

COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINE IS DEARTHA NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

> Faculty of Fine Art Print Department

THE REPRESENTATION OF TIME in regard to the work of Resnais, Syberberg and Kiefer

by SINEAD HOGAN

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INTRODUCTION

In this Thesis I intend to investigate the demands that the representation of non-linear time puts on the image and on the visual artist. I will set out the philosophical reasons for the interest in time with certain developments in the cinema of Alain Resnais, Hans Jurgen Syberberg and the paintings of Anselm Kiefer. I will analyse how these artists structure their language to deal with the complexities inherent in such subject matter.

<u>CHAPTER ONE</u> <u>THE PHILOSOPHY OF TIME:</u> <u>A REVIEW OF WESTERN THOUGHT</u>

EARLY GREEK PHILOSOPHY

Emerging from chaos, according to early Greek mythology metaphysics, Ge, or Mother Earth have birth to Uranus, the Uranus saw his children as a threat and banished universe. them to the nether world. One of these children(1), Cronus was released by the angry earth mother and went on to castrate his father, Uranus. As he took over the rule it was foretold to him that one of his children would destroy him so he proceeded to swallow them as soon as they were His wife substituted a stone for her third son, Zeus, born. and hid him where he was brought up secretly until the time on Cronus came for him to wage war who subsequently disappeared from myth and "The stage was set for the ordering of the gods and their place in the consciousness of the Greeks."

Time for the early Greeks was equated essentially with life. Chronos (also Oceanos, the River-God who encompassed the universe) was the original time-God, creator and destroyer This time-conscious philosophy of the Greeks of everything. stemming from Chronos, a myriad of Time-Gods and saw, Goddesses who represented all aspects of life. As important as the all-encompassing Chronos/Oceanos there was Aion, God of long periods including lifespans. There were also gods of particular types of time who were responsible for order and balance between the constant play of opposites that composed existence; Goddesses such as Ananke (Necessity), (Justice), Heimarmene (Allotted fate) and Nemesis Dike They even had Gods of particular crucial (Retribution). moments; Fortuna, the blind Goddess of chance/fate, Nike (Victory) Goddess of that mysterious moment when the scales tip in favour of one or the other conbatants in war or competitive games, Kairos, God of that moment of lucky coincidence of circumstance/chance. A god that has come to have great significance for thinking now, was also amongst other things a "god of the moment when a sudden silence fell upon a social gathering"(2).

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Time is the ultimate archetypal experience and all cultures provide themselves with myths, symbols and allegory to contain their concept of the structure of time.

of the earliest Greek philosophers (c 500 b.c.) One Heraclitus believed in a doctrine of eternal flux which was the ground for the possibility of the mingling of opposites. Fate was a world order stemming from a concept of 'entanfiodromia' which was the creating force of all things, law where an entity reaching its extreme state of fullness, jumps over into its opposite.(3)

While Heraclitus believed that every thing changes, the philosopher who followed him Parmenides (c 450 b.c.) maintained that nothing changes.

Possibly, akin to the disappearance of Chronus from myth, it is from the philosophy of Parmenides that Western philosophy took the concept of the indestructability of substance. This became a fundamental concept in western thought. It is the philosophy of Parmenides that is also accredited with the invention of logic, or as Bertrand Russell points out, what he really invented was a metaphysics based on logic, as opposed to the senses which were deceptive. This was to be the driving thrust of W. Philosophy for more than 2,000 It was with Plato that the ground of Western years. philosophy fully came into existence. He combined the conclusions of Parmenides' philosophy of eternal timeless reality and Heraclitus' philosophy of impermanence to produce a philosophy based on the concept of knowledge as intellect rather than sense/perception. Above and outside the temporal universe were the essential ideas which could not be realised in transient reality: a timeless world of a transient world in "moving ideas and likeness of eternity." Time became a likeness "moving according to The philosophy of absolutes and ideals emerged as number." opposed to phenomena seen as pale reflections of plato's forms (Gridea = form). The languages of Geometry and Mathematics were conceived to describe this reality.

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WESTERN RATIONALITY

Rational thought became dominant in Western philosophy producing western science, and time as a concept became subjectivised. The history of Western philosophy directly gave rise to Western scientific thought and the concept of time in science parallelled philosophical ideas. Time in rational thought is linear with the present representing a point

between past and future, which was the line on which time could be calculated as movement, velocity; Time was essentially a measurable concept of distance between spaces. In physics, Newton expanded the linear view of time and this was a dominant idea concreting itself with the discovery of entropy which led to the idea of the "arrow of time" and the irreversible orientation of time from past to future.

This linear approach was also fundamental to Darwin's ideas and is the essence of positivism in all its forms, such as the belief in progress and technology, that inform the belief system that underpins Western Science. With Einstein a fundamental change was introduced with the theory of relativity, however even he negated the full importance of experienced time that had been subjugated in Western thought(4), because it was beyond the scope of physics and the thought that gave rise to it to analyse the phenomenon It was a phenomenon that required a of experienced time. metaphysical approach.

An interesting philosopher of Time is Augustine who claimed that God stood outside the stream of time in which all time is eternally present to God and that only the present really is. He saw three concepts of time/present as experience of the soul

- (1) a present of things past/memory
- (2) a present of things present/sight, perception.
- (3) a present of thing future/expectation.

He held that time was subjective to the human mind and that there could be no time without a created being, (here he is seen to have anticipated Kant). Augustine, however, stands out in his acceptance of defeat in the face of the concept of time and acknowledges the paradoxes inherent in its contemplation.

"What then is time? If no-one asks of me, I know, if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not" (5) It is this acknowledgment of the difficulty in thinking time that makes him stand out from western philosophy as a whole. By relegating time to a measurable entity, western rational thought had avoided dealing with time as experienced. When Augustine to understand time took on as this lived experience; as memory of the past, perception of the present and expectation of the future, he was led to call it "That most entangled enigma."

THE RETEMPORALISATION OF THOUGHT

It was the conceptual rediscovery of time in late 1920 (what B. Russell calls - in prejudice-the revolt against reason) thought of philosophers such through the as Bergson, Husserl, Benjamin and particularly Heidegger that marks a change in the direction of Western thinking. These philosophies saw the negation of time as evidence of the radical untruths and misleading directions inherent in thinking the scientific, rational approach.

Bergson objected to the linear view of time which he saw as spatialised time, where the present is a point with no dimensions, representing a break separating past and future. He thought that movement was distinct from the space covered: "space covered is past, movement is present, the act of covering" (6)

Bergson saw time as duration where "not only is the instant an immobile section of movement, but movement is a mobile section of duration, that is of the whole", movement expresses the change that is duration.

For him duration implies both the preservation of the past and the anticipation of future. In Bergson's philosophy intuition is dominant over intellect. The latter he sees as the force in man which separates matter into distinct things when in reality there is nothing only an endless stream of becoming. He sees space and time as being essentially dissimilar, with space being illusory and time being the essential characteristic of life.

"Whenever anything lives there is open somewhere, a registration which time is being inscribed"(7)

For Walter Benjamin the idea of non-time "the authentic moment of an innovative present interrupts the continuum of History and breaks away from its homogenous flaws." He built a philosophy around an idea of the crystallisation of the momentary event. In his philosophy we can see a momentation of the forward pointing arrow of time or the axis of "non-time" towards a radical re-orientation towards the past, anticipating the future through a remembrance of the past. He pointed to a way to continue tradition and He saw surrealisim as an aesthetic innovation at once. attempt to use time in space "to transform the ineluctable flux of history into a world of mystical presents." "Ambiguity displaced authenticity."(8)

He used, drawing on his personal tradition of the Jewish religion, cabalistic approaches to the exegis of texts. This is a not such as dissimilar approach to that of hermeneutics that came about through the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger.

From Husserl came the call for objective or scientific truth to be re-grounded in human experience. Through the philosophy of phenomenology the classical category of substance was replaced by that of relation with the world. The human being and the world of phenomena are essentially in relation; The world is an experience before it is an idea. This sends echoes back to the pre-rational Greek philosophy, pre Platonic ideals and essences.

