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CINEMA & COUNTER-HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

> To me History is, so to speak, the work of works; it contains all of them. History is the family name, there are parents and children, literature, painting, philosophy .... let's say History is the whole lot. So a work of art, if well made, is a part of History, if intended as such and if this is artistically apparent. You can get a feeling through it because it is worked artistically. Science doesn't have to do that, and other disciplines haven't done it. It seemed to me that History could be a work of art, something not generally admitted except perhaps by Michelet.
>
> —Jean-Luc Godard, in *Cinema* (Godard and Ishaghpour 2005, 28)

CINEMA, TELEVISION, and the Internet have become major sources for access to historical events despite declarations of the end of history and of cinema. Nonetheless, historians, social critics, and film scholars continue to debate what constitutes an accurate and realistic version of past events in relation to cinema and in light of new visual technologies. Although the media's predilection for fiction and entertainment has often been judged antithetical to truthful and legitimate presentations of history, a growing number of critics and artists regard the cinema as a significant medium for reevaluating the nature and status of the image as a guide to the uses, and particularly the disadvantages, of history for the present and future. *Cinema and Counter-History,* as its title suggests, proposes that, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, visual media have contributed to, and continue to contribute to, an expanded and altered understanding of what constitutes historical thinking.

My book does not claim that written and visual histories are identical, but it takes seriously how visual and aural technologies "contribute to historical thinking" (Rosenstone 2006, 12). Thus, *Cinema and Counter-History* closely examines select critical writings and visual media texts that offer versions of the past and future that run *counter* to received views about historicizing. My book pays specific attention to various, often conflicting theories, forms, and styles in order to identify the philosophic, aesthetic, and political stakes in thinking through media. I focus on both dominant and marginalized or neglected forms of visual history that are implicitly or explicitly illustrative of different conceptions of space and time, of bodies and places. In identifying counter-historical thinking, I am attentive to the existence of different popular and experimental film forms and their uses of the cinematic medium in relation to camera movement, continuity and discontinuity, framing, montage, and real and virtual bodies. My discussion of film theory and historical narration is directed toward a transnational context, with major attention paid to European, Asian, and African films.

My object in thinking counter-historically is to locate it in the role of invention, artifice, theatricality, and conjecture as allowing for and enlarging on an active engagement with feeling and thought as expressed through cinema. *Counter-history* assumes an active and irreverent position for the reader and viewer in relation to the disciplines of history and popular culture in their predilection for memorializing in terms of the past, and it regards thinking on visual media as complicit with this position. This book is not antihistorical: however, it is committed to escaping history through expanding our thinking on what constitutes historical thought. To think counter-historically does not mean condescendingly admitting visual media into considerations of the past, but rather investigating and challenging the character and quality of affective investments in them as expressed through cinema.

A RATIONALE FOR COUNTER-HISTORY THROUGH FILM

The idea of moving images existed before the invention of movie technology, through explorations in physics, biology, philosophy, and the visual arts concerning development and movement in relation to time and space.

However, the invention of the movie camera in the late nineteenth century challenged thinkers to find a language and methods to characterize the new technological medium—one that promised to cross the boundaries between popular and elite art forms and science—so as to explore the potential impact of the medium on the culture. Far-seeing cultural and political writers in the United States and transnationally, such as Vachel Lindsay, Hugo Münsterberg, Béla Balázs, Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, and André Bazin accorded serious attention to characterizing and identifying cinema's potential impact on culture and society. The problems raised through their work were hardly antiquarian but still remain fundamental to an understanding of visual culture, in light of its increasing dominance, and for rethinking the body of film and the body in film. In addressing the implications of technological reproduction, their understanding of visual culture extended to considerations of the making and remaking of historical thinking.

