' of the symbolic order.¹⁰⁰

Again, the notion of a symbolic order, like the notion of game rules, hints at an outside: a before or after the event, which ties the individual and temporary production of the semiotic drive, the moves of the players, to a 'plan'. Within this plan individual and temporary sense and identity is mobile but relative to a consensual sense and nonsense. The semiotic motility seeks and finds a totality of expression in the practice of this plan. The subject in process/on trial is a relative subjectivity, either mocked and marginalized in its irrelevance, or recuperated into collectivity via the negativity of its position. The practice of the text is a game for amusement, which is halted for a more pragmatic production. The need for conviction, and the danger of disarticulation, disorientation are thus minimal.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Kristeva acknowledges the negative of her conception but insists on its criticality in relation to the homogeneous direction of Hegel's 'Absolute Idea'. She states that unlike his ideality, her conception of praxis never negates itself in and of itself. Thus, whilst acknowledging the totality of her trial, she defines the criticality of its heterogeneity and practice vis-à-vis an absolute aesthetic. I find her practice on trial useful to articulate my critique of objectivity, but propose to develop her critique in respect to the idea of totality. The progressive nature of her dialectical trial, I argue, leads to an ideal totality, however temporal, heterogeneous and subjective. I understand the difference between her totality in practice and Hegel's totality in ideality, and draw from her project. However, I aim to critique this practice even further and undo its dialectic relativity through the proposal of a self-conscious transitivity: I propose the subject spectatant of temporal-collage to be in the process of a trial that is not progressive and dialectical and hence is never totalised objectively.

¹⁰¹ Of course these dangers are marginal in art: I can quite happily admit madness when entering a gallery. It is a very safe space to lose my rational sense of place and identity in.

I contest that the break between the symbolic and the semiotic defines Kristeva's fourth signifying practice as a modernist practice.¹⁰² Her trial depends on the symbolic order as a foundation. Although this foundation is continually broken and re-negotiated through the motility of the semiotic, it remains foundational in

And although, in my critique of the game rules and the symbolic order, I might seem to argue for an abandonment of rationality and stable sense per se, I am not. Rather, I acknowledge that such a promotion for irrationality would only outline a relative position of fluidity and insanity, imminently clarified in the negative. By contrast, I want to consider the foundation, the symbolic order and the game rules per se and investigate how they can be argued so as not to set up a dialectic position. A re-articulation of the symbolic and the social not as rules, nor as order, but as quality, I argue, allows for a criticality that is neither marginal nor futile in its relative negativity to a normative reading.

¹⁰² Earlier in this chapter I articulated via Lyotard the distinction of modernism from postmodernism via the notion of the sublime as absence. Lyotard points out that it is at the point of absence, that aesthetics asserts its critical right over art and suggests that modernism (romanticism) is characterised by such absence filled by theory. By contrast, the postmodern according to Lyotard, is perpetually in the 'aegis of *now*' (Lyotard, 1998, p199). Following this argument I now contest that Kristeva's practice of two modalities, and Lyotard's game play, includes a 'sublime moment' in the dynamic of her semiotic and symbolic and at the intersection of his game and its rules respectively. Thus both allow for a romantic aesthetic (a modernist aesthetic) and define the subject within a romantic subjectivity. This romantic subject is in process, but its process is relative to the 'plan of the artwork' (a transcendental order). The void is not the Idea but the collective practice of a void, however, it is nevertheless a symbolic void. This point is pivotal to my project since it re-assesses Lyotard's postmodern condition and my suggestions made in chapter 2 about Kristeva's fourth signifying practice in respect to a romantic, modernist, aesthetic. The 'absence' of the signifying dynamic is not represented in the material of the text. However, the transgressive break in the dynamic of the trial, in-between the rules and the game, I argue, invites a theoretical position, a meta-subject and a meta-discourse, which grounds the motility vis-à-vis the foundation of the symbolic modality, the game plan. This problematises my suggestion developed in chapter 2 that Kristeva's subject on trial is *not* a romantic subject. Now I argue that the subject on trial in a dialectic postmodern condition remains an aesthetic romantic subject. Its dialectic practice enables metadiscourse. The theorisation of this subject on trial in the (dialectic) postmodern condition, I argue, articulates the notion of 'theory as practice'. However the dialectical dynamic of this theory as practice stages the meta-practice of the *spectateur-spectatant* as opposed to the immersive and perpetual practice of the *spectatant*.

What is central to this in reference to the film *Stalker* is that the subject of the Zone can never be a romantic subject. I contest that the Zone has no 'game plan' in this sense it can never open a symbolic void relative to such a plan. Consequently it never allows the viewer to take a distanced position from which he/she could replenish an experiential void from a symbolic register in aesthetic theory. I argue that due to the practice and individuality of the non-dialectically postmodern subject on trial in the Zone, the romantic, aesthetic theory is rejected as a possibility. Rather the subject on trial in the condition of the Zone is argued as a practical and contingent romantic identity; a priori as a neo-romantic subjectivity. This neo-romantic subject is not theorisable from a meta-position, since its processes are not discursive outside him/herself.

This articulation of a neo-romantic subjectivity is crucial in regards to my own video work. I contest that the impression of a void in my work is not collective, romantic void, a sublime, experienced from a meta-position. Rather, I argue that any void felt is an individual and sensorial rather than an aesthetic void, and can thus not be filled through a representational replacement. It does not call for a replacement object, found in a collective symbolic register, articulated in aesthetic theory. Instead it invites a subjective and mobile production of the material. In this sense, my work does not produce a romantic but a neo-romantic aesthetic and subjectivity. The prove of this identity can never lie outside its practice however.

character. In response, I understand, the semiotic motility defines the concurrent social expression of this symbolic foundation. Although this semiotic sociality too is in process, it is not fixed but is continually re-articulated, its relation to a symbolic foundation gives it *gravitas* as representation. I propose to critique the dialectic inevitability set up in such a split mobility by re-considering not its representation, but its foundational characteristic. I contest that my notion of a tendential symbolism develops the conceptual shift from a symbolic characterised as an *order* to a symbolic understood as a *quality*. I argue subsequently that this allows the semiotic expression, understood as the social to be tendential rather than contractual also and thus the separation between the two modalities can be abandoned.

I understand the semiotic and the symbolic not as two separate modalities. Rather I conflate them as qualities within practice. As a consequence of this articulation the semiotic does not break with the symbolic to move it on, rather, the semiotic quality *is* the temporary realisation of this tendential symbolic. I suggest that there always is a tendential symbolic, but there never is symbolism outside of its realisation. The symbolic is produced rather than passed through in practice. There is no tautological sense played out within the plan of the artwork, the sense produced lies beyond the work in its perpetual playful extension. Thus there is no sublime. The here and now is absolutely rather than relatively here and now. In relation to my articulation of the semiotic as the social moves of the game and the symbolic as its contract, I can now articulate the moves and its contract as one. I contest that when matter and drive are one, when the game's rules and the player's moves are one, then there is no break from where I can theorise the practice within an aesthetic register.

I contest that the Zone provokes such a non-dialectically mobile practice. The Zone never breaks its practice. It never allows the viewer to take a distanced position from which he/she could fill such a break through (aesthetic) theory. The subject *spectatant* on trial in the Zone can thus never be an aesthetic (modernist, romantic) subject. In the non-dialectical here and now of *my* postmodern condition the mobility of perception is particular to my subjectivity and any stoppage, any pause of perception, is not re-presentable (theorisable) outside myself. This perception is not nostalgic, it does not refer to a transcendental/ foundational order. This does not mean, however, that it does not employ conventions. It simply implies that the conventions are not used in relation to their transcendental authority, but rather are practised by a subject on trial here and now. Such a contingent perceptual practice needs conviction since it does not stand relative to a foundational practice but its

'contract' is only ever and particularly now.

I understand that without the particularity of the subject, such an abandonment of foundation in the conflation of the social expression and its symbolic contract, could lead to meaningless nonsense and asociality. However, I contest that the particularity of the subject *spectatant* on trial avoids this and determines the semiotic-symbolic signifying practice in its own particular motion here and now. Sense and identity on trial in the signifying practice of temporal-collage are assured not through a symbolic order but through the particularity of the subject continually realising a symbolic quality.

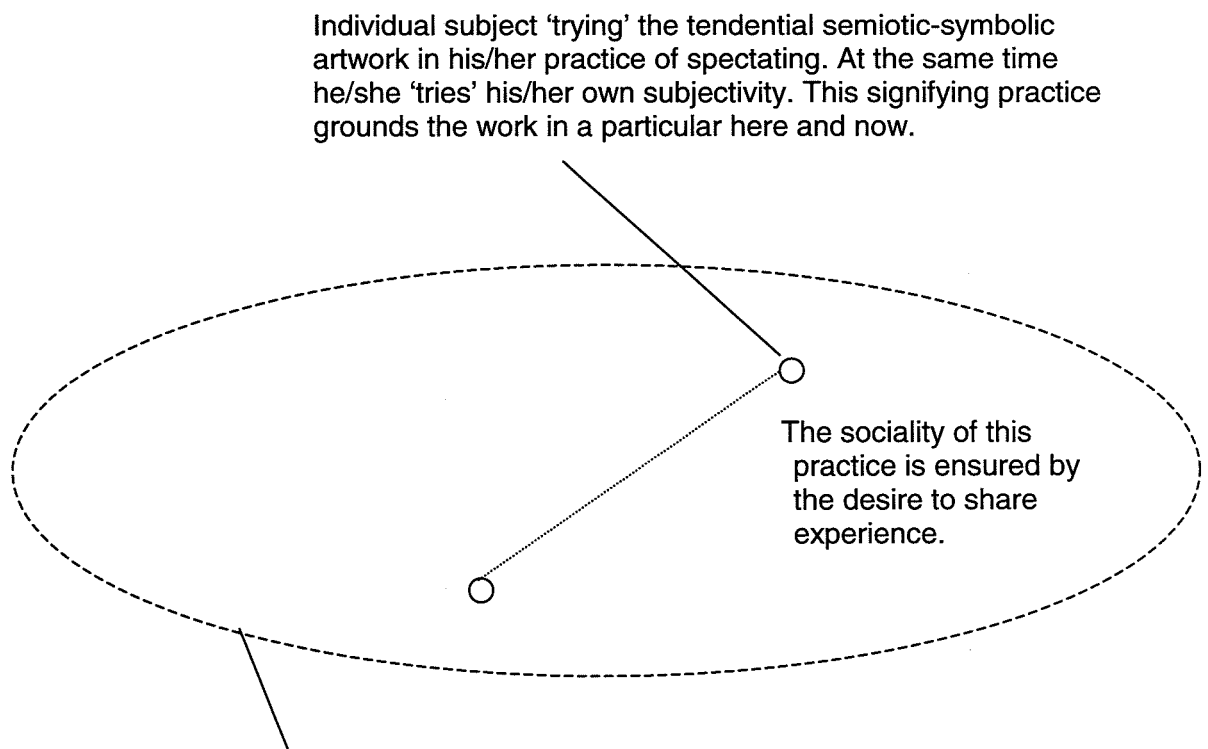
To apply this argument, and to debate it in more detail, I turn to my understanding of symbolism in the film *Stalker*. I consider *Stalker's* symbolism not through a theoretical (aesthetic) analysis, but through a mode of production in perception. I contest my understanding of Tarkovsky's work through my realisation of the tendential symbolic quality of its material, visual and sonic. The symbolism is produced by me in my particular realisation of its tendential quality in the signifying practice of temporal-collage.¹⁰³ In the last chapter I discussed this tendential symbolic as a 'trigger' that forged my engagement in the material but did not foreclose my understanding. Now, as a consequence of my critique of the break in the dynamic of the semiotic and the symbolic I re-assess this. The tendential symbolic is not a trigger separate from my experience of the work. The trigger is the experience and the experience the trigger all at the same time. The travellers walking through the Zone produce the symbolism of the Zone from a tendential quality of its material to symbolise, which they realise in their transitive spectating of the Zone, individually and contingently. In turn, I the viewer, am invited to produce

¹⁰³At this point I would like to clarify the notion of tendential in distinction to immanence. The term tendential is not a noun, it is an adjective. It is not something that is immanently available, rather it is the description of the action of production. It is thus not a spirit inherent in the subject nor in the object just waiting to be realised. Rather, it *is* its realisation now. It is the adjective and adverb that describes symbolism and sociality in its actuality. Tendential symbolism or sociality is produced in production. It is its own realisation continually in the present. I insist on this distinction in order to separate it from an understanding within Hegel's objective ideality, which is achieved through an activity, which immanently realises the thing towards its ideal outcome. I avoid such a progressive description of symbolisation and socialisation as an ideal activity (*Tätigkeit*), by focusing on its processes rather than an end outside of its actuality. Hegel's immanence includes the drive to overcome the incongruity between inner-necessity and outer appearance (Hegel, 1953). I acknowledge this incongruity as conflict, and immanence as an action born out of conflict toward its ideal resolution. By contrast, tendential is not an antagonistic quality. It points instead to a playful adversariness, agonism, which does not need to be overcome. Its play is infinite.

the filmic material from a tendential quality in the material to symbolise, via my own particular and individual practice of such symbolisations. There are always an infinite number of symbolisations possible. However, my particularity avoids the swamp of 'everything goes' and works out one particular symbolic from its tendential quality.

Fig. 3

Tendential Sense and Identity produced through the practice of Tendential Symbolic and Social Qualities; in the particularity of this practice without foundation they become one motion.



Tendential semiotic-symbolic object/event, 'tried' by the subject spectatant in a semiotic-symbolic signifying practice.
[There is no recognisable outside of this signifying practice. The dotted line simply assumes the temporal border of perception for illustration purposes.]

This produces an inclusive and continual practice of sense and identity. There is nothing that is not included, no outside, no before or thereafter. What assures the relevance and sanity of this practice is the **particularity of the subject**. What assures the sociality of this practice and subjectivity is the **desire to share** rather than a **shared contract/ order**.

I argue that what I share with the Stalker, the Writer, the Professor and my fellow viewers, is the *desire* to use symbolisation and the *desire* to be social, not however a symbolic register or a social code outside of any practice of socialisation or symbolisation. If the postmodern condition is the condition of the here and now, there is no outside, no beyond. Everything is produced from within, immersive, and everything is generative, transitive. Meta-positions and stoppage points are an illusion.¹⁰⁴ The danger of relativity is avoided by focusing on the subject in perception.

The travellers in the Zone are 'playing', *jouant*, rather than players, *joueur*. The Stalker, the Professor, the Writer and me, the Critic, 'play' the Zone. We share the desire to be social and the desire of symbolisation, not however an outcome or any rules and contracts of sociality or symbolisation. The rule is the game and the game are its rules in action. I propose the subjectivity in the condition of the Zone as a neo-symbolic subjectivity. This subjectivity is connected to a symbolism but not via the transcendental emotivity of the unified subject of Symbolism, nor in relation to a symbolic lexicon. In the Zone we are continually in the here and now and cannot nostalgically feed off a symbolic order outside of this position.

Sense and identity based on tendential qualities rather than contracts and rules, assumes the desire to share these qualities. Thus, when Green laments Tarkovsky's unwillingness to explain his symbolic, I understand him to be complaining about the responsibility to produce meaning himself. I contest that when we talk about non-understanding it is more interesting to consider the non-desire, the unwillingness, to understand rather than the faults of a contract or its transmission. Understanding, and contracts of knowledge are misleading as they suggest that if only the contract were right we would all understand each other. This patronises and sublimates the individual and robs him/her of his/her generative autonomy. By contrast, if we abandon the register of sociality and symbolisation it is only through ourselves that anything can make sense, and this sense, and our self, is perpetually on trial. In this sense, my notions of tendential symbolic and social start from the point of non-contractual desire for communication and perform sense making processes in the

¹⁰⁴ For Lyotard totality is always an illusion upheld as real through terror. By terror he means the ability to exclude a *coup inattendu* or a player from the game in order not to disturb its totalitarian play. A renunciation of this terror is accordingly a renunciation of the possibility of totality and vice versa (Lyotard, 1994, p46). As a consequence of his insights my project takes up the implication of terror and attempts to escape totality via a signifying practice of temporal-collage.

contingency here and now perpetually.

Conclusion

Temporal-collage is thus confirmed not as an outcome, it is not a material quality but a 'fifth' signifying practice. I argue that it resembles in many ways Kristeva's 'fourth' signifying practice of the text, but contest that it is crucially different in respect to its understanding of the relationship between the symbolic and the semiotic, e.g. in relation to the social. In conclusion, I posit the subject of temporal-collage as subject *spectatant* on trial; I summarise the condition of this transitive subject as the here and now of (non-dialectical) postmodernism and re-assert temporal-collage as a fifth signifying practice.

The fact that I do not posit the symbolic as an order, separate from the semiotic motility, but conflate them in the practice of the tendential, clarifies my distinction of temporal-collage and Kristeva's fourth signifying practice of the text. The separation of the semiotic and the symbolic, however mobile, renders her signifying practice of the text dialectical in reference to the underlying register. By contrast, I argue, my fifth signifying practice is not dialectical. Its perpetual practice of tendential qualities does not perform a break and hence does not enable a meta-position, which recuperates its individual and particular perception into a collective meaning, aesthetic theory. I still hold on to the notion of Kristeva's 'trial of sense and identity', and reaffirm the concept and ideological investment in her signifying practice of the text articulated in the idea of a *Revolution in Poetic Language*. What I re-evaluate in my signifying practice of temporal-collage, however, are the details of its practice.

By conflating the symbolic and the semiotic in a semiotic-symbolic practice of tendential qualities, temporal-collage avoids the break. And, by focusing on the contingent particularity of this practice I also avoid the boundarilessness of relativity and the insanity of asociality. I contest that my re-thinking of the symbolic, not as a register but as a tendential quality allows me to grant the subject perceptual autonomy without having to accept *nonsense* as its necessary outcome. I conclude that the *spectatant* on trial in temporal-collage makes individual *sense* (*non-sense*) via the performance of a tendential symbolic. The sociality of this performance is dependent on the desire to share sense, not on a social contract. This notion of desire renders the collective a dynamic concept and allows the individual to be social without however limiting his/her sense and identity to a collective register. The

traveller is producing the Zone, his/her reality of it, as the condition of his/her generative experience, from a tendential semiotic-symbolic. In the Zone the Stalker, the Writer, the Professor and myself only share our desire to be there, to generate this condition. Any actuality of this condition however remains individual and contingent.

The Zone (the condition of temporal-collage) is maybe naively but certainly unambiguously 'true' in this individuality. The social *is* the desire for sociality. Its perpetual production lies in the act of sharing, which is temporal and particular, and thus again unambiguous in relation to its contingency. Sharing involves the conviction demanded of the body in process/on trial by Kristeva. In the Zone this conviction is not nostalgic but continually presently produced. Ultimately no discussion of past achievements or failings aids the travellers through the terrain to the Room. In the Zone what is otherwise understood as common sense and pragmatic realism becomes a matter of belief. Thus understanding is a non-measurable desire for communication rather than a pragmatic rendition of contracted rules. I argue the (social) subject of temporal-collage is a neo-symbolic subject. He/she enjoys his/her autonomous perception now, without falling out of communication and sociality. In neo-symbolism the social is produced in the desire for communication and sociality not in relation to a register.

The notion of a subject *spectatant* on trial re-evaluates the sense of futility that I have articulated in relation to an individual non-systemic production of sense in perception. In the last chapter I argued that it is impossible to contend a radical individuality seeing that we are always already ideological. I contested that such an ideological subject is always recuperable into a collective identity. Although I still pronounced that trying to escape the dialectic is critical, I declared it futile at the same time. Now, however, I argue that the notion of a tendential symbolic and social, practised by the neo-symbolic subject, frees me from the constraints of a dialectic inevitability, without refuting the idea of ideology. The fifth signifying practice does not deny the ideological character of the individual. Rather, in temporal-collage ideology *is* the individual practice of desire rather than a symbolic power-pool from where, and in opposition to which, practice arises. This, I contest, allows me to produce an immersive and transitive sense and identity without an outside, metasubject/ metadiscourse, and thus without a (aesthetic) stoppage: there is no (aesthetic) theory as practice, but only practice.

I confirm that crucial to the non-dialectical understanding of this practice is an understanding of the postmodern condition as always here and now. No over there or another time can have an impact on its practice. The Zone, the condition of temporal-collage, is nothing in itself but is only the perpetual present signifying of a here and now. As a signifying practice temporal-collage is not restricted to film or video, the material complexity of audio-visuality.¹⁰⁵ Its perceptual and individuated characteristic implies that any artwork can be produced within the signifying practice of temporal-collage. What is confirmed to be central is not the work but its perception. The focus is on the individual interpretation as a generative narration. The criticality lies with the anecdotal, the validity in the conviction of the subject. The status of temporality is thus re-evaluated by thinking it as a perceptual attitude with its basis in desire, rather than a quality based on a symbolic register. The understanding of temporal-collage as a perpetually present perceptual generative narration rather than a (material) aesthetic theorisation, allows me to apply its understanding beyond audio-visual work. This shift enables me to expand the specific realm of audio-visuality into a broader arena of art practice and to engage in a discussion around any artwork as a material complex. I pursue this expansion in chapters 4 and 5.

In chapter 4 I test the viability of the signifying practice of temporal-collage beyond audio-visuality. This chapter elaborates the concerns developed vis-à-vis film work into a more general field of art practice. The ideas of sense and identity discussed so far are re-introduced and developed via the theories and practices of the digital. The next chapter thus 'tries' the subject *spectatant*, introduced and observed in this chapter, in process. I am inquiring whether or not my suggestions regarding the immersive and active subjectivity of the *spectatant* on trial is realisable beyond audio-visuality and in fact whether or not such an active position is actualised in the digital.

¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, implicit in the argument of this chapter, is a critique of writing which theorises film and video work according to conventions of authorship, intentionality, visual and sonic codes, historical data, etc.. As an additional conclusion, I propose that in the postmodern here and now of the subject *spectatant* on trial, film theory has to abandon the notion of (semiotic) 'reading', and become a 'practice' in the sense of producing anecdotal narrations (generative interpretations) whose validity lie in the conviction of narrating rather than in a code of reading. In other words I encourage a film theory which abandons a systemic analysis in favour of an experiential production. Consequently the central issue would be audienceship: the relationship between the film and its individual and contingent viewing. And its central problematic would be the desire, or not, to share experience.

Chapter 4

Euphoria of Immaterial Immersivity and Interactive Subjectivity: Temporal-Collage Tested as Digital Concept

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Synopsis

This chapter elaborates the notion of the artwork as material complex developed vis-à-vis audio-visuality into a more general realm of art practice. Current contestations of the network age, critically the ideas of Margaret Morse are reviewed in respect of the promise of radical temporality she claims to be produced in digital immateriality, and to result in an autonomous interactive subjectivity. Notably, her ideas about digital dematerialization are brought parallel to ideas of dematerialization in Conceptual Art exemplified in particular by Mel Bochner. At the same time, her ideas around the interactive autonomy of the digital subject are contested vis-à-vis Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological and intersubjective (analogue) subject. In the course of this review, the idea of temporal-collage is juxtaposed with the digital as concept. Through this juxtaposition, I propose a critical realisation of the signifying practice of temporal-collage and digital practice respectively.

Introduction

In the last two chapters I articulated the artwork as a material complex, continually produced in a singular and generative perception. I staged this generative perception vis-à-vis Kristeva's practice of the text as the (fifth) signifying practice of temporal-collage; I identified the subject of this practice as a subject *spectatant* on trial; and summarised the condition of this transitive subjectivity as the here and now of (non-dialectical) postmodernism. In order to now re-assert and develop this proposal and test the scope of its criticality, in this chapter, I bring the signifying practice of temporal-collage in contact with digital practice. Thus I try my hypothesis of a transitive and generative materiality and subjectivity through a consideration of digital art practice, its conceptual promise and experiential actuality. I discuss the digital in relation to the contestations about materiality, virtuality and subjectivity as they are currently made apparent in digital artworks, and the theories ensuing from and describing such art practices. Accordingly, the ideas developed in the last two chapters: temporal-collage's centrifugal effort of production in perception (disjointing and bricolaging); the tendential quality of material and subject; and the notion of desire rather than contractual agreement at the centre of sociality, are re-assessed in relation to such theories and practices.

I have argued that temporal-collage practices form as process. Material as ultimately non-physical in its centrifugal extension through a bricolaging and disjointing action of perception is generated by a transitive subject 'on trial'. The notion of a non-physical artwork, and the idea of an 'active' subjectivity, I understand to resonate with claims made in digital contestations and brings me to this critical comparison. The focus on perception as a generative interpretation (narration) as argued via the language theories of Julia Kristeva and Jean-François Lyotard, affords me the methodological framework in which to articulate such a juxtaposition. Concurrent digital theories stage and discuss the digital object as a command enounced by the computer programme. The digital is thus identified as an object of 'quasi enunciation'. The notion of such a 'digital discursivity' evokes ideas of language as action rather than description: generative rather than analytical. In this chapter I investigate this identification of the digital as generative, with the generative interpretations practised in temporal-collage.

My argument for the discursive/generative status of the digital object is staged initially via Manuel Castells' notion of the alphabet as a technology which enables

conceptuality, and through Timothy Druckery's ideas on the digital as iteration. I contend that the basis of both these ideas is an oppositional understanding of verbal and written language. Their ideas around the digital as temporal enunciation position the digital object in clear opposition to a spatially fixed, written analogue object. By focusing on their dichotomous identification, in the beginning of this chapter, I demonstrate how both manage to argue such an oppositionality through their equation of the technological novelty of the digital with a philosophical and experiential novelty. In order to examine the tenability of these oppositional evaluations of objecthood in the digital, and to critique their 'techno-philosophy', I discuss their ideas via the notion of the digital as abstract information, as staged by Margaret Morse.

In her book *Virtualities: television, media art, and cyberculture* (1998) Morse articulates her ideas of the digital object as an abstract informational, data object disengaged from the actual material: a dematerialised object. The apperception of this data object, she suggests, forges a motion of 'reengagement' as a re-materialisation of the object by the subject in perception. Her focus on this motion of reengagement introduces a perceptual consideration to production-based theories, and foregrounds the subject above technology. I discuss her ideas in order to query the usefulness of a perceptual object in the re-evaluation of 'techno-philosophies' and their ideological background. Her position allows me to re-consider the digital in terms of its experiential rather than its technological quality, and to re-think the subject in relation to this experientiality. This investigation initiates the critique of an easy dichotomy between the digital and the analogue.

