concept, not a social-scientific one: the relation of this concept to actual historical fascism in Germany, Italy or Spain would require much further investigation along lines only sketched here (in terms of imposition/convergence). The concept of fascism developed in *A Thousand Plateaus* is significantly different. See Protevi (2000) for a valiant attempt to construct a concept of fascist nihilism based on *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Chapter 10

Arresting the Flux of Images and Sounds: Free Indirect Discourse and the Dialectics of Political Cinema

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In order to address the issue of contemporary political cinema I will propose that contemporary cinema should be conceived as a speech-act in free indirect discourse. I will depart from Deleuze's observation that in the time-image the whole of cinema becomes a free indirect discourse, operating in reality (Deleuze 1989: 155). But I will also propose a more polemical reading of Deleuze's cinema books, arguing that there is a dialectical shift between the movement-image and the time-image, or, between First, Second and Third Cinema.

Cinema and the Masses

As Walter Benjamin wrote in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', film, because of its mechanical reproduction and therefore its relation to the masses, is fundamentally related to politics (Benjamin 1999a). When Benjamin wrote this article, two main political currencies were dominant. On the one hand, fascism used cinema to give the people a feeling of strength and beauty born of a remythologisation of the present, while at the same preserving property relations and power structures. Fascism rendered politics aesthetic.[1] Communism, on the other hand, Benjamin argued, responded by politicising art. Eisenstein's Russian revolution films like *Potemkin* (1925) and *October* (1928) Benjamin considered fine examples of such politicised art.

From this one can conclude that, in a way, cinema is always political: either it makes the masses 'absent minded' as in fascism, or it can be used as a weapon in the emancipation of the people in the communist tradition. Although in contemporary audiovisual culture it is no longer possible to make these oppositional distinctions (I will come to that later) I will take the communist approach of cinema as a political weapon for the emancipation of the masses as a starting point for my discussion of

political film. In the 1960s this form of cinema was named 'Third Cinema'. Let me first map out briefly the concept of Third Cinema, before looking at Deleuze's observations about this type of cinema which he calls 'the modern political film'.

Third Cinema and the People

In the 1960s, in the wake of independence struggles and movements of decolonisation all over the world, a new type of post-colonial cinema emerged. In a manifesto from 1969, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino called this type of cinema 'Third Cinema'. Filmmakers in Argentina themselves, Solanas and Gettino argued for a militant type of cinema to decolonise culture from the former colonisers. 'We have to film with a camera in one hand and a rock in the other,' they wrote (Solanas and Gettino 2000: 278). Third Cinema refers to the minority political position of the third-world as it is explicitly addressed in these films. But they also coined the term as an aesthetic opposition to what they call First Cinema (Hollywood) and Second Cinema (European Art cinema).

First Cinema is Hollywood genre cinema, what Deleuze calls 'the action-cinema of the movement-image', in which the action is followed through one or two central characters that meet a challenge that is overcome in the course of the actions (Deleuze 1986: 141–77). Protagonists of First Cinema films find themselves caught in at least two duels (one romantic and one other type of duel like a physical struggle with their milieu, or a political duel with opponents, or a psychological duel with a hostile family, and so on). Second Cinema is auteur cinema, often an idiosyncratic reworking of classical genres, sometimes with non-professional actors. Here, there is more attention to the socially less fortunate but the stories are also universal, talking about the human condition in general. The seamless montage (continuity editing) of the action-image has become 'montrage' of the long take and deep staging; or it now provides irrational cuts that make it difficult to distinguish between the actual and the virtual. This type of cinema is broadly categorised by Deleuze as modern cinema of the time-image (Deleuze 1989). In his book *Political Film* Mike Wayne gives several characteristics for Third Cinema (Wayne 2001). It is a cinema that considers history as a Marxist dialectic process of change and contradiction. The raising of political consciousness is also very important. There is always a critical engagement with the minority position. And finally Third Cinema always speaks from a position within the culture it speaks for. Films now regarded as Third Cinema are discussed by Deleuze

as time-images, which he distinguishes from classical political film (Deleuze 1989: 215–24).

Wayne does not refer to the emancipation of 'the people' but clearly this issue is addressed in many of the early Third Cinema films. We find the hopes of Che Guevara for a united South America for the people in the films of Solanas and Gettino; in Egypt, Yussef Chahine, directs the film *Saladin* (1963) to commemorate Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal; in Algeria, the liberation struggle of the FLN is reflected in many of the films produced right after independence, like *The Battle of Algiers* (1967): and in Africa the hopes of new nations find their parallels in the organisation of African film associations and festivals. In all these early Third Cinema expressions, the idea of 'the people' as a united force that can be represented and addressed is very strong.