Through Husserl and expanded radically with Heidegger, was manifested the acknowledgement of a crisis in thought that was leading to the dominance of positivism and technology. Such thinking was seen to have lost its grounding in human existence, in its origins, and to have proceeded in a future

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orientated manner with a disregard for tradition and history (the past)(9). This enabled it to generate possibilities detrimental to human being.

Thinking had become unrooted from its relation as lived experience of a world that is composed of complex, multilayered, trancendental structures. The understanding aspect of reason as inquiry had been subordinated to instrumental rationalist reason.

Heidegger offered a radical (at the root) deconstruction of such western thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Kant, Schelling, Hegel and Nietzsche, towards a disclosure of the "unthought." This "unthought" origin was "The phenomenological horizon of the temporal experience..."(10) he pointed out that "time has ceased to be anything other than velocity, instastaneousness and simultaneity, and time as history has vanished from the lives of all peoples"(11) He believed that a separation had occured between reason and existential spirit which resulted in a lack of the reflective self-awareness in people.

"We are too late for the Gods and too early for Being."(12)

In calling for a radical unthinking towards the beginning and origin of thought, he saw that originally the "perspective governing the disclosure of being was time" but that in its development this perspective was hidden; what was "ousia"-permanent presence became "ousia tis" - the now, the actual moment. The fundamental temporal essence of Greek thought remained undeveloped in Western philosophy and had caused its crisis.

Heidegger, referring often to Heraclitus and Parmenides analysed Nietzsche's enigmatic concept of the eternal return(13) where he explained how the "will itself wills passing"

He was to utilise the system of hermeneutics, originally used as a way towards the exegis of Biblical and sacred texts (ie. The Cabala) which through their history had received various interpretations. It is a system which enables the recuperation of texts and spiritual activities which is what Heidegger wanted for Western Thought.

"Hermeneutics is the art of deciphering indirect meaning" (14)

Heidegger saw the hermeneutic approach as one that demands the kind of thinking that demands to be thought. In other words, we interpret that which is already given, in which the answer already exists but from which the meaning has withdrawn (hermetic). What we are looking for is in fact what is calling on us to think; we do not create it by thinking of it, it is what calls on us to think. To take the right direction, the "path of thinking", we must already know what we are looking for.

"Every way of thinking takes its way already within the total relation of being and man's nature, or else it is not thinking at all."(15)

This is opposed to logic which considers thinking to be the assertion of something about something. The hermeneutic "way of thinking" does not follow a linear, logical route; instead it is structurally circular, where "only...by thoughtful questioning, are we on the move, on the way. This movement is what allows the way to come forward" (16)

Heidegger saw interpretation as a dialogue with a work and what it is saying. The speakers in the dialogue are involved within that of which they are speaking, as opposed to making assertions from an external perspective "such involvement is the soul of dialogue it leads the speakers into the unspoken"(17)

This is the return of Hermes, the messenger of the gods, the god of that moment when a sudden silence falls upon a social gathering.

"But why Time? Because in the beginning of Western philosophy the perspective governing the disclosure of being was time, though this perspective as such remained hidden and inevitably so" (18)

This re-emphasis on temporality is fundamental to a rethinking of western thought.(19)

Hermeneutics has been continued in the work of such modern thinkers as Paul Ricour who sees the need for human understanding to approach experience as a series of

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hermeneutic fields, where the philosophical claims for the absolute ceases and the possibility of multiple meanings opens up.

All these thinkers (Bergson, Heidegger, Benjamin, Ricour etc. have diverse and often opposing philosophies and philosophical conclusions but the connecting factor is that of the retemporalization of modern thinking; they see time as the neglected conceptual area in western thinking and the importance of its reinstatement as the horizon for all thought.

In scientific thought there seems to be a similar shift; the fundamental nature of matter has come into question with the classical concept of substance (particles, quanta) being replaced by the idea that nature is knowable only through its underlying patterns and wave forms - quantum physics, fractal geometry, theories of chaos etc.

Echoes of the Heraclitean fire?

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1: The others being the Titans, The Giants and The Cyclops.

2: Von Franz, M., <u>Time, Rhythm and Repose</u>, Thames and Hudson, 1978.

3: This is a fundamental concept to the Chinese I Ching and also dealt with in C. G. Jung's psychological theories. It is one of the essential concepts in philosophies concerned with change/chance.

4: Henderson, L.P. <u>The Fourth Dimension and non-euclidean</u> geometry in modern art. Princeton U.P. 1983.

5: St. Augustine, Confessions, Penguin 1983.

6: Quoted in <u>"Cinema 1, The movement image"</u> Gilles Deleuze Athlone Press.

7: Bergson, quoted in Cinema 1, The Movement Image

8: Quoted in <u>"Modern Movements in European Philosophy"</u> R. Kearney Manchester University Press.

9: Heidegger, Benjamin.

10: M. Heidegger, <u>"An introduction to Metaphysics"</u> Yale U.P. 1959.

11: Ibid, pg.37

12: Ibid.

13: M. Heidegger <u>"What is called Thinking?"</u> Harper and Row pg.93

14: P. Ricour, quoted in <u>"Modern Movements in European</u> <u>Philosophy</u>" R. Kearney.

15: Heidegger "What is called Thinking" pg.80.

16: Ibid pg.169

17: Ibid pg.178

18: Heidegger, M. An introduction to Metaphysics

19: "What is most thought provoking of our thought provoking times is that we are still not thinking" M. Heidegger <u>"What is called thinking"</u>

CHAPTER 2: THE ROLE OF CINEMA IN REPRESENTATION

THE "REPRODUCTION OF REALITY"

Cinema is a technological invention of the scientific materialism of the 20th Century. It is a direct product that stems from the concept of reproduction; which started with the woodcut, for the graphic image, print for the word and finally photography which appears to reproduce the 'actual' and has been taken as such and used (with print) to give rise to the communications and information industry.

However, it was with the invention of photography that reproduction was liberated from the direct hand of the artist and, paradoxically, created the possibility of an art of reproduction.(1) Film as art, however, is fundamentally different from other forms of reproduction. Technical reproductions of works of art remain reproductions, in that the authenticity, the aura of the art work is soley contained by the original.(2) With reproduction the quality of presence is depreciated and the reproduction remains a reproduction and hence a derivative image.

The 'actual' image as reproduced by means of film exists in this derivative sense. Walter Benjamin points this out when he uses the example of the effect (or non-effect) of a landscape as depicted in a film.(3)

The cult of the document as real, existing 'fact' is an absurd but largely unquestioned assumption that is prevalent in thinking towards cinema. It is the illusory effect of film that has been put to use to create news images that are treasured as guarding the facts, the 'truths', which are best appreciated by audiences when they are given the aura of being 'live'.(4)

The popularity of live action, news, direct images of suffering, pornography, sensationalist documentaries with "intimate" stories, public confessions and trials etc. show an appetite for voyeurism in the viewer that is being fed by a constant promotion of the illusion of film as reality. This encourages the use of the camera as an intrusive instrument turning private into public, and has led to a "documentary" industry that exists in a parasitical relationship to life.(5)

Cinema does not reproduce reality, as a cast does a sculpture, or a printing press, the word; the meaning of the word does not change with different appearances, a poem remains intact as itself whether printed mechanically, handwritten by the author or even in the script of a person who does not understand but directly copies.

Cinema is effect, impression rather than essence. It is representation rather than reproduction. Photography writing with light - is just that; a process which uses light to make an image. We relate to such an image because it provides a simulacrum of reality and appeals to a superficially visual bias in our perception of the world. This is the essence of the illusion that cinema trades on. The world is no less real to the blind, different but just as real.(6)

The myth of the 'real' photographic image is even more complicated than that, for we accept a still image obtained from a moving subject as "what is real", ie. The change in the way a galloping horse was depicted in painting due to the discovery of photography (Muybridge's sequences of the movements of a horse showing one leg always on the ground) With cinematography - writing with motion - The illusion was heightened and an ephemeral impression from the play of light and time could be reproduced. It was heightened to such an extreme that we have talk of film as a visualisation of our dreamworld and of its having the same language.

