
A Deleuzian Cineosis: Cinematic Semiosis and Syntheses of Time

David Deamer Manchester Metropolitan University

Abstract

In *Cinema 1* Deleuze creates the taxonomy of the movement-image by extending Henri Bergson's account of the sensory-motor process in *Matter and Memory* through the semiotic system of Charles Sanders Peirce. Through this nexus of Bergson and Peirce, Deleuze can account for each image and sign, their impetus and their relationship to one another. In contrast, the taxonomy of the time-image, the focus of *Cinema 2*, is given no such genesis. Rather, the images and signs appear *in situ*, as if ready-made. This article proposes that the impetus for the taxonomy of the time-image lies in the account given of the three passive syntheses of time in *Difference and Repetition*, and that the nine aspects of the passive syntheses can be seen to correspond to the nine proper signs of the time-image.

Keywords: active syntheses, cinema, cineosis, Deleuze, movement-image, three passive syntheses, time-image

What is the underlying structure of Deleuze's time-image? Asking such a question may be considered controversial, heretical even. The assertion that there is any underlying structure to unearth in the *Cinema* books may at first appear as an allegation. Yet it is clear where Deleuze gets the concepts for the movement-image. He begins with the sensory-motor process described by Bergson in *Matter and Memory* (perception→affection→action) and then extends the typology through certain iterations of the semiotic systems of Peirce. This provides an underlying structure, no matter how much Deleuze may trouble or deterritorialise it, through any number of variances and contradictions.

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Given this, should we accept that the time-image concepts and their organisation have fallen from the sky? To put this another way, can we simply say that all the various components of the time-image come directly from Deleuze's observation of modern(ist) cinema as an expression of the Bergsonian concept of pure memory (different in kind to Bergson's sensory-motor process)? My argument is that there is indeed an underlying organisation, or structure, to the time-image concepts, and one that precedes the Bergsonian inspiration.

There is enough evidence to justify taking such a claim seriously. For instance, in the 'Preface to the French Edition' of *Cinema 1*, Deleuze writes that the book is 'a taxonomy, an attempt at the classification of images and signs. But this first volume has to content itself with determining the elements, the elements of only one part of the classification' (Deleuze 2002a: xiv). Does this not hint that the second volume will determine its elements as another part of the classification? Indeed, in *Cinema 2* Deleuze writes that the time-image is a 'second dimension of pure, non-linguistic semiotics... a whole series of new signs' (Deleuze 2001: 34). The taxonomic creation is a central aspect of both *Cinema* books. Consider, for example, Deleuze's response to a question by Bonitzer, Narboni et al.:

[Q:] *What strikes us in your two books on cinema is something that one already finds in your other books, but never to this extent, namely, taxonomy—the love of classification. Have you always had this tendency, or did it develop over time? Does classification have a particular connection to cinema?*

[A:] Yes, there's nothing more fun than classifications or tables. They're like the outline of a book, or its vocabulary, its glossary. It's not the essential thing, which comes next, but it's an indispensable work of preparation. Nothing is more beautiful than the classifications of natural history... For example, I'm attempting a classification of light in the cinema. (Deleuze 2000: 367–8).

Deleuze, it is clear, does not fear being held to account for his tendency towards taxonomy, for his tendency towards structure. As Philippe Mengue has recently commented, in another context, Deleuze's 'philosophy is thought to constitute an unrestricted apology for all forms of deterritorialisation. But that is a partial and partisan view.' Mengue believes 'we are entitled to think that Deleuze does not disdain the problem of unity' (Mengue 2008: 237). In other words, Deleuze is concerned with the way in which structures arise, come atumbling, and are reconstituted, the way in which territories are deterritorialised

and reterritorialised (cf. Parr 2005: 67). As Deleuze and Guattari put it in another terminological register: ‘there are knots of arborescence on rhizomes, and rhizomatic offshoots in roots... The important point is that the root-tree and canal-rhizome are not two opposed models’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 22).

Take Ronald Bogue’s wonderful *Deleuze on Cinema*. In chapter three, ‘Eighteen signs (more or less)’, Bogue writes:

At a minimum, the signs of the movement-image are fourteen... At most, they number twenty-three... But obviously, the tally is insignificant, for Deleuze is no ordinary system builder... his taxonomy is a generative device meant to create new terms for talking about new ways of seeing. But if the minute terminological differentiations are unimportant, the concepts and logic of their creation are crucial. (Bogue 2003: 104)

Prior to this, Bogue has, astutely, compiled comparative tables of the movement-image concepts from the text of *Cinema 1*, its glossary and recapitulation in chapter two of *Cinema 2*. The tables show variations, variations which seemingly have a number of inconsistencies. This inconsistency (I would guess) leads Bogue to his conclusion that ‘the tally is insignificant’. However, how are we to square this with the claim that ‘the concepts and logic of their creation are crucial’? Surely taking stock of the movement-image signs, the very concepts themselves, *is* the logic of their creation and therefore a significant part of understanding them? As Deleuze writes, it is their ‘differentiation’ and ‘specification’ (Deleuze 2001: 29).

At this point, it perhaps becomes apparent that, due to Deleuze’s procedures, unearthing any underlying structure will necessarily involve an act of reconstitution, the reverse engineering of a machine that was never fully constructed and so is open to a certain amount of interpretation. An act of reterritorialisation? Is this a bad thing? Or is it not this that makes it essentially a creative endeavour? After all, did not Deleuze (famously and perhaps too often quoted) conceive his own approach to ‘the history of philosophy as a kind of buggery...’?

I imagined myself getting onto the back of an author, and giving him a child, which would be his and which would at the same time be a monster. It is very important that it should be his child, because the author actually had to say everything I made him say. But it also had to be a monster because it was necessary to go through all kinds of decenterings, slips, break ins, secret emissions, which I really enjoyed. (Deleuze 2002b: 8)

My own monstrous enjoyment of the *Cinema* books can be called a cineosis, an attempt at a reconstitution of the underlying structures of

the two-fold cinematic semiosis: the signs of the movement-image and the time-image.