To develop this critique, I juxtapose Morse's ideas on the 'informationalisation' of the object, and its 're-engagement' by the subject, with notions of 'dematerialization' and experience as proposed by a conceptual art practice of the 1970s. Conceptual Art and its theories are employed in order to argue notions of materiality and strategies of dematerialization as an artistic motivation against established forms of objecthood. In particular the work and writing of conceptual artist Mel Bochner affords me a critical insight into notions of materiality and non-materiality beyond an oppositional identification. Bochner questions the notion of dematerialization and the idea of conceptuality on the bases of their dialectical position vis-à-vis materialisation and actuality, or what he calls 'empiricism'. His argument offers me a starting point for the articulation of a 'nonmaterial' criticality to be applied to the digital as well as the analogue artwork. The question asked in order to stage this

argument is: does the digital object present an actual realisation of the desire for a conceptual immateriality as proposed by some works made in the name of '70s Conceptual Art and Bochner's practice in particular?¹⁰⁶

The argument triggered by this question works through the relationship between the analogue desire of the conceptual artist to challenge material/modernist models of aesthetic evaluation (focusing on the intentionality and authorial ideality of material production), and the digital claim for an immaterial immersivity and an extensional interactivity, which allegedly challenges such an aesthetic ideality. The claims made about the existence of the digital as fluid data, as an informational, enunciating object, are brought to bear on the conceptual artwork's emphasis on outline and measurement. I am considering the motivation and perception of the informational object in the digital in relation to the appearance of outline and measurement in the conceptual art-object in the analogue. In this way I examine their respective notions of 'participation'. This shifts the emphasis from the actual material of either practice to its production in perception.

Central to this discussion is the relationship between what Bochner pushes as a critical practice of *Conceptual Art* -the measurement object- and its *actual* realisation as a 'measurement object' in the digital realm. This comparison leads me to speculate on discursivity and informationality in the digital *and* the analogue. What is highlighted and compared, then, are not their materialities as actualities, but their concepts of actuality; the ideologies behind the analogue and the digital aesthetics. The notion of the analogue or digital artwork as ideological enunciation rather than

¹⁰⁶ Timothy Druckery anticipates the affirmative with which for him such a question needs to be answered, when, in his essay 'Welcome to Netopolis', in the January-April 1998 issue of *Exposed*, he writes:

How, then, can the development of electronic imaging be contextualised in terms of its relationship with the history of art and as a realisation of the transformed potential of imaging made possible with the use of digital technology? (Druckery, 1998, p10)

For him it is seemingly not a question of *if*, but a question of *how*. I later argue that, in order to assume such a confident notion of the digital as a paradigmatic break, which realises 'the transformed [analogue] potential', his discussion of the digital is based on an oppositional stance between the analogue and the digital. I present how for Druckery the digital is a liberating tool that frees us from the constraints of an analogue notion of reality. The analogue, in turn, is positioned in direct opposition to such a liberated image world, presenting as it does a materially encumbered reality. For Druckery, in the digital, 'the shifting boundary of the image extends away from the static photographic mode into that of the "dematerialised" space of video, installation, information and electronics' (ibid., p10). I remain critical of such an easy oppositionality and aim to query the relationship between digital and analogue beyond a dialectical understanding.

actual materiality, is at this stage argued within the term 'conceptual actuality'. In relation to this term, I argue that either practice, digital and analogue, can be considered in reference to its conceptuality or its actuality. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological philosophy in general, and his notion of doubt forging a continual production of the object in intersubjective uncertainty, in particular, is central to this articulation.

From here I go on to develop this idea of the artwork as 'conceptual actuality' rather than as 'substantial materiality' by contrasting works by Californian-based digital artist/ designer John Maeda and also Californian-based artist Ed Ruscha. I am in the first instance concentrating on those works for which both artists engage themselves with the appearance and interaction of written language. The doubling of language as language of production and as pictorial appearance renders these works particularly interesting for a discussion around the artwork as informational enunciation. A comparative study of Ruscha's word paintings and Maeda's computed text animations aids me to continue the discussion around language as description or informational production. It also allows a consideration of the motivational remit and perceptual consequences thereof. This further tests the tenability of an easy dichotomy between a quasi oral computer language and a graphic written language as it is set up in concurrent theories of the digital. The dialectic dynamic of any such argumentation is re-evaluated in a more sophisticated understanding of digital and analogue artworks as conceptualities.

Conceptuality stresses the position of the subject. Both Maeda's and Ruscha's works involve the subject in the production of a contingent actuality I contend. Through a discussion of their works I am comparing the notion of the *mouse-click*, the actual digital interaction, with the conceptual interaction at the *knotting-points* in temporal-collage.¹⁰⁷ I argue that the actual interaction via mouse-click on screen, in Maeda's work answers a more conceptual interaction in Ruscha's paintings. I present how the first allows the user to make things move on screen, to open new

¹⁰⁷ I am using the term 'mouse-click' to include interfaces and feedback mechanisms such as mouse-over, plasma screen tactility, motion detectors and any other soft and hard-ware operational interactive devices which support the actual extension of the digital object. Thus the conceptual bricolaging and disjuncting effort of perception in the signifying practice of temporal-collage is juxtaposed to an actual extensionality. Later on in this chapter, the comparison between actual, operational, interaction, and perceptual interaction is evaluated and clarified via Mel Bochner's notion of exteriorisation through imagination. And further, the issue is developed and rethought in relation to Bernd Wingert's notion of (mouse-) *click* in the digital as a 'centrifugal force', extending the work by opening links to other possible appearances or sites.

windows, extending thus the material actually. By contrast, the latter offers the work for a conceptual extension by the subject. This comparison highlights the core issue of this chapter: the differentiation between actuality and conceptuality; their correlation within art practice (analogue or digital); and the way in which they constitute notions of substantiality and subjectivity.

The Digital Condition

In the catalogue of a show of digital photography entitled 'Iterations: the New Image' Timothy Druckery writes: 'Any reading of the hype surrounding digital culture and art shows that the responses range from dizzying exaggeration to ethical solipsism, from paranoia to euphoria' (Druckery, 1993, p29). I agree with his assessment. And although this remark is ten years old, much writing about digital art seems not to have developed less anxious or excited understandings.

Despite his awareness however, Druckery himself does not refrain from promoting the digital as a radically new and positively liberating expression in his own writing. Thus he introduces his essay 'Welcome to Netopolis', in the January-April 1998 issue of *Exposed*, by stating:

Haunting the transformation of photography in the past decade is a series of shocks broadly extended by digital media. This extension, made viable by computer technology demands a reassessment of the crucial role of technology and photography in the representation of information, particularly as the link between an event and its availability as "mediated" collapses. (Druckery, 1998, p8)

He suggests the digital as a 'shock', and proposes the idea that it provokes a reassessment of information understood as information of a 'real' event vis-à-vis its modes of representation. The notion of 'representation' hints at the idea that there is a real event that can be represented in mediation from a meta-position (analogue). By contrast the digital is suggested to collapse this position. Thus the digital information does not *represent* a 'real' event but *produces* the event as real. The 'shock' of this proposes the digital in opposition to an analogue referentiality. In turn, I contend that this dialectical relation confirms the analogue as a conventional (nominal) system of reality. Similarly, the statements which introduce other critical texts on digital art portray the digital as the 'new' and present it as engendering a break in our sense of reality, its production and mediation, and thus also in our

sense of self. Digital theory in this sense propose that (digital) reality and subjectivity are posited in direct opposition to what in turn is conceived of as a nominal identification in the analogue world. The consequence of such an oppositional evaluation is a central concern of this chapter.

I am following these texts to test the tenability of such an oppositional argumentation. Their critical trajectories offer me a basis to rethink the digital as well as the analogue sense of reality and subjectivity. However, I am not consulting these texts to reach an abstract understanding about a general notion of reality and its subject, or how these are understood to be reconfigured in the digital. Rather, in a more particular and concrete sense, I am positioning the theories on the digital object as something against which I test the object and subject of temporal-collage as argued in the previous chapters. The dialectical theories of reconfiguration and novelty are argued in relation to temporal-collage's insistence on a perpetual signifying practice in a (non-dialectical) condition of here and now. This investigation re-assess the digital in relation to the claims of its radicality. The notion of radicality, however, is important to me in regards to developing my idea of the signifying practice of temporal-collage, not in reference to a more general sense of success or failure of criticality in the digital. In this sense the notion of the (digital) 'new' is used to elaborate the investigation of the perceptual and continual 'newness' produced in the signifying practice of temporal-collage, and to verify its criticality.¹⁰⁸

Vocabularies of Presentness and Fabrications of Language: Digital Techno-Philosophy

In *The Rise of the Network Society*, under the chapter heading 'The Culture of Real Virtuality', Manuel Castells, writes about the Greek invention of the alphabet as a conceptual technology. Via Havelock, he discusses how this technology enables a separation of the speaker from what is being said; between the subject and the object of discourse.¹⁰⁹ He states that this 'new' distance, introduced via the alphabet enables conceptual discourse. The alphabet gives the thing articulated a security in

¹⁰⁸ The sense of material complexities practised in radical extensionality (generative interpretation), which I developed in relation to temporal-collage in chapters 2 and 3, is brought into contact with the idea of the digital object as a chain of complex commands in time and the notion of its operational extensionality through input device interaction, where the subject extends the apparent material on screen by opening new windows, triggering an animation, changing colours, etc..

¹⁰⁹ Havelock, Eric A., *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences*, Princeton University Press, US, 1982, (orig. *Preface to Plato*, 1963)

that it fixes and positions it in letters and words. The object in writing is spatialised as a material thing. In this state it becomes thinkable, conceptualisable. According to Castells 'it was the alphabet that, in the West, provided the mental infrastructure for cumulative, knowledge based communication.' (Castells, 1997, p356). This implies that conceptualisation does not come out of what Castells understands as the insecurity and temporality of spaceless orality. Rather, it is a framework of (alphabetical) representation that grounds the object, which can then be moved and extended immaterially in conceptual discourse.

Castells talks about the development of the digital in relation to the conceptualising technology of the alphabet. He understands that:

The new alphabetic order, while allowing rational discourse, separated written communication from the audiovisual system of symbols and perceptions, so critical for the fully fledged expression of the human mind. By implicitly and explicitly establishing a social hierarchy between literate culture and audiovisual expression, the price paid for the foundation of human practice in the written discourse was to relegate the world of sounds and images to the backstage of the arts, dealing with the private domain of emotions and with the public world of liturgy. (Ibid., p356)

From here he asserts that the 20th Century developments of radio, television and the digital computer represent revenge against the rational alphabetic order through a sensorial and quasi oral preference and audio-visibility. He parallels the relationship between orality and literality with the correlation between the digital and the analogue. The analogue is presented in relation to a systemic understanding of language, where the word refers directly to and nominates the 'thing'. By contrast, the digital is understood to communicate through the free combination of discrete pixels, offering complex conceptualisations. In his terms, the analogue is identified as the alphabetic system, which, whilst 'allowing rational discourse', prevents the fluid discursivity and complexity of orality. This fluidity he understands to be revived in the digital. Thus he identifies writing with the analogue, and asserts both, writing and the analogue, as material stabilities in opposition to the temporal character of digital 'orality', which, he argues, destabilises writing's analogue communication in immaterial thought. I contest that this designates conceptuality in a dialectic dynamic with actuality. In this dynamic the material encompasses the immaterial, and likewise, the immaterial the material, as immanently present within its identification. This inevitably ties conceptualisation to a dialectic return: every extension of the

object away from the alphabet, the analogue, in an immaterial, digital, conceptualisation thereof, presents itself immanently for nomination in an actual rendition.¹¹⁰

I aim to question the tenability and usefulness of such a dialectic understanding. I contend that Castells' simple dichotomy between orality and literality, between the thing in space and its enunciation in time is not tenable when argued vis-à-vis the more sophisticated language theories of Julia Kristeva and Jean-François Lyotard, as pursued in the previous chapters. Castells' theory presupposes a simple relationship between the object and its description. He does not acknowledge the more complex relationship, which constitutes the object between signifier and signified.¹¹¹

What Castells discusses in relation to the spatialisation of the alphabet and the temporal orality of the digital, Timothy Druckery discusses in relation to the authenticity of photographic representation. In his essay 'Welcome to Netopolis' Druckery writes that in the digital, 'the shifting boundary of the image extends away from the static photographic mode into that of the "dematerialised" space of video, installation, information and electronics.' (Druckery, 1998, p10) His essay suggests that the digital breaks with a 'static mode' of materiality, represented by analogue photography, and instead supports the notion of an informational and fluid immateriality. According to him, 'linked with the critical thinking of the past decade, the confrontation with the status of the photographic image has been subjugated and re-functioned, de-authenticated and repositioned.' (Ibid., p10) Druckery stages the digital in opposition to the analogue: the dematerialised (non-authentic) space of

¹¹⁰ I understand the dynamic of Castells' writing to stage a Hegelian dialectic. One description, the analogue thesis, is imminently re-described through the overcoming of its discord with the digital thesis as antithesis, in a synthesis. This synthesis is a new thesis at a more advanced level, a higher order thesis. However, both the thesis and antithesis confirm each other in the synthesis which combines the methods of them both. The new thesis which imminently comes out of the conflict between thesis and antithesis, then, does not truly challenge their ideologies but reconfigures and hence confirms them as a negative to the current thesis staged as a positive.

¹¹¹ Castells seems to precede from a pre-Enlightenment understanding of language, where the object and its term work according to an analogical representation, in which their correlation is not considered arbitrary but referential. However, more sophisticated language theory considers the arbitrariness of the sign in the relation between signifier and signified. In-between those terms, a 'third meaning, in the form of a psychic image' can be inserted, which complexifies a simple analogical relationality, and forges a more complex production of the sign not as referential but arbitrary (Barthes, 1986, p25). As I have already critiqued the 'more sophisticated' synthesis bound to Barthes' semiotics after deSaussure however, nominalism like semiosis, is understood here as limited to material referentiality.

video versus the static (material and authentic) space of the photograph. Although he acknowledges a pre-technological digitality explored in the 'critical thinking of the past decade', for him the technological realisation nevertheless breaks with an analogue sense of image making and its implied sense of a referential 'reality'.

Both, Druckery and Castells sketch out a dialectic oppositionality between digital and analogue technologies of production and perception. Castells does so via the pronunciation of the alphabet as an analogue technology in opposition to the digital technology which renders the object discursive, and hence brings it 'back' to an oral sense of temporality and instability. Similarly, Druckery understands the technological digital as a dematerialization of the 'real' material, world. By contrast, I argue that the correlation between the digital and the analogue does not necessarily lead to such a dialectic oppositionality and its imminent reversal. I aim to goad the digital out of its negative relationship to the analogue, and to articulate an alternative understanding of either mechanism of production. I stage this critique via a consideration of the critical focus of digital theorisation. Margaret Morse's writing on digital practice offers me a starting point for this re-evaluation.

In the first chapter of her book *Virtualities: television, media art, and cyberculture*, Morse initiates her ideas on the 'discursivity' of the digital via Julian Dibell's idea that the digital is not distinguishable from the pre-Enlightenment principle of the magic word: 'the commands you type into computer are a kind of speech that doesn't so much communicate as *make things happen*, (...) the same way pulling a trigger does.' (Dibell quoted in Morse, 1998, p8)¹¹²

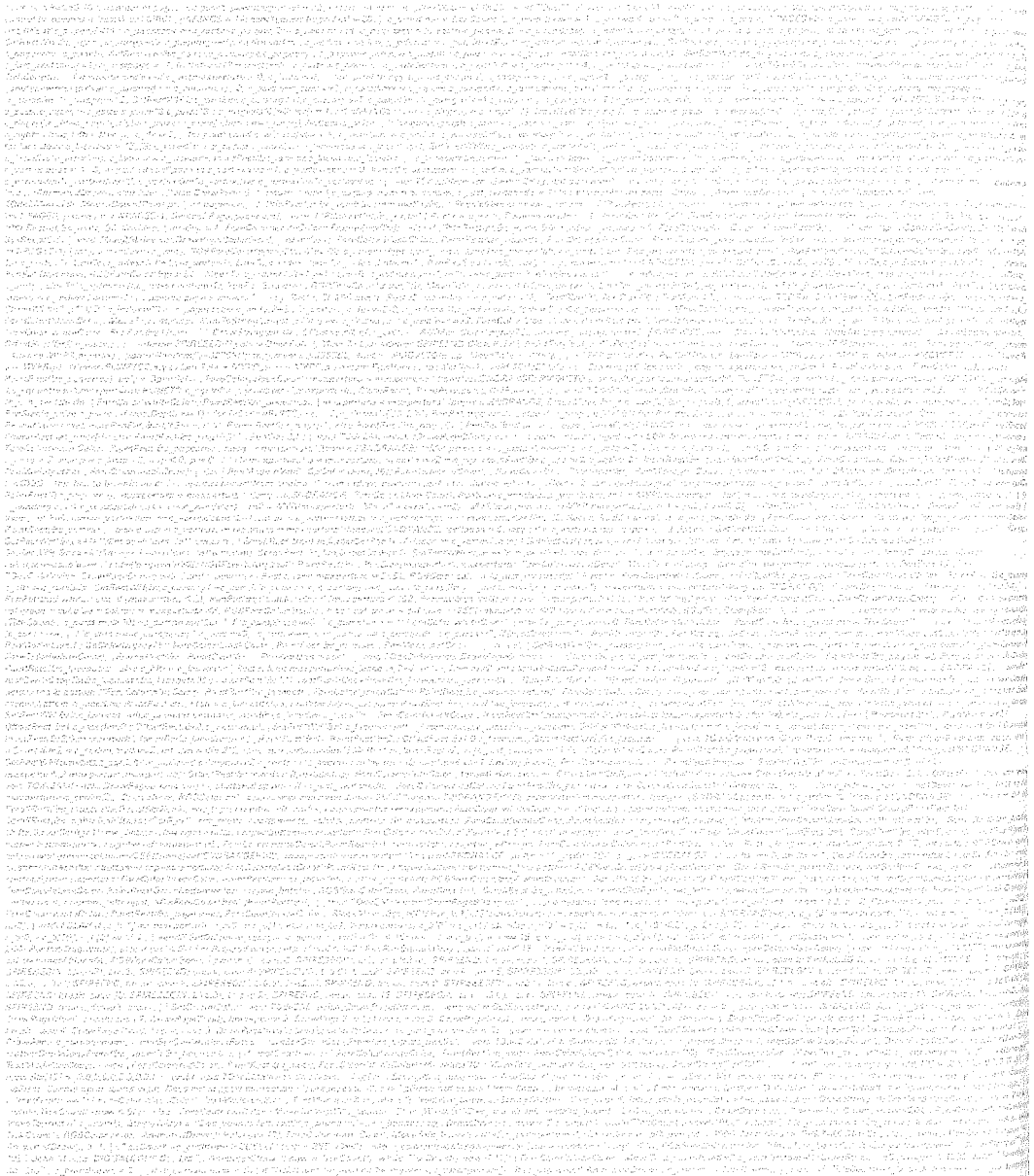
In technological terms, the digital 'image' is a temporal organisation of discrete pixels. The icon I see on my desktop is created by the software command which produces and organises those pixels. According to Morse, the digital object is discursive, even if computerised discursivity is not necessarily wholly reciprocal.¹¹³ The on-screen object is the instant result of a chain of commands in time. Its objectivity is text-based. It is a continually present text which '*makes things happen*'.

¹¹² Dibell, Julian, 'A Rape in Cyberspace' in the *Village Voice* 21, December 1993, pp36-42.

¹¹³ The issue of reciprocity between hearer and speaker, as a requirement for discourse, is discussed later via Margaret Morse's comparison between digital, instrumental interactivity, and notions of phenomenological (analogue) intersubjectivity. In her discussion of 'Machine Subjects' and 'Subject Machines', the notion of non-reciprocity in the digital is argued through the distinction between notions of analogue and digital discursivity. This differentiation forms a central part of my critique of the digital techno-philosophy later on in this chapter.

Digital artist and graphic designer John Maeda's *Script* visualises one such temporal chain of commands.

Image 1, John Maeda, *a computer programme is a utilitarian typographers dream - functioning machine composed completely of type, 2000*, computer script on paper



Technically, the digital phenomenon is a complex event of terms organised in time. It is iterative, forever moving away from a closed form and definition, needing repetition to sustain a stable object. As soon as the computer software stops repeating its command, the image, the digital object and all its potential links, disappear. The digital phenomenon then, is abstract duration, *is* time. Repeating its command stabilises it, but only as long as the repetition goes on.¹¹⁴ The resulting object does not present a fixed configuration. Rather, it is an object in motion, composed by continuously changing affiliations, the docking of autonomous pixels in time.¹¹⁵ Its material stability is perpetually temporal rather than physical and spatial.

The technical description seemingly affirms Castells' notions of the digital as oral, in direct opposition to an analogue object identified as literal. It apparently verifies his supposition that the digital, as orality, produces complex combinations in time, in opposition to the analogue as alphabet, which names and thereby spatialises a pre-existent thing. I understand this to presuppose that the technical particularities delineate the digital beyond its soft and hard ware parameters. This gives the digital technology the status of philosophy. Such an understanding, I argue, ignores any consideration of content or aesthetics, relevant for the study of the digital beyond a simple techno-theory. Rather, it considers language within 'the pre-Enlightenment

¹¹⁴ Repetition is a central device for the intensification of the ideological message in Eisenstein's montage theories as argued in chapter one. My critique of this ideological intensification articulated in chapters 2 and 3, via the development of a fifth signifying practice (temporal-collage), finds a crucial point of re-assessment here. Does the continuous repetition of the digital command support an ideological intensification in the sense that Eisenstein's repetition of conflict, as articulated in his montage theory, work towards an intensification of the propaganda message? In other words, does the repeating mechanism of the digital, as a mechanism of intensification, reveal the computer as a propaganda-machine, working towards an ideologically total ideality? These questions allow me to consider the digital as technology in relation to the ideological dynamic of montage and temporal-collage respectively, and thereby to evaluate them both.

¹¹⁵ Druckery, by identifying the still image of the photograph within the digital, highlights the digital not in regard to its technological temporality, but rather in its relation to an ideological sense of temporality. For him the digital photograph is not a static image. His notion of digital fluidity comes out of the sense that the digital image does not *represent* but *creates* its object. In this respect it stands in no relation to a real object or event: no sense of a 'having been there' is evoked (Barthes, 1986, p33). For Druckery the digital image continually pursues its own present production in opposition to an analogue photograph which is static in its historical referentiality and causality. This interpretation of the digital still-image as temporal, via its a-historicity, is interesting in regard to ideas of time and space, materiality and immateriality as ideological rather than rational and scientific. Later in this chapter I pursue this comparison via Margaret Morse. Morse articulates the digital as a separate 'fiction of presence' to be differentiated from the 'fictions of past' of the 'real' reality. Her argument which is based on the differentiation between analogue 'reality' and digital 'unreality', presents a starting point for my critique of such oppositional dynamics. This argument is also further pursued in the concluding chapter 5, when the dialectic dynamic between time and space, is scrutinised via the consideration of a net-work sensibility.

principle of the magic word' (Dibell in Morse, 1998, p8), and omits more complex linguistic theories which challenge such an easy relation between name and thing.

I contend that the simple dichotomous interpretation of the digital via its technological workings, allows for a whole array of assertions regarding materiality and subjectivity to be argued convincingly: euphoric notions of real interactivity in the digital, as opposed to passive spectatorship in the analogue; the notion of virtual fluidity in opposition to material stability, two ideas suggested by Druckery, find confirmation in such technological argumentation. From the focus on technology, the digital can be claimed to break with analogue notions of materiality and its aesthetic valuation. However, I contest that the technological dogmatism prevents a discussion of the aesthetic and ideological issues which might link either expression and hence could problematise the notion of such a break. Thus I understand that the tenability of such a technology-based argumentation is questionable, especially when, instead of discussing the production of the digital from a technological point, we consider its production from the point of perception. This shift in focus, from production to perception, foregrounds the ideological interest behind the digital and problematises its relation to an analogue aesthetic. I aim to undertake such a re-evaluation of digital theory via a practical (transitive and generative) perception. This critique is staged via Morse's articulation of the digital as abstract information and the reengagement of that informational object through its re-materialisation by the subject. I contend that her notion of reengagement challenges the technological orthodoxies as pronounced by Castells and Druckery. In this respect I understand her focus on perception to resonate with the challenge to aesthetic orthodoxies as articulated in the signifying practice of temporal-collage.

The Reengagement of the Informational Object in Contingent Perception

When to type a computer command brings a graphic world to virtual life as an immersive environment and when human qualities of subjectivity and agency can be granted to objects or even distributed over space itself, we have entered a realm for which we have little vocabulary and few reference points except the language of magic tricks or the linguistic of speech-acts or *performatives*, a category of words that bring the very situation they describe into being. (Morse, 1998, p8)

This statement positions Morse seemingly in agreement with a dichotomous theory of the digital as orality. The notion of the digital command as 'speech-acts (...) that

bring the very situation they describe into being' hint at an understanding of the digital as immaterial and discursive/ interactive orality. The idea that these 'speech-acts' formulate a 'language of magic tricks' suggests the '*unreality*' of the situation produced in such digital (generative) descriptions, directly opposed to the nominal '*reality*' of an analogue referentiality (analytical). She appears to identify the digital through its technological mechanism and thus to verify the simple dichotomy between the digital conceptuality and an analogue actuality. However, I argue that her position is more complex and takes into account the tautology of its own critique.

Morse problematizes the digital as an abstract information-object, produced continually in the command of its computation. The digital object is its data in time. In this respect she follows the technological argument. However, her consideration of the perception of this data object, develops this interpretation, and presents a useful argumentation against its dichotomy.

Morse argues that it is exactly the disengagedness of the digital object from its real context through informationalisation that demands of the subject to engage him/herself in its production. She acknowledges this motion of personalisation in the paradox between ever more impersonal machines and the increasing need to interact:

The paradox of the development of the media generally in this century is that as *impersonal* relations with machines and /or physically removed strangers characterize ever-larger areas of work and private life, more and more *personal* and subjective means of expression and ways of virtually interacting with machines and / or distant strangers are elaborated. (Ibid., p5)

She states further that 'the very impersonality and lack of context that are fundamental to information are far too sterile a basis on which to build the human relations' (ibid., p5). She suggests that in this 'imperceptible realm of data' the user needs to 'reengage' the data object through an 'embodying' and 'inhabiting' thereof (ibid., p5). What I understand her to propose here is the idea of a re-materialisation of the virtual data object in the digital via the perception of the subject. It is the subject that perceives the abstract data object in his/her interaction with it, and in this perception produces the object as real. However, despite thereby invoking the idea of digital interactivity as quasi phenomenological intersubjectivity, which would equate perception in the digital with perception in the analogue, she later

problematizes such a straightforward identification between the two.

