

Louis Armand, PhD
OPPONENT'S REPORT:

re "REFLECTIONS ON THE DELEUZEAN TIME-IMAGE IN THE FILMS OF
ANDREI TARKOVSKY AND ALAIN RESNAIS" by Evgeniya Konoreva
(MA dissertation, 2008, supervised by Dr Erik Roraback)

Ms Konoreva's dissertation seeks to "reconsider the role of the cinematic image within the frames of the representational mode of postmodern audiovisual culture." Ms Konoreva attempts to do this by way of the writings of Gilles Deleuze, with regard to three case studies each of the work of Alain Resnais and Andrei Tarkovsky.

Such an undertaking may appear ambitious if it were to attempt to "integrate cinema into the philosophical debate around the understanding of experience, representation and reflection, perception and affection" [4]. Instead, what we have is a template for a possible method drawn from the work of Deleuze, in order to provide a "new range of tools difficult to find in other models of film theory." In brief, Ms Konoreva offers an overview of Deleuze's approach to cinematography, bracketing off various terms that are then reflected upon anecdotally in treatments of Resnais and Tarkovsky.

I will move directly to my questions:

Firstly, *why* Deleuze; *why* Resnais and Tarkovsky?

It may be said that the films of Resnais and Tarkovsky themselves reflect upon the philosophy and technics of cinema; what need, then, to introduce a Deleuzian vocabulary? Is it not the case that neo-realist and new wave cinema provides its own critical vocabulary? Does Deleuze not impose a philosophical schema *upon* cinema, using film as an *illustration* of preconstituted philosophical ideas often of a suspiciously dualistic character?

I would have expected, in the context, more critical treatment of Deleuze, and perhaps some genealogical work viz. the film theoretical writings of Eisenstein and Bazin (especially Bazin!).

I missed any significant treatment of the *Cahiers du Cinema* writings of Godard and Truffaut. Such a treatment would not only have revealed a synthesis of Bazin's ontology and Eisenstein's montage techniques (beyond mere dialectics), but also would have revealed the profound indebtedness of New Wave cinema to a particular Hollywood tradition—especially the films of Griffith, Fuller, Ford, Hawks, and the likes. This would have explained, too,

the easy transition of New Wave techniques back into Hollywood films of the 70s—synthesised with the improvisational, cinema verite and low budget productions of Corman and Cassavettes, for example.

And this leads to a bigger question: why is the anglo-american cinematic tradition so conspicuously overlooked (indeed, it is discounted)? Both in terms of commercial and documentary film.

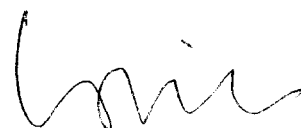
It is entirely arguable, for example, that cinema verite, radical decoupage, montage, and “real time” editing evolve out of documentary traditions—traditions heavily effected by the institutions put in place by Grierson and his disciples in the UK, Australia and Canada in particular. It is worth noting that the lightweight cameras used by the new wave were largely pioneered during WWII for use by frontline reporters.

Both Godard and Scorsesi, e.g., employed directors of photography trained in documentary techniques and in live theatre; Cassavettes emerged from theatre, also, and his editing, camera work and his direction respond to a particular temporal rhythm that is missing in much mainstream commercial cinema of that time. As for the more elaborate forms of cinematic language found in the work of Resnais and Robbe-Grillet, one might look to earlier experiments in repetition, recursion and spatio-temporal dislocation in the work of Man Ray and Maya Deren; or the later work of Stan Brakhage and—especially—Peter Greenaway.

The question is, then, why Resnais and Tarkovsky are so deliberately chosen to frame aspects of cinema exemplary of the Deleuzian time-image: it might seem that this choice is simply a reflex to an already established canon, and one that is not critically self-aware enough to perceive the limitations of this canonisation. The same may be said of the cinematic writings of Deleuze, which *are* anteceded in the writings of film theorists, though without the exemplary philosophical single-mindedness of Deleuze. Indeed, is there anything Deleuze’s system of terminology is really able to tell us about cinema itself and not simply about cinema as a “mode” of philosophising?

To be sure, I have no objections in principle to the scope of Ms Konoreva’s discussion, I only ask that its rationale be examined more thoroughly.

Conditionally, I propose a grade of 2.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Loni'.