'The People are Missing' and Cinema as Speech-Act: Imagined Communities

But this expectation of a new people would not last very long. The military juntas that arose in several third-world countries in the decolonisation period, the Six Day War, and many élitist and dictatorial state régimes in the new nations soon caused a feeling of profound deception throughout the third-world. Civil wars, poverty and migration followed: the people fell apart. So Third Cinema, in fact, very soon turned out to be based on this condition of the absence of the people. As Deleuze says in *The Time-Image*: 'If there were a modern political cinema, it would be on this basis: the people no longer exist, or not yet . . . the people are missing' (Deleuze 1989: 216).

In classical political cinema, such as Eisenstein's films or the early Third Cinema films, the people exist; they can be represented and addressed. In the modern political film of the time-image, however, the people are missing: it is no longer possible to represent or address the people. As Deleuze argues, the status of film changed. Films become speech-acts that act upon reality, that help the people to 'become', to invent themselves in the stories that are being told.[2]

> Not the myth of a past people, but the story-telling of a people to come. The speech-act must create itself as a foreign language in a dominant language, precisely in order to express an impossibility of living under domination . . . [T]hird world cinema has this aim . . . to constitute an assemblage which brings real parties together, in order to make them produce collective utterances as the prefiguration of the people who are missing. (Deleuze 1989: 223–4)

The idea of a speech-act in cinema that can produce 'a people' might be compared in some sense to Benedict Anderson's idea of the 'imagined community'. Reflecting on the origins of nationalism, Anderson argues that the nation is an imagined political community that was made possible by two forms of imagining that were significant in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper (Anderson 1983: 25). The novel and the newspaper made it possible for a large group of people who do not know each other to share the same 'clocked', calendrical time (Anderson calls 'homogeneous empty time'). Anderson illustrates his point by referring to a novel by Balzac, which presents several characters that do not know each other and yet are embedded in the same society. At the same time these characters are embedded in the minds of the omniscient readers who now can imagine this world as a shared reference. While Anderson clearly speaks of the nation, he also acknowledges that in fact 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined' (Anderson 1983: 6).

Following Anderson's logic of the people as an 'imagined community' it is plausible to argue that cinema is the twentieth and twenty-first century's means of creating imagined communities. However, this poses a difficulty for the distinction Deleuze makes between the ways the people pre-exist and are addressed in the movement-image, as opposed to the way the people are imagined and invented in the time-image. In fact Deleuze himself gives some examples of speech-acts in silent cinema (Deleuze 1989: 233). Possibly the distinctions between these types of images in respect to their political dimensions are not that easy to make. I will return to this point.

Free Indirect Style

As indicated by Anderson, style (in film and literature) can be considered a distinctive characteristic of different types of community. So perhaps the difference between the two types of political cinema can be sensed in matters of style. A classical style of the movement-image moves between two poles: the 'subjective' (direct presentation of the events through the point of view of a character) and the 'objective' (indirect presentation of the events through the camera from a more distant point of view). In *The Movement-Image* Deleuze argues that the final goal of the cinema is to reach a more diffuse and supple status that could be characterised as semi-subjective or free indirect. The free indirect style is actually the basis

of cinematographic perception, but cinema had to go through a 'slow evolution before attaining self-consciousness' (Deleuze 1986: 74–5). With the advent of the time-image after World War II and in the modern political film after colonial independence struggles, free indirect discourse becomes the dominant style.

Free indirect discourse is a term derived from Russian linguistics.[3] It refers to a style of reporting in which the reporter and the reported fuse together. In a direct style the difference between reporter and the reported (narrator and character) is clear. An example would be: 'My father rose, took my hand and said: "Do not get involved in politics."'[4] In a free indirect style this sentence would be: 'I should not get involved in politics.' Free indirect discourse creates the impression the narrator is superseded by his character. As John Marks indicates, Flaubert developed this conception of language as a literary technique (Marks 1998: 106). It is as though Flaubert has ceased to speak and Madame Bovary has begun to speak for herself. Where the author was, there the character is, and in the best worked instances, of which Flaubert is clearly an example, the author disappears into their characters, in a process of double becoming. This ambiguity of the status of the linguistic utterance, somewhere between the narrator and the character, is also central to understanding free indirect discourse in cinema.

Free indirect discourse in cinema was theorised initially by Pasolini in his 1965 speech 'Cinema of Poetry' (Pasolini 1988). Just prior to writing this essay, Pasolini had made *Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo*; during the making of this film the question he had to ask himself was the following: how could he, as an atheist Marxist, make a film about Christ through the eyes of a religious person?[5] As Deleuze explains, Pasolini discovered how to go beyond the two elements of the traditional story, the objective indirect story from the camera's point of view and the subjective direct story from the character's point of view, by the form of free indirect discourse:

> In the cinema of poetry the distinction between what the character saw subjectively and what the camera saw objectively vanished, not in favor of one or the other, but because the camera assumed a subjective presence, acquired an internal vision, which entered into a relation of simulation with the character's way of seeing . . . The author takes a step towards his characters, but the characters take a step towards the author: double becoming. (Deleuze 1989: 148, 222).