Morse questions the idea that purely operational interactivity, via input device, renders the computed object intersubjective. In her terms interactivity and intersubjectivity are not unconditionally equivalent. For Morse, the disparity is based on two points: one is the 'murky' status of subjectivity that is attached to machines, and the second is their differing relationship to causality.¹¹⁶ The discourse we are engaged in when conversing with a digital subject, a subject on screen is, according to Morse, not wholly reciprocal. The digital 'I' of the computer screen or the televisual image, the 'machine subject', is not reciprocal with the user 'I', in that the analogue 'I' does not constitute the digital 'I' as 'you' in discourse beyond operational changes. Discourse however, is dependent on reciprocity, where both the 'I' and the 'you' constitute each other. Intersubjectivity relies on such reciprocity. Interactivity by contrast, in her terms, does not: the 'subject machine' of the computer constitutes the analogue subject, interacting via input device, without adapting its own 'subjectivity'. And whilst the intersubjective exchange in the real world implies a causality, the digital interaction has no origin in, nor consequence for, the real world. Consequently, although she states that instrumental relations, understood as metaphors, can enrich artistic and social imagination, their lack of historical causality and subjective reciprocity for her distinguishes them from analogue relations.

Morse's argument is based on an understanding of the digital and the analogue as disconnected realms. According to her, 'virtuality is a little-understood *fiction of presence* that operates on a different plane' (ibid., p20). A space can be 'cyberised': marked by 'bubbles or pockets of virtuality in the midst of the material world' (ibid., p7). These virtualities 'can enchant spheres of everyday reality' (ibid., p7), but they remain but a bubble within it.¹¹⁷ The digital is identified by Morse as a virtual

¹¹⁶ Morse considers the machine subject 'murky', since, for her, it is not a complete subject. She argues how 'subjectivity is characterized by the reversibility of "I" and "you", as shifters or empty positions.' (ibid., p9) However, the digital 'I' of the computer screen or the televisual image, the 'machine subject' is not reciprocal. 'I' am constituted as a listener, a 'you', by the 'machine subject' 'I', which is however not rendered a 'you' by my listening. It always retains its authority as an 'I', whilst my subjectivity is rendered incomplete vis-à-vis this authority.

¹¹⁷ The actions of the subject in the virtual do not, or at least should not, according to Morse, impact on the real world. There appears to be an ethical interest in her effort of separation. This ethicality is apparent in her choice of description of the digital language as a language of 'magic tricks' in relation to a supposedly sober analogue language of description. Later in her text she clarifies the motivation for this separation in her identification of a 'telepresent

language that produces fictions (generative), in opposition to an analogue language that describes (analytically) a pre-existent reality. The digital does not *represent*, but only *presents* itself. For Morse, the virtual presentation stands in no causal relationship with the real world. This barrier between reality and virtuality, what she terms a 'membrane', renders her notion of a reengagement by the subject only partially useful for my critique of a dialectic oppositionality between the digital and the analogue. Her argument still pre-supposes an oppositional relation between both realms, even if an experiential rather than a technological one. The referentiality and nominality of the experience in the real is confirmed vis-à-vis the experience in the unreality of the virtual bubble. However, Morse's text is useful in that it stages the oppositionality from an experiential angle. Thereby it allows for an argumentation of reality, real or virtual, in relation to its production by the subject.

Morse does acknowledge that analogue 'reality' is not unproblematically non-ideological but 'rather [presents] a problematic social construction that is contingent and historical.' (Ibid., p9)

The claim is not that television and a computer supported cyberculture are less authentic than "real" discursive exchange between human beings. It is rather that socially constructed reality is already fictional and the virtuality is an aspect of that fictionality that has come to be more and more supported and maintained by machines, especially television and the computer. (Ibid., pp10,11)

She argues the fictionality of any reality, which is always a social and hence an ideological reality. Despite this acknowledgement however, she does not stage the digital as another socially constructed reality, but maintains that due to its a-historicity the virtual fiction retains its status of unreality. This identification is argued in the differentiation between 'fictions of past', as present representations of things that stand in relation to a potential 'having been there' à la Barthes, and 'fictions of presence', that have no such originary authenticity and hence can claim no causality.¹¹⁸ 'Once the photographic realism is no guarantee of "having been there",

danger of engagement with the image world at the cost -ethical and psychic- of disengagement or remoteness from the actual effects of one's actions.' (Ibid., p23)

¹¹⁸ In his text *Rhetoric of the Image*, which is referred to here by Morse, Barthes sets up the differentiation between an image that refers to a notion of a '*having-been-there*' and '*things being there*'. Barthes talks about the reality value of photographs as a '*real unreality*'. Photographs are, according to him, real not as a present reality, but in their evidence of a past reality. In relation to this the digital image, which has no such past, but is a production without a moment of '*this is how it was*' to relate to, becomes understood as an unreality by Morse. (Barthes, 1986, p33)

the credibility the photograph nevertheless possesses is undermined.’ (Ibid., pp11-12) For her there is a danger in (mis-)understanding fictions of presence in relation to a historical causality. She believes that:

The convention of fiction as representation (as in books or films) are more sophisticated and better understood than the fictions of presence, that vary in mood from persuasive performance to subjunctive presentation to outright lies and deception; *such utterances or performances include images meant to shape or invent a world, not represent it.* Virtualities become problematic when they are misunderstood as fictions of the past in which actions have no direct consequences for the material world. (Ibid., p21).

This quote reveals her belief in a notion of a true, historical reality, however ideological, which is betrayed and attacked by a virtual reality. It points to an anxiety of the digital to destabilise and corrupt the nominality of the analogue world through its continuous present production without a past. Morse fears the destruction of a present reality which she sees to be ‘more and more compromised by algorithmic image processing that erases the difference between *having been there then* and *being here now.*’ (Ibid., p15) The digital understood as a continually present virtuality presents a threat to the material certainty of the analogue world understood as verified by the notion of a past. For Morse, “‘virtuality’ is a dematerialized, and for that reason, ontologically uncertain mode of presence.’ It presents a threat to ‘long-term cultural notions of reality as well as systems of belief and identification.’ (Ibid., p24)

Therefore, for Morse, the digital and the analogue realm and their respective notions of subjectivity continue to be argued and constituted in opposition to each other. Her investigation of the digital and analogue subject and its perception remains bound up in a dialectic dynamic. By contrast, I propose that an investigation which compares rather than opposes the reality of both realms, argued via the perception of the subject, problematises the dialectic understanding of reality and unreality on which her argument is based.

To substantiate this proposal I invest her notion of a ‘reengagement’ of the abstract data object through its ‘inhabiting’ by the subject, and test the criticality of this idea beyond her anxiety of ‘a-historicism’. In the next part of this chapter, then, I attempt to develop her interaction in the digital outside of its dichotomous relation with an analogue intersubjectivity. This investigation is pursued via Merleau-Ponty’s notion

of 'intersubjectivity' and his 'life-world' continually produced in 'motility'. Merleau-Ponty's ideas are discussed through the work of conceptual artist Mel Bochner. Via this conjunction I argue for an understanding of reality, virtual *and* real, as social constructions.¹¹⁹ This allows me to place the digital and the analogue in comparison rather than in opposition to each other. Thus I can critically compare their materiality; dynamic of production and perception; and the status of the subject involved in this dynamic.

I recognise what Morse fears as a threat to ontological certainty and 'cultural notions of reality', as exactly the stimulus of conceptual art of the '70s exactly: to work against material representation established through a history and theory of art, by concerning oneself with processes of 'dematerialization', which foreground the work as continually present productions. I follow Tony Godfrey's suggestion here. In his essay 'The Dematerialized Object Almost' he writes that in the conceptual art work, 'the withdrawal from the traditional art object often led to an examination of bodily experience.' (Godfrey, 1999, p128) I read this statement in relation to Morse's notion of reengagement of the digital data object. In this sense I understand Godfrey's statement to support the idea that informationalisation, understood as dematerialization, engages the subject in a process of re-materialisation via a 'bodily experience'. Dematerialization forges an involvement of the subject in the production of the work. To investigate this conjunction I pursue the strategy of dematerialising the material object into an informational object in the digital, in relation to conceptual art's emphasis on processes and time. The effort of reengagement I consider outside the notion of a historical causality; not as a reengagement, but a continually present engagement .

For conceptual artist Robert Smithson the emphasis on time and continual presence over spatial materiality, does not present a frightful and disturbing fiction, a 'language of magic tricks'. Rather, it grants the material artwork its status as process, and thus presents a recognition of the subject engaged within it. Smithson, in his essay 'A Sedimentation of the mind: Earth Projects' remarks:

¹¹⁹ The notion of the social as construction is examined in chapter 3. There I argued for an understanding of the social not as contract but as 'tendential' quality which is actualised through the *desire* to be social, thus rendering sociality contingent and particular rather than contractual. This argument is developed here in relation to digital and the analogue notions of sociality vis-à-vis Merleau-Ponty's intersubjectivity and his notion of doubt. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological sense is motivated by doubt. Doubt, I argue, foregrounds the desire to produce and perceive, rather than a systemic production and perception. This argument re-asserts the criticality of spectatorial desire discussed in the last chapter.

For too long the artist has been estranged from his own 'time'. Critics, by focusing on the 'art object', deprived the artist of any existence in the world of both mind and matter. The mental process of the artist which takes *place* in time is disowned, so that a commodity value can be maintained by a system independent of the artist. Art, in this sense, is considered 'timeless' or a product of 'no time at all'; this becomes a convenient way to exploit the artist out of his rightful claim to his temporal processes. The argument for the contention that time is unreal is a fiction of language, and not of the material of time or art.¹²⁰ (Smithson, 1979, p90)

In the next part of this chapter I query the status of digital informationality, as staged by Morse, in comparison with the challenge to material substantiality (supported by art history), announced by conceptual art, which seeks to emphasis temporal processes. The above quote from Smithson demonstrates that this comparison is not arbitrary. The conceptual artist, although working with substantial material, tries to emphasis not a material stability, but a notion of the (art-)object as process. Through the juxtaposition of the conceptual and the technological process of informationalisation, I aim to query the practical consequences and the ideological background of either strategy. The question I am asking in such a comparison is whether or not the digital object realises the conceptual artist's desire to produce a process-based artwork that manages to challenge aesthetic conventions and values tied to a notion of materiality as spatial and fixed. In other words, I am trying to enquire whether or not the digital offers an actualisation of the ideological premise of conceptual art. In the course of this investigation I promote the signifying practice of temporal-collage in relation to dematerialization and reengagement. This correlation further develops and clarifies issues of materiality, subjectivity, as well as ideas of intention (authorial production) and extension (imaginative perception) as they are staged in previous chapters.

In order to stage this investigation I am initially concentrating on the work and ideas of Mel Bochner. The careful position this artist takes vis-à-vis notions of materiality and process, beyond a dialectical negation, in a more contextual position, I understand to allow for a critical evaluation of both terms and their correlation. This

¹²⁰ According to Smithson the artwork as process, as temporal production rather than spatial product, manages to escape commodification. The paradox of Smithson's own practice in respect to his argument against the monumental in favour of entropic processes is discussed in chapter 2. In chapter 5 I problematise the easy dichotomy on which such an understanding of space as commodity versus time as non-saleable fluidity, is based. This investigation further queries the dialectic dynamic of the oppositional differentiation between time and space. From the hindsight of computational dematerialization and exchange, time and space, are rethought and thereby an easy logic of temporal criticality re-considered.

follows an investigation of Bochner's motivation and mechanism of dematerialization in the light of the informational 'immateriality' of the digital, and in respect to the dialectic dynamic between notions of materiality and information as immateriality. My investigation of conceptual art, and Bochner's practice in particular, focuses on the status of the audience (spectatorship) in the production of the work.

Mel Bochner: Analogue Object as Information¹²¹

Richard S. Field, in his foreword to the catalogue of the retrospective 'Mel Bochner: Thought Made Visible', at the Yale University Gallery in 1995, introduces Bochner's work by writing:

His art examines the conventions, codes, and grammars we routinely use to grasp the external world. Beginning with the simplest cognitive strategies - counting, measuring, stacking, or rendering - he gradually moves on to equally basic investigation of the language of relationships: prepositions, verbs, and simple logical propositions. The questions he deals with in his conceptual works, like the materials he uses, are familiar to everyone - fundamental givens in our culture. But their surface simplicity masks a serious questioning of all systems of representation, both visual and verbal. (Field, 1995, p7)

Field identifies Bochner within the general concerns of Conceptual Art. However, Bochner himself critiques the ideational premise of this categorisation. Despite scrutinising and working against formal notions of materiality, Bochner opposes a straight forward dematerialization as a viable strategy for art practice to critically assess and challenge a substantial aesthetic. Both his stance against the categorical conceptual a priori and his position against strategies of dematerialization, formulate a critique of the dichotomy within which any such categorisation and strategy takes place. This twofold critique is expressed in the following passages quoted from 'Excerpts From Speculation [1967-1970]':

¹²¹ I want to signal here clearly that my observations of Bochner's work are, analogous to my consideration of Smithson's film-work 'Spiral Jetty' in chapter 2, and my examination of Tarkovsky's film 'Stalker' in chapter 3, not primarily concerned with the author's intent. Nor is my argument conducted as an art historical study of his work in relation to an oeuvre. My observations do not formulate a comprehensive study, but focus on the particular relationship between materiality and dematerialization as observed in his work. I foreground the notion of fundamental givens and their systemic representation as critiqued in his work and writing. In this sense, this consideration of Bochner's practice presents an estimation of particular written and visual works, from my focus on materiality and subjectivity to facilitate a critical elaboration of my own concerns.

For a variety of reasons I do not like the term “conceptual art”. Connotation of an easy dichotomy with perception are obvious and inappropriate. The unfortunate implication is of a somewhat magical/mystical leap from one mode of existence to another. The problem is the confusion of idealism and intention. By creating an original fiction, “conceptualism” posits its special nonempirical existence as a positive (transcendent) value. (Bochner, 1972, p50)

My disagreement with dematerialization goes beyond a squabble with terms, there is no art that does not bear some burden of physicality. To deny it is to descend to irony. Words set up circumstances for understanding. And this particular one only perpetuates old confusions. It is misleading to the intentions of artists finding different ways for art to come into being...and both how and how long it stays there. (Ibid., p57)

Both, the conceptual in its dichotomy with the actual, what he calls ‘empirical’, and the immaterial in its opposition to materiality, is understood by Bochner not to present a strategy away from ‘the burden of physicality’. Immaterial conceptuality does not, according to him, sufficiently dispute the referential stability of visible boundaries. However to challenge such a positive notion of stability as a fundamentally given reality seems nevertheless the motivation for his art practice. Following Field, Bochner’s work examines systemic conventions and relationships to emphasise experiential knowledge above referential knowledge and to question the material beyond a deterministic ideal of empirical reality. His motivation to critique a substantial aesthetic without forging a dialectic oppositionality, I understand to propose a complex evaluation of the notion of systemic reality, actual *and* conceptual, beyond dialectical reversibility. This, I argue, renders a discussion of his practice useful in relation to Morse’s contentions of digital informationalism (immateriality) encouraging interaction, versus analogue materiality producing intersubjectivity.

Bochner asserts his challenge to a systemic, representational art practice by writing that:

A fundamental assumption in much recent past art was that things have stable properties, i.e., boundaries. This seemingly simple premise became the basis for a spiralling series of conclusions. Boundaries, however, are only the fabrication of our desire to detect them...a trade-off between seeing something and wanting to enclose it. For example, what we attribute to objects as “constancy of size”, during their progressive diminution when we walk away from them, is not a set of snapshot images

gradually blending together. Concentration produces the illusion of consistency. (...) The problem is that surrendering the stability of objects immediately subverts any control we think we have over situations. (Ibid., p50)

Bochner voices a critique of the substantial aesthetic which he sees to dominate recent art practice, and takes it away from its ideology of intrinsic material properties by considering its perception. Thus the notion of consistency and stability becomes identified as an illusion of consistency, fabricated in 'our desire to detect'. His critique is not settled within the framework of this illusion, a sense of a positive materiality, nor in opposition to it, as an immaterial negativity. He does not allow the immaterial to marginalise itself in fictionality, nor does he want to reaffirm material reality by providing an illusion of consistency. By contrast, he focuses on the 'desire' to understand, stabilise and enclose the object in perceptual contracts and referential norms. It is then neither the object, the material itself, nor an immaterial negation thereof that his work is focusing on. Rather, he emphasises the perception of the work as a conceptual interaction, along *certain*, referential, lines, producing 'the illusion of consistency', or, if free of referentiality, producing perceptual *non-certainties* 'beyond our control'.^{122 123}

I understand his sense of a surrendering of stability, this loss of control in relation to the non-referential object, to stage the artwork in particular, and the world in general, as a perceptual and hence contingent non-certainty in the sense of a phenomenological world in accordance with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's life-world.¹²⁴

¹²² Following Merleau-Ponty's use of the 'non' in his articulation of a phenomenological non-sense I use the term 'non-certainty' rather than 'uncertainty' in order to avoid a dialectical recuperation via a negative identification vis-à-vis certainty. 'Non-certainty' aims to stress the phenomenological production of certainty as 'uncertainty in perception', rather than identify an empirical certainty in direct opposition to a dialectical uncertainty. In this sense non-certainty dismisses the notion of empirical certainty and proposes certainty as always experiential non-certainty instead.

¹²³ I read Bochner's notion of the 'illusion of consistency' in conjunction with Lyotard's 'illusion of totality' as articulated in chapter 3. Both, I argue, suggest that (Hegelian) totality is not achievable in the object, the material, but is only an illusion of a referential evaluation. This, I contest, implies a critique of aesthetic judgement for its closing down of the generative process of perception in analytical totality. At the same time I understand Bochner's notion of 'control' in relation to the idea of the contract, the game-rules or lexical register, as discussed via Lyotard and Kristeva in chapters 2 and 3. I discuss this conjunction later on in this chapter. There I bring my assertions of a tendential symbolic-semiotic (sociality) and its realisation through desire together with ideas about imaginative intersubjectivity and programmed computer interaction respectively.

¹²⁴ Merleau-Ponty's notion of an intersubjective life-world describes the world as produced in the correlation between subject and object, who are in the world and are through their being in the world and the world through their being in it, in the present continuously. Intersubjectivity describes the world as produced in reciprocal relations between the subject and his/her environment. The intersubjective subject perceives the 'things' around him/her, in

In this life-world the subject and the thing are constituted in relation to each other. The intersubjective subject perceives the 'things' around him/her, in his/her movements and gestures towards them, as much as these movements and gestures themselves are determined by the way these things are perceived. This perception is practical and present: it produces the subject and the object in continual motility.

However, Bochner's emphasis is not initially on the intersubjective motility which produces the object in such a life-world. Rather he focuses on rendering visible the invisible norms that limit perception to detection. The notion of phenomenological intersubjective motility is only involved once the object has been rendered an informational object. Freed from its normative referentiality, via a literal rendering thereof, the object allows for a conceptual production. Bochner's description of a non-certain, non-referential object, I argue, emphasises conceptual perception not in opposition to the detection of a referential (actual) product. Rather, it highlights the normative context through which the object is referential, rather than phenomenological, in order to then, in a second step, enable a production of the object as a conceptual object in its phenomenological perception.

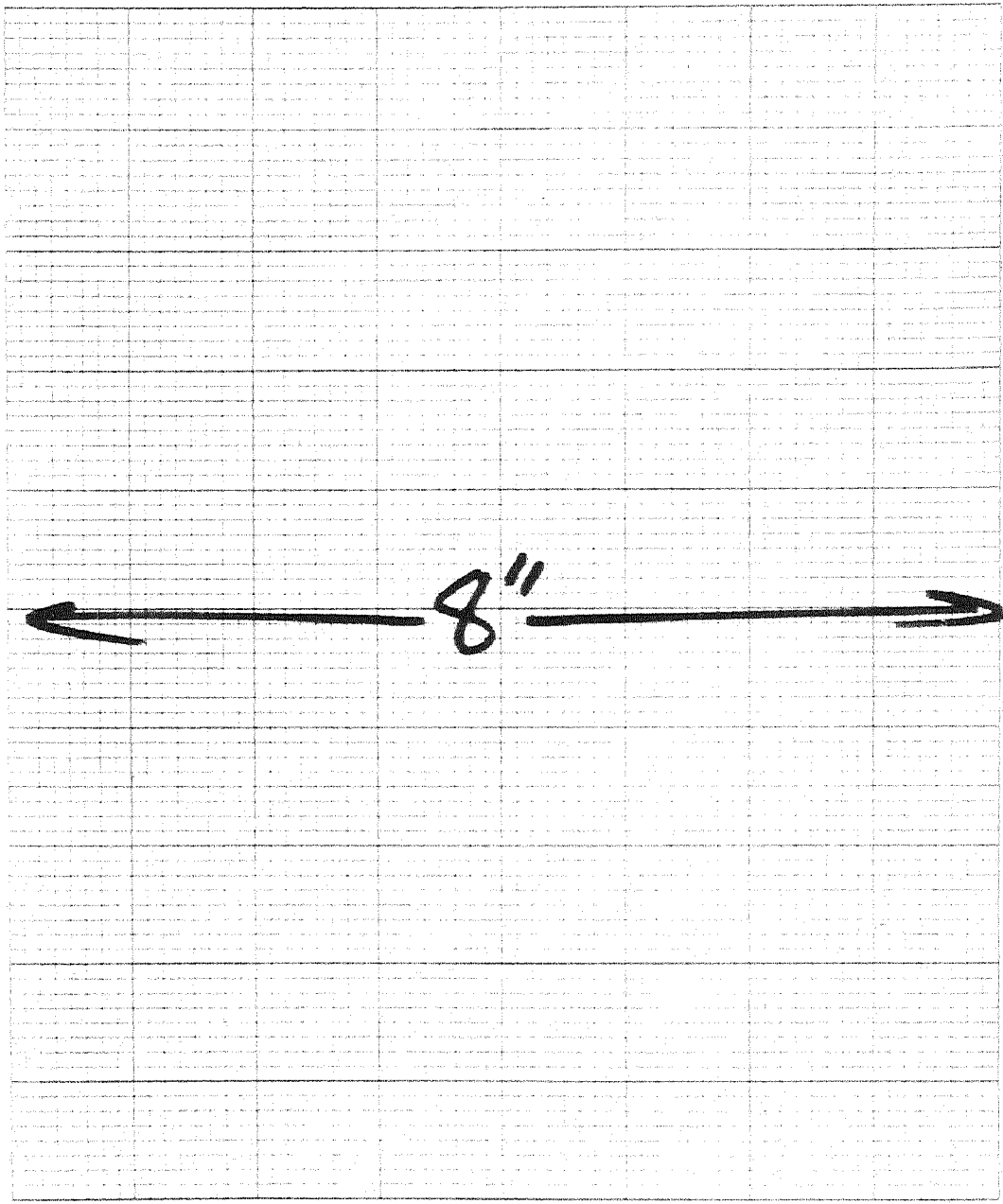
Bochner's piece *8" Measurements* (image 2) from 1969, presents us with a piece of graph paper, on which are drawn two arrows pointing from the middle, where the measure of 8" is noted, to either side of the sheet. This referential note pre-empts the detection of size, which at once makes it apparent as a normative measurement and allows us to think about the 8" beyond certainty of measurement into much less

his/her movements towards them, as much as the movements themselves are determined by the way these things are perceived. The intersubjective 'I' is reliant on the action of perception for the continuous production of the self, which in turn is determined by the gestures of the other, produced continuously in the movement of perception, sensory-motor. According to Merleau-Ponty, this intersubjective creating, in sensory-motor actions, happens in time, but not in a historical linearity, but as complex spatio-temporal events. The life-world is produced continually through perception, rather than sought and closed down in an empirical detection: the referential recognition of one object, the pre-programmed combination of one past definition/ signifier with one object, phenomenon/ signified perceived in the present. In this sense my experience of an object, phenomenon or another subject is not a discovery of that object, phenomenon or subject, but a perceptive operation that produces the object, phenomenon or subject in the present, and at the same time produces my own subjectivity, at every moment anew. The perceptual production is practical and present, it is in continuous present motions and gestures, what Merleau-Ponty terms: in motility.

It is I who bring into being this world which seemed to exist without me, to surround and surpass me. I am therefore a consciousness, immediately present to the world, and nothing can claim to exist without somehow being caught in the web of my experience. (Merleau-Ponty, 1964a, p29)

certain and doubtful terrain. The 8" are clearly signalling the objective size of the paper. The paper is at once described and abandoned in that measurement. The focus shifts immediately from the material of the paper onto the re-thinking of the appearance and veracity of the 8" of its description. It is the description that *is* the object, an uncertain informational object.

Image 2, Mel Bochner, *8" Measurements*, 1969, black ink on graph paper, 11" x 8,5"



8 x 8

In relation to this work I understand Bochner's statement on the dominant preoccupation of the artwork with a substantial consistency that produces, in his sense, an illusion of consistency or a loss of control respectively, to question what has earlier been talked about in terms of Morse's 'ontological certainty'. Morse sees this 'ontological certainty' to be rendered uncertain in the virtuality of digital immateriality. She talks about the virtual as an 'ontologically uncertain mode of presence', that undermines our notions of reality and its concurrent systems of belief, due to its existence without a past (Morse, 1998, p24). I earlier argued how this highlights her sense of a true, normative and referential reality whose primary position is being threatened by a virtuality based on abstract information, constructed continually in the present. This 'fiction of presence' for her threatens the status of a real substantiality verified in its empirical and historical description. I contest that Bochner's work undermines the certainty of such a substantial reality. *8" Measurements* at once presents and devastates the primacy and certainty of an empirical description. However, his work stands not in an obvious opposition to such substantiality. He does not present the immaterial dimension of the paper in order to shatter its ontological certainty. Rather, his work presents any notion of ontological certainty to be an illusion in the first place.

I find proof for this observation in his designation of the measurement not as an immateriality but a 'nonmateriality'. Instead of dwelling on the immaterial description (conceptual), verifying the dialectically opposed material object as actual, he perceives them both as 'nonmaterialized components' (Bochner, 1972, p56). The piece of paper might not be 8" after all. Not because we do not trust the paper to be paper, or of a specific size, but because our belief in a consistent notion of 8" has been shattered in this conceptualisation. It is the description, the information about the object, that has been transposed from being an attributal, normative device, describing the certainty of the material, into the production of itself as non-certain. The subject is invited to perceive *8" Measurements* not in relation to its status as an empirical measurement, but in his/her contingent production of it as an uncertainty. In this engagement, I argue, the subject re-thinks the conception of any materiality: The description/ measurement, the 8", is clarified as information, and information is verified as a (conceptual) object rather than a description of an (actual) object. The 8" are not a representation of something else, but are produced as a conceptual (nonmaterial) object in the perception of the subject performing a generative

interpretation.¹²⁵ Thus, I argue, description/representation is articulated as generative information rather than analytical information. In his sense the 8” are a data-object, a measurement in time, which brings ‘the very situation (it) describe(s) into being’ (Morse, 1998, p8). This generative nonmateriality, I argue, stands not in opposition to a referential materiality but *is* the material in perception. This leads me to parallel the processes of Bochner’s nonmaterial object with the textual mechanisms of an informational-digital-object. In this sense I propose the conceptual artwork as iterative information.