This notion of photographic reality is prevalent not only throughout Hollywood cinema but also through the European Art Film, in particular the French tradition (Bazin's "mummified time" and the call for the realist long shot etc.) If there is a possibility for art through film the actual essence of cinema must be diametrically opposed to this notion of photographic reality. It must see film as it actually is, as the most unnaturalistic medium. "Technical images are images not windows"(7)

As a development of modern technological thought, cinema is a phenomenon which can and has been analysed towards interpreting the attitudes of modern society, for example, the works of Benjamin, Barthes, Sontag and Deleuze, that if there is a way to overcome the abuses of technological thinking, while accepting the fact of the irreversability of technology (not in the sense of being unable to change but of not being able to go backwards and deny what already is) there is implied that there should be a way of using a technological medium to create art.

Technological thought at its fundamental, epistemological level gave rise originally to art as well as science, -(techne - Gk.[Heidegger]). It is not in technology, as a thing in itself apart from human thought that the fault lies but in the decisions in, and use of, technological thought and the process of thought as technology(8).

THE POTENTIAL OF MONTAGE

Art from mechanical reproduction must lie with the concept of taking reproduced images and effects and using them as material elements rather than as already given reality. This is the concept of film as montage/collage(9). When the false objectivity is revealed the camera has the possibility of showing images of one thing from diverse angles and different points of reference, all existing in contiguity. doubt, As Vilem Flusser sees it -Photography as phenomenological doubt.

"The practice of photography is anti-idealogical. Ideology is the assumption of a single point of view as preferential to all others"(10)

This is fundamental to the attraction that cinema and still photography had for the surrealists and the connecting concept between Benjamin's championing of surrealism and his thinking toward the possibilities for cinema.

The surrealists, the cubist collage aesthetic and the photomontage experiments of the dadaists are all involved in an analyses of the visual metaphor in a profoundly antiideological dialectic. Concurrently, in scientific thought Einstein declared that 'The simultaneity of separate events is relative and depends upon the frame of reference of the observer.'

the psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Jung had thrown subjectivity back into the foreground of experience. Jung's theories of synchronicity deal directly with the concept of integrating diverse temporal phenomena.

"Synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance namely a peculiar interdependance of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer on observers"

"Synchronistic events are acts of creation in time"(11) (- living metaphors?)

Similarly in literature, writers such as Proust, Joyce, Faulkner, Apollinaire, Eliot, deal with worlds where fragment and contradiction are part of what is seen as a paradoxically, disjointed whole. This is not a solipstic view of the world, which would be an ideology of the self but a view of the diversity of subjectivities which goes towards creating an objective world.

"Thirty spokes meet in the hub but the empty space between them is the essence of the wheel" - Lao Tse.

Akin to the way modern philosophy has been oriented towards a re-temporalisation of thought, Gilles Deleuze, in his philosophical analyses of cinema(12), argues that there is a fundamental crisis in cinema that is being dealt with by a temporalization of the image. The traditional action image of the cinema, which peaks with the Hollywood industry has been broken down. This action image was a 'movement image' but, when time ceases to be the measurement of movement and appears for and of itself (he quotes Hamlet's 'Time is out of joint') the subordination of time to movement has been reversed and the "time - image" appears. The time - image is a "co-existance of distinct durations, or level of durations." He points out that the cinematographic image is in the present but what is in the present is not

'represented'; the image must not be confused with what it represents. The type of "false continuity" that modern montage methods create give a effect of playing and analysing the passage and perception of time.

In the films of such as Welles, Resnais, Godard, Syberberg, images are connected by "irrational cuts" that reconstitute the documentary source, through false continuity, this creates a confrontational image between the external picture of the world and the internal images that develop.

Deleuze links the 'time - image' towards a development of an 'image of thought';(13) he sees modern cinema as an attempt to analyse itself (self-reflective), the world of thought, and memory (outside itself) towards "an unthought within thought"(14)

There is a pathologically powerful 'rule of cliche' in cinema which is what the thinking image is to deal with. He calls this an 'image - crystal', the crystallisation of layers of differently perceived time and thought, where time exists on many planes; past, present, future, personal times, shared time, collective memories etc. which rather than existing on the same linear plane, combine to create a complex, psrismatic structure of interjoining planes that intersect at significant points. This gives rise to a nonlinear perspective and offers a system of multiple meanings and interpretations.

It is in the work of Resnais where he sees that the fixed point (in relation to which "all the strata on sheets of past coexist and confront each other") disappears and there is a "coexistence of sheets of past, the present no longer even intervening as a centre of evocation."(15)

Resnais' work is a thinking image where, as Deleuze points out, Resnais says something ought to happen "around the image, behind the image and even inside the image" - this is what happens when the image becomes time - image. The world has become memory...."(16)

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1: W. Benjamin "The work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction." <u>Illuminations</u>, Fontana 1973.

2: "The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity" ibid. pg.220.

3: Ibid.

4: This is why, inherent in cinema, is a tool for propaganda; The appearance without essence of ideology, of facts, within a powerfully illusory form which appeals to the psychology and this takes effect as a 'truth' by feeding off the passivity that it engenders.

5: The pervasiveness of mass media in this role has given rise to a culture of the passive voyeur - Hitchcock's 'Rear window' -

6: Two of the greatest 'images' of the complexities of life have been created by the visually impaired - Homer and Joyce

7: Vilem Flusser "Towards a philosophy of photography, 1984 pg.6.

8: a) The irreversability of technology is accepted by Benjamin and Heidegger.

b) Resnais' placard in the procession of protesters

"It's regrettable that men's political intelligence is 100 times less developed than his scientific intelligence' "Hiroshima mon amour" Text Grove Press pg. 42.

9: "The evolution of the cinema, the conquest of its own essence or novelty, was to take place through montage, the mobile camera, and the emancipation of the viewpoint. The shot would stop being a spatial category and become a temporal one, and the section would no longer be immobile but mobile" - Deleuze, <u>Cinema 1</u> Athlone Press -

10: Flusser "Towards a Philosophy of Photography" pg.27.

11: C. G. Jung, <u>Collected works VIII</u> Routelege and Kegan Paul.

12: Deleuze Cinema 1 & 2 Athlone Press 1985

all quotes from above.

13: "In the screen there can be a brain, as in Resnais, or Syberberg's cinema. Cinema does not operate only with



linkages by rational cuts but by re-linkages or irrational
cuts." - Deleuze Cinema 2.

14: Deleuze's thinking on Cinema is directly related to Bergson's theories which he analyses, however there is also a direct link with Heidegger's philosophy of thinking here, the "unthought within thought" is directly from Heidegger who wrote

"What is <u>un</u>-thought is there" only as the un-<u>thought</u>. The more original the thinking the richer will be the what is unthought in it. The unthought is the greatest gift that thinking can bestow - what is called thinking pg.76.

Deleuze, <u>Cinema 2</u> pg.122.
 Ibid. Pg.119.

CHAPTER THREE

AN ANALYSIS OF "NIGHT AND FOG"

THE ROLE OF THE LISTS

It was this obsession with time and memory that Resnais brought to the film "Night and Fog"(1). His previous work had been short documentaries such as on Guernica and the Bibliotheque Paris; meditations National on types of collective memory. The title is a translation of "Nacht und Nabel" which was the phrase used in the concentration camps guards to designate those prisoners by the due for extermination three months after their arrival. It Hitler's statement from that who originated anyone 'endangered German Security' was to "vanish without trace(in the) Night and Fog" of the third Reich(2). Resnais' film was to be a testament to what occurred and to the victims, towards a retrieval of their memory from the 'Night and Fog' which had attempted to obliterate it. He recognised the essence of genocide was the obliteration of memory, for a race of people is that, in that they are related by the remembrance of a tradition.

To show not only the way the camps functioned but the way thinking functioned to make the camps possible, Resnais concentrated on the evocative power of the images of what was produced by the camp. The images became iconic (as has the film): they seek remembrance of what had created them.