Pedagogy was inherent in their discussions of the fate of the new medium, also expressed by individuals and social groups through religious and social organizations, popular scientific literature, inventors, and modest early attempts to establish courses on media in a few institutions (Polan 2007). The resistance to the academic study of film was conspicuous and contentious, ranging from indifference to media to fears of diluting established curricula. Aside from production-oriented film schools in Europe and Asia, it was not until the second half of the twentieth century that college and university programs dedicated to "film studies" courses designed to explore the history of the medium, relation to the other arts, theories of cinema, film grammar and form, and modes of production were legitimized. However, the issue of what was to legitimize their intellectual focus, parameters, and methodology became—and remains—a concern of cinema as art form involving both the history of cinema and the uses of history through film. The ongoing problem of what constitutes history through cinema has had to address two questions: "What is history" and "What is cinema"? This book seeks to link these questions under the rubric of counter-history, which I define as an escape from formal history to a world of affect, invention, memory, art, reflection, and action.

Contemporary challenges to historical thinking can be traced to early twentieth-century France through the Annales school, with its focus on

geography, mentalities, and anthropology. These historians emphasized a social scientific and interdisciplinary methodology that privileged earlier historical eras but largely rejected Marxism and especially its considerations of social class. The European Annales historians in their various incarnations were concerned to emphasize social theories relating to everyday life and, thus, cautiously segmented the archive for historical analysis. They broadened the boundaries of historicizing. In the aftermath of World War II, at the onset of the Cold War, their reckoning with fascism and especially the Holocaust, with a focus on memorialization, was critical in exacerbating concerns about interpretation, uses of visual data, and questions of authenticity in the proliferation of media documents (photographs, newsreels, and documentaries). The growth and militancy of global social moments in the 1960s relating to the exclusion of racial, ethnic, classed, and gendered groups also engendered a rethinking of history making through memory and through visual documents. These texts questioned the effectiveness of traditional history and chose to include personal narratives, anecdotal material, and diaries. On the theoretical front, poststructuralism and postmodernism challenged the "sacred myths of order, exhaustiveness, and objective neutrality" (Amad 2010, 4).

In the European context, the rethinking of historicizing was exemplified in the prolific influential writings of Jacques Derrida on language and deconstruction, Michel de Certeau on the "practice of everyday life," and, if differently, in those of Michel Foucault on "effective history." The writings of Antonio Gramsci and of his interpreters and modifiers (for example, Louis Althusser, Ernesto Laclau, and Chantal Mouffe) played a critical role in the 1970s in reconfiguring conceptions of history, language, politics, and culture. Gramsci's thinking is evident in the postcolonialism writings of Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and the Subaltern Studies Group in the work of Ranajit Guha. The political and transnational character of postcolonial thought sought to create a form of historicizing critical of existing treatments of historiography, especially in relation to the character of archival sources and the means and ends of investigation. Carlo Ginzburg in *Il formaggio e i vermi* ([1976] *The Cheese and the Worms,* 1989) and *Miti, emblemi, spie: morfologia e storia* ([1986] *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method,* 1992) reflected on the practices of historians, redefining their scope and methods, which resemble crime

detection in their focus on symptoms, clues, and intuitive processes. As a microhistorian, he trained his attention on the cultural practices of dominant and subaltern groups.

Hayden White's writings offered a rethinking of history in *Metahistory* (1973), *Tropics of Discourse* (1978), and *The Content of the Form* (1987), sharing with Ginzburg a skepticism of history as a science and drawing on literary forms to elaborate a "poetics of history," narrativity in particular, to identify "What does it mean to think historically"? (1973, 1). His work, especially his distinction between historiography and what he called (visual) "historiophoty" (White 1988), influenced historians such as Robert Rosenstone by bringing a "contemporary sensibility" into twentieth- and now twenty-first-century history making (Rosenstone 2006, 3) by paying attention to rethinking the archive through film images (ibid., 23).