I contend my understanding of Bochner’s use of non-certain and generative iteration in relation to Merleau-Ponty’s identification of doubt as the central motivator for Paul Cézanne’s work. Merleau-Ponty’s text ‘Cézanne’s Doubt’ (in Johnson ed., 1993), outlines a notion of ‘doubt’ in the objective perception as a motivation for artistic practice. In this essay the painter’s doubt of the singular and fixed perspective is identified as the drive for his continuous and continuously re-evaluating production in the sense of an intersubjective motility. Merleau-Ponty sees Cézanne’s work to question the anthropomorphic functionalism through which we detect a referentially determined world, and ourselves as determined in it, from one predetermined viewpoint.¹²⁶

We live in the midst of man-made objects, among tools, in houses, streets, cities, and most of the time we see them only through the human actions which put them to use. We become used to thinking that all of this exists necessarily and unshakably. Cézanne’s painting suspends these habits of thought and reveals the base of inhuman nature upon which man has installed himself. This is why Cézanne’s people are strange, as if viewed by a creature of another species. Nature itself is stripped of the attributes which make it ready for animistic communions. (Merleau-Ponty in Johnson ed., 1993, p66)

The identification of ‘habits of thought’, I see to articulate the referential frame which renders the image tautological, providing a notion of ideality, which determines and encompasses the object in totality. With the idea of a ‘suspense’ of these habits in Cézanne’s work, Merleau-Ponty points to a critique of such a habitual referentiality,

¹²⁵ I understand this process of conceptualisation to resonate with the trial of the subject and materiality in the *mis-en-scène* of the Zone, articulated as the condition of temporal-collage, and staged via Kristeva’s fourth signifying practice of the text in chapter 3.

¹²⁶ The notion of ‘anthropomorphic functionalism’ suggests the experience of the world as a detection of historically pre-determined referentialities according to human needs (tautological reality). With his challenge to such a functional understanding Merleau-Ponty critiques the idea of its organisation and suggests that perception in doubt can stretch ‘to the root of things beneath the imposed order of humanity.’ (in Johnson ed., 1993, p67)

and hence of totalising ideality. I understand the statement 'creature of another species' to articulate subjectivity outside categorical identities and to hint at a complexity of production in perception rather than a fulfilment in detection vis-à-vis fundamental givens. Instead an 'alien' and new object is produced in the incessant doubt of the subject vis-à-vis the thing seen. There is no recourse to a referential frame against which the object can be measured and no known category within which the subject can be identified.¹²⁷ Rather, everything/one is produced anew all the time.

Merleau-Ponty understands Cézanne's paintings to work on the doubt of any one reading as an absolute reality, an ideal totality. I hold Merleau-Ponty's statement to suggest that systemic referentiality ties the work and the subject to a structural certainty and disables a more complex production. I contest that in this suggestion, ontological certainty and causal referentiality are critiqued as paralysing the artwork in totality. By contrast, doubt is staged to provoke a continually present production in perception: 'Cézanne's Doubt' sketches the notion of doubt as a desire for practice; motivating the continuous action of producing the world in our perception of it. When the motivation of the work is its doubt, then, its effect is the intersubjective production of the world and the self in that world, in intersubjective motility.

Merleau-Ponty's intersubjectivity is wholly reciprocal. This stands in clear contrast to Morse's notion of interaction in the virtual-world. For her the 'machine subject' (computed subject) does not adapt beyond operational changes, and hence only the analogue subject (the human subject) gets produced by the computer, which is consequently identified as a 'subject machine'. Bochner's work, understood as producing informational objects, comparable to Morse's digital data-objects, identified via Merleau-Ponty's intersubjectivity, presents a critique of Morse's notion of interaction. Merleau-Ponty does not propose the idea of an ideal state verified

¹²⁷Merleau-Ponty's intersubjective 'I', is not known to itself as a rational, in reference to a category pre-existing, identity, and hence cannot discover the other through his/her self-certainty. The 'I' in this intersubjective motor-operation produces the certainty of itself and its environment, the life-world, through continuous production as uncertainty. In the reciprocal relationship between the life-world and the 'I', doubt implies self doubt as well as doubt about the world. I read the doubt that Merleau-Ponty understands to drive Cézanne to paint, to be the doubt through which subjectivity as well as objectivity is produced provisionally and continually in an intersubjective life-world: 'Only one emotion is possible for this painter- the feeling of strangeness- and only one lyricism- that of the continual rebirth of existence.' (Merleau-Ponty in Johnson ed., 1993, p68).

through a 'fiction of the past', nor does he suggest that there is an ideal state to be aimed at in the future. Rather, the subject and the object are produced as nonmaterial non-certainties, reciprocally and continually in the present perception. It is in reference to this argument that I refer to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of intersubjective perception when trying to articulate a critique of a Morsian separation between virtuality and reality, and its consequent claims of a true referential reality and certain subjectivity. I understand it is between an agreement with her notion of 'inhabiting', and a critique of her insistence on causality and historical referentiality, via Merleau-Ponty's present intersubjectivity, that temporal-collage can be confirmed as a non-dialectical signifying practice.

I understand Bochner's recourse to the referential frame, the emphasis on the measurement of the object rather than its functional aim or aesthetic appearance, to propose an insistent engagement with the object in doubt. 8" *Measurement* proposes doubt in the referential and normative data framing the stable object for detection. I contest that it is not doubt in the object as material but as nonmaterial information which motivates my perception of his work. The focus of this work is on the systematisation of the object as (objective) actuality, articulated as the illusion of consistent measurement and the control of description. Bochner's work doubts the status of the referential system and thus introduces doubt into the certainty of an empiricist actuality. Thereby it destabilises the notion of actual materiality and proposes the extension of the referential as a conceptual nonmateriality instead. I articulate this conceptual extensionality in reference to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the world as a place produced in my consciousness of it. According to Merleau-Ponty there is no empirical or theoretical meta-(or ante-) position:

That the world could pre-exist my consciousness of the world is out of the question: is it not obvious that every world without me that I could think of becomes, by the very fact that I think of it a world for me. (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p47)

This 'thought of world' is a conceptual extensionality as articulated above. Thus I understand the engagement in the art-object, which Bochner's work proposes, to be articulated along the lines of Merleau-Ponty's notion of a non-causal and continually present intersubjective production in perception. Doubt in a referential objectivity is the trigger and motivation for Merleau-Ponty as well as Bochner's notion of extension as a 'thinking which becomes'. However, in distinction to Cézanne, read

via Merleau-Ponty, I contend that Bochner is not motivated to alleviate that doubt, even if temporally, in a phenomenological embodying.¹²⁸ As a consequence of my argument for a particular sense and identity realised in the desire to be social, as staged in chapter 3, I understand this motivation to be realised in the desire for certainty, not in certainty itself however.¹²⁹ Rather, doubt leads to the desire for certainty and, I argue, it is this desire rather than its fulfilment that is the focus of Bochner's work.

I argue that Bochner's conceptual art-object does not propose to alleviate doubt through certainty. Rather, it produces non-certainty as a particular and contingent conviction of 'a world for me'. The conceptual is a contingent generating of the art-object by the subject. It does not negate any previous perception, nor does it contradict any future production. *Measurements: Group B*, (image 3), from the Room Series, produced in 1969 for the Heiner Friedrich Gallery in Munich, I believe, exemplifies this point.

¹²⁸ According to Merleau-Ponty, Cézanne's paintings are painted in doubt. Their production is motivated by the doubt of the author in the appearance of the landscape distended in front of him. The motivation to paint is the doubt in the veracity of what he sees. However, the painting itself is not in doubt, it is maybe a result of doubt but is in itself a certain object. The painting is the higher order synthesis of the body of the artist and the doubt in his perception. In comparison I understand Bochner's emphasis on doubt not to express uncertainty in the piece of paper as a material object in front of him, but rather in the accuracy and reliability of its measurement. His doubt is a doubt in the system of a referential certainty. His work does not render the measurement certain through the production of an (ideal) artwork. Rather, it is made doubtful through its existence as an artwork.

¹²⁹ The notion of the artwork realised as desire for certainty but not in an actual fulfilment of this desire, a certain denouement, brings the argument of chapter 3 into this chapter. In the last chapter I outlined the notion of an autonomous and generative subjectivity and sense. I discussed the idea that what we share is not a social contract nor a symbolic register, but the desire to be social, to realise sociality in the tendential (symbolic) qualities of materiality and subject. Thus I argued, the tendential *is* the realisation of an autonomous subjectivity and sense. In this phenomenological 'non-sense', I argued, subjectivity and sense are neither produced in a negative relation to a contractual meaning and identity (collective sense), nor are they rendered irrelevant in a relative identification (nonsense). This argument is pertinent in relation to my use of Merleau-Ponty: I do not employ his 'Phenomenology of Perception' in order to come to certainty, but in order to focus on its process of perception as a perpetually doubtful producing of generative non-certainty instead. As a consequence of the argument staged in the last chapter, the certainty of this non-certainty lies in the conviction of the subject about his/her own generative interpretation.

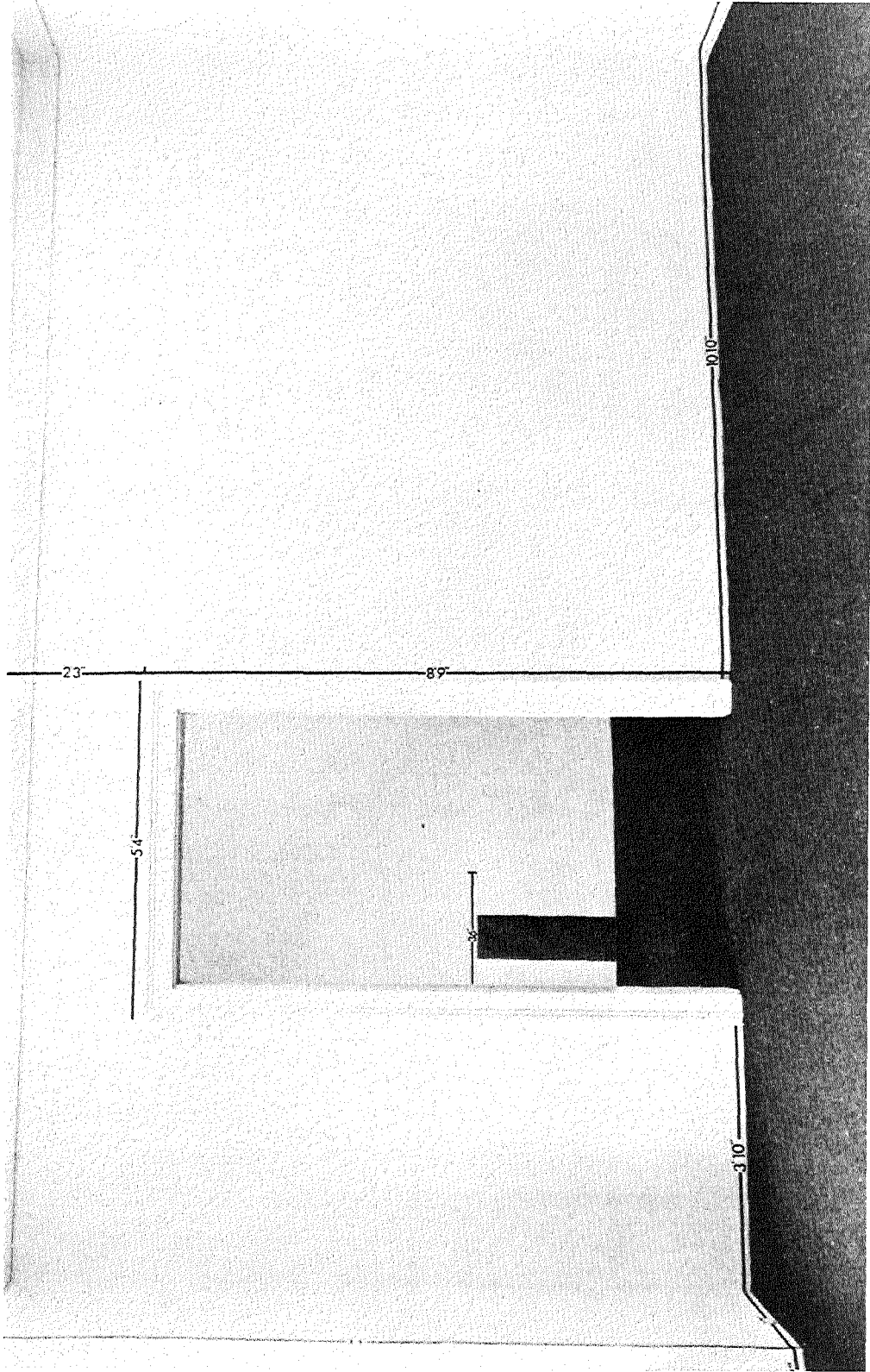


Image 3, Mel Bochner, *Measurements: Group B*, 1969, black tape on wall

The architectural space of the room has been rendered visible in relation to its measurements. The walls and doors have been measured, drawn out and labelled in feet and inches. A blue-print is added to the room, which at once adds the certainty of measurement *and* exposes its futility and illusionary sense of consistency and control, understood as objective reality, to the subject thinking the room. The space of the room is not actually changed by these measurements. My position within it is not really made more secure and certain through knowing its data. However, I argue that the obvious measure allows me to at once recognise my experience as detection as well as to question its reliability. Through this process of perception, I argue, the condition of objectivity, as encompassable by an empirical description, is put into doubt. From this doubt I produce the room in intersubjective motility.

Bochner's work highlights the referential structure and thereby generates doubt in the belief that any referential category can support the object, the room-space, as a true object, room-space. Instead, his work provokes the subject to inhabit the room-space. I understand this process to resonate with Morse where she is talking about the inhabiting of the informational object in the digital: Bochner's room measurements are abstract data objects which oblige the subject to engage them in a mental inhabiting. Via a referential abstraction, the data, he provokes an intellectual engagement with the viewer. He/she extends the room and its description, in a mental interaction beyond its empirical actuality, into a more conceptual existence.¹³⁰ However, I contest, that whilst for Morse the interaction of the digital data object is a *reengagement*, Bochner's work produces an *engagement*. And whilst Morse's reengagement is a not wholly reciprocal interaction, Bochner's

¹³⁰ Manuel Castells in 'the Rise of the Network Society', under the chapter heading 'The Culture of Real Virtuality', talks about the Greek invention of the alphabet as a conceptual technology. As mentioned earlier in the text, he articulates the notion that it is the material and spatial certainty provided by the alphabet, which renders a conceptualisation of the object possible. Similarly I understand Bochner's use of measurements and data, in their spatial and material certainty, to allow for a conceptualisation of the object beyond its visible certainty. However, his work drives this process a step further: the conceptualisation made possible through the visualisation of the object in reference to the alphabet, the measuring data, makes it possible for him to question the reliability and certainty of the measuring data, even. This putting into doubt the object *and* its referential frame, gives the notion of the stability of the alphabet, which offers the object for conceptualisation, a different spin. The description is no longer an attribute, describing and hence fixing a correlate object, rather it is itself an object, and it is now only the context of perception which stabilises both these objects in time. What is produced is a double conceptualisation (of actuality and conceptuality) in contingency, which produces not a conceptualisation as transgression of the referential frame: the alphabet, the measuring data, describing an actual object, but rather an acknowledgement of the actuality of the object as contingent.

work engages in a reciprocal dialogue: the room, the measurement and the subject are all constituted as mental extensions in the contingency of their engagement in dialogue.¹³¹

I understand the conceptual extensions Bochner's work is forging to agree with Merleau-Ponty's notion of intersubjectivity rather than with Morse's idea of a non-reciprocal interactivity in the separate realm of the digital. Bochner presents as equal the measurement object and the object of the room. He does not present them as existing in different realms but to be produced equally, in the intersubjective dialogue of their perception, as data objects. The informational object of the measurement, and the actual object of the room, are both constituted in the mental extension of the subject as nonmaterial. The subject in turn is constituted in relation to this nonmaterial. All three 'elements' are thus produced intersubjectively as 'conceptual extensions'.

I understand this notion of 'conceptual extensions', staged in his proposal for 'imagination', to produce the perception of the material as real, or fictional.¹³² Bochner talks about the term imagination as a word excluded from the concurrent discourse of art. He suggests that 'imagination is a word that has been generally banned from the vocabulary of recent art. Associations with any notion of special power reserved for artists or of a "poetical world" of half-dreams seem particularly unattractive.' (Bochner, 1972, p54) He argues that imagination is conventionally

¹³¹ The production of the work as mental extensions is continually in the present and does not insist on a historical causality. Merleau-Ponty's intersubjectivity, through which I am staging Bochner's work as an engagement, includes the notion of memory, and hence of past. However, Merleau-Ponty does not differentiate memory from present perception. Instead, he understands the past to culminate in the present without its reference to the past. Merleau-Ponty explains the 'contribution of memory' to a present perception in the sense of an added value (Merleau-Ponty, 1989, p20). Perception is always in the present, a 'having been there' is thus no measure of veracity, but becomes part of and is constituted in the continually present engagement in the 'now'. 'Le passé de fait n'est pas importé dans l'aperception présent par un mécanisme d'association, mais déployer par la conscience présente elle même.' ('The past event is not imported into the present perception through association, rather it is deployed by the present conscience.') (Merleau-Ponty, 1960, p9, *my translation*) There is therefore no notion of a past context which the data object is *reengaged* from. Rather, the data object is produced continually in the subject's contingent *engagement*.

¹³² I understand Bochner's 'imagination' producing 'conceptual extensions' in relation to the generative imagination practised in the centrifugal signifying of temporal-collage as argued in the previous chapters. Particularly in chapter 3 I contended the practice of temporal-collage via Lyotard's use of the term imagination. This identification is re-staged and developed here via Bochner's use of the term. In relation to this, the cautions articulated in the last chapter regarding the issue of imaginations relative irrelevance and their immanent recuperation in the negative, are being restaged via Bochner here also.

understood as an ephemeral immateriality, and as such stands in direct opposition to a material certainty. In this sense it is perceived as not serious, it can be marginalised as irrelevant and loses its criticality. Positioned in such clear opposition to a serious and substantial world, it is easily dismissed as nonsense and then recuperated in a dialectical move, to affirm a referential, material certainty and objective sense.

From this articulation of marginalisation Bochner goes on to formulate a notion of practice of imagination that refutes such a dismissal by stating that:

There is, however, within the unspecified usage of the word a function that infuses the process of making and seeing art. The root word "image" need not be used only to mean representation (in the sense of one thing referring to something other than itself). To represent can be defined as the shift in referential frames of the viewer from the space of events to the space of statements or vice versa. (Ibid., p54)

Thus Bochner clarifies the term 'representation' as empirical (analytical) information, which positions the image as a translation of 'something other than itself'. Such representation, I argue, confirms the image (the artwork), within the notion of a causal referentiality of an analogue reality as described by Morse. By contrast his term 're-presentation' re-considers this (analogue) referentiality. The notion of a 'shift' 'from space of events to the space of statements', or back again, I understand as a shift from a referential image to an image generated in intersubjective articulations. Through this shift Bochner (re-)introduces imagination into art discourse. For him, 'imagining (as opposed to imaging) is not a pictorial preoccupation. Imagination is a projection, the exteriorising of ideas about the nature of things seen.' (Ibid., pp54-55) In imagination the image is not an empirical description of the thing seen (analytical interpretation). Rather, its description is its production in a generative interpretation.

Would anything change if sensible things were conceived of as "across" rather than "in" space? First, objects would cease to be the locus of sight. Then, no longer centers in themselves, they would demand to be perceived as the organization by everything around them. What might result from this conjecture is a sense of trajectory rather than of identity what common sense has always presented as a unity (objects) become only the negatives in a field of determinants. Opaque, yet fragmented, what is seen is only what stops my view beyond... it is in front of me but without being in depth. Profiled in this way, matter surrenders its obstinate chunkiness to reveal only a position in a cross

section of orientations and levels, these levels merge on but one plane into dimensional sense data. And even on this plane, thought can efface them. (Bochner, 1972, p55)

Imagination in Bochner's sense, then, renders the work a trajectory rather than a 'locus of sight'. It is produced in perception, rather than perceived as a product of sight. Bochner's 'image' is not a stable substantial image but an image in iteration. It is a discursive image. It is the object as concept, not in contradiction to an actual state, but as an extension thereof constituting its actuality anew all the time through imagination. Thus I understand his notion of the 'image' to articulate the artwork as a signifying complex, continually produced between its material actuality and a conceptual articulation thereof by the (intersubjective) subject viewing the work.¹³³ I will call the actuality of this object a 'conceptual actuality'. It is neither a concept extending a pre-existing substantial reality, nor is it an actual materiality, dialectically opposed to such a conceptuality. Rather, and in accord with Bochner's earlier refusal to accept the categorical nominalism of some conceptual art due to its tied-upness with a straightforward dichotomy between materiality and immateriality, the notion of a 'conceptual actuality', proposes a material perception that includes and is constituted through the 'nonmaterial'.

In relation to *Measurements: Group B*, the room is continually produced between the actuality of the measurements painted along the walls and on the doorframe, and the doubt about the veracity of these measurements. This doubt provokes the subject to generate the room in 'imaginative' extensions (non-certain). In this sense the room is discursive, it becomes an event produced in its description performed in a generative interpretation by the viewing subject. The non-dialectical relationship between the actual measurements and their performance in a conceptual extensionality render the room a 'conceptual actuality'.

I argue that the subject viewing this *Measurements: Group B* room, produces the room in a forever present engagement. The recognition of Bochner's art-object, room-space, is a 're-cognition...thinking it again', rather than a recognition of a 'having thought it before' (ibid., p53). In relation to the works discussed, I understand it to be the motion of imagining that renders the work conceptually actual. Imagining formulates a conceptual extensionality of the actual material which in turn becomes

¹³³ Bochner's notion of the 'image', I argue, resonates with Lyotard's *petit récit*, the little narration, as articulated in the last chapter. Thus, viewing understood as an imagining process confirms perception as a narrating process; generative and intersubjective.

the object as nonmaterial in its context of time and place. 'The specific nature of any result is contingent on the time and place of implementation, and is interesting as such. It is the "proceeding" that establishes it.' (Ibid., p56). It is in this sense that the materiality is neither fixed as an actuality, nor in opposition to a conceptual extension. Rather, the actual is identified as a contingent nonmaterial implementation of the artwork in its conceptual 'proceedings'. I find concurrence for my notion of the artwork as a conceptual actuality produced in the contingent context of its perception in Bochner's statement that:

Perception of an object is generally preconceived as taking place within a point-by-point time. This disconnected time, a lingering bias of tense in language, restricts our experiencing the conjunction between object and observation. When this conjunction is acknowledged, "things" become indistinguishable from events. Carried to its conclusion, physicality, or what separates the material from the nonmaterial (the object from our observation), is merely a contextual detail. (Ibid., p52)

The term conceptual actuality, I argue, at once summarises Bochner's efforts and allows me to consider the signifying practice of temporal-collage in its circumscription.

Despite his criticism of Conceptual Art, then, I understand Bochner to be a conceptual artist, who performs a notion of dematerialization. His idea that all that separates the material from the nonmaterial is its contextualisation, identifies the conceptual as the 'belief' in materiality rather than in opposition to an actual materiality. This acknowledgement of materiality as an ideological rather than a physical concern, makes him, to me, an even more interesting conceptual artist. His emphasis on belief rather than systemic referentiality resonates with my proposition for temporal-collage to foreground the perceptual conviction before the contracts of production as critically assessed in the last two chapters. I understand my interpretation of his work to perform a complex signifying practice as articulated in the term temporal-collage: Bochner's motion of exteriorisation in imagination resonates with the centrifugal practice of temporal-collage; my intersubjective engagement with his work can be articulated in relation to a transitive subjectivity on trial; and his identification of the artwork as ideological nonmaterial rather than actual and referential, *re-cognised* rather than *recognised*, is what I understand temporal-collage to be proposing also. Therefore I contest that his work and critical writing enables me to re-assess and re-assert the criticality of temporal-collage.

I contend my argument for the artwork as a signifying complex, temporal-collage, via Bochner, in relation to this idea of a conceptual actuality. As a consequence of my articulation of this term as a nonmaterial extension of 'the actual' produced in Bochner's 'imagining', temporal-collage is elucidated to continually produce the artwork as a contingent imagining. This process is identified as a reciprocal engagement. Bochner's practice stages the artwork and the subject as nonmaterial perceptualities, produced continually and contingently in mental engagements. The fact that Bochner's work produces a conceptuality without referring to a simple dialectical position of actuality, makes my observations on his practice particularly useful to my attempt at articulating an art practice that exists through a conceptual imagining, which allows for a reflection back onto its actuality as a concept.¹³⁴

The difference between temporal-collage and my understanding of Bochner's practice, I argue, lies in the dynamic which forges such conceptualisations: the motivation for my strategy of temporal-collage is not a purely mental engagement, rather I understand it to be a mental and visceral engagement that constitutes the

¹³⁴ Brenda Richards in her essay *Mel Bochner: Numbers and Shapes*, writes that after the piece *Axiom of Indifference* (image 4)...

The shapes had been generated. The potential for combinatory shapes had been clarified. The artist almost immediately eliminated the infrastructure (points and connecting lines) and concentrated on the shapes. What followed was an extraordinary series of severe and powerful drawings in charcoal and gouache, permuting the two shapes explored in the "point" drawings (the triangle and the square). (Richards, 1976, p37)

In relation to this shift from an emphasis on the outline, the number, to the drawing of the shape, Richards quotes Bochner: 'To continue meant a re-involvement with issues primarily visual in nature, concerns which I had bracketed out of my work for some time. (However, I have always considered my work to be visual art, no matter how far I deviated from or stretched traditional modes of presentation.)' (Bochner in Richards, 1976, p37). The fact that Bochner's own work becomes increasingly visual after 1971, after having, according to Brenda Richards, reached a peak in terms of a practice which worked with the referential background of shapes, manifests to me, that once Bochner had freed himself of the notion of measured rationality, via an overstatement of that rationality exactly, he could go on producing visual work without thereby returning to a material, rational logic. In other words, once it was clear that the conceptual is not in opposition to, but *is* in fact the actual as imagining, a material practice could (again) be pursued that would work with material on a nonmaterial sensitivity.

This shift I understand can be observed in the development from *Axiom of Indifference* and *Rules of Inference* (image 5) to *Three, Five, Four* (image 6). Although *Axiom of Indifference*, and more clearly the drawing *Rules of Inference*, which I understand as a kind of blue-print or rework in sketch of *Axiom of Indifference*, clearly highlights and works with the referential frame of the object, the dots, displayed or drawn, *Three, Five, Four* abandons the referential and produces the visual shapes, created by the referential frame in the first two, only. In connection to the series, and extending the sensitivity of its informationalisation, I understand the *Three, Five, Four* piece not as a re-installment of a visual actuality. Rather, it enables the thinking of its materiality as a conceptual actuality (nonmateriality).

collaged material as a conceptual actuality. To be more particular, unlike Bochner, I do not differentiate between a mental and a physical engagement since that simply proposes but a new dialectical relationship.

