

avantgarde film biopolitics

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Death 24 times a second: the tension between movement and stillness in the cinema.

The cinema recently, in 1995, celebrated its 100th birthday and now, like the rest of us is hurrying towards another major temporal marker: 2000. These markers may be, and perhaps should be, simple celebrations of survival but they are also moments when the transitions, upheavals and profound changes that have overtaken the cinema in recent years acquire dramatic, public, visibility. Critics, theorists and even the public at large suddenly focus their attention on the current 'state of the cinema'. This essay belongs very much to that kind of flurry of speculative activity. However, it is not about the new image generating technologies that are enhancing the 'millennial effect' hanging over the cinema at the moment. It derives from the presence of these technologies, the concepts and different ways of seeing that they bring with them and the way they affect critical perspectives on the cinema. That is, it is more about different ways of thinking about the cinema as it has been, in the past, than about ways in which the cinema is or will be changed in the future. Such an altered perspective may, itself, be a by-product of electronic and digital technologies. Thomas Elsaesser sums up the paradox:

'[The cinema] will remain the same and it will be utterly different... For the digital is not only a new system of post-production work and a new delivery system, or storage medium, it is the new horizon for thinking about cinema, which also means that it gives a vantage point beyond the horizon, so that we can, as it were, try to look back to where we actually are and how we arrived there. The digital can thus function as a time machine, a conceptual boundary as well as its threshold.'

Death and the cinema.

With the actual passing of time and the sudden impact of the 'digital', the cinema, which will be aged 105 in the year 2000, has assumed a new aura of 'oldness'. It is not simply this 'oldness' that has brought a sense of death to the cinema, although the passing of time has certainly brought the cinema/death relation into relief. As the cinema has always had the ability to capture the appearance of life and preserve it after death, it is perhaps only the ironies of this property that are, now, becoming more apparent, more visible or analysable. From this angle, tension between movement and stillness is essential to the cinema as a technology and as an illusion. But on another, more metaphoric, level the stillness/movement tension coincides with the cinema's capacity to create an illusion of life out of the presence of death. But there is another aspect to the stillness/movement tension that is not specific to the cinema. As a medium, which always has been, and still is, subject to the demands of story telling, the cinema shares the tension between movement and stillness that is characteristic of narrative itself. Again, the present moment, with its attraction to endings, with the threat of 'ending' hanging over the cinema itself, brings with it an extra awareness of the death like properties of narrative closure. Inevitably, such a conjuncture shifts the attention of the psychoanalytically influenced critic away from a preoccupation with the erotic as the propelling force of narrative towards death. The death drive, as

a propelling force of narrative, starts to merge with the cinema's stillness, its own death-like properties. With the arrival of new technologies, new ways of consuming and perceiving the cinematic image have become available, giving new visibility to the cinema's inherent stillness. The individual frame, the projected film's best kept secret, can now be revealed, by anyone, at the simple touch of the relevant button.

These themes, stillness/movement in cinema and in narrative, the impact of new technologies, have combined to give (me, at least) an altered perspective on death, the cinema and Freud's concept of the death-drive. In this essay, I have selected only certain aspects of the issues at stake, concentrating on the death-drive in narrative structure to create a backdrop for my argument about death in the cinema as such. My main point of reference will be Hollywood's mode of story telling during the studio system period. Hollywood managed to transcend movements and epochs to establish itself as the cinema, if only for a few decades, and it is probably the decay and diffusion (in the 60s) of its characteristic industrial system of production, distribution and exhibition that, in popular imagination, sounded the death-knell of the cinema. The studio system is synonymous with the star system, and the great stars who fronted for it, its icons and emblems, have died themselves only to be threatened with resurrection by computer generated simulation. I will end the essay with Marilyn Monroe, not only as an extreme example of the star system and its condensation with an emblematic femininity, but as a star whose actual death coincided with the death of the system that had made her a star.

Although new technologies figure as a starting point for this essay, most of it consists of two detours, returning to their impact on the perception and consumption of cinema at the very end.