If Bogue resists the lure of resolving the taxonomic tables for the movement-image, there is not even an attempt at tabulating the time-image. This is not surprising. Unlike the movement-image, Deleuze does not hint at an underlying schema. But what if such exists, hidden away, so to speak? One way to explore this possibility is to identify and specify the concepts proper to the time-image. This, I believe, can only be done by picking up where Bogue has left off. In other words, reconstituting and resolving the movement-image taxonomy, and seeing what is, so to speak, left over. This is an essential first step towards figuring out the time-image taxonomy. Yet simply tabulating the signs of the movement- and time-image is not the crucial issue. What is critical is that the tabulation of the time-image concepts (their number, their organisation) reveals their impetus, their source. Just as the movement-image has its beginnings in Bergson's sensory-motor process extended by Peirce's semiotic system, could some equivalent, some pre-existing organisation, be the stimulus for the time-image? The underlying system, I argue, is the three passive syntheses of time that first appear in *Difference and Repetition*. As Deleuze has stated: '*Difference and Repetition* was the first book in which I tried to "do philosophy". All that I have done since is connected to this book, including what I wrote with Guattari (obviously, I speak from my own point of view)' (Deleuze 2004a: xiii).

I am not the first to propose such a link between the *Cinema* books and the three passive syntheses. D. N. Rodowick, for instance, in his seminal exploration of the philosophical antecedents and connectives of Deleuze's work on film, writes: 'Cinematic movement-images emerge from the regime of universal variation where "matter = image" ... Alternatively, time-images emerge from what Deleuze calls, in *Difference and Repetition*, the three passive syntheses of time' (Rodowick 1997: 127). Rodowick leaves it, more or less, at this. More recently David Martin-Jones, Richard Rushton, Joe Hughes and Patricia Pisters have gone on to explore, in their own way, connections between the *Cinema* books and the three passive syntheses. As we will see a little later, they all reach very different conclusions. Yet all agree on one point, that some, or all, of the three passive syntheses are aligned with components of the movement-image.

I follow Rodowick in my approach. In so doing I will explore how the particular concepts, images and signs of the time-image can be said to have their foundation in the three passive syntheses. Further, while Bergson's concepts of the sensory-motor process and pure memory

in *Matter and Memory* provide the visible framework of the *Cinema* books, it is Deleuze's own work in *Difference and Repetition* that constitutes a hidden structure. For the three passive syntheses operate in consort with what Deleuze calls the active syntheses, which can in turn be seen as a general conceptual figure for the movement-image taxonomy.

I. Taxonomy of Time-Images: From Bergson to Simondon, Nietzsche, Heidegger

For Deleuze, what marks the emergence of the time-image is an explosion of the signs of the action-image which cohere the coordinates of the movement-image and—as a consequence—delinks affection-images, perception-images and mental images. This delinkage is achieved through the reintroduction of aberrations which the movement-image (from the early days of cinema) attempted to annul (through, for example, an integrated soundtrack, naturalistic colour, invisible montage, and so on). In this way filmmakers discovered pure optical and sound situations, situations where characters no longer act (no longer resolve the chaos). But this is only the intimation of a new kind of cinema. Something else needs to happen. The pure optical and pure sound situations—opsigns and sonsigns—need to be relinked differently and a new cinema built from this ground up. According to Deleuze, opsigns and sonsigns are relinked in a number of ways. The actual (on-screen) image is coerced to open up to its virtual component creating hyalosigns. These 'mutual images' are combined as narratives resulting in the emergence of chronosigns (Deleuze 2001: 78). Chronosigns operate by creating non-linear or serial narratives and go on to 'constitute a new image of thought' (Deleuze 2001: 215). This new image of thought Deleuze names the noosign which tears thinking away from habitual (movement-image) mental images. In this way time-images are also lectosigns, visual and auditory concepts that must be read rather than simply seen.

The etymologies of the names of the time-image offer a way of exploring them in more detail. Opsigns and sonsigns are simply contractions of the terms optical sign and sound sign, pure optical and sound situations which defy classification through the movement-image taxonomy. Hyalosigns are inspired by the work of Gilbert Simondon, who uses the idea of the crystal (from which the prefix *hyal*—meaning 'glass'—is derived) as a parallel for the process of individuation.¹ Chronosign seems to be a neologism. However, as a synonym for the

time-image the concepts it describes (memory as aspects of the past, present and future) can be seen to emerge from Bergson's *Matter and Memory*. Noosigns are inspired by Martin Heidegger and his discussion of the nature of thought (Heidegger 1972: 3; Deleuze 2001: 156, 156 n2, 308). Finally, lectosigns appear to be yet another of Deleuze's neologisms and refer to the process of reading time-images, from the Latin *lecto*. All interesting stuff. However, while Deleuze's concepts can be seen to display a philosophical consonance in the way he deploys them in *Cinema 2*, it is clear that looking at the various sources of these cinematographic concepts betrays no contingent structure between the different images. Rather, the first clue to uncovering the underlying structure of the time-image is that only hyalosigns, chronosigns and noosigns – not opsigns/sonsigns or lectosigns – can be decomposed into triadic sign structures.

For instance, hyalosigns seem to be decomposed into avatars which describe properties of crystalline formations. Deleuze takes the example of the crystal and identifies how filmmakers have reflected the multiplicitous facia of crystals and the growth of a crystal from a pre-crystal. He identifies three broad trends which form the avatars of the hyalosign: 'two mirrors face to face', 'the limpid and the opaque' and 'the seed and the environment' (Deleuze 2001: 71). Each perform exchanges between the actual on-screen image and its virtual connections off-screen (on the brain screen).

The avatars of chronosigns have a more direct relationship with the properties of pure memory discussed by Bergson in *Matter and Memory*, but are also extended by Nietzsche's concept of the 'will to power' (Nietzsche 1967; Deleuze 2001: 141). Deleuze specifies three types of chronosign that correspond to the three aspects of time in-and-for-itself. 'Sheets of the past' explore the way in which memories are 'no longer confused with the space which serves as its place' (Deleuze 2001: 100). Instead memories explore time itself – no longer functioning as a repository of the present, but as a product of the present. 'Points [or peaks] of the present' explore the way in which any present moment is fundamentally divided between the present-in-itself, the past and the future (Deleuze 2001: 100). It is this aspect that can make time 'frightening and inexplicable' for the possibility of action is torn between living in the moment, reacting to the influences of the past and acting for future effects (Deleuze 2001: 101). Deleuze refers to these two aspects of chronosigns as the 'order of time' in that they undermine the linear chronology of past, present and future (Deleuze 2001: 155). The third avatar of the chronosign – which is orientated towards the future – is the

‘power of the false’ and Deleuze delineates this function as the ‘series of time’ (Deleuze 2001: 126, 155, 133, 136). A serial organisation disconnects the continuity of time that constructs the character in the film as locked into a narrative where the present is a product of the past and the future a consequence. Rather than this closed circuit, a serial organisation is one in which time is organised into images in-and-for-themselves which while independent have a multiplicitous virtual presence with each other. Deleuze puts it thus, ‘the power of the false exists only from the perspective of a series of powers, always referring to each other and passing into one another’ (Deleuze 2001: 133). As in serialism in music, which attempts to overthrow traditional harmonics without descending into chaos, fundamental elements are continuously re-arranged exploring the difference in repetition.