Image 4, Mel Bochner, *Axiom of Indifference* (south side), 1972-73, felt-tip pen on masking tape and pennies on floor; each square 12" x 12"

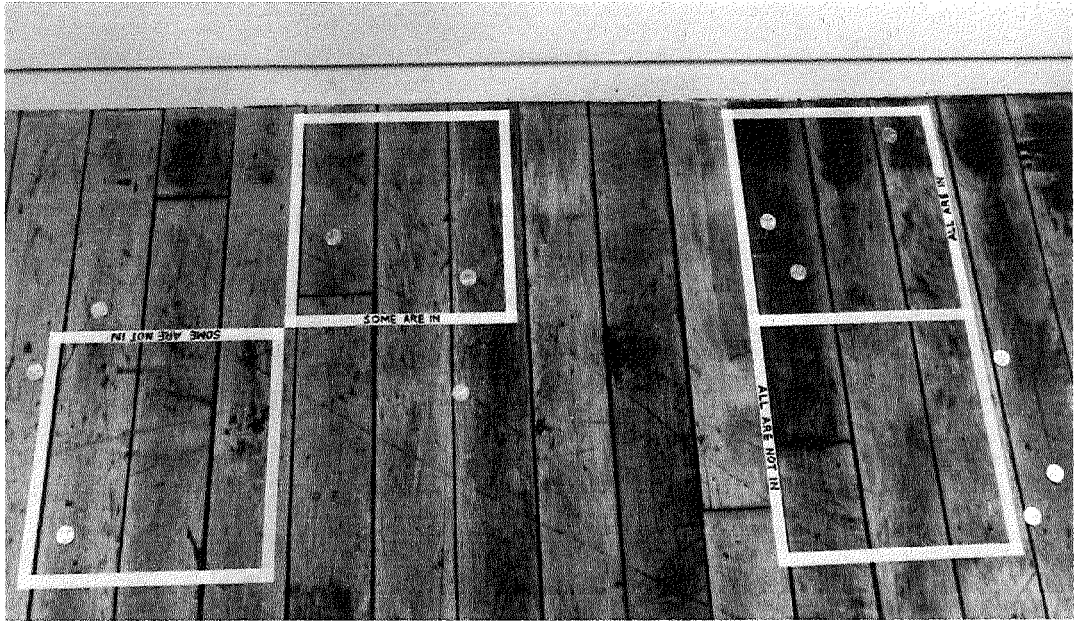


Image 5, Mel Bochner, *Rules of Inference*, 1973, charcoal and gouache on paper, 38" x 50"

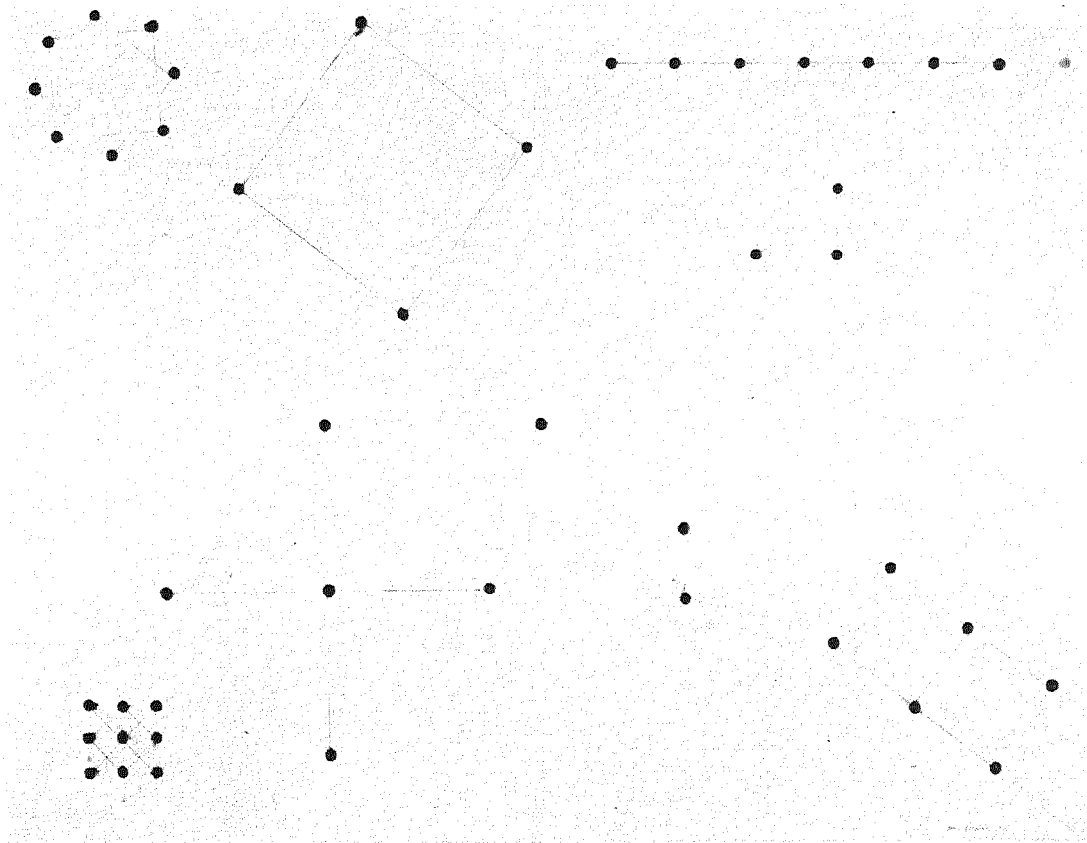
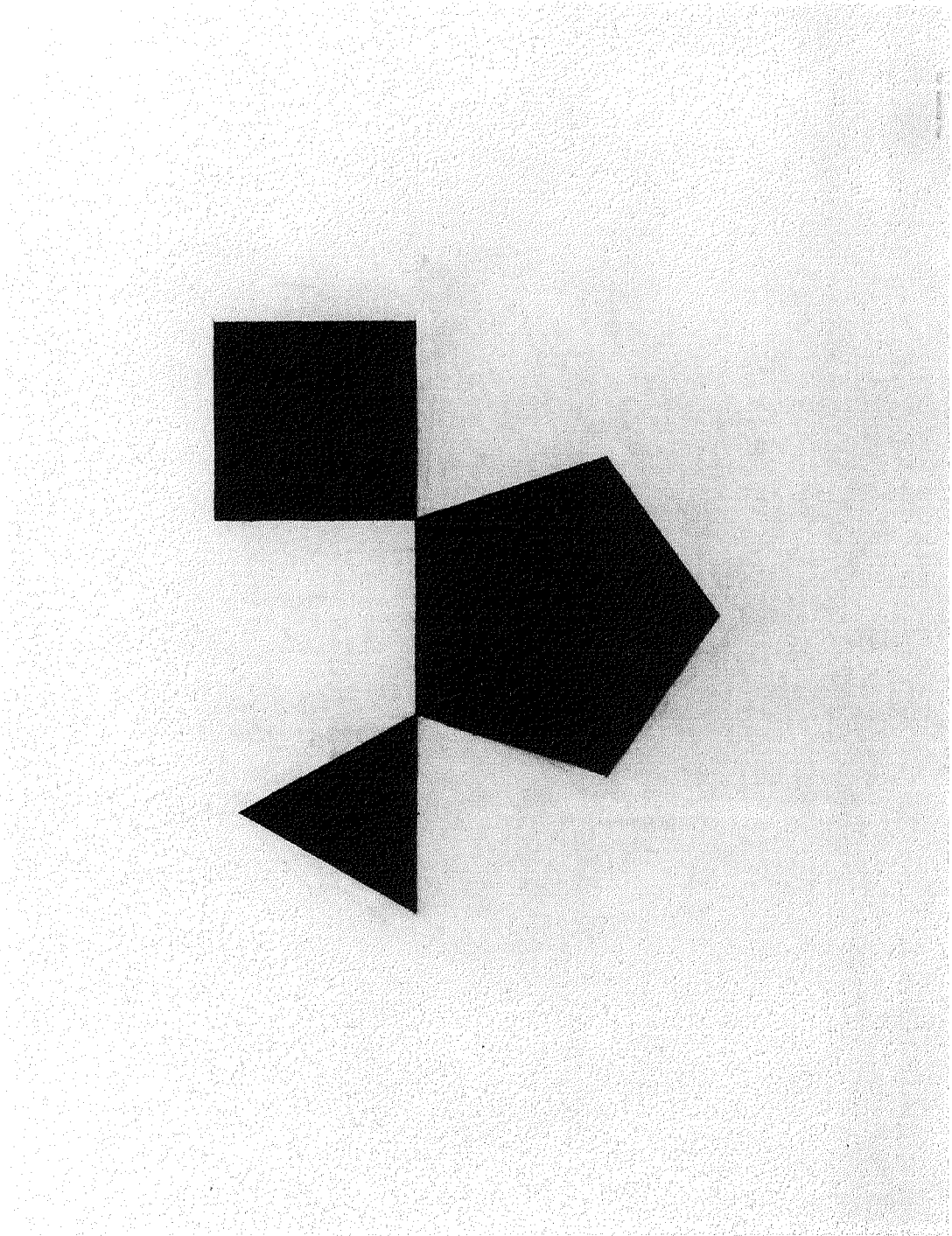


Image 6, Mel Bochner, *Three, Five, Four*, 1973
charcoal and gouache on paper, 38" x 50"



It is from a complex non-dialectical relationship between actuality and conceptuality that I aim to debate the notion of an *analogue* nonmateriality in relation to the idea of a *digital* nonmateriality. I am undertaking this investigation in order to try to answer the question asked in the introduction to this chapter whether the critique of a referential materiality, as forged by conceptual art, is realised actually by the digital artist or not?

In the next part of this chapter I am working through this question via an investigation of the status of materiality and the subject, in the painted graphic works of Ed Ruscha and the computer graphics of John Maeda respectively. In doing this, I attempt to confirm my suggestions about conceptual extensions producing actual nonmateriality vis-à-vis digital virtuality. My engagement with both these artist's work aids me to further develop my notion of a conceptual actuality. In the juxtaposition of their work, the assertions about a conceptual analogue materiality producing and produced in intersubjective imagining, (introduced via Bochner's work and discussed via Merleau-Ponty), is brought in contact with ideas of participation and production in the digital artwork. Operational interaction via an input device in the digital is brought in contact with my notion of extension in contingent participation in the analogue. What is being tested is the notion of the artwork as perceptual and contextual rather than substantial and referential. In conclusion, notions of conceptuality, actuality and participation are brought in contact with my idea of materiality and subjectivity in temporal-collage. At the same time, interaction in digital art practice is discussed in relation to notions of a 'new' (inter-)activity in 'real virtuality'.

Conceptual and Actual Digital: John Maeda and Ed Ruscha

In a comparison between the digital artist John Maeda and the analogue artist Ed Ruscha, I attempt to illustrate and verify the relationship between an actual and a conceptual materiality and its involvement of the subject. I understand both artists' work to incorporate notions of actuality and conceptuality defined earlier in the text. The parallel discussion of their work helps me to further articulate these terms in relation to an analogue materiality and to develop them vis-à-vis the digital. In this way I further articulate and develop my notion of a conceptual actuality; the subject engaged in its production; as well as the relevance and criticality thereof in relation to the signifying practice of temporal-collage.

The introduction of these issues into the digital realm aids me to critique the

dichotomous digital theories outlined in the first part of this chapter. The simple relation between word and 'thing' on which foundation the digital attains its status of 'newness' and criticality, is critiqued via a complexification of its terms in the dynamic of a conceptual actuality. I contend that the notion of an extensional imagining, producing a conceptual actuality, helps me to develop the articulation of a digital nonmateriality, *à la* Bochner, rather than a digital immateriality, *à la* Morse. The basis of this critique is the position and role of the subject perceiving Maeda's and Ruscha's work. The emphasis on the perceptual subject allows me to articulate the digital as an imaginative virtuality: a digital conceptuality, and distinguish it from the technological virtuality, a digital actuality, that seems to persuade theorists of the radical novelty of digitality.

The assumption in concurrent contentions of the digital is that virtuality is an immateriality that allows for autonomous and infinite interactivity, which transforms the so far passive spectator into an active producer, an autonomous subject. According to Druckery:

Dimensional interfaces and "tactile" feedback represent a powerful possibility, robotics medicine, design, simulation, the idea of spatial integration is a tremendous benefit. For the arts, access to technologies that wholly engage the participant and, could be a final blow to work traditions of images. (Druckery, 1993, p23)

This statement shows Druckery to be very optimistic about digital interactivity. He presents a euphoric argument around the liberating possibilities of digital interactivity in relation to existing norms of image making. His text argues digital interactivity to propose a critical opposition to a totalized notion of (analogue) art, due to its emphasis on participation. His understanding of the digital as formulating a critique of (modernist) traditions of art practice via interactivity is useful in relation to the aims and strategies of my research project. In chapter 3 I discussed how the focus on spectatorship is critical for a complex art practice. My argument for a subject *spectatant* on trial producing the artwork as individual non-sense, beyond the intention of the artist, and beyond a total understanding of the artwork (through objective sense), seems to parallel Druckery's motivation for an engaged participation in the digital. However, I am cautious of his oppositional identification of this digitality. I investigate instead his euphoric notions of digital interactivity and its supposedly 'wholly engaged' subject via the notion of a conceptual participation in the analogue. Although my correlation between an analogue and a digital notion of

materiality, and its engagement of the subject, supports Druckery's critique of totality, I critically evaluate his oppositional contentions through the same objections of negativity sustained up to now in this thesis.

I understand the following comparison of Maeda's and Ruscha's artistic practices to problematise the easy differentiation between a digital and an analogue expression as staged by Druckery's digital theories. My discussion of their work shifts the emphasis from the distinction between a digital virtuality and an analogue materiality towards ideas of a technological materiality in relation to a more experiential and imaginative materiality, and also re-emphasises the subject on trial in relation to them. Rather than a dichotomous relation between virtuality and materiality, the connection of either, or any, practice, to its conceptual production in perception, is being highlighted. The focus on perception colludes the argument between the analogue and digital artwork with my concerns for temporal-collage.

John Maeda: *close to you*, 2000 (image 7)

John Maeda's work is actual digital work, in the sense that his digitality, his *pixels* and their production, are supported by the soft and hard ware of the computer. In Maeda's digital work, we can *actually* make the writing move. The cursor enables us to play with the words and their letters on screen, combining them in all their potentialities. Imaginative possibilities, conceptualities, are realised as mathematical probabilities. Any assemblage of his letters is an actuality. However, due to the frame on screen and the technological possibility of the soft- and hard-ware constructing and supporting the production, there are only so many actual possibilities of movement the subject can produce. The movement of production, I argue, is a representation of motion. The production realises pre-existing parameters, resulting always in a pre-determined outcome. The interaction is a real interaction in the sense of an actual interaction, conforming to rules and limits of a pre-existing technical parameters, and is limited within them.

Read via the simple language philosophies on which digital theories are seen to be based (Druckery and Castells), this, I argue, shows the contradiction inherent in the digital claim of critical newness via orality. If, as outlined in the beginning of this chapter, the digital artwork reaches its critical novelty as an iteration, in opposition to an analogue art-object identified in accordance with written language as descriptive of a thing, then, I argue, the actual realisation of the digital as a digital actuality,

forfeits the claims to criticality on its own grounds: the programming language fixes the digital iteration within the parameters of its description. It is the simple dichotomy on which digital theories are based that allows me to argue against their criticality. If I understand the written, stable object in a dialectic opposition to an oral, fluid non-objective expression, then, any notion of actuality, however temporal and fluid, is recuperable into that state of stability and hence does not transcend, but rather reaffirms its ideological basis. I argue that my observation of Maeda's work substantiates this argument. Maeda's writing presents stable objects: his letters are multiplicitous rather than singular, and time-based rather than spatial. However, their production remains limited to a pre-programmed actuality. As such I identify them as actual objects, which confirm in their material limitation, an ideology of substantiality.

Ed Ruscha: Words...Go, 1991 (image 8)

By contrast, Ed Ruscha's painted writing does not represent movement, but involves the viewer in the making of movement in-between the letters. The word, or series of words, first reveal and then abandon their illusory stability. His letters are temporal conglomerates of discrete *pixels* rather than parts of a whole word. They invite the docking on to other pixels as well as onto their own pixelation. They do not, however, work towards the re-organisation of a pre-existing whole, towards a consensual sense and objective ideality (according to a prior computed programme). Rather, the analogue docking follows a contingent and singular desire to imagine, to produce subjective non-sense.

Image 7, John Maeda, *close to you*, 2000, computer typography

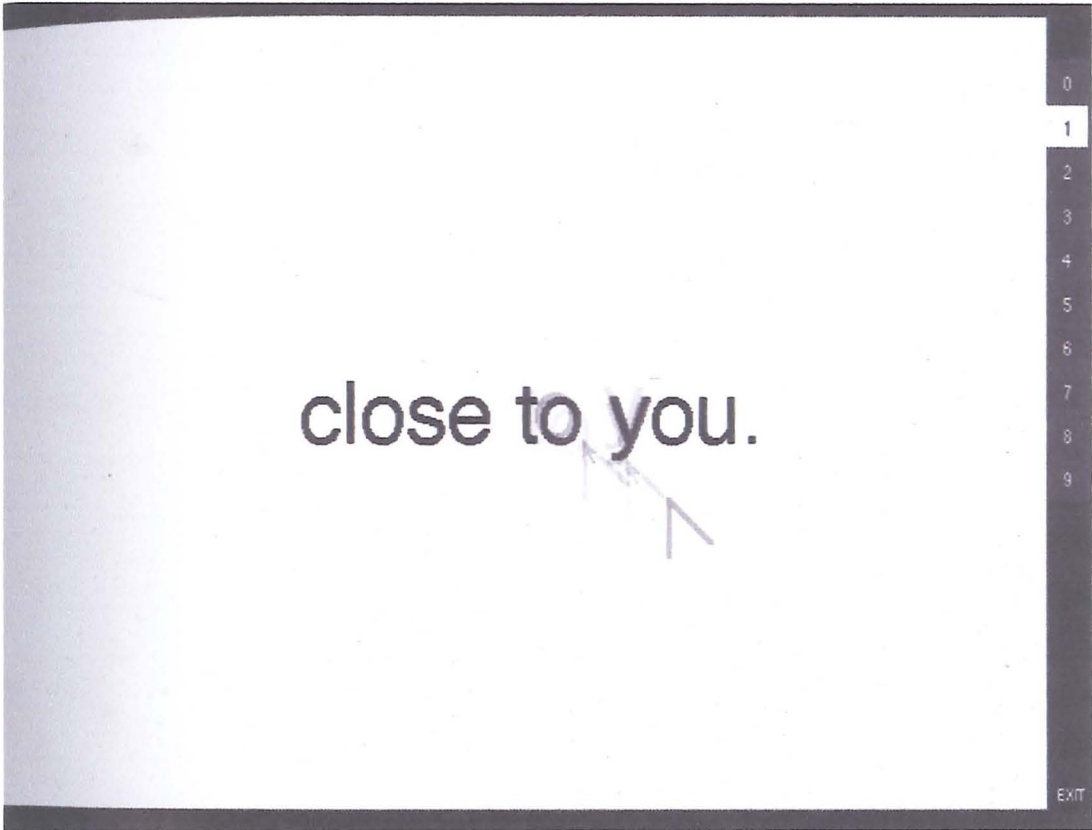
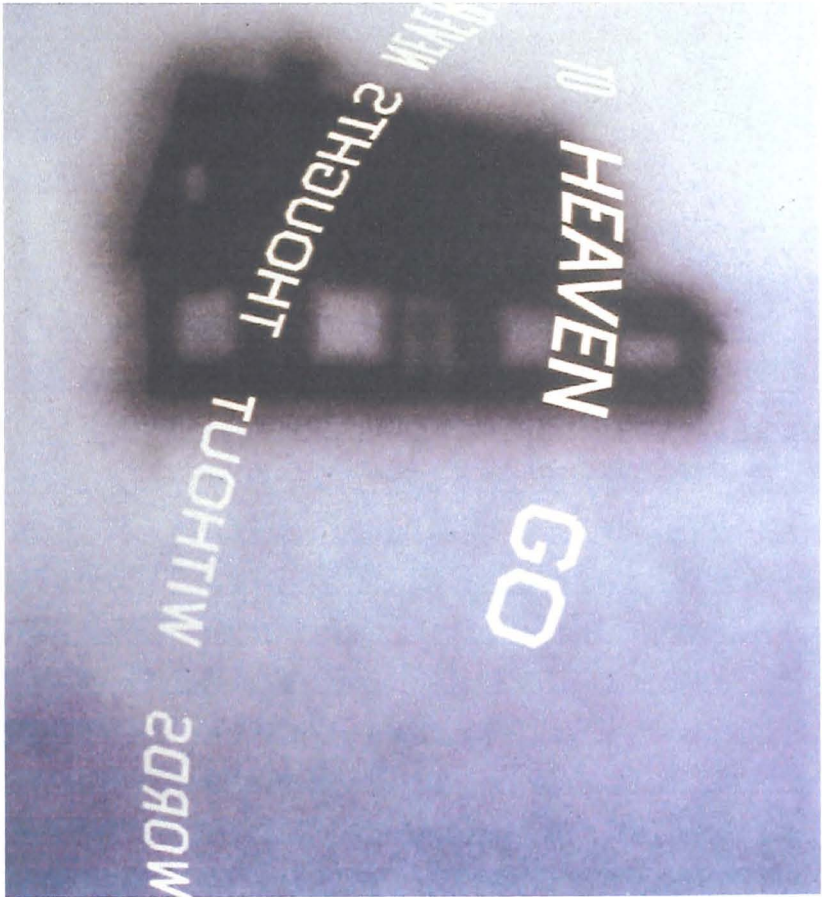


Image 8, Ed Ruscha, *Words...Go*, 1991, acrylic on paper, 152,6 x 76,2 cm



Ruscha's paintings are *dynamic surfaces*, which exist as a multiplicity of potential actualities -conceptual actualities. I contend that they are performed and used differently by each individual viewer in his/her own time and place. The words as pixels trigger a generative image, its actuality is forever conceptual, in that it is produced continually in the imagining of the contingent subject 'interacting' with that actuality. I understand Ruscha's use of words to enable production, rather than realise a product. The letters offer themselves for the continual construction of a nonmaterial object. In this perceptual modality, the 'real' object of the painting is not the artwork, indeed the painting is in doubt as an object, its existence as a substantial, total object is illusory. Rather, the artwork *is* its continual motion of extension. This motion of production happens in a continually present engagement of the subject. The letters are not a fixed state of writing, an alphabet, a measurement, but a conceptual nonmateriality. They involve the subject as a transitive individual producing n-numbers of potential actualities, which are not actual in relation to an empirical actuality. Rather, they are conceptual actualities produced in centrifugal imaginings; their generative interpretation.

Ruscha's writing painting, his words and letters as pixels, I argue, render the represented linguistic objects conceptual. The assemblage of letters constructing Ruscha's words 'press' towards extensions in imagining. His analogue work does not provide us with an actual mouse-click. Instead the whole surface is dynamic, pushing for a conceptual extension. I contend that the pixelations and the nonmaterial extensions that are forged by my transitive viewing of Ruscha's work allow me to articulate his work as producing a digital sensibility. This notion of a digital sensibility is articulated in relation to the definition of the digital object as a command in time. According to Dibell the digital exists as 'a kind of speech that doesn't so much communicate as *make things happen*' (Dibell quoted in Morse, *Virtualities*, 1998, p8). Ruscha's work is not actually digital, in the sense of technologically constructed and supported by digital soft and hard ware. However, his work is digital in that it works conceptually along the lines of the digital promise of virtuality and interaction. Ruscha's words work as imaginative virtualities, they are conceptually digital. In this conceptual digitality the individual produces the motion of writing in his or her contingent perception of the analogue material. Thereby the viewer pushes the notion of material limits, stable actualities, beyond the idea of a stable objectivity and subjectivity into a conceptual stability, a conceptual actuality. This conceptual participation I argue describes a reciprocal intersubjectivity: the subject as well the artwork are constituted in the mobile imagining of its viewing.

John Maeda, by contrast, affords the viewer an actual participation via a mouse-click. He presents an actual, technological virtuality, enabling an operational interactivity. Maeda's work seems to fulfil the digital promise as it appears to realise the conceptual actuality staged by Ruscha's work in digital actuality. However, the actual mouse-clicks in Maeda's work limit extensionality to a programmed set of motions in a pre-given and programmed field of exteriority. Thus, I argue, it presents a recuperation of the digital into a substantial aesthetic due to the inevitable limitations, which encumber the conceptual digital in its actual rendering. In their soft- and hard-ware limitations, Maeda's words have become ideal in relation to the determination of the programme, in relation to the intention of the artist as programmer.¹³⁵

Maeda's virtual writing, I contest, is limited by the technological framework and concurrent possibilities of production, (aesthetic and technological), in the same way that Ruscha's actual writing, the analogue object understood as a substantial actuality, is limited to the framework of a grid of reference, of measurements. The ideology of analogy complies to a frame of reference, which defines the analogue object as an actual material. This ideology remains intact in Maeda's writing. What has changed is not the ideology of stability and certainty, but the frame of reference. In the actual virtuality of the digital, defined by pre-given technological and aesthetic possibilities, the nonmateriality is an immateriality. It is a fixed state, a real actuality rather than a fluid conceptuality. Instead of a material stability we have an immaterial stability. This, I contest, does not present a critical shift, but a dialectical reversal. The immaterial actual digital has been recuperated and presents the certainty of a real substance in the immateriality of its expression. It exists in the same ideological mould it proposes to move away from.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Ruscha's work I argue does not intend an ideal totality. He does not attempt to forge an objectively ideal reading of his work. Rather, I understand his intention to lie in the enabling of an intersubjective and contingent production of the work by the individual viewer. My observation articulated above is such a contingent production in perception (generative interpretation). This generative interpretation has a 'general contingency' in that I, as its subject, live in a digital world. I produce Ruscha's work as a conceptual actuality, from the actuality of digital technology. This affiliation with the digital, however, does in no way undermine any prior or future reading's veracity, and does not make any claim to present an ultimate understanding of his work. My generative interpretation is contingent on my circumstance in time and space. Its ideality lies in my subjective engagement rather than in an objective ideality *à la* Hegel. By contrast, Maeda's work achieves an objective ideality in the technological actualisation of the operational motions pre-determined/intended by the programme. Technologically his work forges an analytical interpretation.