Like in linguistics, the relationship between the one who is talking (the narrator/the camera) and what is being said in the image (the character)

is rather ambiguous; it is unclear where one begins and the other ends. Pasolini himself gives the example of Antonioni's *Il Deserto Rosso* (1964) in which the neurotic experience of the world of the main character blends with the cinematographic style of the director. Equally ambiguous is the relation between fiction and reality. As Deleuze and Guattari indicate in *What is Philosophy?* free indirect styles create an 'acentred "plane of composition", instituting counterpoints between the heterogeneous elements of "characters, current events, biographies, and camera eyes"' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 188).[6] Objective and subjective, reality and fiction lose their distinction. As Deleuze indicates, we should no longer talk about 'a cinema of truth but of the truth of cinema' (Deleuze 1989: 151). In free indirect discourse the camera makes itself felt through salient techniques (like obsessive framing, zooming, or the dissociation of image and sound, as I will demonstrate in the next section). As Deleuze points out: '[W]e are caught in a correlation between a perception-image and a camera-consciousness which transforms it (the question of knowing whether the image was objective or subjective is no longer raised)' (Deleuze 1986: 74). As I said before, Deleuze argues that, with the time-image, the whole of cinema becomes a free indirect discourse:

> It is under these conditions of the time-image that the same transformation involves the cinema of fiction and the cinema of reality and blurs their differences; in the same movement, descriptions become pure, purely optical and sound, narrations falsifying and stories simulations. The whole of cinema becomes a free, indirect discourse, operating in reality. (Deleuze 1989: 155)

What does this dominance of the time-image and free indirect discourse mean for contemporary political cinema?

Aesthetics of Free Indirect Discourse in the Time-Image

In *The Skin of Film*, Laura Marks (2000) analyses a range of modern political films that belong to the category of Third Cinema (which she refers to as 'intercultural cinema') and are clearly time-images in a Deleuzian sense. One of these films is *Lumumba, Death of a Prophet* (1992) made by Raoul Peck. Patrice Lumumba was the first leader and prime minister of independent Congo in 1960. But he was soon dismissed by President Kasa-Vubu and in 1961, with the complicity of the US, he was murdered. General Mobutu then took power. The circumstances of Lumumba's death (and the involvements of Belgium and

the United States who considered him a dangerous communist) have been hushed up for a long time. With this film Peck gives a voice to Lumumba.

Telling a story in free indirect discourse is possible through several aesthetic techniques. One way to make subjective and objective, fiction and reality, past and present more ambiguous is by disconnecting sound and image. A voice tells us something, and at the same time we see something else. In this way the voice digs up layers of the past or adds aspects of the future that cannot be seen directly. This strategy is widely used in *Lumumba*: we see images of Brussels, while in voice-over Peck tells the story of Lumumba. By using image and sound autonomously (or 'heautonomously' as Deleuze calls it) image and sound start to speak to each other and influence each other. Lumumba's ghost becomes visible in Brussels in 1992. The past speaks in the present in a free indirect way, neither completely subjective (there isn't a character in the film whose point of view we follow) nor completely objective (the voice of the filmmaker is clearly present commenting in a personal way).

As a filmmaker, Peck moreover relates to Lumumba in a free indirect way. The film is also Peck's story. At the beginning of the 1960s, Peck's family moved from Haiti to Congo to help build the country. His mother was secretary of the government for several years. By using both home movies and news footage, Peck infuses official history with non-official history in a free indirect discourse. In one scene we see Super 8 home movie images of Peck's father, who films a few boys in the garden of their house. Peck's voice-over then tells us: 'My father is trying his new camera. He has found some actors. Among them a future psychoanalyst, a truck driver, a lawyer, two business men, a filmmaker and a male nurse.' Here the voice takes the images of the past to the future. We also see Peck's mother looking at her children. And when Peck tells us: 'My mother says . . .' the images switch to a picture of Lumumba with the Belgian king, Boudoin and President Kasa Vubu. Meanwhile Peck continues, 'that Lumumba was dismissed by the one he himself installed'.

Official historical images are alternated with home movies and stories about the political situation by his mother. Image and sound, filmmaker and his character (Lumumba), official and unofficial history, now come together in a free and indirect way. The film is a perfect example of what Deleuze calls a 'modern political film of the time-image' because it presents simultaneously several layers of time and functions as a speech-act, an act of fabulation that helps to 'invent' (the history of) a people. It is also a typical Third Cinema film in that it deals with the contradictions

and conflicts of history, aims at the raising of political consciousness, clearly takes a minority perspective and speaks (mostly) from within Congolese culture.