Finally, the avatars of the noosigns would initially seem to emerge directly from cinema itself. How does a filmmaker of the time-image capture thought on-screen? To use mental images (relation-, recollection- and dream-images, expressions of thought, habitual memory) would mean a return to the coordinates of the movement-image. Methods other than this must be found. Indeed, for Deleuze, the answer seems beguilingly simple. On the one hand, thought appears through the environments of the *mise-en-scène*. As Deleuze writes in *Cinema 2*, ‘landscapes are mental states’, thus the *mise-en-scène* is ‘the brain’ (Deleuze 2001: 188, 205). On the other hand thought appears through the body of the actor (Deleuze 2001: 205). Deleuze sees the body as having two poles: those of ‘attitude’ and ‘gest’ (Deleuze 2001: 188, 205): Gest, a term taken from Brecht, describes the way in which an actor can foreground gesture and performance. Attitude describes a body that does not act, that is displayed in its everydayness.

That only the time-images of hyalosigns, chronosigns and noosigns can be decomposed into specific signs is more than a detail. It intimates not only the way in which the components of the time-image are organised, but also the difference at conceptual level between them and opsigns/sonsigns and lectosigns. Opsigns and sonsigns describe the actual visual and auditory components of a time-image film in general, after the collapse of the coordinates of the movement-image. Deleuze writes ‘we gave the name opsign (and sonsign) to the actual image cut off from its motor extension’ (Deleuze 2001: 69). They are ‘slivers’, the images resulting in the despecification of movement-images prior to rejoining each other as time-images (hyalosigns, chronosigns and noosigns) (Deleuze 2001: 69). Similarly, it is clear in Deleuze’s discussion of lectosigns that this term is used for the way in which time-images

Table 1.1. Time-image: images and signs

Images	Signs		
0 Opsigns and sonsigns			
1 Hyalosigns	Mirrors	Limpid and opaque	Seed and environment
2 Chronosigns	Sheets of the past	Peaks of the present	Powers of the false
3 Noosigns	Body of <i>gest</i>	Body of attitude	Brain Lectosigns ∞

(again, in general) need to be read rather than be seen. This is the 'final aspect of the direct time-image, the common limit' (Deleuze 2001: 279). Thus, if opsigns and sonsigns are actual material images appearing on screen decoupled from each other to instead give on to the virtual, lectosigns are virtual images appearing on the brain screen as an effect of the actual filmic process, the former from the point of view of the image, the latter from the point of view of the film as a complex nexus of powers. In this way, the domains of the time-image that appear between opsigns/sonsigns and lectosigns can be called the three time-images proper. Hyalosigns, chronosigns and noosigns are, on the one hand, complex compositions of opsigns and sonsigns. On the other hand, the images and signs of the time-image constitute a decomposition of lectosigns.

The time-image proper: three times three. Nine signs. Three connected concepts, each with three sub-categories. Where do we see such a structure in Deleuze's other work? The answer, of course, is in the three passive syntheses of time and the three dimensions of each as originally set out in the second chapter of *Difference and Repetition*. As Jay Lampert summarises:

While in one sense there are three distinct logics of time corresponding to the forms of present, past, and future—the logic of succession, the logic of co-existence, and the logic of dark precursors, respectively—the logic of succession has its own way of conceiving the present, past, and future, and the logics of co-existence and of precursors each have their own way of conceiving all three. As a result, there exist nine forms of present, past, and future... (Lampert 2006: 8)

But is this any more than coincidence?

II. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* and the Three Passive Syntheses

The central concern of *Difference and Repetition* is to attack concepts of identity and overturn philosophies of representation in order to set free an alternative 'image of thought' (Deleuze 2004a: 164). Deleuze's approach is to conduct a number of sorties into the many and varied instances of identity and representation from Aristotle via Hegel to Freud and beyond. The concept of identity, for Deleuze, is problematic because it relies upon reconstituting the same at the expense of the different. It is a concept that depends upon annulling difference in-itself. It is a concept that depends upon exclusion. It is a concept that relies upon negativity – this is this because it is not that. The concept of identity is fundamental to representation which proposes – firstly – an object and its representation as separate but – secondly – a verisimilitude between the two. Representational relationships pretend to truth through identity. Deleuze's programme is to replace the philosophy of representation with expression, another kind of image of thought that arises through an alternative series of philosophies, from the Stoics to Spinoza, Nietzsche and Bergson (Deleuze 2004a: 346). Fundamental to achieving this is replacing identity with difference and repetition: the repetition of difference, the difference in repetition, taking the concepts of difference and repetition 'together rather than separately' (Deleuze 2004a: xiii). For Deleuze both concepts have suffered the same fate, which is to say, neither had been fully developed as concepts in-and-of-themselves. Both concepts, in their own way, have been developed in relation, opposition and subordination to the concept of identity. Setting these concepts free is thus the first major activity of the book. Deleuze approaches this from a number of directions (though, crucially, they are not designed to 'add up' so much as create a nexus). One of the most famous of these approaches is the section where Deleuze explores (after Kant and Husserl) the three passive syntheses of time.