Even a quiet country scene

Even a field with crops harvested and crows flying

Even a road with cows and people passing

Even a village fair may lead direct to a concentration camp(3)

Resnais uses a narration of lists that lets the things listed create their own signification, in a fashion of contradictory meaning and illusion while remaining as fragments of what was actual. A list of "ordinary names like any other on the map" that are now unlike any other; "Struthof, Oranienburg, Aushwitz, Belsen, Ravensbruch, Dachau"



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The basic mundane history of the camps he lists with the type of ordinary people it took to build them.

"Architects calmly design doorways to be entered only once". The lists of the different 'styles' of camp testify to the rational planning involved in their production but, with hindsight, in the historical context of what they now represent, Renais evokes the detached absurdity that was inherent in such extremes of logic.

This paradox of the absurdity of extreme logic is a fundamental message that Resnais attempts to evoke. Another example of it is the nauseating drawings, of cowboys, pornographic girls etc. on pieces of human skin, as an experiment on parchment.

With the camps built, Resnais evokes the list of those "who are needed to make the camps complete" giving them specific names and origins.(4) This is the last time a victim is referred to as a form of individual entity because being victims they become a moving mass, have become a product of the camps another thing.(5)

Ultimately facts had been produced by the camps as things

"9 million dead haunt this landscape

200,000 dead in 9 seconds...."

This process of listing the things was effective in that it evoked the thing in itself which ordinarily would have no particular significance and puts it in relation to the significance created by its involvement with the camps.

This is the complexity of the subject matter; there is a list of what and who made up the camps and a list of those denying responsibility. No one person or thing is responsible, and all are responsible. The subject creates the paradox because it is one itself, simply "inhumanity" (of man and technology) the things are not inherently at fault but have been produced as tools to implement However, it is the use, the decision that is decisions. This puts the blame back in human hands and determinative. the paradox back into the concept of "inhumanity", it ultimately grounds the 'inhumanity' if technology in the



human mind and points towards a response-ability. It is not a questioning of championing or denouncing technology and its products as such but a call for a radical understanding and response-ability towards decision making.

Renais used a contrasting pattern of opposites to create the film, the reason is in Resnais' aesthetic of the necessity of memory within the difficulty of remembering. Night and provided subject that showed the necessity foq a to understand with the feeling of the impossibility of comprehension.

He used the documentary footage shot for his film of the "now" camps against the "it was" to assert that our minds which are empty now in forgetfulness should be filled with the ghosts of past images. Their memory should be kept alive. As Benjamin said, "an experienced event is finite... confined to one sphere of experience; a remembered event is infinite, because it is only a key to everything that happened before it and after it."(6)

"We enter the dead abandoned setting of what ... was man's most rational enterprise for exterminating man. So the past becomes the conscience of the present, its tormenting question - mark and the spectator has to ask himself - How was this possible?"(7)

That it must not be forgotten and that we must think is the note that Resnais finishes on. Everyone denies that they are responsible and it is asked "who then is responsible?"

THE MELANCHOLIC IMAGE

It is in this area of its calling of the audience that the film has been seen to be problematical. The facts, are represented and we cannot help but acknowledge the horror; we are left with a feeling that these atrocities must be remembered but we have no path of understanding to follow. the discovery of facts, the things, the objects, is like the uncovering of acheological finds which bear witness to a tragedy but have no caption to explain their context. The possibility to understand seems to be repressed, but like archeological fragments attest to a past existence and


demand an interpretation from the viewer. From the fragment, we can build an image of the whole.

Rilke in his poem "Archaic Torso of Apollo" uses the image of a fragmented piece, a torso, and contemplates its power to evoke the whole sculpture "his truth still sends a candelabrum glow" which "persists and gleams". The fragment contains the memory of the whole and evokes it by its very presence, the fragment sets up a dialogue with us that calls on us to draw out the full meaning and in doing so its significance resignifies us.

"There is not the least of parts that sees you. You must change your life."(8)

The fragments of documentary material from the concentration camps call on us to piece together the strands that created them and through their memory call on us to change our lives.

Resnais was aware of this and he alludes to it; "no image, no description can capture their true dimension of constant fear", "words fail", he denies the possibility for a polemical explanation, due to the subjects extreme "unspeakable" unrepresentable aspect. In the using of documentary material there is a danger of the image being confused with what it represents, by simultaneously showing us the past images with the present images Resnais avoids this, to a certain extent, by detaching our identification with the direct images of suffering toward an attachment to the present images and their melancholic significance.

When a tragedy occurs, to be understood there must be a period of mourning, grief. According to Freud in the essay "Mourning and Melancolia" the inability to work through grief and the repression of mourning is a direct cause of melancholy.(9)

Resnais attests to this melancholic vision: towards the end of the film he returns to the train tracks that had brought the victims there and the commentator says "sunlight is now on the train lines, we follow them slowly seeking what?" The end is full of melancholic images, "cold marsh water fills the ditches as cold and sluggish as our memories War has dozed off, one eye still open."

Resnais confronts the aspect of melancholy when he points to memory as containing the key to the retrieval of the past as "conscience of the present". When confronted by such tragedy, Resnais knows that memory is in danger of being annihilated in the fog of melancholy, the challenge is to utilise the inevitable melancholy towards a creative use of memory, because that very melancholic disposition can open up a way for empathy with what has past, it embues the present with evocations of what has past. In its realisation of the past and its specific temporal character, the present is always a melancholic image, "... the incurable imperfection in the very essence of the

present moment."(10)

At its best "Night and Fog" is as Truffaut said "not a documentary, on an indiciment, or a poem, but a meditation on the most important phenomenon of the 20th century". However, there is undeniable problems with the documentary approach "aura" and the that is attached to it. Specifically where the use of "unrepeatable reality" to contemplate atrocity is in danger of being pornographic and appealing to the voyeur in the viewer. It is questionable whether these images can be used aesthetically, as the images were the direct creation of the Nazis(11)

As Benjamin points out, film has a capacity to produce "shock effects" conducive to a "heightened presence of mind" which could reduce the human imagination to a point of "self alienation that it experiences its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order(12)(13)

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1: Commissioned by the French committee for the history of World War II (1955), to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps. "Nuit et Brouillard"

Argos Films.

2: Ibid. - information available with video

3: Ibid.

The narration is a script by Jean Crayol, who himself had been deported to Germany during World War II. Based on "La Tragedie des deportations"-Olga Wormser and Andre Michels'. 4: Ibid.

"Burger the German workman

Sturm the Jewish student from Amsterdam

Schmulshi a shopkeeper in Krakow

Annette the schoolgirl ... "

5: Also listed:-

- The buildings - Hospital, crematorium, brothel, prison etc.

- The products of this 'factory' - soap, felt, fertilizer etc.

- The mountains of collected things - glasses, hair, corpes etc.

- The companies using the camps - Siemens, Krupps etc.

6: Benjamin on Proust 'Rememberance of things past' -Illuminations "The image of Proust", Schoken Books 1968, pg 202.

7: "Night and Fog"

8: R. M. Rilke. Collected poems.

9: S. Sontag. Essay on Syberberg.

10: Proust, quoted by W. Benjamin in Illuminations, pg 202.

11: Particularly as Hitler can be seen to have used the war as his own personal "film" (Hitler a film from Germany) and we could seem to be continuing this process and the Nazi cult of death and sacrifice.

12: Quoted in R. Kearney "The poetics of the imagination"

13: The crematorium as a pretty picture postcard" (from the text of 'Night and Fog')

This has been seen in the perversely morbid attraction of the concentration camps for tourists. When Resnais said in the film "The camera is now the only visitor, no steps are heard but ours...," this has been shown to be untrue (but paradoxically true) in that the camera has become the ultimate visitor, insidiously, with many film crews feeling the need to 'authenticate' their stories with the 'real' location. - <u>Screening the Holocaust</u>...- Late show special,1990

Even Resnais succumbs to this in the film when he prefaces a series of photos with..