Coincidentally, film scholars have been mindful of the role that cinema plays in addressing the past and have incorporated many aspects of historical analysis into their discussions of cinema (Kracauer, Bazin, and more recently Charles Musser, Vivian Sobchack, Richard Abel, Miriam Hansen, and Philip Rosen). Another form of historical treatment is the everyday and the ceremonial associated with the writings of de Certeau (1988) and identified with writings on Indian cinema of the 1940s and 1950s (Kaarsholm 2007). The role of allegory is an unpredictable and often painful conjuncture for locating where the past and present collide and where tropes for history "remain disconcertingly close to the habitual surfaces and mundane realities of everyday life" (Shaviro 1993, 82; cf. Lowenstein 2005, 9). The treatment of history from the position of daily life in both documentary and fiction is a mode of "archiving the world anew and revealing the provisional, denaturalized, and open nature of history" (Amad 2010, 15).

In this reevaluation of historicizing, the earlier writings of Walter Benjamin became influential, especially his *Das Passagen-Werk* (*The Arcades Project,* 2002) and *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* ([1928] *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* 1998) for insights on historical method through his conception of modern allegory. His work enabled a serious encounter with cinema and drama as purveyors of history by bringing into relief connections between material culture and the character of the work of art in the age of mechanical (now, electronic) forms of reproduction. Benja-

min's work maps the changing contours of the past in relation to culture and politics. His conception of allegory, itself historically inflected, emphasizes the incompleteness and imperfection of "objects." In his words, "Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things. . . . The quintessence of these decaying objects is the polar opposite to the idea of transfigured nature. . . . But it is as something incomplete and imperfect that objects stare out from the allegorical structure" (Benjamin 1998, 178, 179, 186).

Benjamin's work became an invitation to document and explore the existence of new and transforming modes for recollecting the past in relation to the barbarism of power and the cinematic uses of the past. His writings are a gloss on the ruins of storytelling and the rise to power of cultural and political forms to which this world of "decaying objects" has given rise: his form of allegorizing "produces a history from nature and transforms history into nature in a world that no longer has its center" (Deleuze 1993, 125) and are thus helpful for thinking counter-historically, since one of the primary elements of counter-history is its decentering of narrativity through discontinuity or fragmentation in the interests of a different relation to bodies and movement. The writings of philosopher Gilles Deleuze have become important for reconsiderations of historicizing through cinema: especially influential are two written with Félix Guattari—*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986) and *What Is Philosophy?* (1994)—and his solo works *Difference and Repetition* (1994), *The Logic of Sense* (1990), and the two cinema books, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (1986) and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989a). These works are important for the light they shed on Deleuze's continuing preoccupation with historicizing through cinema along the lines suggested by Godard, that "history could be a work of art" (Godard and Ishaghpour 2005, 28).

The cinema books, linked to the other cited texts, are not a history of cinema in the conventional sense but an investigation of film as history—or, as I prefer to understand them, as counter-historicizing. Deleuze's observations on cinema, similar to his discussions of literature and painting, are committed to exploring the civilization of the image through changing technologies as a response to a crisis of the image (Deleuze 1986, 197) as it impacts on culture and politics. His project in his reflections on cinema is to examine the image at a moment when the entire culture seems to have

gone visual. If the civilization of the image has produced a concerted organization of clichés, Deleuze ceaselessly explores whether it is possible to extract from this "misery" the possibility of thinking differently about the relation of cinema and thought through an expression of bodily sensation to delineate the conditions for counter-historical thinking.

Counter-history as I develop it from Deleuze's work involves conceiving of "thought without image," in which thought via sensation is "a new principle which does not allow itself to be represented" (Deleuze 1994, 147) but is, nonetheless, a form of thought. According to Deleuze:

> Artaud said that the problem (for him) was not to orientate his thought, or to perfect the expression of what he thought, or to acquire application and method or to perfect his poems, but simply to manage to think something. For him, this was the only conceivable "work": it presupposes an impulse, a compulsion to think which passes through all sorts of bifurcations, spreading from the nerves and being communicated to the soul in order to arrive at thought. Henceforth, thought is also forced to think its central collapse, its fracture, its own natural "powerlessness." (Ibid.)