A. The first detour.

1. Stillness becomes movement: cinema and narrative.

As everyone knows, the cinema consists of a series of still frames, in sequence, on a strip of celluloid. When actions are filmed and then projected at the speed of 24 (give or take) frames per second, they then give the spectating eye an illusion of natural movement. This paradox lies at the heart of many debates about the cinema's ontology and carries over into its specificity as a narrative form.

The excitement of 'the movies' extends into a chain reaction out of this initial animation of the still frame. Once the picture comes alive, the illusory movement of the frames merges into the movements inside the shot. Concentrated very often, especially in stories, into the movement of its human characters, movements accumulate from shot to shot, merging into sequences and scenes. These movements, from shot to shot and from scene to scene, may then merge with the overall movement of narrative itself. The frame, the cinema's latent stillness, is mobilised and woven into the sequence of shots, the chain-like structure characteristic of narrativity attaches itself easily to the cinema's affinity with sequence. And a particular story, its fiction and its characters, then makes up its own movement, with excitements, suspense, drive etc., animating what would otherwise be an interesting, but inert, pattern.

Of course, narrative, its characteristic movements and its varying patterns, exists in its own right, outside the cinema, pre-existing the cinema. Peter Brooks, in his analysis of narrative movement and stillness, makes a distinction between its serial nature, its chain-like formation, and its movement, which, he suggests, is activated by desire:

'The description of narrative needs metonymy (the figure of contiguity, combination and the syntagmatic relation) the figure of linkage in the signifying chain: precedence and consequence, the movement from one detail to another, the

movement towards totalisation under the mandate of desire.'

And he locates this, activating, element of narrativity within a psychoanalytic dimension, also restoring the temporal dimension to narrative structure that tended to disappear in structuralist distrust of linearity:

'Lacan helps us to understand how the aims and imaginings of desire move us from the realm of basic drives to highly elaborated fictions. Desire necessarily becomes textual by way of a specifically narrative impulse, since desire is metonymy, a forward drive in the signifying chain, an insistence on meaning towards the occulted objects of desire.'

Although, the drive forward towards meaning and the resolution of desire are key elements in plotting narrative, stillness is its essential counterpoint. In the simplest terms, now a cliché of basic narrative theory, an initial point of stasis is activated into a process of movement and change which returns to a same yet different stasis at the end. However slight, compared to the length and events of the story as a whole those points of stasis may be, they still mark out, or book-end, the space of change and transformation. For instance, in traditional folk-tales, the two points of stasis may be literally rendered by:

a) The home, static like the beginning of the story itself, that the hero leaves

And:

c) The new, grander, home the hero establishes with the princess which 'settles' both his movement and that of the story

While the movement between the two is marked by:

b) The path of his journey from one to another, the road along which he travels which literally figures the process of narrative change and transformation

Closure, the final stasis, is realised as 'wedding' and the subsequent establishment of a new home and a new family. This is the kind of story analysed by Vladimir Propp in his *Morphology of the Folk Tale*. And although its 'rite of passage' narrative may not be relevant to the urbanised twentieth century, the power of its structure and the importance of marking 'The End' as (sexual) stasis has been passed on, like a family legacy, to twentieth century popular cinema. But the 'happy end' with which this story comes to rest is built on top of the villain's grave. His death, the resolution of the story's mobilisation as conflict, prefigures the hero's wedding so that both 'death' and 'wedding' realise the abstract necessity of narrative closure.