"These were taken a few minutes before extermination"

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEMANDS IN REPRESENTING TIME

Time-Images

Benjamin however saw a 'positive instrumental' possibility melancholy the 'origin for as of true historical understanding' "a process of empathy where origin is indolence of the heart, acedia."(1)

Melancholia is directly linked with a concentration on the temporality of the world. Resnais, Syberberg and Kiefer are three artists whose work is involved with the attempt to deal with the paradoxical concept of time when its linear structure is denied as the sole structure. All three artists are profoundly concerned with melancholia.(2) "Footfalls echo in the memory down the passage which we did not take Towards the door we never opened Into the rose-garden. My words echo Thus, in your mind.

But to what purpose

Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves I do not know."(3)

This could be "Last year at Marienbad" in a paragraph. A film which is a metaphor for the structure of memory. The feeling of melancholy/thinking on time is echoed in Resnais' film with its moving through architecture (as present ruins) its inhabitants like ghosts or dummies(4). and In Syberberg's film "Hitler a film from Germany") it is echoed with the stage set of shop dummies and the melancholic the leaves strewn on floor combined with the front projections of actors against architecture and particularly significant buildings or rooms, as if we were passing them. It is also echoed in Kiefer's through use of architecture that refers to Nazi architecture and repeats and recedes in perspective using it to evoke memories and myth.





The textures of *Toute la mémoire du monde*: newspapers, staircases, roofs endless corridors with grilled shadows.



The analogies between their work is striking, the most obvious being their work thematically related to the Nazis. 'Night and Fog' being such an iconic film and one that has been used as testament must inevitably have been in the consiousness of both Syberberg and Kiefer, with many of Kiefer's paintings strikingly alike to certain stills from 'Night and Fog'.

Syberbergs film "Hitler.." while not using the documentary footage to the same extent, approaches the subject with the same concentration on the evocative power of things (in a broader way to take in the historcal setting) to prevoke contradictory meanings.

Less obviously, however, are the similarities such as their work on cultural icons that signify a collective meaning; Resnais documentaries on Van Gogh, Guernica, The Paris library "Toute la memoire du monde", Syberberg's work on Wagner, Karl May and film as collective memory(5), kiefer's book projects especially the "High Priestess" again stills from "Toute la memoire du monde" have echoes in Kiefers 'stills' of the sculpture and the idea of the collective memory stemming back to the civilisation of the word (Euphrates etc) which is the moment of history (as opposed to prehistory, pre word).

As well as through their choice of temporal subject matter, their approach to actual presentation of their chosen media reflects a concentration on the way time passes.

Renais utilises film's capacity to create an illusion of specific chronological time passing. He manipulates this illusion by juxtaposing one view of time passing with contradictory perspectives that reflect and exist in relation to each other yet remain distinct.

Syberberg literally extends the performance time of his work into operatic epic dimensions and demands of his audience a sustained effort of attention that is not usually required by films (Andy Warhol's films on time played on this in a different way...)





Λ





Brief apparition of the very bare room. (P. 84.)

A grand staircase, with groups standing here and there. (P. 88.)



A waitor in a white jacket picks up the broken glass. (P. 87.)



The garden and the frozen figures with their shadows. (P. 94.)



Kiefer's paintings use materials that he knows will not last any major length in time. Their impermenancy, with rotting straw, non-congealing materials etc. add to the ephemeral effect which creates a visual paradox when used to create 'monumental' images. He also uses lead to contradict this ephemerality, being one of the heaviest and most inert of the elements. He uses his materials to represent their elemental processes, such as mutability, decay etc. and places contradictory materials in relation to each other (He learnt this approach from his tutor J. Beuys.) the inert is the ground for decay (straw), the fading impression (photographs), the organic (hair) etc.

All three artists' work centers predominantly on temporal themes. For Resnais "film is the art of playing with time"(6) time is his medium, his direct subject matter is time and memory. For him cinema is thought visualised and thought temporal experience. Kiefer's is our work "transience and eternity" constitutes a dialogue between with temporal subject matter within static imagery. Time seems to be the predominant linking theme within his subject matter: myth, narrative, pathways/trails, memory, history There is a constant paradoxical play with the etc. materials and ideas; images and words combined, photographs bleached and painted on, molten lead solidified into static form, books with sheets of lead bound and heavy in presence (thought and memory, the ultimate abstract, ephemeral and temporal entity becoming concrete (leaden).

Constant use of images of flux; water, fire , sand, clouds etc and the use of these as materials; sand, molten lead, acid, to create a sense of visual flow in a statre image. Archetypal symbols of time such as the snake and rivers constantly appear. Syberberg's themes concentrate on temporality being directed towards history and also uses the Benjaminian 'fascination for photography as a means of capturing moments as spatial images on icons'(7)

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The reasons for these similarities in the work of such diverse artists and approaches (in both media and politics) is that they are all dealing with the same aesthetic. This is an aesthetic of time. It is no coincidence that though all are working with a primarily visual language all choose to depend on narrative for structure(8)

PARADOX, NARRATIVE, METAPHOR.

Paul Ricour pointed out "the paradoxes of time experience ... call for narrative activity if they are not to fall into sheer meaninglessness", that "time becomes human time to the extent that it is articulated in a narrative way."(9)

"...by passing away constantly, time remains as time."(10) "At the still point of the turning world."(11)

inherently Time is paradoxical. There is nothing paradoxical about linear time and its description as a sequence of now-points. However, when time is contemplated beyond its merely linear aspect we are confronted by a paradoxical experience. The paradoxes evolve when we attempt to understand the dialectical relationship between past, present and future, and between different lengths of time experiences eq. instants, durations etc. When dealing with time as a subject in itself, the resulting concept must take often also the form of a paradox, for example Heidegger's 'constant, passing away', "Time is in that it constantly is not."(12), and Eliot's still, turning point.

Augustine solved the paradoxes that he encountered with another paradox, that of the threefold present "a present time of past things, a present time of present things, and a present time of future things"(13)

He then uses the example of a poem to illustrate the other paradox involved when we contemplate the idea of a present that has no extension with the fact that we can talk of time as long or short He proposes the distention of the soul(14) as the human spirit's way of comprehending the temporal. When we start to recite a poem, we are in expectation of the future, the poem is our expectation, this expectation recedes as the poem is recited and memory of the world of the work increases, we experience a decreasing future and an increasing past through a present which is the continously changing point of intersection. By choosing the example of reciting a poem, P. Ricour points out that Augustine opens the way towards "a consideration of narrative activity as a 'poetic' solution of the speculative paradox"(15)

Augustine was a philosopher who employed hermeneutics in his thinking towards the exegesis of christian texts and beliefs. Ricour approaches hermeneutics as being applicable to all language not just theological language, towards an hermeneutical philosophy which interprets the world figuratively, as opposed to literally, using the terms and structures of allegory, symbol, metaphor, myth and analogy.(16)

Hermeneutic enquiry, as a circular approach, provides a way for the contemplation of an enigma such as time. The narrative activity provides structure in which a the discussion of time is possible. The narrative follows the changing of things and events. These changing events create a whole which is the narrative; a structure in equilibrium. Narrative has the capacity to contain the non-linear concept of time because the end of the story is as much present as the beginning

"I was born as a plant near the churchyard, as a man in a pastor's house" "Thus man grows out of everything that once embraced him..."(17)

Furthermore, the metaphor is a structure, within narrative, which provides a way of saying that which cannot be said directly, "The unthought". When dealing with temporality as a subject matter, because of its paradoxical nature much of what is, cannot be said. The use of metaphor provides the power to transform contradiction into new meaning.