How does an organisation such as a body emerge out of the dark chaos of the universe? According to Deleuze a body exists through spatial stability and temporal fusion. A body is spatial in the sense that it is a contraction of the matter of the universe, a synthesis of physical stuff. A body is temporal in that it perseveres in some way in the present, past and future. These are the extensive and intensive dimensions of a body. Historically, philosophy has tended to focus upon the spatial (which results in identity) rather than the temporal (which relates to difference and repetition). Deleuze thus concentrates upon this temporal dimension

and specifies three domains, the time of the present, the past and the future. First, the self is temporal through the contraction (synthesis) of different instants into a now. Second, the self is temporal because it has stored up compacted (synthesised) moments as memories. Third, the self is temporal through a continual reencountering (synthesising) of the permeable wall of the future. These three aspects – or syntheses – of time form the temporal nexus of the self prior to consciousness. In this way the self is a passive temporal entity before locating itself spatially in a body in a universe, prior to the active awareness of consciousness (Deleuze 2004a: 100). Deleuze names this temporal primacy the three passive syntheses of time. Each passive synthesis has its own domain. Thus, each of the passive syntheses has own way of constituting the past, present and future, as decomposing into a past, a present and a future. Consequently there are three aspects to each of the domains of the three passive syntheses. In other words, there are nine dimensions of time. The Deleuzian self is a complex repetition of temporal manifestations of difference.

The first passive synthesis of time (the ‘originary synthesis’) is that of the ‘lived, or living, present’. It is the ever-present now, the nowness of the now . . . a ‘succession’ or ‘repetition of instants’ (Deleuze 2004a: 91). The primary aspect of this contraction is that each autonomous present instant appears seamlessly as a flow. However, this flow also depends upon the future and the past, for the present negotiates the flow of future instants into past instants. So, for Deleuze, the first passive synthesis of time has the present in ascendancy and ‘to it belong both the past and the future’, they are aspects, or facets of the present (Deleuze 2004a: 91). So future and past are not distinct entities, but the future of the present and the past of the present with respect to the present of the present. This contraction of time both foresees the future and preserves the past but only in as much as it gives ‘direction to the arrow of time’ (Deleuze 2004a: 91). The past is a form of the present through ‘retention’, a reservoir of present instants synthesised in the service of the present, for the present. The future is a form of the present as ‘expectation’, that the next now will follow this now. Thus, for Deleuze, this passive synthesis ‘constitutes our habit of living’, it is the ‘thousands of habits of which we are composed – these contractions, contemplations, pretensions, presumptions, satisfactions, fatigues; these variable presents’ (Deleuze 2004a: 94, 100). ‘This self’, Deleuze makes clear, ‘is by no means simple’ (Deleuze 2004a: 100).

The second passive synthesis of time is deduced from the first. ‘The paradox of the present’, writes Deleuze, is to ‘constitute time while

passing the time constituted', thus a 'necessary conclusion—*that there must be another time in which the first synthesis of time can occur.* This refers us to the second synthesis' (Deleuze 2004a: 100). Deleuze contrasts the first and second syntheses in this way: if the first synthesis is the 'foundation' of time, the second is 'ground', and the 'ground' might be thought of as the aspect of time which supports the 'foundation' (Deleuze 2004a: 100). Another image: the first synthesis of time is the present, it flows from the now to the past, and from the future to the now—like a river, and the river flows over an earth which supports it. This is the second passive synthesis of time, the ground which allows the present to pass. If the present was the now, and gave direction to time, the past is a chasm of the then. Deleuze names the second passive synthesis 'memory' (Deleuze 2004a: 101). Memory, in this way, is the 'pure, general, *a priori* element of all time' (Deleuze 2004a: 103–4). It is more than just memory in the common usage of the term (just as the first passive synthesis—as will be explored a little later—extends beyond the common sense usage of habit). This pure past is a dominion of paradoxes: 'first paradox: the contemporaneity of the past with the present that it *was*... Second paradox... *all* of the past coexists with the new present', the present is merely the razor's edge of generalised past (Deleuze 2004a: 103). Further—third paradox—'the pure element of the past in general pre-exists the passing present' (Deleuze 2004a: 104). Final paradox, there are an 'infinity of levels' to the past (Deleuze 2004a: 105). From the second paradox we see that the past's relationship with the present is one of domination, the weight of the past bears down on a present which is merely the focal point. This is what leads Deleuze to call the present of the past 'destiny' (Deleuze 2004a: 105). The future of the past, as we have seen with the third paradox, is the way in which we can 'penetrate' the second passive synthesis (Deleuze 2004a: 106). Deleuze calls this 'reminiscence', and—he makes this clear—reminiscence is 'involuntary' (Deleuze 2004a: 107). And this is where the power of the future of the past lies. Thus the infinite levels of the fourth paradox.

It is the power of the future in the past that leads to the conclusion there must be a third passive synthesis. Thus, if the passive synthesis of habit threatens towards consistency and the passive synthesis of memory threatens to close in upon itself, it is a third passive synthesis that 'fractures' this line and closure, which opens up the passive syntheses to life, the universe and everything (Deleuze 2004a: 109). It is a 'caesura' (Deleuze 2004a: 111). It does this because while the first passive synthesis has the future as expectation and the second passive synthesis has it as reminiscence, the third passive synthesis has the future

Table 2.1. The nine dimensions of the three passive syntheses of time

Passive syntheses		Dimensions	
First passive synthesis	Past of the present (retention)	Present the living present	Future of the present (expectation)
Habit			
Second passive synthesis	Past the pure past	Present of the past (destiny)	Future of the past (reminiscence)
Memory			
Third passive synthesis	Past of the future (experience)	Present of the future (metamorphosis)	Future the empty future
Caesura			

as an ‘empty form of time’ (Deleuze 2004a: 108). If the first passive synthesis of time constituted the ground, the second the foundation, the third has ‘overturned its own ground’ (Deleuze 2004a: 111). The future is unknowable, ‘dark’, but there are possibilities, ‘precursors’ (Deleuze 2004a: 145). Its dimensions are the past of the future, this is the past as ‘experience’, but not one of completion, rather of an experience that is incomplete and reeks of the ‘act that is too big’ (Deleuze 2004a: 112). The dimension of the present of the future Deleuze names ‘metamorphosis’, a change or ‘a becoming-equal to the act’ (Deleuze 2004a: 112). This is the way the empty future allows the present to vary. This is freedom, of a kind.