Reality and Fiction: A Free Indirect Relation

And yet, Peck felt the need to retell the story differently, in a more classical way. He precisely felt this need in order to make Lumumba's story, the story of the people of Zaire, accessible to a larger audience, an audience that is necessary in order to construct an 'imagined community'.[7] In 2000, therefore, he made a First Cinema version of those events as a political thriller, *Lumumba*. Now we engage with the story mainly through the eyes of Lumumba, played by Eriq Ebouaney. And parallel to the political story, we also witness Lumumba's family life, and his relationship with his wife and kids whom he has to leave behind. The scene just described now looks very different. When Kasa Vubu dismisses Lumumba, the latter is in his office at home. He gets the message of his removal through the radio. Immediately he leaves the house, telling his pregnant wife, who is doing the laundry, that he is going to parliament. There he tries to dismiss Kasa Vubu in turn. But he no longer has the support of the army, which has been paid off with American dollars. In the next scene he is put under arrest by General Mobutu.

Aesthetically, in the cinematographic language we have an alternation between direct discourse (subjective images from the point of view of Lumumba) and indirect discourse (objective images where the camera is at a distance and shows what happens to Lumumba). However, I would like to argue that free indirect discourse has become important for this type of Hollywood genre cinema as well. So taking Deleuze's argument that time-images are free indirect discourses that operate in reality one step further, not only time-images, but also contemporary movement-images like First Cinema films, have to be considered as free indirect discourses, as speech-acts that operate in reality. Aesthetically these images might follow a classic path, but in terms of their content, First Cinema equally relates fiction and reality in a free indirect way. Or perhaps it is possible to say that now that with the time-image cinema has become self-conscious, this also affects contemporary movement-images. Latently there from the beginning, free indirect discourse as 'zero degree' of the perception-image takes its full effects in contemporary cinema.[8] Consequently we have to accept that movement-images are also speech-acts that act upon reality and as such are important for the constitution of 'a people'. It is no longer the privilege of the time-image. As I demonstrated above,

this too was part of cinematographic power from the beginning, but becomes more evident in contemporary cinema.

Dialectics of Contemporary Political Cinema

But we have to acknowledge that there are clearly differences between the various types of cinema and their political perspectives. In order to analyse these perspectives and see how the free and indirect relations between reality and fiction are coloured, we should consider the relations between movement-image and time-image, not only in clear opposition to each other, but in a dialectical way. Here I concur with Mike Wayne who has proposed a dialectics between First, Second and Third Cinema which I would like to translate in a Deleuzian perspective. Connecting Deleuze to any kind of dialectics might not appear a logical step to make. As Ian Buchanan points out in *Deleuzism*, it has become an axiom of Deleuze and Guattari studies to say that they are anti-dialectical:

> Deleuze and Guattari never stop saying that they are anti-dialectical, it is a kind of mantra with them. But in going along with them on this we do ourselves a profound disservice, I believe, because we neutralize one of the most effective tools we have for mobilizing their work towards positive political ends and consequently fall tendentially into a paradigm of pure description of the adjectival kind. More importantly it assumes that there is only one kind of dialectics, which is patently not the case. I would agree wholeheartedly with anyone that said that Deleuze and Guattari's approach was not dialectical if that meant synthesizing, but would disagree strongly if instead it meant historicizing – which is to say, creating the means to 'distance' the present as an 'event' from itself as 'mindless immediacy' of 'flux' – and as Jameson has amply demonstrated one conception of dialectics does not imply the other (Buchanan 2000: 46)

As Buchanan demonstrates, Deleuze and Guattari in their construction of concepts never cease to refer to specific (historical) *contexts*, planes of immanence that function as perspectives on a particular problem. Another (and related) dialectical characteristic in the work of Deleuze and Guattari is that their concepts are always constructed from *concrete material* reality. As Buchanan argues, this is dialectical 'because it attempts to think the ground *as* ground, which is to say as prephilosophical, and at the same time conceptualize that ground as something philosophers construct by fiat (the very antithesis of a ground) and impose on the world a new way of framing it' (Buchanan 2000: 57). A final dialectical characteristic that is important in respect to a dialectical reading of contemporary political cinema is to recognise that in a

Marxist spirit, the past is not something that prevents the future, but rather provides the building blocks for the *transformation* of the present into the future.

As Fredric Jameson indicates in his article 'Marxism and Dualism in Deleuze' (1997), in an axiomatic world, it might even become more important to consider Deleuze in a dialectic way. It is useful to recall that in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari mention four axiomatic fluxes: the flux of energy-matter, the flux of population, the flux of food products and the flux of the urban (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 468). I would like to add another flux, although that could be considered as part of the energy-matter flux, namely the flux of audio-visual images. It is a flux that becomes increasingly complex.