¹³⁶ This dialectic relation is relevant to my project in the sense that my proposal for temporal-collage aims to produce a signifying practice that works perceptually beyond the dialectic immanence of its material production. The dialectical reversal of the immaterial uncertainty

If we observe both, the materially analogue work of Ruscha and the actual digital practice of Maeda along the lines of an oppositional techno-theory, then, Ruscha's actual analogue works achieve a conceptual digitality, whilst the actual digital works of John Maeda attain the status of a conceptual analogue. The dichotomous starting point of this argument obstructs a more critical suggestion, and can only support the dichotomous relation it is based on. By contrast, I argue that criticality lies not in the use of technology or aesthetics, but in the sensitive engagement forged by the work through its contingent perception. A generative contingency, I argue, refutes the easy differentiation between analogy and digitality and instead forces the focus on their conception. Consequently I contest that both, the analogue and the digital, can be conceptual as well as actual.

A perceptual understanding of Maeda's and Ruscha's work, I argue, shows that the digital as well as the analogue artwork, can be considered as conceptualities. There is an 'imagining' in the perception of either artists' work that extends the material, analogue or digital, and enables a conceptualisation thereof beyond its aesthetic (referential) and technological parameters. I can think Maeda's text animations beyond the limits of the cursor engagement, out of the soft and hard ware context, into my own contingent imagining. Conversely I can refuse to imagine Ruscha's words beyond their painted presence and stick to an analytical interpretation of the words within the framework of the alphabet. This, I contest, confirms that it is not a matter of immateriality over materiality, or vice versa. Rather, it is a question of problematising either condition via a perceptual interpretation. I thus affirm my contention established earlier in this chapter, via Morse and Bochner, that the issue of criticality is ideological and perceptual rather than material or technological.¹³⁷

Of course John Maeda's virtual environments are not very sophisticated. But in their technological simplicity they point to a problem that even the most complex and sophisticated interactive digital sphere will have: the linkages that are possible in-between pixels and sites, etc., are finite. The real virtuality of digital objects and environments have referential limits, and in this respect, the actual digital is always a

into an immaterial certainty of virtuality, and the problematic of this recuperation in respect to the digital's claims to criticality, is further discussed and summarised in chapter five. There, the relation between material (or nonmaterial) and immaterial, time and space, is taken up via David Harvey and Doreen Massey respectively; one positioning the digital within a Heideggerian dialectic of fluidity and embeddedness, the other proposing a more contingent connection in the term 'time-space'.

¹³⁷ In relation to my articulation of temporal-collage, this confirms that any artwork, digital or analogue, time-based or spatial, can be produced in its signifying practice.

substantial and aesthetic actuality. By contrast the imagining perception of the subject exteriorises Maeda's virtual words and extends them in the contingent perception of the subject beyond such technological limitations. In turn this subjective imagining reflects its extensions back onto the virtual actuality producing it as a contingent nonmateriality: a conceptual actuality. The circle is closed; as a stable actuality, a conceptual analogue, the actual digital works of Maeda are extended in imagining, in the same way as are the actual analogue work's of Ruscha. The extending conceptuality forged by the exteriorising perception of a contingent subject renders both artists' works conceptual. In the sense of its perception as a conceptual actuality, the digital is thus not opposed to the analogue but demands and enables an equivocal engagement.

To substantiate this equivocation and to deduce its criticality, in the concluding part of this chapter, I focus on the mode of participation. As discussed above, I believe that it is in the technical actualisation of this interaction that the difference between the conceptual digital and the digital of actual virtuality, becomes apparent. Therefore, I argue, it is through an investigation of this technical actualisation that I can articulate my critique of a dialectical separation between interaction and intersubjectivity and between the digital and the analogue respectively. This critique enables me to re-assert the notion of artistic production in perception as articulated in relation to spectatorship in postmodernism in the previous two chapters. Also, as a consequence of my argument for the digital as a conceptual sensitivity rather than a technological actuality, I re-assess and confirm some suggestions made in those earlier chapters regarding materiality and complexity. In conclusion I bring these ideas of conceptuality and subjectivity into contact with issues of production and perception in the (fifth) signifying practice of temporal-collage.

Conclusion: Mouse-click Extensionality versus Knotting-Point Extensionality

In the last part of this chapter I have identified the position of the actual digital as a conceptual analogue. I have discussed its obvious relation to an ideology of stability and substantiality, and identified its extensionality as a representation of extensionality, working along aesthetic and technological parameters. Conversely I have argued for an understanding of the actual analogue as a conceptual digital, forging infinite extensions in the imagination of the viewer. Subsequently I have staged the conceptual actuality of the analogue *and* the digital in a perceptual engagement. To conclude this argument I aim to articulate this perceptual

engagement vis-à-vis the signifying practice of temporal-collage. In this way I seek to re-assert and clarify temporal-collage. I also aim to affirm that the criticality of the digital lies in achieving conceptual non-sense in individual perception, rather than producing consensual sense in actual material referentiality (aesthetic *and* technological).

In relation to the idea of digital actualisation as a totalising practice, I articulated the operational mouse-click as an aesthetic representation. Conversely, now, I stage the conceptual mouse-click at the location of the 'peripheral pressures' which in Bochner's terms forge the extension of the object in experience. In 'Excerpts from Speculation [1967-1970]', Bochner states that 'ultimately, description as a critical method fails. Pretending to be a nonsubjective rendering of the object, it cuts off the peripheral pressures of experience.' (Bochner, 1972, p55) I understand his notion of 'peripheral pressures of experience' as the force with which, at the surface of the supposedly actual material towards the periphery, the subject extends, in imagination, the work into his/her own contingent circumstance.¹³⁸ I contend that such peripheral pressures are what pushes the object as a contingent perceptual object into centrifugality. In this sense the artwork is confirmed as a *dynamic surface* and the peripheral pressures are identified as its imaginary mouse-click points. I suggest Bochner's peripheral pressures vis-à-vis the digital as concept, enabling an exteriorising imagining which produces the artwork as an intersubjective 'virtuality', perceptually 'real'.

I contend that Bochner's exteriorising imagining, argued via Ruscha's conceptual extensionality vis-à-vis Maeda's technological extensionality, enables me to

¹³⁸ I understand Bochner's term 'pressure' in relation to Merleau-Ponty's complex philosophy of the relationship between the apparently substantial presence of an object, and the invisible motion of its production. For Merleau-Ponty it is 'the vibration of appearances which is the cradle of things.' (Merleau-Ponty in Johnson ed., 1993, p68) Merleau-Ponty's notion of the intersubjectively constituted subject and object hints at movement on either side. He suggests a force that pushes out of the object and extends it from the contingency of perception into the contingency of the perceiving subject. Both object and subject are constituted in this 'vibrating force'. There is no static actuality, every actuality is its vibrating conceptuality. Following this, I would like to suggest that Bochner's work forces its own production from the vibrating conceptual materiality, outward into the equally vibrating sphere of the subject. I understand the peripheral pressures as the bases from which and through which the exteriorisations of the object takes place. I mean to adopt this notion of peripheral pressures here in relation to my discussion of the centrifugal force at the knotting-point and the mouse-click point respectively. With this adoption I want to stress the conceptual extension as a constant force, rather than a fluid opposition to a static actuality. This identification relates directly to my notion of a tendential quality as articulated in the last chapter. In this sense, Merleau-Ponty's vibrations are not the sign of an immanence but of a perpetual production.

conclude on the status of temporal-collage's centrifugal quality. In the previous chapters I contended temporal-collage as a signifying practice, perpetually producing the artwork in the perception of it as a material complex. This practice works through the conceptual knotting (disjoining and bricolaging) of the artwork's material elements. This knotting effort is staged as an extensional motion which produces the material beyond a totality conceived as an objective ideality (consensual sense), into the contingent and individual circumstance of the viewer (subjective phenomenological non-sense). This viewer has been identified as a subject *spectatant* on trial: a transitive subject perpetually constituted in the (non-dialectical) here and now of its production in perception.

Now, having discussed participation and material complexity via a (generative) conceptual interpretation of Ruscha's analogue *and* Maeda's digital work, I aim to re-stage this signifying practice. I seek to corroborate my ideas concerning digitality, nonmaterial conceptuality, centrifugal extensionality, and interactivity/intersubjectivity and stage them vis-à-vis subjectivity and materiality as produced in the signifying practice of temporal-collage.

As a consequence of my staging of Bochner's nonmaterial work within the idea of a conceptual actuality, and further, due to my articulation of temporal-collage vis-à-vis such a conceptual actuality, in this last part of the chapter, I investigate the connection between operational 'clicking points', 'peripheral pressures' and the 'knotting-points' of temporal-collage. In bringing these terms together I re-assess the dynamic quality as well as the participatory nature of the digital in relation to temporal-collage. This juxtaposition brings me to the question staged earlier in the text regarding the digital's realisation of the desire for a conceptual immateriality as proposed by some works made in '70s Conceptual Art. Does the digital argued as a conceptual actuality, a digital sensitivity rather than an actual digitality, confirm my strategy of the signifying practice of temporal-collage?

I attempt to answer this question via Johannes Auer's notion of operational 'clicking points' (mouse-click, mouse over or other programmed input devices). In his text on 'Screaming Screen and Binary idealism', Auer talks about Bernd Wingert's notion of a "centrifugal force" at the clicking points of a computer work.

Bernd Wingert notes a possible shift of attention in the reading of hypertext from the text to the actual click, which he quite correctly characterizes as the "centrifugal force". That

is the reader is much more interested in where the links take him than in what he actually sees on the screen. And so it is quite right to speak about a hypertextual zap-mentality. (Auer, 28.09.01, p2)

What is useful to me about his statement is the notion of a 'centrifugal force' identified at the moment and place of the mouse-click. I aim to bring Auer's notion of 'force' in to relation with Bochner's ideas of 'peripheral pressures', which I placed at the knotting-points of temporal-collage. Following Morse, the (actual) digital centrifugality, mouse-click interaction, produces an informationalisation. As a consequence of my development of Morse's digital theories into a conceptual realm, I argue that this informationalisation forges an *engagement* with the artwork in an intersubjective motility. Accordingly the centrifugality of temporal-collage informationalises the material, and forges a signifying engagement. This engagement does not produce an actualisation of the object in the sense of a *representation*. It does not enable a poetic re-alignment in the sense of Seitz' poetic assemblage or Kristeva's first three signifying practices of the poetic. That is: no aesthetic-stoppage is achieved, rather the engagement *re-presents* the artwork, again and again as a conceptual actuality in just the same way as does Bochner's nonmaterial (art-)object.

The (art-)object, the (hyper-)text in the digital, is, according to Auer, drawing from Wingert, constituted as a 'force'. The appeal of which are the (centrifugal) linkages rather than the material/content of the text itself. Auer's understanding of the (hyper-)text as triggering a 'zapping interaction', rather than an invitation for a close reading, I argue, articulates the work as a 'dynamic surface' to use Bochner's term. I understand Auer's focus on the linkages to correspond with my focus on the knotting of material elements in the signifying practice of temporal-collage. Consequently I understand temporal-collage to be practising the work as a dynamic surface in a zapping interaction: it is not a total, intentional artwork that is being consensually 'read', the intent of the author is not equivalent with the intent of the individual viewer. Rather, the appeal is the knotting points which enable a contingent imaginative 'reading', through an individual (centrifugal) production of material as nonmaterial and vice versa.

The articulation of the centrifugal as a 'force', as a quality, rather than an actuality, I argue, resonates with the tendential symbolic-semiotic quality that is realised in the dynamic practice of temporal-collage. The desire to produce, to open and use, such

clicking points, sites and linkages, I argue, compares to the desire to share the tendential qualities in sociality.

The notion of this zapping as a 'mentality', I argue, articulates its production as sensibility. This articulation of sensibility, I contend, re-assesses the digital, technological actuality of this interaction, and promotes a conceptual dynamic instead. As a consequence of the argument staged between Ruscha and Maeda, I contend here, that Auer's ideas are useful to me as articulations of a conceptual actuality. They are less useful however in respect to the technological actuality of the hypertext, the actual digital artwork. Again I argue that the importance is not the actual interaction, but the understanding of the mentality/ sensibility produced in this interaction. This sensibility subsequently feeds back to analogue interactions and can be applied to any artwork digital or analogue.

In relation to the argument of this chapter, the bricolaging and disjointing effort of temporal-collage is confirmed as contingent and intersubjective exteriorising imaginings in perception. The outward motion of such a generative perception is established via Bochner's notion of 'imagination' articulating the idea of 'the exteriorizing of ideas about nature and the thing seen'. (Bochner, 1972, p55) The notion of centrifugality is confirmed as a conceptual motion of extension via Morse's understanding of an actual, operational interaction, in a conceptual evaluation thereof in Ruscha's analogue work. The knotting-points in temporal-collage are confirmed as a conceptual equivalent to the operational actuality of the mouse-click. However, the knotting-points are not programmed mouse-click-points. Thus their imagining is not limited to a pre-determined programme. In this sense, rather than actualised by a soft-ware programme and its hard-ware platform, they remain continually conceptual. Thereby, I contend that the signifying practice of temporal-collage produces the material complex from conceptual mouse-click points, knotting points, in centrifugal motions. Its transitive subject produces the work as a conceptual actuality in his/her engagement of its abstract material elements. Temporal-collage continually seduce the subject to perform contingent engagements, which produce the object *and* the subject as conceptual actualities, they are reciprocal.

It is not within the actual, digital or analogue, but from the digital sensibility as concept, in a backwards glance at the concept of analogy, that the digital mouse-click has a radical impact on art practice. In the referentiality of the conceptual, back

onto the actual, actuality is produced as conceptual actuality. The mouse-click in itself, as an actual click, does not hold this radicality. However, as a concept it forges a sensibility towards the notion of materiality as contingent nonmateriality. It is in this forging of a contingent sensibility that I understand the 'newness' and invention of the digital to impact radically on notions of subjectivity and materiality. Thus I assert that temporal-collage is conceptually digital in that it relies on a digital consciousness of temporality and extensionality. The contingent perception brings the material assemblage out of its relationship with the notion of either a material certainty or the opposite notion of an immaterial uncertainty. Instead it promotes a nonmaterial non-certainty.

This conclusion suggests that temporal-collage is a digital strategy in that it forges and relies on a digital sensibility for the enabling of its intersubjective interactivity. At the same time, the digital as concept is evaluated as a critical strategy of contingency, whilst the radicality and novelty of the digital as a technological actuality is disputed. The notion of sensibility rather than technological actuality precipitates the conclusion that the term temporal in my practice of temporal-collage does not refer to the time-based character of the work. Rather, it foregrounds the temporality of its perceptual quality. Therefore, the term temporal-collage does not refer to a technological nor an aesthetic category. Instead, it describes the dynamic of engagement in the perception of the artwork understood as informational rather than substantial. In this sense any artwork, produced in the contingent signifying practice of a (non-dialectical) here and now, without reference to a 'having been there' (beyond a certain referential reality), by a reciprocal and transitive subject, presents the dynamic of temporal-collage.

This understanding of the status and dynamic of temporal-collage, articulated via Kristeva and Lyotard in the previous two chapters, and tested in relation to the digital in this chapter, is further developed and tested in the concluding chapter 5. There, the status of temporal-collage as a conceptual digital, and the digital as a nonmaterial sensibility rather than a technological actuality, is re-examined. In order to do this, I am contextualising temporal-collage in the network age.

Chapter 5 extends and concludes the investigation of temporal-collage in relation to the digital, and considers its perceptual practice in relation to a concurrent networking sensibility. It examines the premise of a contingent and interactive nonmateriality in relation to notions of 'fluidity and fixing' as they appear in current

contentions of the network age. I am juxtaposing euphoric notions of network-fluidity presented as a strategy for artistic practice to work against fixed normative values, with more critical views on the 'actual fluidity' of the network. Thereby the dialectic premise of the digital in its concurrent contestations is further investigated. At the same time the signifying practice of temporal-collage is tested in regards to the status of its temporality. In my attempt to problematise and critique a dialectical art practice, I have developed a perceptual approach, which challenges a dialectical identification of temporal and spatial practices via a conceptual sensibility. For the conclusion of this project, I focus on the status of temporality and spatiality in relation to this conceptual sensibility.

Conclusion

Fluidity and Fixing: Timespace-Collage

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Synopsis

In this concluding chapter, the central issues of this project -materiality and subjectivity- and related points -aesthetics, ideology, intentionality and perception- are re-assessed and summarised via a discussion of temporal-collage in the context of a global networking dynamic. Theories on the network age are employed in order to consider the conceptual status of production and perception in a current context. I re-position Metz' arguments on ideological hierarchies between sound and image in relation to the supposed fluidity of the digital net and the apparent fixity of analogue relations. Time/sound and Space/image are juxtaposed, and it is argued that, when following Doreen Massey rather than David Harvey, they do not have to be understood as opposites but rather as implemented in each other as 'timespace'. Thus the project concludes with an observation of time and space, and by implication sound and image, disassociated from a dialectical oppositionality, in a more complex relationship. This clarifies the perceptual temporality of 'temporal-collage' as a 'timespace' perception and stages the notion of 'timespace-collage'. Subsequently I clarify the subject of this 'signifying practice of timespace-collage' in relation to his/her individual sense making processes and their connection to a collective meaning.

Introduction

In this final chapter I summarise my notion of a signifying practice of temporal-collage. I conclude by outlining its characteristics and criticality via a juxtaposition of its perceptual sensibility with the understanding of materiality and subjectivity in the 'network age'. Global networking sensibilities, currently theorised within the field of social-geography, contextualise my perceptual strategy. In particular debates between social fluidity and fixing, (informational [immaterial] and material states of sociality), are employed to end my investigation of the artwork as a material complex. Principally the writings of David Harvey and Doreen Massey allow me to re-stage the central premise of this research project: *to challenge aesthetic orthodoxies of ideal totality and homogeneity of artistic production via individual perception as practice*. Both Harvey and Massey deliberate on the promise of a 'different' relationship between subjectivity, time and space in the context of a 'new' global connectivity. I am tracing this 'new' sensibility in order to investigate its ideological background, and to query, in association, the criticality of my idea of the artwork as generated continually in the signifying practice of temporal-collage.

The central aspiration of this final investigation is the clarification of the term 'time' in temporal-collage. So far the 'temporal' has been developed from pertaining to the 'time of the work' (time-based work; i.e. video, film, sound) to the 'time of the perception of the work'. In the previous chapters I have developed a perceptual approach, which challenges a dialectical identification of temporal and spatial practices via a conceptual sensitivity. As a consequence of my argument for the artwork as a 'conceptual actuality', time is divorced from the actual material and re-configured as a matter of its conceptualisation, 'materialised' in individual imaginations. In this way any artwork is rendered 'time-based'. In this concluding chapter I problematise the 'time' of such individual imaginations. I acknowledge that perception retains time in a dialectical relationship with space, even if conceptually rather than actually. I aim to address this problem. Both, Massey and Harvey, in their theorisations of global networking sensibilities, focus on the dialectic between time and space. Their respective theories enable me to clarify my argument for perceptual temporality in regards to art practice, and aid me to re-assess its dialectical characteristic.

In a sense, this final assessment recalls the ideological prejudices of sound and image as outlined via Christian Metz in the beginning of this research project. Metz'

essay on the hierarchy between sound and image, 'Aural Objects' ('le perçu et le nommé', 1975), through which I introduced the concerns of this research project, is re-assessed through the sensibilities of the network age. Metz discusses sound and image in relation to a notion of ephemerality and substantiality respectively.¹³⁹ Here I re-focus on this differentiation between sound and image via an understanding thereof as time (attributal) and space (substantial), 'fluidity' and 'fixity'.¹⁴⁰ This brings my investigation into the artwork as 'material complex' full circle: the relationship between sound and image in audio-visual artwork, which I focused on at the beginning and which I subsequently developed via an emphasis on perception, to encompass a wider field of art practice, is now re-invoked via the issue of the time and space of perception.

In the last chapter I concluded, via the notion of a digital sensibility, that once perception is foregrounded, then, any artwork (not only audio-visual work) can be produced in a 'signifying practice of temporal-collage': its material generated continually as a 'conceptual actuality' in the individual perception of the 'subject *spectatant on trial*'. I contend now that, in order to summarise and finalise this idea, I need to debate temporal-collage with regard to the relationship between the time and space of its signifying practice. Thus, the interpretation of the spatio-temporal context of temporal-collage's perceptual conceptualisation is a central issue of this concluding chapter. In this respect, to re-consider sound and image as time and space now, at the end of this project, I believe, designates not a simple return to the problems informing this research initially. Rather, as a consequence of the development of the initial problematic via the notion of a generative perception, this

¹³⁹ In his essay Metz deliberates the hierarchy of the relationship between sound (attributal) and image (substantial) in relation to a capitalist orientation in the West. In the introductory chapter I outline how Metz' considers the preference for vision in the sense of a 'primitive substantialism', 'which distinguishes fairly rigidly the primary qualities that determine the list of objects (substances) and the secondary qualities which correspond to attributes applicable to these objects.' (Metz, 1992, p313) According to him the substantial is the visible and tactile, which he identifies as primary sensorial qualities. I adopt his acknowledgement of a primary and a secondary constitution of the object but believe that the valuation of 'substance' over 'ephemerality' is re-considered in the network age. To articulate this point I develop his differentiation between image/substantial and sound/ephemeral into an investigation of the relationship between time and space as 'fluidity' and 'fixity'. Also, this acknowledges that capitalism in the network age is Global.

¹⁴⁰ The term 'fixity' is adopted from David Harvey's essay 'From space to place and back again: Reflections on the condition of postmodernity'. In this essay he strongly differentiates between the fluidity of a concurrent networking society, and the fixed state of a traditional, geographically embedded, society. According to him 'the tension between fixity and mobility erupts into generalized crises' (Harvey, 1996, p7). In this conclusion, I employ his notion of a 'crises in fluidity' in opposition to 'safety in fixity' in relation to Doreen Massey's non-dialectical interpretation of time and space.

concluding investigation of time-space relations further develops and finalises the trajectory of my research into the artwork as a (non-hierarchical) 'material complex'.

What is foregrounded in this development is the problem of dialectical recuperation: the individual into the collective; heterogeneous complexities into a homogeneous unity; (ephemeral) temporality of perception into, what Metz terms, the (primary) valuation of the artwork as a substantial product. This dynamic has been queried and challenged throughout this research project. Here, in conjunction with a consideration of networking sensibilities, I seek to reach a conclusion on the efficacy of this challenge. In other words, the signifying practice of temporal-collage, which I articulated as a challenge to substantial and consensual productions of the artwork, beyond a dialectical opposition, is finalised vis-à-vis current contentions of the network age. Thus the perceptual 'continuity' of temporal-collage; the 'tendential' (symbolic and social) quality, which, I argued, realises and is realised in its practice; as well the individual subject of this practice and its relationship to a collective identification, are tried in relation to concurrent socio-geographical theorisations. In relation to this assessment, ideas of: intentionality as authorial, forging an objective ideality, or perceptual, generating continually a subjective ideality, are re-evaluated and concluded upon also. In other words, the position of the viewing subject as '*spectatant*' or '*specatateur*' is clarified too.

Network Sensibilities; temporal-collage in context

In the previous chapter I argued via Mel Bochner for the perception of the artwork as a 'conceptual actuality'. An actuality that is constituted through a contingent exteriorisation in the generative imagination of the subject (*spectatant* on trial). As a consequence of my argument for the artwork as a conceptual actuality, the material artwork (image, spatial practice) does not stand in opposition to an immaterial artwork (sound, temporal practice). Rather, both are shown to trigger a continual signifying practice which produces the artwork as a singular and contingent conceptualisation, as nonmaterial. This understanding, I contended, challenges a dialectical identification between material and immaterial. Consequently it challenges the immanent reversal this would invite. Thus the perceptual signifying of temporal-collage is argued to critique the ideological dynamic of a *substantial aesthetics* without re-affirming it in this critique exactly. The problem that chapter four uncovers but leaves unanswered in relation to this conclusion is the issue of the time and space of this generative perceptuality however. To ensure that conceptual

actuality does not simply position its *ephemeral perception* (temporal, heterogeneous) in opposition to a *substantial aesthetic* (spatial, homogeneous), but rather achieves a complication of aesthetics, ephemeral *and* substantial, I seek to clarify its imaginative extensionality in respect to the status of time and space.

According to Bochner, 'the conceptual is a contingent rendering of the object by the subject in time *and* [my emphasis] space' (Bochner, 1972, p9). If I understand the perceptual practice of 'temporal-collage' as strictly temporal, then, I argue, I position the conceptually actual artwork thus produced again in a dialectic relationship with an actual piece of work: the time of perceiving the piece of work stands in direct opposition (antagonistically) to the space that the work inhabits actually. This, I believe, would undo the criticality of this perceptual practice as its contingent imagination would ultimately be recuperated in a dialectical overcoming of the antagonistic position in a higher order substantial artwork (ideologically homogeneous and spatial; verified in reference to an aesthetic framework). To avoid this recuperation and to acknowledge the (non-dialectical) complexity of the perceptual conceptualisation (produced in the signifying practice of temporal-collage), I propose that the notion of 'time' in the term 'temporal-collage' is neither time as opposed to space nor is it time *plus* space. Rather, it prompts a re-thinking of temporality *and* spatiality.

Socio-geographical theorisations of the 'new' relationship between time and space in the sensibility of global connectivity, concerns informational (on-line, virtual) as well as material (off-line, 'real' world) dynamics of connectivity. These are useful to articulate a critical understanding of perceptuality in terms of its spatio-temporal characteristic.¹⁴¹ In turning to social-geography and its discussion of global networking, I am contextualising temporal-collage, elaborated as 'digital concept', in terms of its contingent relationship to time and space and also in terms of its social

¹⁴¹ Without considering the particular details and context of her argument, I agree with the general premise of Iris Young's idea on this distinction. In her essay 'The ideal community and the politics of difference' (1990), she argues that difference lies not between immaterial (meditated) and material interaction, or what she calls face-to-face interaction. She contends that face-to-face interactions are not more pure than technologically mediated interactions, they do not ensure a more 'real' interaction per se. By contrast, according to Young, such a judgement would promote the dichotomy between an authentic and a non-authentic communication. From this follows, that difference and similarity is a matter of the 'quality' of communication rather than its 'form'. I develop this idea in my argument for the collective (communication, sense) to be produced in the desire to communicate one's individual perception, rather than according to rules and contracts determined outside the act of communication.

connectivity. The issues of material and immaterial social relations, I argue, amplify and contextualise my proposal for a heterogeneous nonmateriality; a reciprocal and generative interactivity (intersubjectivity); and the related notion of autonomous subjectivities, as pronounced in the last chapter.