Metaphorical imagination can create and recreate meaning wherein we can discover reality.(18)

"The strategy of discourse implied in metaphorical language is... to shatter and to increase our sense of reality by shattering and increasing our language... with metaphor we experience the metamorphosis of both language and reality."(19)

Not only does time dictate the narrative approach in the work of Resnais, Syberberg and Kiefer but the complexities of such as subject matter, when dealt with directly, dictates the particular way narrative must be used. The modernist literary narrative has concentrated profoundly on temporality as a subject in itself (eg Joyce's "ineluctable modality", Proust's rememberance and mnemonic experience). It diverges from a linear and literal approach towards a fragmented and figurative one. This can also be seen in non-literary narrative works such as in narrative film and visual art.(20)

RESNAIS

Resnais uses a metaphoric logic (21) and its structure of contradictory material to create new meaning. juxtaposing In "Night and Fog" his positioning of the present images of the camps against their repressed memories utilises the metaphoric structure towards an understanding of what is 'unthought' (unthinkable). The narrative structures that he uses in such films as "last Year at Mariebad' and 'Hiroshima mon Amour', work at negating both absolute objectivity and absolute subjectivity in of layered favour a diverse The lack of a specific encapsulating commentary viewpoint. for the images in "Night and Fog " is due to the knowledge impossibility of a direct explanation of of the the In 'Hiroshiman mon amour' Resnais develops this phenomenon. metaphorical approach with layers of metaphors (22). As in 'Night and Fog' the relationship between past and present is enigmatic and he sees memory as the active catalyst that creates relations between dissimilar elements.







By juxtaposing the woman's memory of the war with images of Hiroshima, Resnais what took place in does not talk specifically about the woman ("your name is Nevers") or the man ("your name is Hiroshima")(23), but of the paradox of what was taking place at the same time which was interelated to such an extent that they created each other. It is also that of the different memories that are created from the same source. The Japanese lover's hand twitching sparks off the memory of the German lover dying, however, by relating the image of her past lover to that of her present one their respective meaning is changed. Her perception of her present lover sparks the memory of the former one but in turn the memory changes the meaning of the present. This leads her to recount her forgotten story. Everything that is given is resignified in its relation to memory. not only woman's is meaning changed by the memory but the significance of what she remembers is changed by the memory of Hiroshima, not her memory of Hiroshima (she has none) but Hiroshima's memory (Hiroshima, mon amour, to the man "your is Hiroshima") we do not get the man's personal name narrative, instead we have fragments of Hiroshima's story. Whatever she said she saw, he said she saw nothing "Nothing, you know nothing". She says that she knows what it is to forget, he says that she does not. The film proceeds to be a telling of what she has forgotten - her life in Nevers, her love for a German, his death and her victimisation for She relates the German to the Japanese man collaborating. and at the end shouts at the latter that she is already forgetting him (as she had the former). Meanwhile as an undercurrent to the love story, Hiroshima's memory is everpresent but in a muted sense, like the memory of the We have images but not the camps in Night and Fog. narrative from Hiroshima, only her narrative of what she has seen, Hiroshima says she has seen nothing.

The characters in the film are constructions to represent separate narratives that coexist. Her war and Hiroshima's war are interrelated and go to create each other while at the same time setting up a stark contrast between their respective imagery.

Syberberg

Syberberg approaches narrative structure from а less literary and more polemical/theoretical angle than Resnais. His approach is like the form of the Tractatus which is an approach that Benjamin favoured. The tractatus is a structure which renounces "a descursive flow of arguments which follow a single line of inquiry, a single end or logic", but enforces "a continual pausing for breath...for by pursuing different levels of meaning in its examination of one single object, [the tractatus] receives both the incentive to begin again and the justification for its irregular rythm"(24)

This approach to a subject where the different strands of thought and signification emenate out from a central idea is the chosen structure for 'Hitler, a film from Germany'. It allows Syberberg to treat Hitler as a symbol and to analyse the different layers of meaning that are involved in that symbolism.

History and the past are unrepeatable for Syberberg and he chooses to meditate on them by 'presenting' them, not as memory but as images in the present tense. he stages the past and its symbols and uses actors and props in a prefoundly anti-realist manner. The puppet is like the traditional mask in the theatre which provides "a means of investigating the paradoxical problems that appearances pose in the experience of transitional states"(25)

Brecht Syberberg uses the theatrical approach of and utilises the illusionary effects that cinema is capable of to add to the epic theater structure. He draws on theater's use of illusion where the audience acknowledges the 'falsity' and takes an active part in the work when it accepts the illusions and disguises as allegorical. The puppets symbols and the other props, are a tool for Syberberg to funnel his ideas through, without having to use much direct and specific imagery of 'actual reality'.





Syberberg's stage set is allegorical in a surrealist Benjamin is famous for taking the surrealist fashion. approach of the montage and applying it to history and it is this approach that Syberberg uses. He juxtaposes real actors in various roles (often one actor in different roles) front of projected views of significant rooms in and buildings. The surreal landscape of his different settings recall de Chirico paintings, with mannequins inhabiting a melancholic space and symbols strewn about creating an allegorical and metaphorical structure. He uses multiple, images and sounds layered over each other so that often only fragments can be perceived. He fully utilises the collage potential of film. Collage collects symbols, images, objects that retain their identity yet through juxtaposition relations are set up between them that transposes the effect of the individual fragments onto an abstract plane. This process is metaphorical in its structure, where a separate is created, for "metaphor constitutes meaning the indispensable principle for integrating diverse phenomena and perspectives without sacrificing their diversity"(26)

KIEFER

The collage approach is also used by Anselm Kiefer towards work that visualises temporal subject matter in the static format of the pictorical space and still sculptures. Bv choosing to approach the temporal through the static he attests to the paradoxical nature of time and the need to through paradox. Consequently, Kiefer contemplate it utilises narrative allegory and metaphor in his visual Much of Kiefer's work has revolved around the language. form of the book which he uses in its dual manner of existence as temporal sequence within a finite object. He plays with this form throughout his work. In is earliest books(ie. "The flooding of Heidelberg" and "Occupations" etc.) he collages images to set up conflicting messages (such as the Hitler salute photos in different settings). With his later work the book becomes sculptural, and its presence as an object has significance in itself. The book becomes a symbol for history encapsulated as memory, for time recorded. He uses not only the symbolism of the book but that of the library which evokes a collective historical



The High Priestess/Zweistromland, begun in 1985. Approximately 200 lead books in two steel bookcases, with glass and copper wire, c. 14 ft × 26 ft × 3 ft. Photographed in progress at the artist's studio, January 1989.



memory. He furthers this thought by linking his libaries to the first civilisation of the word, Mesopotamia, using literal and figurative references.

By using clay as a metaphor, both in the brich making factory that he photographs his sculpture in, and also directly (as a material), Kiefer refers to the clay tablets that survived from mesopotamia as the earliest fragments of the recorded word, the start of history. "matter is not used for its sheer materiality but because it manifests itself as a substance laden with meaning"(27)

Kiefer is a famously erudite painter, but when questioned about this he answered "I immediately see everything I read in images"(28) This is a fundamental aspect to Kiefer's method of the visual metaphor:-The erudite image maker.

Much has been written about the references in Kiefer's work but that work is not determined by an intent to illustrate particular images from any source, either from the German Myths to the Cabala etc. Rather he uses these references in much the same way as he uses his materials, for their metaphorical significance. His pictures are not about what can be seen directly but about what cannot be seen, what cannot be directly shown. Towards this end every componant of the painting has a metaphoric or symbolic significance.

For instance, the use of lead creates many layers of meaning and reference. It can be seen as an iconographical thread linking many of the aspects of the work. (29) As well as its physical properties and their significance, lead is seen to be the element related to Saturn, the God of Time and melancholia. This in turn has echoes in the use of the myth Isis and Osiris that Kiefer has worked with. The of allegory and symbolism in Kiefer's art are so interwoven and multifaceted that they set up a constant symbolic discourse. This works not by using straight narrative sequences but by creating a poetic narrative of evocation rather than representation. This dialogue of correspondence and antithesis that is set up amongst the different symbols, motifs and materials are presented on a metaphoric plane.



Another facet of Kiefer's work is when he uses his studio or a premises like the 'Kaiser and Bohrer' brick factory for 'staging' his work through photography. This has been a consistent part of Kiefer's work, what A. Huyssen calls, "a dimension of self-conscious

mise - en - scene"(30), from the 'Occupations' series of the 'High Priestess' where the artist photos to (occupations) or the work (High Priestess, Jason etc.) occupy "varous framed image-spaces" (31). This is similar to Syberberg's creation of allegorical image - spaces.