Axioms are operational, they are a set of rules put into effect.[9] Jameson discusses the most important axiom, capitalism, which always surmounts its contradictions by adding new axioms. And, as Jameson adds: 'There can be no return to any simpler axiomatic or purer form of capitalism; only the addition of ever more rules and qualifications' (Jameson 1997: 398). By same token, we cannot go backwards aesthetically either: it is no longer possible to have pure forms of the movement-image (First Cinema) or the time-image (Second and Third Cinema). In cinema too, new rules, influences and qualifications are constantly being added as the medium pushes up against seemingly insurmountable aesthetic limits, only to discover new techniques, new technology, new ways of telling stories, thus reviving the aesthetic once more. And we cannot escape a certain dualism or dialectics between the different types of images. Jameson puts it even more strongly when (speaking about the dualism between state and nomads in Deleuze and Guattari's work) he argues that: '[A] certain dualism might be the pretext and the occasion of the very "overcoming" of Deleuzian thought itself and the [dialectic] transformation into something else . . .' (Jameson 1997: 414). He adds that perhaps the best way to read the opposition between the nomads and the state is to see it as 'reterritorialization by way of the archaic, and as the distant thunder, in the age of axiomatic and global capitalism, of the return of the myth and the call for utopian transfiguration' (Jameson 1997: 414).

Political cinema has a utopian mission in the invention of a people and it operates sometimes by reterritorialisation and deterritorialisations between First, Second and Third Cinema, or between movement-images and time-images. Here it is important to note that Deleuze himself considered classical cinema of the movement-image in itself as a form of Hegelian (not Marxist) dialectical thinking. Illustrating his point with the dialectical montage of Eisenstein he argues:

Three relationships between cinema and thought are encountered together everywhere in the cinema of the movement-image: *the relationship with a whole which can only be thought in a higher awareness, the relationship with a thought which can only be shaped in the subconscious unfolding of images, the sensory-motor relationship between world and man, nature and thought.* (Deleuze 1989: 163)

The modern cinema of the time-image develops new relations with thought which Deleuze characterises as:

the obliteration of a [organic] whole or of a totalising of images [synthetic moment], in favour of an outside which is inserted between them [something that is unsummonable, inexplicable, undecidable, impossible or incommensurable]; the erasure of the internal monologue as whole of the film, in favour of a free indirect discourse and vision; the erasure of the unity of man and the world, in favour of a break which now leaves us with only a belief in this world. (Deleuze 1989: 188)

The restoration of 'a belief in this world' is what has become the task of modern filmmakers – and this is what critical thinking implies with respect to cinematographic modernity (and which could be called dialectical in a Marxist sense). Now, my point is not that what we witness today in contemporary cinema is the fusion or synthesis of Hegelian and Marxist dialectics, but that there are dialectical movements and moments between movement-images and time-images that influence each other. By analysing the precise dialectic movements it becomes possible to distinguish the various political perspectives on material history.

Of course, not all political perspectives are equal, or equally powerful and effective, and we need tools to see in which ways exactly the dialectics between different types of cinema work. By considering film a speech-act that operates as free indirect discourse in reality, we can start unpacking the political dimensions of a variety of perspectives. And it becomes possible to define a new ethics of the image that tries to map the different speaking positions/perspectives, and the ways in which these speaking positions colour the relationship between fiction and reality. Consequently, we don't necessarily need a time-image, or even a Third Cinema film, to discover the minority perspective necessary for political film in the communist tradition. And vice versa, not all First Cinema films propose fascist absent-mindedness of the people, even though historically the movement-image gave way to the time-image because of the fascist misuse of classical cinema (Deleuze 1989: 264).

It is impossible to give a simple code or model of analysis that can be applied to each film in a similar way. Although we have some conceptual

tools, like the movement-image, the time-image and categories of First, Second and Third Cinema, the dynamics or dialectics between all these elements always changes. It is important to disentangle both the virtualities within the image (the past, present, the future) and the forces behind the image (the money flows, who made or supported the image). In order to put these thoughts to work I want to conclude with a few examples of contemporary films that propose dialectical transformations of political cinema.