The choice to involve and borrow from socio-geographical theorisations of the network age, in the last chapter of my project, forms, I contend, a logical conclusion of my research trajectory. Throughout my project I have been developing my ideas in relation to critical changes in the practice and theorisation of art. My notion of 'temporal-collage' has developed in response to critical moments of art history: the coming of sound film; the death of the author; '70s Conceptual Art's challenge to material values; and the invention of digital technology. The consideration of the network age concludes this trajectory in a concurrent contextualisation.

The impact of digital technology enabled me to re-consider materiality and subjectivity in relation to concurrent notions of 'radical' immateriality and 'new' interactivity. This shifted the focus away from audio-visual work enabled me to consider temporal-collage in relation to a wider realm of art practice. The 'novelty' of digital technology, art and its theorisations, understood as a conceptual rather than a technological (actual) novelty, aided me to articulate any artwork as a conceptual actuality. As an example this allowed me to argue the complexity of Ruscha's paintings as produced in the signifying practice of temporal-collage. Now, to conclude on the nature and criticality of this signifying practice, I employ theories discussing concurrent networking sensibilities. The context of this 'new' (digital) sensibility, the global network, I argue, enables me to clarify the details of its signifying practice.¹⁴²

Some theorisations of global networking formulate a euphoric account of its possibilities. For Peter Weibel for instance, in the new age of (virtual) networking 'we

¹⁴² As staged earlier, global networking, as I am considering it here, delineates an on-line, digital, as well as a 'real' world, analogue, context. Social-geography pre-dominantly considers the 'real' world as an effect of networking forces. As a consequence of my argument for the digital impact on the analogue artwork via the notion of a digital conceptuality, however, I argue, that such networking forces combine the digital and the analogue in the sense of a 'sensibility'. Thus the term networking 'sensibility' describes the context of a globally connected world, digital *and* analogue, as the concurrent context of artistic production and perception; the world as a conceptual world wide web. In this sense I focus on networking as a concurrent sensible context, rather than investigate particular geographical effects of this connectivity. Such a contextualisation of the artwork, within a concurrent sensibility, re-stages temporal-collage and enables me to finalise the central issues of my research project.

are able to break out of the prison of space and time co-ordinates (...) The grid of here and now becomes malleable.' (Weibel, 1996, p343).¹⁴³ Weibel celebrates the fluidity of place made possible by an interface sensibility of the world.¹⁴⁴ By contrast, David Harvey describes the new fluidity of the network as crisis. In his essay 'From space to place and back again' he talks about the terror of 'time-space compression'. He understands the technological and organisational shifts in the networking age, to 'annihilate space through time' (Harvey, 1996, p6). For him the fluid ephemerality of the networking age threatens spatial belonging and thus produces a reactionary 'territoriality of place' (ibid., p4). Promptly staging such a reactionary ideology he goes on to suggest, following Heidegger, that 'deprived of such roots [in a native soil], art is reduced to a meaningless caricature of its former self.' (ibid., p11).

I agree with his implicit critique of a networking euphoria, which translates and celebrates the networking sensibility undifferentiatedly as a sense of progressive complexity and radical heterogeneity (democratic, limitlessly generative and autonomous). However, I argue, that the oppositional basis of his argument, the identification of fluidity generally as crises in opposition to spatiality as certainty and stability, does not lead to a more differentiated and critical understanding. Rather, in relation to art practice at least, I argue, his view re-enforces a dichotomy between time and space that renders any engagement in its problematic reactionary. He seals the dialectic relationship between time and space. All we can ever do in terms of a critical art practice within this sealed unit is to oppose a temporal sensibility with a spatial one, and to in turn react to a spatial sensibility with a temporal subversion. The underlying ideologies of space and time identified in Metz' terms as substantial and attributal, however, remain the same. Harvey identifies fluidity as non-authentic and uncertain, and considers fixity to be that which is substantial, authentic, and

¹⁴³ I understand that Weibel's euphoria of a malleable and fluid global network re-calls Eisenstein's euphoria of montage as a global filmmaking strategy. I questioned Eisenstein's conception of the international potential of the montage film in the first chapter when exposing montage's historic and geographical specificity, 'fixity'. Now, the notion of a global networking sensibility re-stages his ambition. This too is not a simple return to an earlier problem however. Rather, to re-consider the time and place of perception with respect to a concurrent networking sensibility, I believe, critically develops the issue of (global) sense in film-making (art-making). The question here is whether or not the global networking age, and its primary tool, the world wide web, manages to realise Eisenstein's claims for an 'international cinema'.

¹⁴⁴ Weibel considers virtual technology in particular. However, I argue that his notion of the 'World as Interface' (the title of the essay quoted in this context), signifies that, although developed in relation to technological changes, Weibel assumes these to change the understanding and interactions of the 'real' world.

certain.¹⁴⁵ Whilst critiquing a euphoric notion of network fluidity, I am differentiating the term of temporal-collage from Harvey's dichotomous understanding. Rather, with my notion of the artwork as a conceptual actuality, I seek to break away from such a dialectic understanding and to propose a (signifying) practice that is critical not as a *re-action* but as an (non-dialectical) *action*, generative in time *and* space.

To argue this break successfully I need to clarify the perceptual imagination of

¹⁴⁵ Harvey understands the symbolic to have a hold over the notion of place. According to him the symbolic validates space as place, renders it authentic, stable and certain. I contend that Harvey's consideration of the Time Square in New York with regard to its symbolic significance, elucidates this suggestion. Harvey identifies Time Square as an authentic place because, according to him, it has a symbolic meaning that is shared in the consciousness of the people visiting it. Harvey states that Time Square...

was a far cry from that authentic dwelling in the Black Forest and on the surface at least, it surely ought to qualify as the most *ersatz*, or as cultural critics might prefer to call it, 'pseudo-place' on earth. Yet it soon became the symbolic heart of New York City and, (...) it was the focus of a sense of togetherness and community for many New Yorkers. (Harvey, 1996, p18)

What Harvey seems to forget is that even the Black Forest, Heidegger's number one dwelling, is not an 'original' place but has attained its apparent authenticity through, Heidegger's and Harvey's own convictions respectively. In this sense, no place is authentic *per se*, authenticity is ideological, a matter of belief. It is Harvey's belief that the symbolic stabilises space as place. Consequently a space not symbolically (collectively) recognised does not attain the description of place, and by extension it is not authentic, stable and certain. To complete Harvey's argument, a non-(collectively) symbolic space is fluid, uncertain and non-authentic, or in his terms it signals a crises. With the notion of a symbolic order, a collective notion of symbolism, space, according to him, is redeemed as place in the, 'fretful' networking sensibility. I argue that such a notion of a stable authenticity is dependent on a lexical understanding of the symbolic (and consequently a lexical identification of the subject visiting for example Time Square also). Such a lexical understanding, I have argued in previous chapters vis-à-vis Kristeva and Lyotard, however, prevents a non-dialectical conceptuality. It results in a dialectical opposition of space and time. Thus it seals understanding of anything in dialectically opposed absolutes: absolute time, absolute place. As a consequence of my argument for the symbolic not as an order but as a 'tendential' quality, this dialectic is disavowed. Time Square has a tendential quality that produces my individual practice of symbolisation. However, this practice, I argue, does not translate its symbolism from a pre-existent register. Rather, the symbolic place is produced in a continual practice of its tendential quality in the contingency of my generative interpretation. Thus there is no authentic place outside my generative perception thereof, and any place that I perceive is authentic in my perception. In the practice of the tendential symbolic neither time nor space have a hold over place but produce places as the time of its practice.

Harvey's understanding of the symbolic, I contend, recalls Barthes' articulation of Eisenstein's montage theory as working along the lines of a semiotic symbolic (vertical and horizontal orientation, context and order). In the same sense that Eisenstein managed to argue for a unified propagandist meaning of his films via recourse to an underlying symbolic order, Harvey sees the symbolic as holding together place in a time of networking fluidity. For Eisenstein the reliance on a particular symbolic understanding (order) inadvertently undoes his ambition for an international film-making. The symbolic order ties his work to the particular historical and geographical circumstance, outside of which, it does not loose sense, but it is unable to produce the intended propagandist meaning. For Harvey, it appears, the notion of the symbolic only solidifies his dialectic view point, and thus increases his fear of fluidity.

temporal-collage's signifying practice to be active in terms of time as well as space. To articulate this particularity I turn to Doreen Massey. In her essay 'Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place', she critiques Harvey for his dialectical argumentation and proposes a different understanding in the 'combination' of time and space as 'time-space'. Her essay enables me to clarify and conclude on the nature of interaction between time and space in the signifying practice of temporal-collage.

Time of perception as timespace; against a dialectic identification

Massey takes up the term 'time-space compression', denoting the 'movement and communication across space', as it is used and lamented by Harvey (Massey, 1996, p59). She observes that the methodological basis for his argument is Heideggerian and that the space - time dialectic, which informs Harvey's theorisations must necessarily lead him to an equally dialectical outcome. This, she argues, can never produce a more differentiated analysis.¹⁴⁶ To avoid such a dialectical dilemma, and in order to articulate time-space relations in the network age in all their complexity, she considers time and space not as dialectically opposed absolutes, but discusses them in relation to their conceptualisation.

The second point about the inadequacy of the notion of 'time-space compression' as it is currently used is that it needs differentiating socially. This is not just a moral or political point about inequality, although that would be sufficient reason to mention it: it is also a conceptual point. (Ibid., p61)

In her sense time and space are concepts rather than absolutes. They are a matter of perception, and also a matter of belief. Not however in relation to a dominant ideology but in relation to an individual ideology, or what I call a contingent conviction.¹⁴⁷ Their status depends on the position of the subject perceiving them rather than in relation to a collective (symbolic) authentication. 'For different social

¹⁴⁶ I understand Massey's critique of Harvey's dialectical 'simplicity' (undifferentiated oppositionality) to support my argument against Weibel's euphoria of limitless fluidity on the net, as well as against Harvey's fear of the networking sensibility. In relation to the research project as whole, her critique clarifies my motivation for the artwork as a material complex: provoking conceptual differentiations in time and space that are not simplyifiable in the notion of a 'higher order absolute' (the overcoming of the dialectic oppositionality in ideal objectivity). Rather, my aim is to propose the artwork as a conceptual actuality produced in a non-dialectical signifying practice.

¹⁴⁷ This notion of an individual ideology recalls and clarifies the issue of conviction in Tarkovsky's *Zone* as discussed in chapter 3. Conviction is an individual and practical

groups and different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections.' (Ibid., p61)

Massey considers Harvey's debate of 'time-space compression' to come from a privileged position. According to her he is the White Male Anglo Academic, for whom movement always happens in relation to nice hotel rooms and the certainty of a home to go back to.¹⁴⁸ In a sense she ridicules his fear of fluidity. In an elaboration of this critique she proposes a differentiation of time and space according to, what I understand to be, its 'inhabitant'.

For different social groups and different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections. (...) Some are more in charge of it than others, some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving end than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it. (Ibid., p61)

Thus she distinguishes between those with control over the networking fluidity, those who move, and those that are fixed by the fluidity of others. Consequently different 'places' are produced dependent on the particular subject's conception of time and space. There is, then, not one condition of network sensibility, not one here and now of postmodernity. Rather, and breaking with the dialectical simplification, this here and now is dependent on the *who* of its practice. At the same time, the 'place' (the here and now) thus produced *is* the practice of time *and* space, as a subjective and contingent conception.¹⁴⁹

In this sense her 'time-space' (place), in clear distinction to Harvey's (dialectical) space, is clarified as complex, contingent and practical. According to Massey 'form *is* process': places are generative, created by interaction, 'they do not have to have boundaries in the sense of divisions' and 'they are full of internal differences and

ideology. It produces one's position and trajectory in the world, and thus it produces one's world, rather than positioning one within a pre-existent world from a meta-position.

¹⁴⁸ Ironically enough, Harvey himself, in this essay 'From space to place and back again' sneers at (second rate) 'white male Anglos' who have, according to him, risen to stardom via the 'postmodern bandwagon' (Harvey, 1996, p26.)

¹⁴⁹ Massey's notion of a time-space here and now, enables me to clarify the perceptual condition of temporal-collage. I initially articulated the circumstance of temporal-collage in chapter three via Lyotard's notion of the 'Postmodern Condition'. There I staged its condition as a (non-dialectically postmodern) 'changing-game', produced continually through the innovative agency of the perceiving subject. Now, I can clarify this condition, and confirm its non-dialectic nature via Massey's articulation of 'time-space'. The generative perception of the here and now, by the innovative subject in temporal-collage is neither temporal nor spatial. Rather, this subject produces its condition as time-space, and this time-space

conflicts' (ibid., p67).¹⁵⁰ Since these 'conflicts' and 'differences' are not dialectical (they are not conflicts between absolutes, but generative and subjective differences), I understand them in relation to my articulation of collage's material complexity as agonistic and playful, rather than antagonistic and pressing for a resolution in a higher order absolute (montage). Playful differences, I argue, trigger the production of similarities (agonistic relationships) in the particularity of their perception (collage).

To employ her non-dialectical understanding, in relation to my project, I compare her notion of place with my idea of the artwork as a conceptual actuality. Thus I employ her sense of time-space complexity to conclude on the nature of the signifying practice producing this conceptual actuality. In this sense I argue that temporal-collage is not simply a temporal (immaterial) signifying perception, proposed against a substantial actuality of the artwork in a spatial (material, contractual) condition. Although I initially developed its strategy, to challenge the dominance of a visual, stable and substantial valuation of materiality, as articulated via Metz, now, I conclude that, in order for my critique not to be imminently recuperated via a dialectically opposed point of view (reactionary spatiality), the temporal dynamic of its perceptual actuality has to be proposed as a 'time-space dynamic'.¹⁵¹

condition is dependent on the position of the subject producing it in his/her conceptualisation, his/her contingent believes.

¹⁵⁰ This articulation recalls Kristeva's notion of the text as process as discussed in her essays on the *Revolution in Poetic Language* (Kristeva, 1984, p102). Her notion of process I have shown to retain a dialectical characteristic in its separation between the semiotic 'drive' and the symbolic 'matter'. The non-dialectical practice of Massey's 'process', combining time and space (drive and matter), in a complex and reciprocal relationship, however confirms the form, the artwork, as non-dialectical, neither material nor immaterial but 'nonmaterial'.

¹⁵¹ Peter Weibel and many other network artists and theorists consider the informational, immaterial artwork to present a critical subversion of material valuations. However, as a consequence of my consideration of Harvey's argument, it is clear that fluidity per se, as a technological actuality, does not propose a critical evaluation of a concurrent networking sensibility. Following Massey, I argue that actual immateriality (virtuality) is being normalised and controlled through those in charge of movement. This understanding confirms and brings into context, the articulation about the actual digital artwork as argued in the previous chapter. The different placing of individuals and groups of people in 'relation to these flows and interconnections' establishes and reveals (conceptual) power positions that (re-)establish material hierarchies, however immaterially (Massey, 1996, p61). Data transfer, networking realities, I argue, render the informational artwork, in its global context, not more critical than a substantial expression. By contrast, it could be argued that the immaterial nature of some time-based works make them more easily compliant to an informationalised sensibility. In this respect it is maybe the substantial artwork, painting, sculpture, etc., that attains a new criticality. The substantial artwork in its fixed configuration, appears to be challenging the fluidity of a networking sensibility. The spatial work sits awkward and square in relation to fluidity. It imposes a particularity of place and transportation that video, sound and internet work avoids. This demand could be seen as articulating a criticality of the network hierarchies. However, the return to a material, substantial practice in this sense, I argue, establishes what Harvey terms a 'reactionary territoriality'. Thus such an

Massey's sense of time and space combines temporal and spatial relations and processes in a complex and generative conceptualisation and foregrounds the subject of its perception. In order to realise these two points in temporal-collage also, I adopt her understanding. This I believe will conclusively determine temporal-collage as a signifying practice that challenges and breaks with the dialectical dynamic. Thus I replace the term 'temporal-collage' with the notion of 'timespace-collage'.

Timespace-Collage

For this term 'timespace-collage' I adopt the dynamic of 'time-space' as articulated by Massey. However, to manifest visually her critique of a dialectical understanding, as argued by Harvey, I remove the dash between time and space. Thereby I seek to avoid a return to a dialectical understanding and to highlight the critical equivalence between spatial and temporal processes, 'fluidfixity', in the conceptualisation of the artwork as 'material complex'.

The notion of 'timespace', I argue, promotes the equivalence between time and space. This is not a simple agreement or similitude, but an 'equal difference'. I articulate this notion of an 'equal difference' via my initial critique of Eisenstein's use of the idea of a 'monism of ensemble'. According to him, in a monistic ensemble, sound and image, or in my sense time and space, do not accompany each other, 'but function as elements of equal significance.' (Eisenstein, 1977e, p20) However, Eisenstein's monism, as I have shown via Barthes, is ultimately directed by the intention of the author, via the symbolic order of its context, into one (homogenous) actuality. Thus it is a dialectical simultaneity between objects, the frames of the film, orchestrated toward an (ideal) similarity, the total (montage) film. The subject meanwhile is in a meta-position, outside the simultaneity and unaffected by its complexity. In 'timespace-collage' by contrast, I argue that from such a monistic

understanding does not contribute to a critical art practice but re-creates and affirms a dialectical dynamic. The appreciation and practice of the substantial artwork in the network sensibility, I argue, cannot simply be opposed to temporal (digital) artwork on the net. Rather the conceptualisation of material and immaterial as nonmaterial, as I argued in the previous chapter, presents us with a more complex notion of materiality, in virtuality *and* the 'real' world. Massey's time-space, I argue, re-evaluates such an easy oppositionality, and thereby challenges the criticality attributed to fluidity or fixity. What becomes clear is that neither the material nor the immaterial artwork have a critical potency per se. Instead, the notion of time-space re-focuses the process of validation onto individual and contingent perception and their relationships and interactions. As a consequence of my argument for a perceptual complexity in the signifying practice of temporal-collage as timespace-collage, the awkward criticality of fixity is the particularity of a fluid perception.

basis of value similarity, the differences are worked out in a signifying practice by the 'inhabiting' subject. The intention of this practice for the subject to experience the work. This experience is guided by the subject's, generative and complex, sensorial simultaneity with the work rather than via an authorial pressure. In this sense Massey's notion of 'time-space' finalises my critique of Eisenstein's monism as I initially stage it in chapter one.

Consequently I argue that in timespace-collage the 'simultaneity' is a complex (non-dialectical) simultaneity between the material elements and the subjects, who are producing the artwork, the place, as 'a particular constellation of relations' dependent on their position in relation to the dynamic of these 'intersections' (Massey, 1996, p66). In other words, time-space sensibility as articulated via Massey, enables me to articulate timespace-collage as a conceptual practice that involves the materials, as (non-hierarchical) equivalent nonmaterials, and the subjects, as individual and active agents, inhabiting a complex actualisation of the artwork, performing thus what I earlier called a generative interpretation.

In this way Massey's ideas enable me to re-visit and finalise the basic contentions of my research project: *the challenge of (hierarchical) differentiations between sensorial materials and their sublimation into one homogeneous (ideal) totality according to the (ideological) intention of the author*. These issues have been investigated and elaborated throughout my research project. I now conclude that the 'signifying practice of timespace-collage' works along the sensibility of a critical equivalence between spatial and temporal processes. The individual subject's timespace sensible perception produces the film, the artwork, as a (non-dialectical) conceptual actuality, in relation to his/her conception of time *and* space. Consequently the timespace artwork is ideal not in relation to the intention's of the author, worked out in relation to a symbolic order (historical and geographical context). Rather, the ideality of this perceptual artwork is a subjective ideality.¹⁵²

¹⁵² The symbolic quality involved in the timespace practice of the artwork, I argue, is not the symbolic of an order. The fixity and hierarchical (vertical and horizontal) organisation of such an order, I believe, would undermine the timespace equivalence of its perceptual practice. Thus, instead, I contend, it is a tendential symbolic, as articulated in chapters two and three. This tendential symbolic is a trigger that forges my simultaneous engagement. However it does not forge my understanding of the artwork as an ideal totality according to an authorial intent. Its quality is the (timespace) realisation of its tendential symbolic in an individual (timespace) perception. There never is symbolism outside of this process since my perception realises the tendential quality in a contingent symbolisation.

According to Massey time-space places 'can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings. And this in turn allows a sense of place which is extra-verted, which includes a consciousness of its links to the wider world' (ibid., p66). Applying this characteristic to my idea of a timespace artwork confirms my notion of centrifugality. Whereas I have argued via Eisenstein's montage, that a homogenous material production results in an introverted articulation, I can now, via Massey, conclude on my idea that the complex and relational dynamic of timespace-collage produces a centrifugal artwork. The 'consciousness of a wider world', I argue, articulates my notion of an outward bound conceptualisation. It clarifies the contingent space of the subject's perception in relation to the direction of an 'outside' world. The criticality of such an understanding, I argue, is the notion that the artwork is actual as conceptual 'relations' and 'intersections' rather than as either relative fluidity or as absolute fixity. According to Massey 'instead then of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of [social] relations and understandings.' (Ibid., p66) Her focus on intersubjective relations, I argue, locates the notion of understanding, sense, in-between the subjects inhabiting time and space as timespace.

Massey's essay establishes the sense (shared meaning) of a place in the relationship between the subjects involved in its conceptualisation: the commissioners of movement, the movers and those arrested by the movement of the first two. It is from their relationships (rather than from the relationship between spaces) that a collective sense of place is being established.

It is from that perspective that it is possible to envisage an alternative interpretation of place. In this interpretation, what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus. (Ibid., p66)

Massey suggests that 'each place can be seen as a particular unique point of their [the subjective conceptualisations'] intersection.' (Ibid., p66) At this 'intersection' temporal *and* spatial conceptualisations form 'place' as a (non-dialectical) complex of relationships and processes. In relation to timespace-collage her understanding of a shared place enables me to conclude that a collective sense, a shared artwork, is produced at the intersection in discourse of each individual's signifying practice and its non-sense. Following her I argue that the generative interpretations that produce

the artwork as a conceptual actuality in timespace establish a shared (collective) sense in their dynamic intersections. In this sense rather than positioning the individual conceptualisation in a dialectical opposition to an actual, aesthetically and ideologically stabilised artwork, it is the dynamic intersections between individual conceptualisations that produce the 'actual' work.

In previous chapters I have argued that the individual *non-sense* produced in a generative interpretation is not dialectically opposed to a (collective) *sense*. Now I can finalise this idea by aligning myself with Massey's emphasis on the relationship between subjects, as opposed to the relationships between spaces (geographical and historical), in the production of the artwork or, in her sense, the construction of place. In the next part of this chapter I adopt Massey's articulation of the centrality of the subjects' relationships in order to clarify the sense processes in the signifying practice of timespace-collage. In relation to this I conclude on the characteristic of the subject *spectatant* on trial and finalise my ideas on its involvement in the production of shared sense.

The Subject in Timespace; ideality of desire versus ideality of contracts

Morse's notion of digital dematerialisation discussed vis-à-vis Bochner's work and writings enabled me, in the previous chapter, to articulate the idea of dematerialisation not as oppositional to a materialisation, but rather in the sense of a (nonmaterial) informationalisation. This informationalisation, I argued, emphasises the subject and pulls him/her into a perceptual effort of 'engagement'. This engagement I argued as the fifth signifying practice of temporal-collage. In relation to this I established the idea that this signifying engagement is not an actual digital engagement (extending the work via an operational input device) but a conceptual digital engagement (imaginative extensionality). As a consequence of this argument, now that the time and space of this extensional practice is clarified as timespace, the subject which practices the (conceptual digital) re-engagement in timespace-collage too is clarified beyond a dialectical opposition.

I confirm this non-dialectical subject of timespace-collage via Massey's notion that (time-space) place is dependent on the *who* of its conceptualisation. Following her ideas on the centrality of the subject in the production of the here and now condition of a place, it is the subject *spectatant* on trial's contingent conceptualisation of the

artwork which produces the contingent condition of this artwork. This practice does not stand in opposition to a fixed or fluid artwork *outside* this practice. Nor does the subject of this practice stand in a dialectical relationship with a fixed or fluid subject *outside* this practice. There is no *outside* position which stands in opposition to timespace-collage's generative signifying.

The notion of timespace disables the notion of dual subjectivity. The subject *spectatant* in timespace is not opposed to a subject *spectateur*. The latter position is rendered impossible. Since, if the time of the signifying practice of temporal-collage is timespace there is no meta-position: *there is no position outside practice for an intransitive spectator, who queries the artistic material in relation to its institutional conventions and finds his/her answer within these conventions also*. In the sensibility of the non-dialectical here and now of timespace the continual practice of engagement defines 'being' as a constant and individual practice. The subject of timespace-collage is a subject of practice. Its subjectivity is defined as an active identity. This activity produces the artwork continually in a generative interpretation.

This timespace subject is not a relative subject however; it is not marginalisable as irrelevant and nonsensical and neither is it fluid in relation to a particular 'plan of the network', fixity. Rather the fluidity and fixing of subjectivity too are one. Following Massey, the position of the individual in the network is particular to the time and place of his/her own formation and thus his/her conceptualisation is relevant in relation to this particularity. Its contingency is a timespace contingency, the subject a timespace subject. In this sense, the timespace identity of the *spectatant* is particular and fixed. However, it is fixed in timespace rather than in relation to a dialectical space or time (historical or geographical). Thus its fluid (active) identity is particular to its own fixity, rather than opposed or relative to an absolute fixity, the dwelling. In other words, the motion of perception (generative interpretation) does not produce its 'conceptual actuality' in a dialectical relation to an 'authentic actuality', an objective ideality. Rather the perceptual (time, space, the artwork) remains a matter of individual production. Its ideality lies in the active subject's own conviction and commitment to this production. In this way I confirm that the subject *spectatant's* generative interpretation produces the artwork as ideality. However, this ideality is not validated via the notion of an objective ideality as proposed in Hegelian aesthetics. Rather, the perception of the *spectatant* produces a, to its timespace sensibility, ideal artwork. At the same time he/she is confirmed in the subjective ideality of this process.

As a consequence of Massey's emphasis on 'relationships' and 'intersections', this (ideal) practice is of 'equal difference' to other subject's practice in the construction of a collective sense of (place) the artwork. The consensuality of this construction is not established vis-à-vis the contracts and rules of a concurrent aesthetic(-stoppage) however. Rather, the subject *spectatant* produces, motivated by his/her desire to share, the concurrent aesthetic as a 'timespace aesthetic'.