2. Movement becomes stillness: narrative and the 'death drive'.

Although this conference has used the term 'death drive' in its title, it is important to remember that James Strachey chose to translate Freud's concept *Trieb* into English as 'instinct' in preference to 'drive' which had been used previously. In his 1920 essay 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', Freud discusses the instinct which overwhelms the pleasure principle, seeking to find a way back to 'an earlier state of things' to the inorganic and ultimately, he argues, to death. Throughout the essay, the stimulation to movement, inherent in the instinct, jostles with its aim to return, to rediscover the stillness from which it originally departed. Reading the essay, especially in the context of its relevance

to narrative, the old term 'drive' takes on an extra resonance. Peter Brooks has described Freud's concept of the death instinct (drive) as his 'master plot' and has used it to analyse the problem of narrative's own drive to find a return to stillness and the inorganic after its initial animation under the aegis of desire. Freud's own use of metaphor provides another dimension to the 'plotting' of the death instinct. across narrative event and narrative pattern. As these instincts are always striving to return to a previous state and are fundamentally conservative in nature, they assume, as a disguise, the appearance of movement, of progress and change:

'Conservative instincts are therefore bound to give a deceptive appearance of being forces towards change and progress, whilst in fact they are merely seeking to reach an ancient goal by paths alike old and new...it would be a contradiction to the conservative nature of the instincts if the goal of life were a state of things which had never yet been attained. On the contrary, it must be an old state of things, an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous paths along which its development leads.'

In this paragraph, Freud's use of metaphor, invoking 'paths' and 'departure' alongside 'return' and 'initial state', resonates with the topographies of narrative, suggesting that life itself is subject to similar patterns. These are the elements that allow Peter Brooks to perceive a 'master plot' at stake:

'We emerge from reading 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' with a dynamic model that structures ends (death, quiescence, non-narratability) against beginnings (Eros, stimulation into tension, the desire of narrative) in a manner that necessitates the middle as a detour, as struggle toward the end under the compulsion of imposed delay, as an arabesque in the dilatory space of the text.'

The type of narrative that ends with marriage, with the hero's foundation of a new home symmetrical to the one he left, evokes stasis through its topography: the home as 'journey's end'. The movement of adventure etc. has returned to stillness and, in some sense, there is a metaphoric aspect to the story's depiction of its ending. But, as Peter Brooks points out, with the end of a story realised as death, the metonymy of the narrative chain, of its journey through the space of telling, finds a vivid realisation in metaphor. Narrative end and human end coalesce. He points out that narrative 'ending' not only implies the silence and stillness associated with death, but that this death-like property of 'the end' may well literally be figured by a final death in the narrative. He says:

'The more we inquire into the problem of ends, the more it seems to compel an inquiry into its relation to the human end.'

In 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', Freud gives a considerable amount of attention to the difficulty of relating the death drive to the pleasure principle, particularly, of course, the sexual instincts. His final opposition is not, as previously, between ego-instincts and sexual instincts but between life and death instincts. This tension recurs with the problem of endings. For instance, Hollywood has been derided throughout its history for following the convention of the 'happy end', marked, at least in popular imagination, by a final kiss which fades out to 'The End'. But some darker genres, particularly gangster pictures and film-noir, could mark 'The End' by death. However, there is also, obviously, room for an attraction between the two, which allows the sexual drive and the death drive to form a narrative alliance in the 'dying together' ending. For instance, in King Vidor's melodramatic Western *Duel in the Sun*, the doomed lovers (Gregory Peck and Jennifer Jones) having shot each other, kiss before dying in each others arms. And the movie ends.

B. The second detour.

1. Stillness in movement: time and the cinema.

As everyone knows, the cinema consists of a series of still frames, in sequence, on a strip of celluloid. When actions are filmed and then projected at the speed of 24 (give or take) frames per second, they then give the spectating eye an illusion of natural movement. This paradox lies at the heart of many debates about the cinema's ontology and carries over into its specificity as a narrative form.