The Interpreter: First and Third Cinema

Undoubtedly, *The Interpreter* (Pollack 2005) is an example par excellence of a work of First Cinema. A big budget Hollywood film, a political thriller (with little direct interest in politics), with big stars – Nicole Kidman and Sean Penn in leading roles – it meets all the classic criteria of the type. Kidman plays an interpreter/translator for the United Nations who overhears plans for the murder of President Zuwani of the fictional African country, Matobo. Sean Penn is a security officer assigned to protect her. Much of the film is shot as an action-image around this murder plan, with the obligatory parallel subplot centred on the relationship between Kidman and Penn. Pure entertainment, indeed. And yet it would be too easy to dismiss the film as a nonpolitical film on these grounds alone. Two elements relate *The Interpreter* to Third Cinema practice. First of all Sylvia Broome, the Kidman character, is a white African, born and raised in Matobo, whose life has been profoundly and personally affected by the civil war. She lost her parents and sister in a landmine accident; she herself was involved in protest movements and killed a boy in self defence. After this she decided to drop the weapons and work as an interpreter for the United Nations. So she is not an innocent tourist who just happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong moment.[10] There is a critical engagement with the minority perspective that Sylvia Broome in the film translates in terms of UN diplomacy.

Secondly, the film refers to the historical political situation in many African countries, without representing one particular country. The African country is called Matobo; the president, who from a liberator turned into a dictator, is called Edmund Zuwani. Zuwani breaks all resistance to his politics by labelling it 'terrorism' and he gets support in the West for doing so. It is a fictitious country, a fictitious president, and Kidman speaks Matoban, a fictitious language developed especially for the film. But it is not difficult to recognise figures like Mobutu (Congo/Zaire), Mugabe (Zimbabwe), or other African dictators and

their relations to Western governments who often supported them. So in this way political history is referred to by what Georg Lukács has called 'typicality'. According to Lukács typicality is:

> the convergence and intersections of all . . . the most important social, political, moral and spiritual contradictions of a time. . . . Through the creation of a type and the discovery of typical characters and typical situations, the most significant directions of social development obtain adequate artistic expression. (Lukács, cited in Wayne 2001: 36)

Typicality is one of the key ways of politicising narrative in Third Cinema.[11] Also the Kidman character, as interpreter for the United Nations, can be considered as typical. Throughout the film numerous references are made to the profession of interpreter. Kidman propagates the UN ideal of transnational dialogue. The fact that Sydney Pollack got permission from Kofi Annan to film (for the first time ever) in the actual United Nations building, does not come as a surprise. In many ways, the politics of this film is 'safe', unthreatening to the dominant order, and not likely to raise the eyebrows of suspicious powerbrokers. Yet it is also the case that concealed behind the approved exterior there lurks a radical potential for a translation of 'tame' First Cinema into highly politicised Third Cinema. In his essay 'The Task of the Translator' (1999b), Benjamin argued that for a good translation, the interpreter has to let languages influence each other mutually. Here it is the relation between political discourses that is at stake. The languages move toward each other and there is a certain ambiguity between the literal and the free interpretation of the words. This mutual influencing of languages, and all the cultural connotations that belong to it, is thematised in *The Interpreter*. This happens both at the level of the profession of the translator, and on a higher level of transnational influences in a globalised world, symbolised in the United Nations.

Viva Laldjerie: Second and Third Cinema

Viva Laldjerie (Nadir Moknèche 2004) is a characteristic example of Second Cinema. Distributed in the Art House Circuit, it tells the story (based on a real situation) of a mother and daughter who live in a hotel room in contemporary Algeria. The film belongs to the category of Second Cinema because on the one hand, its story isn't told in the forceful and direct manner of a Hollywood film, and on the other hand, the historical and political references are indirect. It is careful to exclude even the use of typical characters and allegorical references that might

point to the (recent) political situation in Algeria. The focus is on the relationship between the characters and on the more general human condition.

And yet, *Viva Laldjerie* is a political film. Its Third Cinema characteristics are, however, quite subtle. At the beginning and end of the film, we are presented with images of a crowd walking in the streets of Algiers, as if the director wanted to frame his fictional story of the women in a free and indirect way to these people of Algiers. The women are not representative of Algerian women today. Indeed, after the screening of the film at the International Film Festival in Rotterdam, the director was heavily criticised for that. But, as I have already argued, representative cinema of the old-fashioned political type is no longer possible in the modern political film: 'the people are missing'. As such, the expectation that the women should be 'representative' is misplaced and politically distracting. It has become impossible to represent the multiplicity and fragmentation of people as 'the people'. The title of the film, 'Viva Laldjerie', nevertheless not only refers to the slogan shouted at football games, it also recalls that classical revolution film *The Battle of Algiers* where 'Viva Algeria' is shouted in the demonstrations against the French.