In summary, the first passive synthesis of time constitutes, for Deleuze, the ‘lived, or living, present’ and views the past as retention and the future in expectation (Deleuze 2004a: 91). The second passive synthesis of time constitutes, for Deleuze, the ‘pure past’ and views the present as a destiny and the future as a reminiscence (Deleuze 2004a: 99). The third passive synthesis of time constitutes, for Deleuze ‘the pure and empty form of time’ which is essentially ‘belief in and of the future’ and views the past as experience and the present as metamorphosis (Deleuze 2004a: 108). Habit, memory and belief. To be, being and becoming. Foundation, ground and ungrounding. Time’s arrow, circularity and eternal return. The three domains of passive synthesis.²

What has all of this to do with the cinema? My argument is that Deleuze structures the three domains of the time-image proper (hyalosigns, chronosigns and noosigns) and their nine constituent signs on the three repetitions of the passive syntheses of time and the nine dimensions of temporal difference and repetition. Such a claim must, of course, be tested. The domains of the time-image and the dimensions of

the passive syntheses must be mapped. Some kind of correspondence at conceptual level must be demonstrated.

However, before confronting the devil of such detail, we should first anticipate an objection. It might be posed thus: surely the first passive synthesis of time, the passive synthesis of habit, corresponds to Bergson's habitual memory, the crib and grave of the sensory-motor system... surely the first passive synthesis of time relates to the movement-image? This objection must be addressed, for it seems, on the face of it, quite unarguable. Indeed, a number of writers have put forward just such, or very similar, proposals. In a short discussion in *Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity*, David Martin-Jones argues that the first passive synthesis of habit aligns with the movement-image components of perception-, affection- and action-images; while the second passive synthesis of memory aligns with the mental image category of recollection-images discussed early on in *Cinema 2*. Thus, the third passive synthesis of time aligns with the time-image (Martin-Jones 2006: 60–2). Correspondingly, in a more sustained argument, Richard Rushton, in 'Passions and Actions: Deleuze's Cinematographic Cogito', sees the spectator of the modern cinema encountering film through the third passive synthesis (Rushton 2008). Joe Hughes' 'Schizoanalysis and the Phenomenology of Cinema' is a very different kettle of fish. In a very sophisticated argument that takes in not only *Difference and Repetition* but also *The Logic of Sense* and *Anti-Oedipus*, Hughes schematises thus:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Material field | (plane of immanence) |
| 2. First passive synthesis | (perception-image) |
| 3. Second passive synthesis | (affection-image) |
| 4. Third passive synthesis | (action-image) |
| 5. Failure of the third synthesis | (crisis of the action-image) |
| 6. Pure thought, empty time | (pure thought, empty time) |
- (Hughes 2008: 25)

Hughes is persuasive, his approach anchored within phenomenological coordinates, exploring not only the aforementioned texts but also Kant, Husserl, and Husserl's reading of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, both the A and B editions. The most recent – and radical – contribution comes from Patricia Pisters in 'Synaptic Signals: Time Travelling Through the Brain in the Neuro-Image', and, more fully, in *The Neuro-Image: A Deleuzian Film-Philosophy of Digital Screen Culture*. Pisters aligns the movement-image with the first passive synthesis; the time-image with the second passive synthesis; and creates a new

image—the ‘neuro-image’—for the third passive synthesis. This exciting conceptual creation describes, for Pisters, the ‘temporal dimensions of schizoanalysis’ (Pisters 2011: 261).

Thus, before we can suggest that the three passive syntheses correspond to the three types of time-image, we must initially demonstrate that the first passive synthesis of time does not align with the movement-image, nor indeed, with Bergsonian habitual memory. This will take us a rather circuitous route. However, this is all for the good. Doing so will allow us to propose another, very different, relationship between the syntheses of time and the movement-image.

III. The Dualism That Constitutes a Continual Upheaval in Philosophy

To begin with, let us briefly remind ourselves of the organising principles of the movement-image. Deleuze sets up a correspondence between Bergson’s concepts that describe the world of matter (perception→affection→action) and the films of the so-called classical cinema. These movies organise themselves around the sensory-motor response: a character sees, feels and reacts and the act changes the world of the film. From this correspondence Deleuze formulates the initial coordinates of the movement-image: perception-images, affection-images and action-images. Perception-images: images in long shot, describing the vision of a character or a camera consciousness. Affection-images: close-up images of the face, or images in close-up that evoke an emotional response. Action-images: images in medium shot, duels, investigations, discoveries. Together these three different types of images make possible the description of different types of film, but are not enough to describe the classical cinema. Deleuze needs more coordinates, a larger audio-visual conceptual toolkit within this framework. He finds inspiration in the semiotics of C. S. Peirce.

Deleuze evokes a correspondence between the Bergsonian philosophy of matter and the semiotic system of Peirce: first the image affects us; second, we act upon the image; third, the image enters into thought. Yet this correspondence is not without some give. For instance, Peirce’s topography begins with how an image affects us, whereas this is not the first category in Bergson, which is perception. Also, Peirce’s schema passes beyond action, seemingly the final category in Bergson. In order to reconcile the differences between the two schemas Deleuze invents corresponding terms for each of the other’s concepts. He labels Bergsonian perception as having ‘zeroness’ in reference to Peirce (saying

Peirce takes perception as a given). Peircian thirdness, for Deleuze, describes 'relation' in reference to Bergson and can be thought of as 'the closure of deduction' (Deleuze 2001: 32). In Bergsonian terms this can be seen as a labelling of what Bergson calls 'habitual memory' (Bergson 1991: 85). For Bergson, habitual memory underpins the sensory-motor schema (perception→affection→action) causing recognition and invoking automatic responses. The automatic response is a habit stored up in the body but 'set in motion... by an initial impulse' (Bergson 1991: 80). Simply put, our bodies obey habitual laws based upon a repetition of the perception→affection→action chain. Deleuze uses this compound of Peircian thirdness (thought) and habitual memory (relation) to designate the cinematic concept of the mental image. Mental images have three coordinates. Relation-images, which represent the thoughts of characters on-screen in objects and symbols. Recollection-images, which represent thought through flashbacks. And dream-images, which represent thought as hallucination, from fantasy to nightmares. Thus, for Deleuze, the classical cinema can think in a number of ways. In the first instance 'action, and also perception and affection, are framed in a fabric of relations... [a] chain of relations' (Deleuze 2002a: 200). Another way of representing thought on screen is through the flashback which indicates 'a causality which is psychological, but still analogous to a sensory-motor determinism, and, despite its circuits, only confirms the progression of linear narrative' (Deleuze 2001: 48). Finally, with dream-images there is a weakening the bonds between perception, affection and action yet at the same time they are reconstituted in another narrative in an elsewhere. As Deleuze comments 'dream-images... project the sensory-motor situation to infinity... but we do not, in this way, leave [it] behind' (Deleuze 2001: 273). Mental images are thus expressive images within the domain of the movement-image, classical images of thought. As Peirce puts it, in his description of thirdness (in what could be a parody of a scene from an early German synchronous sound picture):