The "High Priestess" is a testiment to contradiction and paradox with its books of closed (hermetically sealed) pages of lead, but this paradox is made visible by the pages being published in accessible book form where the inner imagery is revealed. The series of the sculpture photographed in its significant setting and the series of photos of the pages themselves, are an integral part of the work and a facet that is used to illumine many of his pieces (ie. Jason.).

Words, sentences, actual poetic references, poetic fragments are used by Kiefer as a direct link with metaphoric language. In choosing to quote from the poem "Death Fugue" by Paul Celan, Kiefer directly refers to the possibilities for poetic language as a means to contemplate tragedy and the ensuing melancholy. Certain thinkers such as Theodor Adorno in the 1945-50's had claimed that poetry was no longer possible after the concentration camp's 'caesura' but Kiefer and Resnais, when they deal directly with the tragedy have shown that the poetic approach is the only possible way and that it is polemics that shows its limits.

Paul Celan's poetry(32), a direct result of the camps, is a testament to the continued living siginificance of poetic thought and by using references in the "Margarete/Shulamite" series of paintings, Kiefer seeks to link poetic thought to the transformation of "The melancholy gaze at the past... into a genuine sense of mourning"(33) Kiefer's very attraction to references such as; The various myths, The Cabala, poetry, his "seeing the world as text"(34) and his creation of complex textual images, emanate from and call for a hermeneutical approach.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1: Is quoted by, Sontag, Susan, "Syberberg's Hitler" (1979) from <u>"Syberberg, A film maker from Germany"</u>, British Film Institute 1992.

2: Resnais as talked about previously, Syberberg directly refers to Durer's "melancholia" in "Hitler, a film from Germany" and is imbued with a 'positive' melancholia in his politics. Kiefer has actual paintings titled 'melancholy' as well as its being integral to his work.

3: Eliot, T.S., <u>Four Quartets</u>, "Burnt Norton", "Faber and Faber", 1944. Poems dedicated to analysing temporality and the flux of life, - prefaced by extracts from Heraclitus.

4: Proust's salons - Remembrance of things past?

5: Edisons "Black Maria" as icon for the reflective world of film in relation to our memories, the idea of Hitler as a film from Germany etc.

6: Quoted in, <u>Resnais</u>, J. Monaco.

7: Kearney, on Benjamin; kearney, R. <u>Modern Movements in</u> European Philosophy, Manchester Press 1987

8: Narrative is part of film language but only part in what is primarily a visual medium. This is why the narrative film is less powerful in contemplating time than the literary work of say Proust or Eliot and why the experiments that narrative is being put through is interesting towards a theory of visual narrative.

9: Paul Ricour, Narrative and Hermeneutics, from <u>Narrative</u> and <u>Literature</u> pg 150

10: Heidegger, Martin, <u>On Time and Being.</u> Harper and Row 1972

11: Eliot, T.S. Four Quartets, Faber and Faber 1944

12: Heidegger, Martin, <u>On Time and Being</u>, Harper and Row, 1972

13: Ricour. Narrative and Hermeneutics pg 151

14: Ibid, quoted by Ricour

15: Ibid, pg 151

16: Kearney, R., <u>Modern Movements in European Philosophy</u> pg 110

17: Nietzsche, quoted in Heidegger 'What is called thinking' Harper and Row, 1968, pg 80 Kearney, R., Poetics of imagining, Urwin Hyman 1991 18: 19: Ibid, P. Ricour quoted in above 20: Resnais has direct links with the modern literary narrative experiments in his collaborations with such writers as A. Robbe - Grillet, M. Duras and Jean Crayol. 21: M.B. White, The International Film Guide, Volume 2, 1991. Ibid. 22:

23: Duras, M. "Hiroshima mon Amour" Grove Press

24: Benjamin, quoted in "Benjamin", ed G.Smith, University of Chicago Press, 1989

Napier A.D., Masks, Transformations and Paradox, 25: University of California Press

26: D.Bergen, quoted in "Art and Time", Barbican Art Gallery, 1986

27: Zweite, Armin, Anselm Kiefer, The High Priestess, Thames and Hudson, 1989.

28: Trans - by Ruth Koenig

29: Le vitte Haarten, D. "Canticle for a god unknown" Kiefer, Lilit, Thames and Hudson, 1990 pg 12

30: Huyssen, "The terror of history, the temptation of myth", October 48

31: Ibid.

32: Paul Celan was a survivor of the concentration camps.

33: Huyssen, A. October 48

34: Le Vitte Haarten, D.

CONCLUSION

When time returns as a concept to be rethought, it presents itself as a determinative subject matter, it demands a certain kind of approach. Because of the paradoxical nature of time, rational thought had relegated it to its linear perspective and had neglected its character as an experienced dimension. This was more than just a decision to make time a measurable entity, it was a consequent result of the logical structure of thought that informed Western structure thinking. Logic proceeds on a linear of assertions, on an objective level towards an absolute fact. The paradox, however, being a structure that is composed of seemingly contradictory statements is anathema to logical thought. It was therefore necessary for such thought to negate time and temporality as valid areas of inquiry. This decision was fundamental to the direction rational thought The growth of the empirical sciences, absolutist took. philosophies, technocratic positivism created a cult of efficiency, self-assertion and domination, and a future orientated progressive society that viewed the past as dead with no significance for the present. This freedom from the past and the temporal freed rational thought from history and tradition, and allowed for the idea of progress, along a sequence of logical steps, to be a justifying end in itself. This thinking proceeded along its logical route to "reduce beings to commonplace entities"(1), with experience of the world, existence and being becoming empty abstractions, producing such logical conclusions as the concentration camps "man's most rational enterprise for exterminating man"(2) and the nuclear bomb.

Certain modern thinkers such as Bergson, Benjamin, Husserl, Heidegger sought to redeem thinking from its logical abstraction and reground it in the experience of lived existence in all its non-linear complexity. Fundamental to this redemption of thought was the retrieval of the temporal as the necessary horizon for being.

"When the universe takes on a fourth dimension, time returns in force. The universe has a history."(3) History is shown not to be a progress of linear cause and effect but paradoxically as that which comes towards us as tradition. "People still hold the view that what is handed down to us by tradition is what in reality is behind us while in fact it comes toward us because we are its captives and destined to it"(4)

By analysing such ideas as Nietzsche's 'eternal return' Heidegger showed how Western metaphysics, had become the history of the forgetfulness of the truth of being. This truth was that the essence of human being was temporality.

The awareness of this temporality was seen by Heidegger and Benjamin to manifest itself as anguish [Angst](Heidegger) or melancholy (Benjamin). This awareness also contains a paradox in that it can be seen as negative in its perception of the possibility on nothingness, yet it is the prerequisite for creative understanding and responsibility.

The three artists' work that I have chosen to analyse in relation to these concepts is as diverse as the respective philosophies of such thinkers as Heidegger, Benjamin and Ricour. However there is a fundamental link in their approach which is necessitated by an authentic dedication to time as a subject matter. They do not choose to escape from the paradoxes of time but rather submerge themselves is its complexities. To this end they all utilise a collage approach.

is fullness of time experience When the approached, different and often disparate levels of perception are shown to exist on the same plane. This is evident in such medieval icons where different symbols of artifacts as varying spiritual significance, from representations of the eternal to the transcedent, all exist in interrelation on each other through same plane and define their the With the discovery and use of linear relativity. perspective, rational thought had a structure with which to visualise the single viewpoint and situate the object in an absolute framework of reference. In doing so, it took possession of it and the object became situated in and

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defined by an absolute linear perspective. This was seen to refer directly to 'reality' and be a to means of representing the 'real''. However, the only reason this approach seemed to be realistic was because the logical, approach to experience was what informed the rational renaissance belief system. A belief in the eternal spirit the system that gave rise to medieval icons was and therefore they were as real to such people, perhaps more all-encompassingly real, as 'realism' was for the west (In such a way does the non-linear perspective of say, Japanese painting, relate to the oriental belief system with its famously cyclical, paradoxical view of time.)