The political dimension that the director gets across with this film is the fact that these women continue to live, despite the traumatic experiences of the civil war in the 1990s, which have inflicted profound wounds on Algerian society. The film is fiction and has to be seen as a speech-act that refers to Algerian society in a free and indirect way. By refusing to represent people or nation, the film contributes to the creation of a people that is becoming, (re)inventing itself, by opening a space, what Deleuze calls a 'plane of immanence', for that important political transformation to occur. It was precisely this 'plane of immanence' that, during the civil war, when it was dangerous and even impossible to make films or images of any kind, was lacking.[12] Algerians had the feeling of being completely forgotten by the rest of the world, as if they did not exist. Now images, and 'imaginary communities' seem to re-emerge. But no single film can take the 'burden of representation' (Hall 1996). As Deleuze says:

> The speech-act has several heads, and, little by little, plants the elements of a people to come as the free indirect discourse of Africa about itself, about America or about Paris. As a general rule, third world cinema has this aim: through trance or crisis, to constitute an assemblage which brings real parties together, in order to make them produce collective utterances as the prefiguration of the people who are missing (and, as Klee says, 'we can do no more'). (Deleuze 1989: 223–24)

Tangier, le Rêve des Brûleurs (*Tangier, the Burners' Dream*): Third and First Cinema

Leila Kiliani's film *Tangier, the Burners' Dream* (2002) is a contemporary Third Cinema film that is shown at smaller festivals but does not get regular distribution on the big screens. In a Deleuzian sense, it is a true modern political film in which the filmmaker (who creates beautiful images) and her characters (two communities of illegal refugees in Tangier who tell their stories, their dream of crossing the ocean) find each other in a free indirect discourse. The characters are often filmed at night or dawn, framed by the intense colours of the city of Tangier or against the backgrounds of the sea or the harbour. Sometimes their voices are in voice-over and sometimes they are embodied. When we hear their voices in voice-over they are shown in the image as silhouettes, as distant figures; or we just see the border, the Spanish coast on the other side of the ocean. These images and sounds are truly poetic, and the way the images are alternated with the concrete bodies and stories is very powerful because this turns the personal stories also into a larger story about marginality. The characters are clearly comfortable with the camera: they choose what they tell, they decide what the filmmaker will show in the end. As a Third Cinema film it refers to the contemporary political situation of the closure of Europe's borders, it presents the perspective of the 'burners' who get time and space to tell their stories and dreams, and it is told from within the cultural knowledge of Tangier, which is the home town of the director. But at the same time the film is also a sort of Western: the burners continue to survive because, like cowboys, they want to conquer the frontier: 'Even if they would built a fence until the sky, we would find ways to climb over,' one of the burners says.[13] This Western element is present not only in their stories but is also emphasised in the *mise-en-scène* in which the border, as indicated above, is an important element. In some instances, the images are also full of suspense. In several stories, for instance, of how to get across by hiding under trucks or in dustbins, the close-ups of trucks, cars and wheels, combined with appropriate music, make our hearts beat faster. And our perception of cars is changed (remember how Hitchcock changed our perception of birds). Here we have First Cinema elements in a Third Cinema film. And it is precisely this dialectical reversal that provides the difficult existence of these people with another, more heroic dimension through which we can view their lives, allowing them also to see themselves in a more dignified light.

Conclusions

The significance of free indirect discourse to political cinema should be understood on three levels. First of all, it is important to see that, contrary to the case with classical political film, it has become impossible to represent a people. This perhaps seems obvious, but for many filmmakers, especially Third World filmmakers, or minority filmmakers in the West, it is still very difficult to shake off 'the burden of representation'. But from Deleuze we learn that in the modern political film, the relationship between filmmakers and their characters is a free indirect one. And political films have to be considered as fabulations and speech-acts that contribute to the invention of a people; they are not representative of an entire people (or nation).

Secondly, not only time-images but also contemporary movement-images have to be considered as free indirect discourses that operate in reality. The relation between the films and reality is often ambiguous (and in any case never direct). It is useful to analyse the dialectical shifts between First, Second and Third Cinema elements in order to understand some of the political dimensions of the different perspectives. It is necessary to take both elements within the films, as well as forces behind the films, into account. And instead of asking: is this a true representation? we should ask: who wants this to be true, what interests are at stake? Of course the power relations between all the different agents in First, Second and Third Cinema are not equal – but neither are they fixed. And the minor position can find expression in unexpected places.

Thirdly, in a globalised, transnational world, money, goods, people and images travel at ever-increasing speeds and in greater quantities. This makes it necessary to think the invention of 'a people' (the becoming of a people) both on a national and transnational level. Intercultural films, accented films, films that deal with migration explicitly refer to this. But also, more directly, 'national' cinemas acknowledge that the people to come will be constructed out of many different stories. In all these stories the relationship between the West and other parts of the world is a complex and free indirect one. In varying dialectic dynamics these relations that started, amongst others, with colonialism, always crystallise differently in increasingly complex transnational networks.