I argued, in the previous section, that cinema's objective alliance with narrativity absorbed and concealed its essential stillness, its existence as a series of still frames (photogrammes) on a strip of celluloid. Here lies an important difference between the movement of narrative as such and that specific to cinematic narrative. The cinema can only maintain its illusion of mobility by suppressing its inherent stillness. As a medium for story telling, it is vulnerable to the tension between its material base and the drive of narrative. Stillness becomes its secret, its repressed and then comes to present a trouble, a difficulty, for film theory that I will return to later. On the other hand, avant-garde film has consistently exposed cinema's stillness and given visibility to the frame, taking pleasure in the fact that there is more to cinema than movement, or, indeed, narrativity. As Peter Kubelka said in an interview with Jonas Mekas:

'Cinema is not movement. This is the first thing. Cinema is not movement. Cinema is a projection of stills – which means images which do not move - in a quick rhythm. And you give the illusion of movement, of course, but this is only a special case.'

But, of course, for most people, this is not a special case. Cinema as illusion of movement is the primary, often the only, way in which it is experienced. For most people, cinema is the movies, in which the excitement of the moving image merges with the excitement of the visualised story, literally moving along, unfolding on the screen across time and space. For this sense of excitement, the eruption of stillness is anathema.

In the first instance, the collapse of the illusion of movement may simply be that: a breakdown of the cinema as a story-telling device. But narrative cinema, unlike written or oral narratives, has a double time structure. Conflicting temporalities lie at the heart of cinema creating a contradiction or a fundamental duality:

1. There is the moment of registration, the moment when the image was inscribed by light onto photosensitive material passing in front of the lens. This is the indexical aspect of the cinematic sign and, in common, of course, with the still photograph, represents a 'there-and-then-ness'.
2. Just as the still frame has to be absorbed into the movement of narrative, so does the moment of registration have to lose itself in the temporality of the narrative and its fiction. There is a presence, a 'here-and-now-ness' in cinema's story telling.

Narrative asserts its own temporality. But the cinema does not have the complexity or flexibility of language and its grammar. Its preferred temporalities are sequentiality or simultaneity and its here-and-now-ness, its immediacy, is part of its appeal. The difficulty that the moving image has with tense, its clumsy flashback devices or calendar leaves flipping forward, are familiar to all moviegoers. Sometimes the ambiguities of tense may be exploited for aesthetic purposes, for instance, in *Last Year at Marienbad*. But these devices represent uncertainty about the status of time within the story and, however sophisticated it might be, the there-and-then-ness of the film's original moment, its moment of registration, stays hidden.

Jean Epstein, avant-garde filmmaker and early theorist of the cinema, evolved the concept of photogenie as the essence of the cinema. While he argues that cinema's essence is in keeping with the essential mobility of time, 'only the mobile aspect of things, beings and souls can be photogenic' he also draws attention to the cinema's double temporality: 'On screen, we re-see what the cinema has already seen'. But the irony is that the cinema can only record 'the mobile apex of things', and re-present them to us projected on the screen, by means of a sequence of still images with spaces between them.

Epstein's Soviet contemporary, Dziga Vertov, made *The Man with the Movie Camera* in 1929. Among the many beautiful and interesting devices in this documentary record of filming everyday life in Moscow, one stands out in the context of this argument. The man with the movie camera is filming a white horse as it draws a carriage of new arrivals from the station to their hotel. The horse is moving briskly, at a canter. Suddenly, at a moment when the horse fills the frame and its movement is, in a sense, the subject of the image, the film comes to a halt. The horse seems to shift in time into the 'there-and-then-ness' of the still photograph. This frozen image is more magical, it suddenly seems, than the illusion of movement itself. The spectators' look, one moment casually following the horse's movement, is, the next moment, arrested. The bustle of the city, its continuity and presence, falls away. Vertov then takes the film out of the street, and re-locates it in the editing room where it becomes a simple strip of frames in Elisaveta Svilova's hands.

2. Stillness in the moving image: death in and of the cinema.

In his book *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes discusses the still photograph's relation to time. As the photographic image embalms a moment of time, it also embalms an image of life, which will eventually become an image of life after death. In numerous passages he associates the photographic image with death. ('Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe.') But he doubts that cinema can generate such an inexorable feeling of 'that has been'. It loses its relation to time, to the inscribed presence of the past; movement and fiction disguise the presence of the past. Christian Metz also argues that the immobility and silence of the still photograph, with its associated connotation of death, disappears in the moving image.