This conclusion allows me to elaborate and clarify my notion of 'desire' in respect to the articulation of a shared sense of place, a shared sense of the artwork. If, following Massey, I argue that the artwork is not an absolute actuality, fluid or fixed, but is produced in the dynamic intersections of individual conceptions, then, I cannot refer to a contract, historical or geographical, determining this shared sense. Rather, I understand her timespace sensibility to confirm my idea that it is the contingent desire of the individual subject to relate that produces the shared artwork. This does in no way assume that either this desire indeed exists, or that it cannot be a desire to manipulate and oppress. I certainly do not suggest a naive utopia here. Rather, what I imply with the term 'desire' is that the perceptual artwork (conceptual actuality) is 'motivationally' collective. It is shared to the extent that the individual subject is participating in a shared sense, rather than sharing contractually, assuming a pre-existent order to this collectivity. This reiterates and confirms the point made in conjunction with my interpretation of Tarkovsky's film 'Stalker' in chapter 3, that what assures the sociality (shared sense) of a non-dialectical subjectivity is the *desire to share* rather than a *shared contract/ order*.¹⁵³ Thus it is the 'quality' of the relationships between the subjects conceptualising the artwork, rather than the relationship between artworks, historically, or between the viewer/listener and the work, geographically, which determines the collective sense. The collective sense produced consequently stems from the dynamic intersections

¹⁵³ In chapter 3 I argued the Zone as a space of tendential symbolism that triggers what Morse calls re-engagement, and what I elaborated via Bochner as engagement, in its generation. As a consequence of my argument in chapter 4 and its contextualisation here in a timespace sensibility, I can apply this tendential quality of the Zone to any artwork. Thus I suggest that the engagement with an artwork is triggered by a tendential symbolic. However, since this is not a symbolic order but a quality, my engagement does not happen in reference to a specific temporal and spatial register, contract. Thus I cannot produce the artwork collectively from a shared register of symbols. Rather, I produce a contingent symbolisation in the signifying practice of the tendential qualities. A contingent consensuality of this quality is achieved at the intersections with other conceptualisations, and depends on the desire to realise such relations. Thus, if we fail to achieve a shared sense of the artwork, we cannot blame a contract, an order, but have to consider our unwillingness to make such shared sense.

between the subjects conceptualising the artwork rather than in relation to an aesthetic, historical or geographical, determination.

Conclusion: Aesthetic Theory as Terror

In a timespace sensibility of production and perception there is only practice. The subject of this practice, who is a subject *spectatant* on trial is ideal in its active identity, and the artwork is ideal in its continual production in perception. A timespace sensible ideality is an ideality of practice. The individual sense (nonsense) produced in this generative interpretation is shared according to *desire*, rather than in relation to a *contract* (order).

The understanding of time and space as one non-dialectical complexity (timespace) disavows the identity of the *spectateur*. The *spectateur* depends on theoretical conventions and orthodoxies, whose judgement necessitates a distance (historically and geographically) from the work. He/she needs the artwork to exist without his/her complicity, in a spatial and temporal 'over-there'. The *spectateur* needs to be able to contemplate and judge his/her perception of the work from outside its production. However, in 'timespace' the action of perception itself *is* the artwork, and any attempt at theorisation is but another act of perception, practice yet again. As a consequence of this conclusion I understand that aesthetic theory, as a hierarchical judgement of material elements for the purpose of a homogenous reading of the work, is rendered impossible. In timespace-collage there is no space outside practice from where to contemplate upon it.

To name writing 'theory' signals that the reader, who produces the text in his/her generative interpretation thereof, is afraid of the timespatiality of his/her active identity. He/she seeks to anchor the work, and him/herself, beyond his/her individual and generative sense in a contractual arrangement. By contrast, and in response to this fear, I argue that the text (the artwork) does not corroborate meaning. Rather, it is the desire to share, the intersections of individual conceptualisations, that ultimately establishes a (consensual) understanding. And this understanding *is* only ever contingent, it is only ever constructed at the timespace moment of desire to share the timespace conceptualisations. From the tendential symbolic qualities, in a committed individual and generative interpretation, the tendential sociality of the text is being practised. The notion of a consensual belief in text as theory, meta-

discursive, is illusory. The enforcement of the consequences of this illusion (a consensual aesthetic) I contend, via Lyotard, is terror.

I conclude on the proposal that to believe one is able to articulate the artwork as a homogeneous whole, to define a consensual aesthetic judgement, from a meta-position, is the illusion of control as articulated by Lyotard in his text on 'The Postmodern Condition'. The danger of this ideology of control is established forcefully in the very last passage of his text.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have given us as much terror as we can take. We have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, of the transparent and the communicable experience. Under the general demand for slackening and for appeasement, we can hear the mutterings of the desire for a return of terror for the realization of the fantasy to seize reality. The answer is: Let us wage a war on totality; (...); let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name. (Lyotard, 1994, p82)

Following Lyotard, I argue that to believe that theory exists as an outside commentary, an observation and is not a production in perception, is dangerous. For Lyotard fascism is the expression of this danger. I agree with him. However, I believe that when we *recognize* this danger only in reference to a 'great' historical or geographical terror, we miss the dynamic of this terror. To refer to this terror in relation to a historically or geographically particular manifestation thereof re-establishes the dichotomy between time and space. By contrast, following my own conclusion, the terror of homogeneity and totality is not representable in a place or time. This itself would affirm the possibility of meta-discourse and thus produce the terror of contractual consensus. Rather, the terror of homogenous totalities, established in meta-discourse (dependent on rules and contracts) which pretend to enable consensual sense, does not need a grand geo-political arena. It happens in the gallery, in the supermarket, the home, everywhere that I practice 'being', that I am a subject; in other words everywhere. The great political incidence is the symptomatic manifestation only of the micro level terror of a dichotomous totality.

Finally: even if the signifying practice of timespace-collage, as I argue it in this research project, seems a play, the viewer a *'jouant'*, playing at abandoning consensual rules for the time he/she perceives a work of art, the motivation behind

my proposition is more sombre than a sense of play.¹⁵⁴ I propose that a timespace sensibility is central to challenge and continually re-evaluate issues of reality, materiality, subjectivity and sense. I propose that material elements trigger productions in perception whose reality lies in the conviction of the individual perceiver, whose desire to share this impression leads, at the intersection with other such desires, to a consensus based on contingent motivation, rather than according to rules and contracts (terror). Timespace-collage is a sensibility not an actuality. It describes an attitude toward art practice not a particularity of expression. Some artworks might offer themselves more readily to its signifying practice than others. However, I believe that conceptual (nonmaterial) complexity can be produced in any timespace sensible (perceptual) collage practice.

Reflections on my Practice

In the beginning of this thesis I suggest that the aim of my work is to 'produce audio-visual work as "Material Complex", which escapes and challenges prejudices of material perception.' Throughout this project the articulation of such complexity and its relationship to aesthetic hierarchies is articulated in reference to the process of perception. Now, at the end of this investigation, I consider my own art practice in relation to the complexity of its production processes and the heterogeneity of its materiality. Without presuming any outcome, or making any claims for the work, I aim to reflect on my methods of production, my choices of content and material, my artistic intentions as well as some presentational concerns arising from my practice. In this way I hope to articulate how this research project, its theoretical and practical element, has clarified my working processes to myself, and how it has opened my work for new developments.

Such a reversal of focus from the perceiver to the producer of the work does not undermine the claims of the thesis in regard to the perceptual autonomy and ideological particularity of the viewing subject. It does not refute the role of the spectator as spectatant in the production of the work as a timespace-collage. Rather, it considers the studio production as a counterpart to such a perceptual

¹⁵⁴ Earlier in this research project I have acknowledged that, of course, it is easy to abandon a sense of rules and contracts in the safe environment of the Gallery space: 'I can quite happily admit madness when entering a gallery. It is a very safe space to lose my rational sense of place and identity in'.

engagement. In this sense I observe and document my video and sound work vis-à-vis the ideas of perception as staged in this project.

The works produced during this research project consist of a series of ten short video pieces, three sound works and two audio-visual installations.¹⁵⁵ Observing this body of work produced over the past five years, I can broadly distinguish between two different approaches to its production. One method involves careful preparation, in which a degree of scripting, or picture boarding of the material is undertaken before shooting/recording. The other is the more unplanned approach of collecting whatever is available, in the sense of, often secretly, recording/filming a 'real' life event or object, or taping found-footage from film and sound archives. Reversing the control over the material, the tightly planned and conceptualised footage is subsequently worked according to a loose editing decision list, whilst the incidental material is controlled in tight compositions.

At the beginning of this research project these two approaches to producing audio-visual work remained fairly distinct.

A good example to demonstrate this distinction is the comparison between *Groundwork*, an audio-visual installation produced in 2000, at the beginning of this project, and *Beach* a short video produced in 2001. The material of the first piece was shot in a, to me, very familiar location in Switzerland. It was planned and conceptualised through drawings, photographs, location scouting, etc. The video material was subsequently produced in a carefully staged and long drawn out shooting process. By comparison, the visual footage of the second piece, which was shot on a brief visit to Cornwall, is the result of carelessly putting down the camera next to my towel whilst relaxing on the beach. Once in the editing suite, the visual element of *Groundwork* was put together in a few brief sessions. The editing method was a simple selection process. The actual practice of shooting the material was simply re-staged. By contrast, the images of *Beach* were carefully viewed and chosen, subsequently they were manipulated digitally and more found footage was added. Here the actual shooting and planning process began in the editing stage. The beach footage became found material. My engagement with the material at the moment of filming had become irrelevant at this stage, the actual experience had been forgotten, and a new a 'possible experience' was being staged.

¹⁵⁵ Please find, at the end of the thesis, an illustrated list of the works produced as part of this research project.

The soundtrack of *Groundwork* was produced in a re-working and manipulating of the in-camera sounds with the aim of re-creating the event as an enhanced authenticity. The sounds were not simply left untouched and synched to the visual, which I believe would not augment the impression of the reality of the event. Rather, they were 'rendered' real: they were re-synched and manipulated, sounds were added, filters used, etc., in order to make the situation filmically, rather than actually, real.

This documentary strategy of *Groundwork* was further pursued in the tape slide piece *Hobbies; a Slideshow*, (2001). Here again the emphasis rests on the planning and recording processes. I visited 14 men in their homes to interview them about their hobbies. This intimate engagement becomes part of the work for me. The editing work was minimal, only in the presentation stage did I manipulate the material to reflect on the recording process: a quasi factual and scientific undertaking which on closer inspection tilts towards the bizarre and obsessive on both sides of the microphone.

In distinction to this, for the soundtrack of *Beach* I produced a tight composition of found material from effects tapes, music samples, found film material and radio broadcasts. This material was used with the intention to fictionalise the visual space on screen, to open it up for an imaginative engagement.

This process resonates with the notion of a material complex as articulated in the written part of this thesis. This term, whilst informing my theoretical research, also offers me the vocabulary to express my desire to produce a rich texture of sensorial material that is tightly composed *and*, in its sumptuousness and intensity, produces different rhythms and narrative registers. The nature of this sonic material, mainly borrowed from other broadcast media, often from the '50s and '60s rather than from contemporary sources, adds another complexity. Using such material I borrow not only the space of transmission (film soundtracks and radio broadcasts have a very different sonic quality and acoustic space than CDs or location recordings), but also its nostalgia. This is not my nostalgia, neither geographically nor historically, however, and this is what gives me the freedom to play with it, pulling at it, tilting it and mocking it, whilst using its particularity to remain serious and grounded in meaning as an idea.

This 'disjointing' and 'bricolaging' strategy of production was used increasingly in most of the video pieces. Their short duration, between 2 and 6 minutes, allowed me to sustain the play with narrative elements without producing one distinct narrative and hence suturing the work in a teleological narrative sense. For the sound work too I employed some of these strategies. However the sonic pieces, *Do you want to dance with me?* (2002) and *Moving Stones* (2003) are both still based on documentary conventions, and both also have a different use of time. They are 16 and 9 minutes respectively. I intentionally worked these sonic works into longer compositions in order to play with this durational quality and to stress the different sense of attention sound work generates. Sound unravels slowly in the time that it plays. It unfolds and creates the disembodied characters, and produces, rather than presents, the context of the action. *Do you want to dance with me?* and *Moving Stones* were designed to try and make people hear their own connections rather than listen to a given narrative.

Increasingly, concurrent with the articulation of temporal-collage as a perceptual strategy in the theoretical element of my project, the documentary conventions and the complex collage strategies are used together, forging a different working process.

Gallant Boy, a short video piece produced at the very end of this project, in the beginning of 2004, is an example of this coming together of approaches. For *Gallant Boy* I worked with incidentally shot footage of horses in a park in Wales and planned material of boats on the Serpentine in London. This footage was subsequently embellished with found visuals, digitally manipulated and juxtaposed to a tightly composed soundtrack consisting of a documentary voice-over, environmental sounds, film sounds and musical interludes. This material was brought together so as to produce the idea of a possible event, or indeed an impossible event, rather than the re-presentation of an actual occurrence. The documentary quality of the voice-over, a woman talking about the image of a naked man in a porn magazine, is juxtaposed to the genteel pursuit of boating in the park. The cold and echoing quality of the voice is dried by the pretty and colourful imagery of flowers and boats moving in a gentle and leisurely rhythm. However, my aim was not the crass juxtaposition of an explicit voice-over with the pretty environments of a boating afternoon. Rather what I sought to create is a complex expression produced in the collaging of all elements involved. The nostalgia reverberant in the glass cut voices of the film soundtrack and the comic appeal of the '40s film-music was used to distance the

viewer from the actual location, the actual content of the material, and to produce a fictional setting instead. Again, the enjoyment and generative quality of this fictional space is, even if paradoxically, assured by the generic particularity of the material used: documentary voice-overs, '40s film music, particular accents, etc.

On the level of the media, sound and image, this complex working together of diverse elements plays with the temporal and spatial aspects of its apparent quality. The sonic is worked so as to spatialise the visual expression and the visual outlines the time of the sonic. The aim is not to produce a linear (narrative) development but to instead generate a static movement: a wobble or quiver on the spot of perception. In the theoretical component of this research I reference this condition as 'timespace'. In relation to my practice this term describes my interest in holding a timebased artwork in the particularity of a spatial now. The theoretical articulation of this timespace condition has clarified my interest in the perceptual arena and has opened my work to a new concern of production. Current work in progress is engaged in the manipulation of audio-visual material for the purpose of stressing a time 'on hold': footage shot most recently focuses on flattening the space of the visual to a timespace by working with zoom lenses and diminishing the depth of field in order to achieve a 2 dimensional surface that is then dynamised, though in stasis, by a complex sound track.

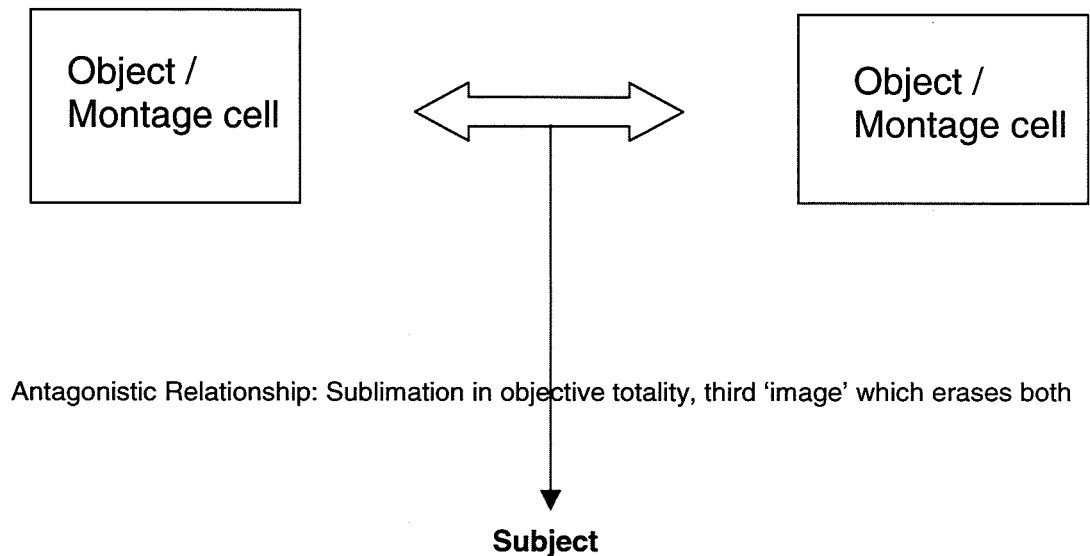
In all the pieces produced in the course of this project I worked on the material with a sensitivity to the particularity of each subject matter. What they share as a body of work is my interest in purposelessness and leisure and the awareness that to recreate rather than represent this leisure, the composition needs to be tightly controlled, be that at the moment of production or in post-production. This relationship between controlled particularity and experiential freedom is an issue that is central to my theoretical research as well as to my studio practice. The tension it creates between experience and materiality is one of the issues that I am pursuing in current work. The most recently completed work, *Wedding Night (coniferous woodland early spring)* plays with this tension. For this piece I used my own voice for the first time. The piece was staged as an actual performance in a woodland, where I repeatedly called out 'I love you'. This actual life event was then edited and re-staged in post-production where the environmental sounds were augmented and manipulated, and the time of the performance was cut to 3.30 minutes to mimic the length of a pop song. I am the author, the performer, the

recordist and the editor, I control every step of the way in order to allow for even more ambiguity in perception.

Appendix 1

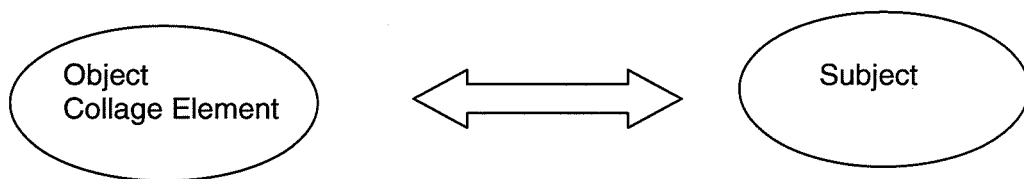
Antagonistic and Agonistic Relationship Between Object and Subject in Montage and Collage

Relationship between objects and subject in montage:



Fixed reader in metaposition, reading the totality as objective ideality

Relationship between object and subject in collage:



Agonistic relationship: Production in perception of collage element and of subject

I argue that the subject produced in the antagonistic, conflictual tension of montage, is a fixed meta-subject, intransitive, who overcomes the conflict through a sublimation of both cells in an ideal totality. By contrast the relationship between the subject and the object of collage is agonistic: it is adversary but playfully so. This subject is produced in its production of the collage element. It is transitive and immersive, it does not pursue an objective outcome. Any outcome reached is forever provisional and subjective in its ideality.

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Filmography

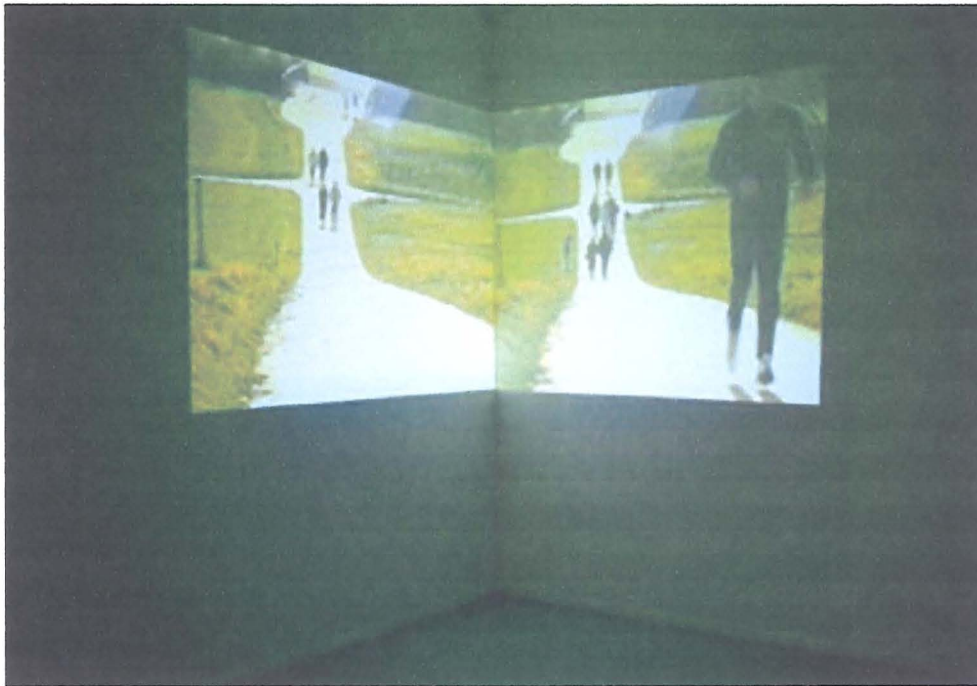
Eisenstein, Sergei, *Battle Ship Potemkin*, B&W, 74min., (Sovjetexportfilm: USSR, 1925)

Hawks, Howard, *Criminal Code*, B&W, 100 min., (Columbia: USA, 1930)

Smithson, Robert, *Spiral Jetty*, colour, 35 min., (USA: 1970)

Tarkovsky, Andrei, *Stalker*, colour, 155 min., (Mostfilm: USSR, 1979)

Illustrated list of works produced as part of this research project:



Groundworks

2000
audio-visual installation

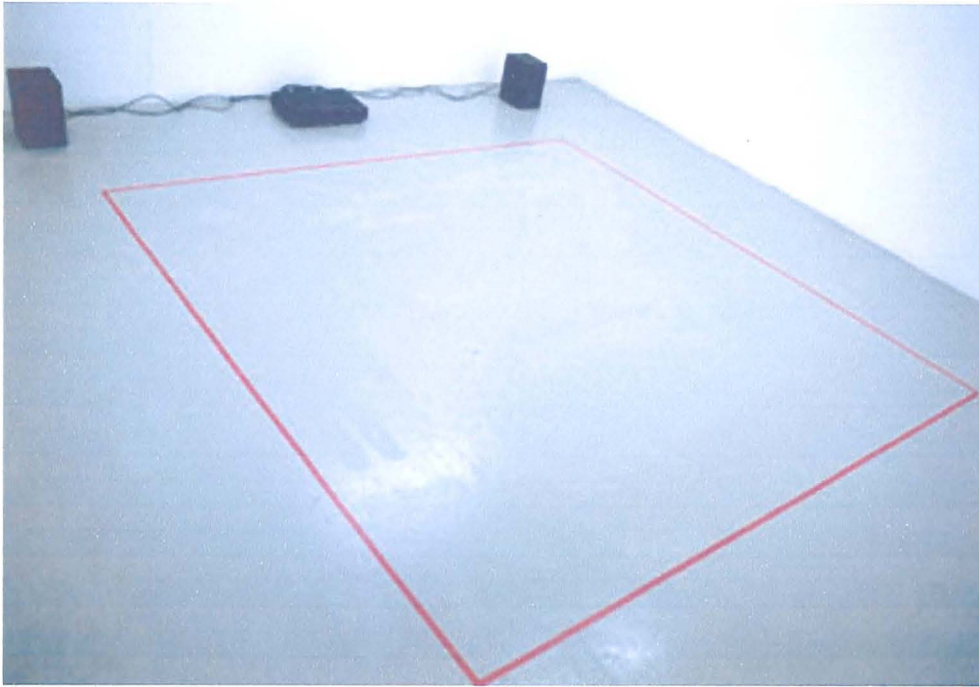
2 x 15 min loops
projected over the
corner of the space



Hobbies; a Slideshow

2001
audio-slideshow

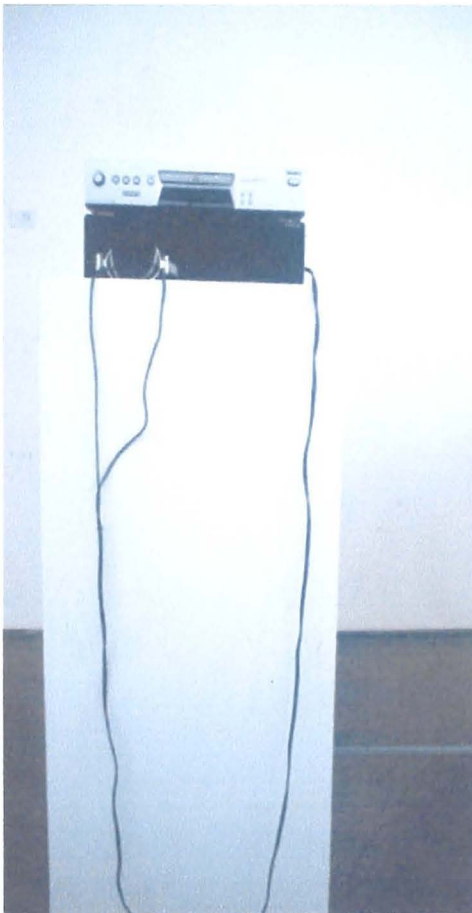
27 min., 44 slides
performed as a lecture



Do You Want to Dance with Me?

2002
Sound piece, 15 min.

installation-view
originally produced for radio



Moving Stones

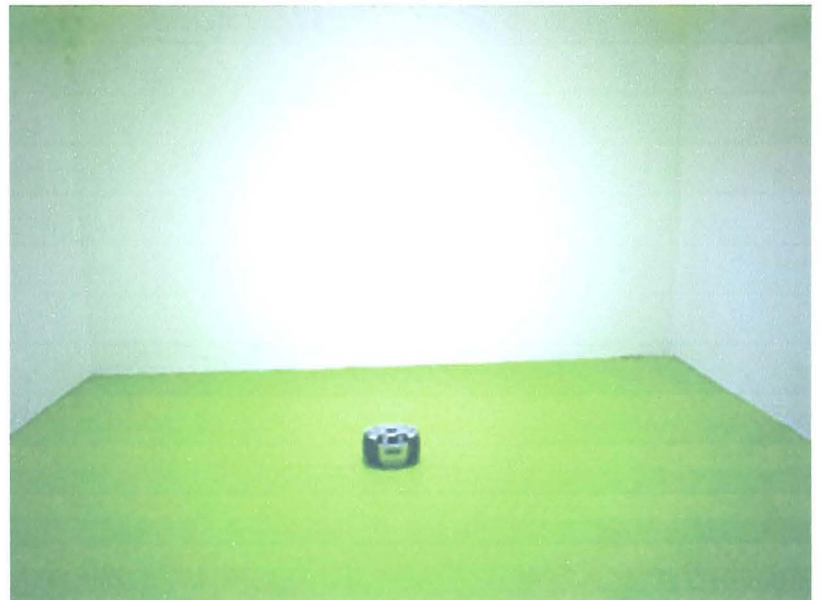
2003
Sound Piece, 20 min.

installation-view

Wedding Night (coniferous woodland early spring)

2004
Sound Piece, 3.30 min.

installation-view





Video Works:

Beach	2001, colour, sound, 6 min.
Marie-Ann	2001, colour, sound, 3 min.
The Party	2002, colour, sound, 5.30 min
Gilbert	2002, colour, sound, 2.30 min
Happy Days	2002, colour, sound, 5.30 min.
Emile	2003, colour, sound, 4.30 min.
Honey	2003, colour, sound, 3 min.
Smile Baby	2003, colour, sound, 5.30 min.
Lovely	2004, colour, sound, 6.30 min.
Gallant Boy	2004, colour, sound, 5 min.