Deleuze's concept of the rhizome and rhizomatic thinking is one that does justice to this complexity. A supplementary and perhaps more visual metaphor could be added: the geometrical figure of the fractal. Like the rhizome, this is not just a metaphor, but also a concrete pattern and material reality.[14] Arjun Appadurai proposes to take the fractal as a figure of

thought for thinking the complexity of transnational cultural formations (Appadurai 1996: 46). In order to understand the whimsical multiplicity of contemporary cultural formations, classical geometric forms, like circles and squares with fixed measures and oppositional sides, are no longer adequate (or only in abstractions). Fractals are new geometrical figures that can be calculated only by computer. They are figures in endless 'repetition with difference'. A detail of the figure presents the same shapes as the complete figure, though it is not necessarily identical. Most importantly, fractal formulae create unpredictable but not arbitrary effects. The free indirect relation between people and images, between reality and fiction, can be imagined as a fractal formula with capricious, unpredictable, but not arbitrary dynamics.

And filmmakers produce with their films fractal imaginary landscapes. They produce speech-acts that influence reality. In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Walter Benjamin compared the filmmaker with a camera to the surgeon with a scalpel. Like the surgeon who cuts deep into the patient's body, the filmmaker penetrates (operates in) reality's flesh. As we know, every operation involves risks. The instrument can be wrong (a knife that is too blunt), the remedy can be worse than the disease, or unexpected side effects can occur. All of which points to the importance of making good, effective diagnoses to begin with, so that the complexity of contemporary culture and politics is not reduced to a clash of civilisations, but the complex dynamics between many different (his)stories and coloured perspectives become visible.

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Notes

1. Adorno and Horkheimer (1997) argued similarly in their essay on the cultural industry.
2. 'Speech-act' refers to the performative quality of certain linguistic expressions. The most famous example given by Austin is the wedding vow: 'Yes I do' implies an actual change of civil status. As such words and films can act upon reality. See also Austin (2004).
3. Deleuze refers to *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* by V. N. Volosinov, which he attributes to M. Bakthin (1973, New York: Seminar Press).
4. This is a sentence inspired by the novel *Ali and Nino* by Kurben Said (1937).
5. In her article 'Syncrétiques Attitudes' (2005), Bouchra Khalili I analyses the free indirect discourse in the work of Pier Paolo Pasolini and Glauber Rocha.
6. In his account on free indirect discourse and Deleuze John Marks also refers to this passage (see Marks 1998: 106 and 152–6).
7. By accessible I mean both in terms of its style and especially in terms of purchasing video or DVD copies. Many Third Cinema films for which it is so important to get an audience are extremely expensive and difficult to get hold of. Even to the point that a danger of elitism, that is a danger that threatens a strict and pure application of Deleuze as well. See Barbrook 2001.

8. Deleuze calls the perception-image a 'zeroness' before Pierce's firstness (Deleuze 1989: 31–2).
9. See also Ian Buchanan 'Treatise on Militarism', in this volume.
10. *Black Hawk Down* (Ridley Scott 2001) and *Missing* (Costa Gravas 1985) are films that portray American characters in a third-world country who seem to get involved 'by accident' in a third-world situation. *Black Hawk Down*, about the failed mission of the US Special Forces in Mogadishu in 1993, doesn't give any insights into the civil war in Somalia. Just like *Missing* does not give any Chilean perspective on the coup d'état by Pinochet in 1973. It is possible to criticise these films for that reason. It is important to know that *Black Hawk Down* was made with the support of the Pentagon and hence presents the facts from an American perspective. *Missing* focuses, indeed, on a couple of Americans in Chile while ignoring the rest of the population, but it actually criticises the American support in the dictatorial coups in South America. These films are not Third Cinema films. They do not speak from within a third-world culture although the stories are set there. This doesn't make the films less political, though (here I disagree with Mike Wayne). They still present a free indirect relation to reality that can influence reality from an American perspective (which as the two examples show, is also not one single perspective).
11. Other ways to politicise are by allegory and satire (Wayne 2001: 129).
12. In the documentary *Guerre Sans Images* (Mohammed Soudani and Michael von Graffenried 2002), this absence of images during the civil war is the central focus.
13. A contemporary Second Cinema (with First Cinema elements) film situated in Tangier, *Les Temps Qui Changent* (André Téchiné 2005) shows, several times, groups of immigrants waiting for their boat but they are barely noticed by the main characters Catherine Deneuve and Gerard Depardieu, who are occupied with their own love affair. They are noticed, however, and not completely left out of the picture (as is the case in many First Cinema films that deal with a love story between white stars) but are nonetheless very marginal within it. In this way the film seems consciously to acknowledge that most Westerners are not concerned with these people. At the time of writing, there are news reports of hundreds of 'illegal' African immigrants rushing border fences of the Spanish enclave Mellila in Northern Morocco. Western news media start to present images and stories of the immigrants. Perhaps, if the desperate and heroic actions of these people are accompanied by their stories in all kinds of media forms, concrete action will be taken to improve their situation.
14. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari give the fractal as an example of a smooth (nomad) space in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 486).