our [man], unable to shut out the piercing sound [of a whistle], jumps up and seeks to make his escape by the door... but the instant our man opens the door let us say the whistle ceases. Much relieved, he thinks he will return to his seat, and so shuts the door, again. No sooner, however, has he done so than the whistle recommences. He asks himself whether the shutting of the door had anything to do with it; and once more opens the mysterious portal. As he opens it, the sound ceases. He is now in a third state of mind: he is Thinking. That is, he is aware of learning... and learning is the means by which we pass from ignorance to knowledge (Peirce 2004).

For Deleuze, 'thirdness perhaps finds its most adequate representation in relation' (Deleuze 2002a: 197). Yet the mental images of recollections and dreams also operate in this domain: recollection-images 'seize a former present in the past and thus respect the empirical progression of time' while dream-images conjure up a 'metamorphosis of the situation' by linking dream situation to waking situation and so negotiating the latter through the former (Deleuze 2001: 273). While it is not difficult to assign these mental images to three aspects of time—the present (relation), the past (recollection) and the future (dreams)—they remain in the movement-image, they are spatialised, materialised images of time. So the question remains the same (though seems to have taken on more force): do not mental images—Bergsonian habitual memory—correspond exactly to the first passive synthesis of time? The first passive synthesis constitutes, for Deleuze, the 'lived, or living, present' and views the past as retention and the future as expectation (Deleuze 2001: 91). It is time's arrow, the passive synthesis that gives direction to time, that structures the past, present and future in succession. Is this not recollection-image, relation-image and dream-image? Is the first passive synthesis not the classical image of thought that Deleuze sets up in order to overturn it with the second and third passive synthesis?

Perhaps not.³ Despite initial appearances, mental images (traditional images of thought that reinscribe the perception, affection and action of the movement-image) are not cinematographic concepts that align with the first passive synthesis of time... though this is not to say that mental images and the first passive synthesis are not closely related. Indeed, unpicking these relationships is essential. Let us return to *Difference and Repetition* and listen closely to what Deleuze has to say of the first passive synthesis of time, and the way in which it extends itself. On the one hand—and as we have already seen—it extends into the second and third passive syntheses. From the habituation of the present to the pure memory of the past and finally to the empty, creative future. On the other hand—and this is crucial—the first passive synthesis also extends into active syntheses. At the same time that the first passive synthesis of time is happening, something else occurs: 'the past is no longer the immediate past of retention but the reflective past of representation, of reflected and reproduced particularity'. And 'the future also ceases to be the immediate future of anticipation in order to become the reflexive future of prediction' (Deleuze 2004a: 92). The past of the present (retention) and the future of the present (expectation) become—in active synthesis—reflective. Time (the first passive synthesis thereof) is spatialised. Deleuze summarises thus: 'in

other words, the active syntheses of memory and understanding are superimposed upon and supported by the passive synthesis' (Deleuze 2004a: 92). There are thus two types of the habitual successive present, the active psychological present and the first passive synthesis of the present. As Deleuze puts it: 'it concerns not only the sensory-motor habits that we have (psychologically), but also, before these, the primary habits that we are; the thousands of passive syntheses of which we are organically composed' (Deleuze 2004a: 95). This organic body is not simply a psychological subject, but a body without organs, or as Deleuze puts it before he has appropriated this concept 'a soul must be attributed to the heart, to the muscles, nerves and cells' (Deleuze 2004a: 95). Thus, while the first active synthesis is carried out by the mind, 'this living present or *passive synthesis* which is duration' rather 'occurs in the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and reflection' (Deleuze 2004a: 92, 91).⁴

This is the crucial point. There is a double aspect to the three syntheses of time: the temporal layers of the three passive syntheses and the spatialised structure of the active synthesis that is built upon them. The first passive synthesis of time 'redeploys in the active synthesis of a psycho-organic memory and intelligence (instinct and learning)' (Deleuze 2004a: 93). And this redeployment occurs for both the second and third passive syntheses as well:

We must therefore distinguish not only the forms of repetition in relation to passive synthesis but also the levels of passive synthesis and the combination of these levels with one another and with active syntheses. All of this forms a rich domain of *signs* which envelop heterogeneous elements and animate behaviour... Each contraction, each passive synthesis, constitutes a sign which is interpreted or deployed in active synthesis. (Deleuze 2004a: 93–4)

We are now in a position to interpret this as follows: rather than the first passive synthesis of time corresponding to the movement-image, the movement-image corresponds to active syntheses. In other words, the active and passive syntheses are another way of figuring Bergson's '*two forms of memory*', habitual memory and pure memory (Bergson 1991: 79):

the past appears... to be stored up... under two extreme forms: on the one hand, motor mechanisms which make use of it; on the other, personal memory-images which picture all past events with their outline, their colour and their place in time... the first, conquered by effort, remains dependent upon our will; the second spontaneous. (Bergson 1991: 88)

On the one hand, habitual memory, which underpins the sensory-motor schema and is of the movement-image and specified by relation-, recollection- and dream-images. On the other hand, pure memory, which underpins the time-image. The time-image is 'non-chronological time, Cronos and not Chronos', which corresponds to the movement-image (Deleuze 2001: 81). The difference is marked by the absence of a single consonant. So close, so difficult, perhaps impossible, to separate. Deleuze chooses to use these similar (and often confused) terms in *Cinema 2*, rather than the more familiar Chronos and Aion. This interaction is one of the fundamental themes running throughout Deleuze's work. For instance, in *The Logic of Sense*, written at the same time as *Difference and Repetition*, a book of 'paradoxes', which examines the 'play of sense and nonsense', of 'chaos-cosmos', takes as its central paradox the Stoics' 'two kinds of things' (Deleuze 2004b: ix, 7). The first kind of thing is the body, the second kind of thing is 'impassive' entities. 'There are two times' and their division is figured in this way: 'one is cyclical, measures the movements of bodies and depends upon the matter which limits and fills it out; the other is a pure straight line at the surface, incorporeal, unlimited, an empty form of time, independent of all matter' (Deleuze 2004b: 71).