Cubism sought to readdress the issue of perspective in a retrieval of the non-linear viewpoint, and surrealism sought to re-address 'The real' towards a sur-real level of meaning. The idea of an objective real world as absolutely given was rejected in favour of a perception of the diverse interpretations that were seeking to be apprehended. Absolute dogma was seen to have become impotent in the face of the multiple viewpoint. Collage was the direct result of these approaches. "The collage is an existential experiment particular order patterns grounded by the with selfconscious belief in the impossibility of ever finding one with general validity"(5)

Seen as the relativistic art, collage, as a principle, provides the structure to approach the paradoxical subject of time. It is a way of making art rather than a form of art.

Cinema is inherently collage/montage structured. Andy Warhol exploited the realist (Bazinian) attitude to cinema to its logical conclusions with his 'Time' films consisting of twelve hours (etc) of actual time/duration. In films such as "Empire" and "Sleep", Warhol utilised the static long-shot of real duration, which the realists felt would simulate a real authentic depiction of life. Watching Warhol take this belief ad absurdum we get the effect of a non-film, a meaningless record of duration. Contrasting approach with the evocative power of the this montage approach we see how reality/duration must present itself as

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a ground to take an impression from to then be used as structural material for a visual language.

Film takes fragments, impressions from reality (like the 'found' material used in the early collages of Picasso and Braque and juxtaposes them with other fragments, either from a similar viewpoint (continuity, linear succession) or from a dissimilar one (contiguous, in a metaphoric system of relations). Eisenstein's work is a famous example of the development of this metaphoric language that is possible through film. Eisenstein saw his use of film as an approach that re-presented the process of reasoning both logically and emotionally. He saw the dialectic as a system of conflicts and the foundation for film language and he formulated his theories of montage around this belief.(6) he was interested in the dialectic as a "dynamic mechanism" that was akin to the "process of thinking" and was vital to artistic representation. Another erudite image maker, he spoke of such things as Japanese (and the Egyptian) ideograms (one of the first approaches that language took to the world) and claimed that dialectical montage had a similar natural metaphoric capacity for representing the unrepresentable.

"From separate hieroglyphs has been fused-the ideogram. By the combination of two 'depictables' is achieved the of that representation something is graphically undepictable... It is exactly what we do in cinema, combining shots that are depictive , single in meaning, neutral in content into intellectual contexts and series...."(7) Eisenstein saw montage editing as a way of realising the dialectical capacity of film as a language, capable of evoking through images the generative powers of the metaphor to make present the working of thought.

Alain Resnais is dedicated to the visualisation of thought, which works through the horizon of time using memory as its fundamental principle. "Memory...signifies man's inner disposition and devotion" "Memory, as the human recall of what must be thought about, consists in the 'keeping' of what is most thought provoking."(8)

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This dedication provokes Resnais to rethink the structure of conventional linear narrative that film language has been using (ie. The French Realist Tradition) and to fracture its linearity. He chooses to do this by both using the illusion of actual duration and documentary, and then placing it in dissimilar or contradictory relation to other planes of perception. he uses the 'actual' as a fragment relating to the world which evokes that world without being identified with it. Syberberg in an eclectic way collects styles and images (and sounds) as fragmentary material which he then uses to construct or assemble a structure whose meaning exists only as a result of the complex relations of dialogue that is set up between the diverse fragments.

As he saw it, the "...depravity of the contemporary arts should...be countered... with a new degree of intensity...It should be an integrated whole, made up of different styles, genres, a simultaneity of life and art... a combination of simplicity and ...unseen complexity...(9)

He plays on contradicting the illusory form of cinematic representation against abstract images, reproduced images from art, consciously created mise-en-scene etc. in much the same way as cubist collage played with such visual paradoxes as trompe l'oeil fragments combined with abstract and found elements. Collage was dedicated to using reproduced products and utilising them as material, using their formal effect at the same time as lettting their aspect of being found, real life fragments speak. By doing so, the collage sets up a dialogue between what is represented and what is evoked.

In Kiefer's work the use of multiple referents creates a world of the work that exists outside of the actual work and necessitates the complicity of the viewer. Whereas Beuys' referents often depended on personal significances, Kiefer's relating them to collective myths and texts opens them out for the viewer's interpretation, and cross reference.

The reason the collage approach works for these artists lies in the way the language of collage works to convey meaning. When it works, the collaging of different fragments operates on a metaphorical level. There is the obvious almost literal, level of the collage pieces themselves being a metaphor for a fragmented world, but on a deeper level, when successful, a collage sets up a poetic dialogue between disparate elements.

If we analyse an example of a poetic metaphor at its most complex level we get an idea of the possibilities for metaphor as structure.

Taking R.M. Rilke's description of a group of performing acrobats and the crowd around them from the 5th Duino Elegy; (the crowd is) "The rose of watching

> blooming and dropping its petals around this pestle smitten by its own blossoming pollen...(10)

He furthers this subject, describing the acrobats act, "And suddenly in this difficult nowhere suddenly the ineffable place where the pure "Too-little" incredibly transforms itself

> somersaulting into that empty "Too-much" Where the problem that had so many digits comes out right with nothing left over."(11)

Rilke evokes an image of a flower to resemble a crowd. This is a relation that didn't exist before Rilke unearthed its power and the ensuing imagery of the spectators gathered around the acrobats, as petals gather around the flowers' pistil, that may drop off (as a spectator might leave the crowd). The performers are referred to as a pestle, grinding the ground through their action, throwing up dust (pollen) etc. In the second quote the acrobatics are brilliantly evoked as a mathematical problem, a difficult long-division sum.

These images are now forever linked in significance by such a poem but their relative significance for each other was created/discovered by the artist. It is the power of this type of metaphorical language that by the use of collage, visual artists are seeking. That search for an evocative language is generated by the contemplation of the temporal which demands the use of narrative, metaphor and paradox. The metaphor shows how "language could extend itself to its very limits forever discovering new resonances within itself" (12)

It is this power of creation/discovery that the collage process seeks to atain by the use of metaphor. An ability to evoke similarity in discordant material that on the same plane, in contradiction, creates paradox while through interpretation and openness to the "living powers of metaphoricity"(13) new significances are disclosed.

The use of language in this poetic way has been proposed by thinkers such as Heidegger and Ricour, (and also in Benjamin's call for the allegorical form of art such as is found in Kafka, Proust and Baudelaire and which he saw as being experimented with by surrealism). Poetic thinking was the solution proposed by Heidegger to allow philosophy to reclaim its origins in the temporal. He saw it as a "mode of speaking... in correspondance with language itself"(14) that things come into being in that they are summoned by This is how significant meaning is created by language. is the privileged way for revealing metaphor. Poetry temporality and transcedence. While Heidegger was speaking directly and specifically about (verbal) language [and it is possible that this poetic power for significance is only fully relevant for the spoken language], it is this that is the aim of such visual artists as Resnais, Syberberg and Kiefer. They seek to approach the unthought in a subject and confront the unrepresentable. To do so they must by necessity push their visual language towards a way of poetic saying that is the only way to approach the unthought. By approaching time through the poetic metaphor and paradox, they seek to disclose the 'no-thing-ness' that time is.

"Time is in that it constantly is not" (15)

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1: Kearney, Modern Movements in European Philosophy, pg 44 2: "Night and Fog" Resnais 3: Art and Time, Barbican Art Gallery, 1986 4: Heidegger, What is called thinking, Harper and Row, pg 76 5: Kuspit, D.B. Collage, The organising principle of Art from Hoffman, K ed. Collage, Critical Views, UMI research press pg 49 6: Selig, Μ. 'Passion and Politics-: Eisenstein and Montage" from Collage, Critical views. 7: Ibid quoted by Selig pg 342 8: Heidegger, What is called thinking, pg 151 From Statements by H.J. Syberberg. Syberberg, A film 9: maker from Germany, B.F.I. 1992 10: Rilke, R.M. Duino Elegies, D. Young. W.W. Norton and Co. 1978 pg 50 11: Ibid, pg 55 12: Ricour quoted in Richard Kearney, Poetics of Imagining. 13: Ibid. 14: Kearney, Modern Movements in European Philosophy Heidegger, On Time and Being, Harper and Row 15:

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