Raymond Bellour paraphrases Roland Barthes' distinction between the photograph and the cinema saying:

'On one side there is movement, the present, presence; on the other, immobility, the past, a certain absence. On one side, the consent of illusion; on the other a quest for hallucination. Here a fleeting image, one that seizes us in flight; there a completely still image that cannot be fully grasped. On this side, time doubles life; on that, time returns to us brushed by death.'

Again following Barthes, he points out that the spectator cannot halt time in the cinema. But he goes on to discuss the effect that the appearance of a still photograph, within a fiction film, might have:

'What happens when the spectator of a film is confronted with a photograph? ... Without ceasing to advance its own rhythm, the film seems to freeze, to suspend itself, inspiring in the spectator a recoil from the image that goes hand in hand with a growing fascination.'

And he then ends by saying:

'As soon as you stop the film, you begin to find time to add to the image. You start to reflect differently on film, on

cinema. You are led towards the photogram - which is itself a step further in the direction of the photograph. In the frozen film (or photogram), the presence of the photograph burst forth, while other means exploited by the mise-en-scene to work against time tend to vanish. The photo thus becomes a stop within a stop, a freeze frame within a freeze frame; between it and the film from which it emerges, two kinds of time blend together, always inextricable but without becoming confused. In this the photograph enjoys a privilege over all other effects that make the spectator, this hurried spectator, a pensive one as well.'

According to Bellour, although a photograph in a cinematic fiction allows the space for 'the pensive spectator' to come into being, its presence directs thought at the nature of the cinema itself. It does not allow space for the photograph to generate a punctum (the photograph's power to move its spectator through a detail, unintentional and inexplicable). Garrett Stewart, writing in the same (On Film and Photography) issue of *Wide Angle*, follows a similar line of argument, suggesting that the presence of a photograph does tend to conjure up consciousness of the cinema's materiality:

'Does photographic stasis within film inevitably reinforce the power of motion in screened pictures or can it sometimes dynamite and anatomize that illusion of movement? Doesn't the held image occasionally remind us that the stillness of photography, its halt and its hush, is never entirely shaken loose by sequential movement in and as film but merely lost to our notice? If and when this founding stillness is called to view may it not be understood a sign of death?'

He concludes however that the 'death work stays in the main hidden, glimpsed only in local ruptures of a film's duration.'

Garrett Stewart suggests that cinema tolerates stillness more easily when the photograph or freeze frame has a particular narrative significance, for instance, a death:

'Death within the plot tends to thematise - and so to absorb - the disruptive potential that could otherwise sabotage the technological deceptions of the cinematic continuum.'

He points out that if a death coincides with an ending, it is quite frequently rendered with stillness, freeze-frame or photograph. Here, Peter Brooks' comments on the way 'The End' may be literally realised as death, the point at which metonymy shifts to metaphor, finds a further extension in the cinema. Just as narrative's return to stasis may be marked by the death of its protagonist, the movement of film halts, marking both narrative stasis and the death of its protagonist with a rare acknowledgement of its own stillness. Narrative stasis, death and the photogramme coincide to return the animate to the inanimate, the organic to the inorganic, at 'The End', with the further implication a point 'beyond narratability' has been reached. The silence of the ending is that of death and also its ultimate 'beyond-ness'. When the cinematic repressed, its stillness, does achieve some kind of visibility it is also naturalised through the power of metaphor.

Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960) tells the story of a young photographer whose aesthetic, and indeed perverse, aim is to capture not only the moment of death, but also the moment of terror at the moment of death, on the moving image. To this end, he murders three young women in the course of the story but cannot capture the perfect image he has in mind. The film ends with his suicide, a performance implying that his aesthetic aim, to capture the image of death on film, had always been impossible. He captures the image of his own death with still cameras, each one triggered by a trip wire as he runs past, like a Muybridge experiment. The still thus represents a return to the inanimate, to the 'inorganic' perhaps, at any rate to the 'before' of cinema. More fancifully, to paraphrase Freud, Mark with his

suicide recorded by a series of still photographs, returns the cinema to its old state of things, in this case its proto-cinematic state or 'the initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed...'