Whereas Chronos expressed the action of bodies and the creation of corporeal qualities, Aion is the locus of incorporeal events, and the attributes which are distinct from qualities. Whereas Chronos was inseparable from bodies which filled it out entirely as causes and matter, Aion is populated by effects which haunt it without ever filling it up. (Deleuze 2004b: 189)

Deleuze writes that 'this new dualism of bodies or states of affairs and effects or incorporeal events entails an upheaval in philosophy' (Deleuze 2004b: 9). It is this upheaval that Deleuze, in all his work, is keeping alive.⁵ Chronos and Aion (Cronos) from the Stoics, matter and memory from Bergson; the active and passive syntheses of *Difference and Repetition*, the movement-image and time-image of the *Cinema* books.⁶

IV. Mapping Passive Syntheses and Time-Images

Yet it is not simply the case that the three time-images proper exemplify the three passive syntheses of time in general. The correspondence could be much deeper than this. It can be shown that the philosophical concepts of the nine dimensions of the past, present and future are embodied as the cinematographic concepts of the nine signs of hyalosigns, chronosigns and noosigns.

Hyalosigns can be seen to correspond with the first passive synthesis of time. This first passive synthesis is that of the 'lived, or living, present', the 'thousands of habits of which we are composed' (Deleuze 2004a: 91, 100). Hyalosigns are cinematographic images that appear in the now, where 'the actual [image] is cut off from its motor linkages', instead exploring 'the coalescence of an actual image and *its* virtual image' (Deleuze 2001: 127). This image in the now, this hyalosign, is a crystal-image and Deleuze identifies three aspects. First, the actual image describes a mirroring: 'oblique mirrors, concave and convex mirrors and Venetian mirrors', 'two facing mirrors', and a 'palace of mirrors' (Deleuze 2001: 70). Here the body and environment appear in the mirror, indiscernible (is this the actual? is this the virtual?). These crystalline images describe the thousands of habits of which we are composed—the contraction of the fragmentation that we are, our living present. Second, actual and virtual images enter into an exchange: one becoming limpid as another becomes opaque. Back and forth, an 'exchange' that is (once again) indiscernible. The actual image is in the present, but the virtual image is a past of the present, a retention. The virtual image appears with the actual image, constituting the 'smallest internal circuit' (Deleuze 2001: 70). Third, actual and virtual images appear as the seed and the environment. The present is the seed, the future of the present an environment in relation to that seed, an expectation, an anticipation—though not as a sensory-motor extension (actual chronological succession) but rather as an indeterminate (virtual) illumination. The future is now: 'as pure virtuality, it does not have to be actualised' (Deleuze 2001: 79). The three images of the hyalosign thus describe the three dimensions of the first passive synthesis of time: the living present, the past as retention and the future as expectation. 'What we see . . . in the crystal is time, in its double movement of making presents pass, replacing one by the next while going towards the future, but also preserving all the past, dropping it into an obscure depth' (Deleuze 2001: 87).

Chronosigns can be seen to correspond with the second passive synthesis of time. This second passive synthesis is 'memory', the 'pure, general, *a priori* element of all time' (Deleuze 2004a: 101, 103–4). Chronosigns, unlike hyalosigns which appear as images in the now, are narrations as narratives. Narratives after narration: the film is a reconstitution involving the dimensions of the past. As Deleuze puts it, chronosigns 'no longer concern . . . description, but narration', a narration of 'false continuity' where 'crystalline narrations will extend crystalline description' (Deleuze 2001: 127). These false continuities take

three forms. First, the ‘coexistence of all the sheets of the past’ which disrupt the order of time (Deleuze 2001: 99). The film resists linear organisation but jumps between circles of the past. The film is the pure past, an ‘infinity of levels’ (Deleuze 2004a: 105). Second, some films are chronosigns in that they explore the present of the past, as Deleuze puts it, the peaks of the present. He writes: ‘narration will consist of the distribution of different presents to different characters, so that each forms a combination that is plausible and possible in itself, but where all of them together are “impossible”’ (Deleuze 2001: 101). This kind of film also disrupts the order of time, ‘gives narration a new value, because it abstracts it from all successive action’ (Deleuze 2001: 101). Rather, the narrative appears in the repetitions of the different presents. In this way the past(s) dominate(s) the present(s). This is the past as the destiny of the present—not in the sense of prescribed fate (a retroactive now which would require an unambiguous and actualised linear trajectory) but rather in the sense of ‘setting time free’ (Deleuze 2001: 102). Destiny is freedom. And freedom is choice, the choice between ‘inextricable differences’ (Deleuze 2001: 105). Third, films can also explore the power of the false. Narration ‘becomes fundamentally falsifying’, it ‘ceases to be truthful, that is, to claim to be true’ (Deleuze 2001: 131). Crucially, as Deleuze puts it ‘this is not a simple principle of reflection or becoming aware: “Beware! This is cinema.” It is a source of inspiration’ (Deleuze 2001: 131). This chronosign is no longer content simply to disrupt the order of time, instead the narrative strategy is one of ‘a series of powers, always referring to each other and passing into one another’ (Deleuze 2001: 133). Difference and repetition, the repetition of themes, events, symbols, bodies, positions, objects, environments in difference: serialism. Reminiscences—the past in service of the future, interweaving, transformational memory. The three images of the chronosign thus describe the three dimensions of the second passive synthesis of time: the pure past, the present as radical destiny, and the future as energetic reminiscence. Chronosigns are narratives that ‘shatter the empirical continuation of time, the chronological succession, the separation of before and after’ (Deleuze 2001: 155).

Noosigns can be seen to correspond with the third passive synthesis of time. This third passive synthesis is a ‘caesura’ exploring the future as an ‘empty form of time’ (Deleuze 2004a: 111, 108). Noosigns are thus events which ‘force... us to think’, events which ‘force... us to think what is concealed from thought, life’ (Deleuze 2001: 189). While hyalosigns are images and chronosigns are narratives, noosigns are events that occur through the bodies and environments of the film: the

mise-en-scène and actors. Thought, then (our thought, the spectator's thought), is not engendered as a consequence of a sensory-motor linkage between the character and the situation, and the concomitant identification of character to subject and filmic situation to real milieu, but rather through the absence of such relationships. In the absence of such a link, thought becomes us. These thought images can occur in three ways. First, the actor does not perform an act of mimesis, but adopts 'the everyday body', a body of 'daily attitude' (Deleuze 2001: 191). This involves strategies such as exposing the fatigues, the ticks, the inabilities of the body. Here the body is circumscribed by experience, the future of this body is a secretion of its past. Second, the actor can foreground a performance, execute a 'ceremonial body' (Deleuze 2001: 191). This is the body of the 'gest' and 'carries out a direct theatricalisation of bodies' (Deleuze 2001: 192, 194). These bodies occur 'independently of the plot' and in this sense are in the present, a direct performance orientated towards the future as metamorphosis. The body is not a function of the situation, but transforms the situation from the outside. The final image of the noosign involves the *mise-en-scène*, the environment. It does not depend upon the physical presence of an actor, but the backgrounds, the lighting, the colours and sounds of the world of the film. Deleuze names this the 'cinema of the brain'. For Deleuze, certain films explore the 'identity of the brain and world' where 'landscapes are mental states, just as mental states are cartographies' and form a reciprocal 'noosphere' (Deleuze 2001: 205). The noosphere is a zone of nothingness that fractures the coordinates of the film. It is here, in this final aspect of the noosign, in this final aspect of the time-image, that cinema explores the future as terrifyingly dark, as an unending night... and conversely, as infinitely open. For the environment is immense, without horizon, without bounds. The three coordinates of the noosign thus describe the three dimensions of the third passive synthesis of time: the past as experience, the present as metamorphosis, and the future as infinitely empty. Noosigns are the events of cinema that transpire between bodies and environments: 'the brain gives orders to the body which is just an outgrowth of it, but the body also gives orders to the brain which is just a part of it' (Deleuze 2001: 205).

V. By Way of Conclusion...

What to make of this attempt to isolate and tabulate the elements of the time-image? I wanted to discover what would happen if I did not accept the signs and images of the time-image as arbitrary, or conjured

Table 4.1. The nine dimensions of the three passive syntheses of time and the nine signs of the time-image

Images	Dimensions and signs			<i>Passive syntheses</i>		
	Past of the present (retention) Limpid and opaque	The living present Mirrors Present of the past (destiny) Peaks of the present	Future of the present (expectation) Seed and environment	First passive synthesis	Second passive synthesis	Third passive synthesis
1 Hyalosigns	The pure past	Present of the future (metamorphosis) Body of <i>gest</i>	Future of the past (reminiscence) Powers of the false	Habit	Memory	Caesura
2 Chronosigns	Sheets of the past					
3 Noosigns	Past of the future (experience) Body of attitude					

from modernist cinema. But then where did they come from? Was there an unarticulated framework? By specifying the cineosis of the *Cinema* books, tabulating movement-images and time-images, this served as a clue that led me on to explore the continuities with Deleuze's earliest foundational work, *Difference and Repetition*, and in turn to consider the categories of the time-image as being engendered by Deleuze's three passive syntheses of time. Indeed, the production of this mapping has also suggested an alignment of the movement-image with the active syntheses, the psycho-organic subject that is superimposed upon the passive syntheses of habituation, memory and empty future. Hence my claim that before Bergson's *Matter and Memory* provides the visible framework of the cinema books, it is the syntheses of time explored in Deleuze's own *Difference and Repetition* that constitute their embedded originary structure.

Notes

1. For references to Gilbert Simondon see Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 46, 66n11, 19, 573–4); see also Deleuze's 'On Gilbert Simondon' (Deleuze 2004b: 86–9).
2. I refer the reader to James Williams' *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition* (2004) and Jay Lampert's *Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy of History* (2006). Both set out, in very different ways, to explore proofs and critically engage with *Difference and Repetition*. Both are great books.
3. Jay Lampert intimates just such a view:

Many treatments of Deleuze describe in appealing ways his account of time, but little work has yet been done to analyse his arguments for it. As a result, Deleuze's first synthesis of time, the time of organic succession, is not as well known. When discussed at all, succession is generally treated as the false or superficial notion of time that co-existence is meant to replace. But Deleuze's philosophy does not devalue the categories of life and desire that characterise temporality of succession . . . Furthermore, Deleuze's description of succession is not merely a standard account of time setting the stage for his original contributions concerning coexistence; it is full of provocative and original arguments in its own right. (Lampert 2006: 12)

4. Towards the end of his exploration of the first passive synthesis Deleuze writes, regarding Samuel Becket: 'it is undoubtedly one of the more profound intentions of the "new novel" to rediscover, below the level of active synthesis, the domain of passive syntheses which constitute us' (Deleuze 2004a: 100). Correspondingly, in *Cinema 2* Deleuze aligns the 'new novel' with the 'new cinema': 'if the new cinema, like the new novel, is of considerable philosophical and logical importance, it is first of all because of the theory of descriptions it implies' (Deleuze 2001: 45).
5. For a wider discussion of the way in which the Stoic conception of time impacts the *Cinema* books, particularly in regard to cinema history and history in general, see Deamer 2009.
6. We must tread carefully here. I am not suggesting that films of the movement-image = the active syntheses of time; and that films of the time-image = the passive syntheses of time. This would be an extraordinary and unsustainable

claim, amongst other things collapsing philosophical and artistic thought (see Deleuze and Guattari 2009 for their discussion of the three great types of thought). Film in-itself is a complex weft and weave of chronos and cronos, of the actual and the virtual, of passive and active synthesis. Patricia Pisters' *The Matrix of Visual Culture: Working with Deleuze in Film Theory* (2003) is exemplary in this regard, exploring how movies interweave passive and active affects. I am simply arguing that the philosophical concepts of the syntheses of time inspire the filmic concepts of the *Cinema* books, and that the concepts and components of the three passive syntheses of time can be seen to echo the structure of the conceptual framework of the time-image taxonomy.

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