Animating the inanimate.

I have been working through a series of homologies that link the Freudian concept of the death drive, the end in narrative structure, the fictional protagonists' death and the freezing of the moving image. Ending, death and stasis seem to converge or condense in an aesthetically satisfying manner. The year before he wrote 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', Freud wrote 'The Uncanny.' 'The Uncanny' is also concerned with relations between the living and the dead, the organic and the inorganic, the animate and the inanimate. Freud used Ernst Jentsch's original article on the topic (published in 1906) as his starting point. Jentsch had noted the sense of uncanniness aroused by an apparent blurring of boundaries between the animate and the inanimate particularly in relation to representations of the human body. Having noted the uncanny impression caused by wax-works, he goes on to say:

'This peculiar effect makes its appearance even more clearly when imitations of the human form not only reach one's perception, but when on top of everything else they appear to be united with certain bodily or mental functions...for example life size automata that perform complicated tasks, blow trumpets, dance and so forth very easily give one a feeling of unease. The finer the mechanism and the truer to nature the formal reproduction, the more strongly will the special effect also make its appearance.'

And he goes on to comment on ETA Hoffman's story 'The Sandman' which Freud, of course, takes up and expands in his essay. As Jentsch unfolds his argument he discusses the way inorganic objects may suddenly take on anthropomorphic features and how this phenomenon condenses with belief in ghosts, animistic spirits etc. all of which belong to a category 'intellectual uncertainty'. In Freud's most interesting reflection on Jentsch's essay, he points out the particular 'intellectual uncertainty' with which the human mind, even the most scientific, faces, or rather fails to face, death.

Here there is perhaps another set of homologies that are relevant to the cinema. The cinema literally transforms the living human body into its inorganic replica. Once projected, these static images then become animated reproducing the living actions once recorded by the camera. In keeping with the double temporality discussed earlier, there is, therefore, also another doubling: the recording of life on inanimate celluloid and the illusion of life recreated on the cinema screen. And the homologies extend: from inorganic to inanimate to still to death and from organic to animate to moving to alive. When blurred, these boundaries start to affect each other with uncanniness. The cinema has, of course, by and large worked hard to suppress spectator consciousness of this phenomenon. But a sudden sense of the uncanny may occur incidentally, or accidentally, half glimpsed with a particularly striking close-up or gesture of a favourite star now long dead. The screen image turns into a perfectly preserved death mask or veronica. Barthes, in *Camera Lucida*, acknowledges this sensation and cites it as one of the rare, if not the only occasion, in which the cinema can, for him, have the still photograph's power to reproduce death in life.

At this point, there is a divergence between questions affecting the cinema as such, the problem of the end, and questions for the cinema arising from the Jentsch/Freud concept of the uncanny. This aspect of the uncanny is to do with the human body and its life-like representations that Freud discusses in his detailed analysis of 'The Sandman'. In the story, the hero falls in love with the beautiful automaton Coppelia. This figure, mechanical, technically perfect, fascinating, is exactly like but unlike the living human body. In her analysis of Villiers de l'Isle Adam's *On the Eve of the Future*, a novel about an exquisite automaton created by a fictionalised Thomas Edison, Annette Michelson

suggests an analogy between the cinema and the beautiful automaton. Hadaly the mechanical woman with whom the hero falls in love is, as she puts it, 'the phantasmatical ground of the cinema itself'. Hadaly creates a transition from the fantasy of the beautiful automaton to the beautiful women featured in the magic shows of Georges Melies, living but subject to the mechanical tricks of the cinema. This is not woman as an object of cinematic iconography, but the female body 'in an ultimate, phantasmatic mode of representation as cinema.'

The Hollywood film industry perfected an image of stylised femininity, highly produced, by the most consummate artifice. Every aspect of performance, movement, gesture, look and so on, had to have an appearance of the natural and spontaneous which concealed timing and rhythm that suited the cinematic spectacle. (This may have been true also for male stars but their style tended to be more underplayed and more naturalised.) The female star may thus be, on the one hand, close to the uncaniness of the beautiful automaton: she merges with the stillness of the cinema, its essential stasis. On the other hand, her beauty and fascination distract the viewer from thinking about the actual mechanics of the cinema, about its essential stillness. All human movement recorded on camera may be compared, when animated by the projector, to the movement of the automaton, but the great female movie icons add the final veneer of fetishistic glamour to the illusion of movement.

Back to the future

Nowadays, the cinema is more likely to be viewed electronically than on celluloid. Does the cinema's new relationship with electronic and digital technologies affect modes of spectatorship? The viewer can now control the unfolding of the cinematic spectacle, fragment the story, breakdown the shots, fetishise a sequence with endless repetition, slow down a gesture or a look and perhaps discover, hidden behind the coherent flow of images another relationship to the figures performing, now, on the small screen.

Thomas Elsaesser discussing the aesthetic breaks between the digital and the cinematic makes the following point. He says:

'Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*, speaks of the way a photograph involves the viewer in a certain kind of presence and absence, what he named the sense of 'having been there'. The sense as he analyses it is also a tense, joining a perfectum with a present, in a conjunction mark of place and time.'

Elsaesser then comments on cinema's double temporality 'the tense structure in which (the cinema) holds the viewer, a 'here and now' which is always already a 'there and then'. New technologies create new possibilities of time/space relation, a new consciousness of the deitic, between viewer and image. Although Elsaesser is reflecting primarily on digitally composed images, his emphasis on tense and new possibilities of perceiving complex temporalities is relevant to my argument here. With the electronic or even more, the digitalised versions of old films something happens which works to break down Barthes' insistence that the cinema can have no presence or punctum. ('Do I add images to the movies? I think not. I don't have time'.) And gives a new significance to his single reference to Bazin in *Camera Lucida*:

'The screen as Bazin has remarked is not a frame but a hideout; the man or woman who emerges, emerges living'; juxtaposed with his reflection that 'there is always something of the Resurrection about the photograph'.

Paradoxically, these attributes of the hidden, secret, material base of the moving image, its animation out of the inanimate stillness of the photograph is easily accessible through digital and electronic technology. As the great days

of the star system are long gone and the stars are now dead, their artificial, stylised performances, have now, literally become ghostly. Watching these movies now is to feel the reality of Jean Luc Godard's answer to the question: What is cinema?

'Cinema is death 24 times a second.'

1 Thomas Elsaesser: 'Digital Cinema: Delivery, Event, Time' in Elsaesser and Hoffmann (eds.): *Cinema Futures: Cain, Able or Cable? The Screen Arts in the Digital Age*. Amsterdam University Press. Amsterdam 1998 Ps. 204-5

2 Peter Brooks: *Reading for the Plot. Design and Intention in Narrative* Vintage New York 1985 p 91

3 *ibid.* p 105

4 Sigmund Freud: 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920) in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volume XVIII The Hogarth Press London 1954-74* p 38

5 Brooks *op.cit.* p 103

6 *ibid.* p. 95

6 Jonas Mekas; 'Interview with Peter Kubelka' in P.A.Sitney (ed.) *Film Culture Reader* Praeger Publishers New York 1970

7 Roland Barthes: *Camera Lucida* Vintage Press London 1993 p.96

8 Raymond Bellour: 'The Pensive Spectator' in *Wide Angle* Volume 9 number 1 p 6

9 *ibid.*

10 *ibid.* p 10

11 Garrett Stewart: 'Photogravure: Death Photography and Film Narrative' *ibid.* p. 13

12 Ernst Jentsch: 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny' *Angelaki* 2:1

13 Elsaesser *op.cit.* p.

14 Barthes *op.cit.* p.