The concept of the unthought or the powerlessness of thought in Deleuze's counter-historical thinking acknowledges the intolerable and banal character of the absurd world to "discover the identity of thought and life" (Deleuze 1989a, 170). Deleuze stresses that affect and sensation are requisite bases for thought as both material and as virtual. Of particular importance is the distinction he makes between surfaces and depths, the skin and the interior body parts. If sense is on the surface and incorporeal, the work of sensation emerges from the depths and plays a major role in responses to the world. In the case of the schizophrenic, the "surface has split open" and "the entire body is no longer anything but depth," in which the "body sieve, fragmented body, and dissociated body" are the three primary dimensions of the schizophrenic body. "In this collapse of surface, the entire world loses its meaning," but what is experienced is "in a hallucinatory form" (1990, 86–87) characteristic of cinematic modernism, if not of surrealism, and hence of thinking differently about time past, present, and future.

Counter-history involves direct encounters with fragmented time as in Proust's highly cinematic *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time,* aka *Remembrance of Things Past*) to substantiate the prominence of forms expressed through fragments, "gaps that are affirmations, pieces of a

puzzle belonging not to one puzzle but to many, pieces assembled by forcing them into a certain place where they may or may not belong" (Deleuze and Guattari 2009 43). Proust's work is an example of an emancipation of time inherent to modern cinema that enables a heretical or counter-historical view. For Deleuze,

> [*In Search of Lost Time*] is nothing more than a part alongside other parts, though it has an effect on these other parts which it neither unifies nor totalizes, though it has an effect on these other parts simply because it establishes aberrant paths of communication between noncommunicating vessels. . . . There is never a totality of what is seen nor a unity of points of view, except along the transversal that the frantic passenger traces from one window to the other "in order to draw together, in order to reweave intermittent and opposite fragments." (Deleuze 1977, 43)

This process of writing is connected with "what Joyce called *re-embodying*" and is related to the conception of the Body without Organs that is "in its own particular place within the process of production, alongside the parts that it neither unifies nor totalizes" (ibid.), reminiscent of other modernist writers/thinkers, such as Samuel Beckett with his schizophrenic strollers and their scrambled codes and circular states. Deleuze's discussions of pre-World War II filmmakers in *Cinema 1* focus on Abel Gance, D. W. Griffith, Jean Renoir, F. W. Murnau, Fritz Lang, Sergei Eisenstein, John Ford, Luis Buñuel, and Alfred Hitchcock as exemplars of the movement-image and its relations to perception, affect, and action and its crisis in the post–World War II era.

The movement-image exemplifies a conception of historicizing reliant on a conception of time that is linear, organic, and universal: "Movements are represented as actions prolonging themselves in space as reactions, thus generating chains of narrative cause and effect in the form of linear succession. Ultimately, the sensorimotor schema implies a world apprehensible in an image of Truth as totality and identity" (Rodowick 1997, 84). The movement-image in its various affective connections between situation and action is one in which history is determined by a system of judgment based on the belief "that one party will ultimately—finally and teleologically—represent the side of the right and the true" (ibid., 85). This form of thinking about history was dominant in pre–World War II cinema and was to weaken in the postwar era, leading to what Deleuze refers to as the regime of the time-image.

Deleuze's observations on the time-image in *Cinema 2* are indebted to Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, and Michel Foucault in addressing conceptions of space, time, and sensation to reveal heterogeneities and heterochrony, "discontinuous spatio-temporal structures operating at different scales" (DeLanda 2009, 122). Hence, style as technical and aesthetic composition unleashes "strange becomings" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 169) and provides clues to Deleuze's modes for identifying the multiple strategies and tactics of counter-historicizing dependent on chance and discontinuities, in an interplay between molar and molecular forms of analysis. Among the numerous filmmakers included in the second volume on cinema whose works are exemplary of the time-image are Michelangelo Antonioni, Orson Welles, Joseph Losey, Jean-Luc Godard, Roberto Rossellini, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Federico Fellini, and Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, whose works experiment with history, memory, and falsifying narration.

Foucault's essay on Nietzsche and history in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (1977, 139–64) intersects with Deleuze's (and Guattari's) insistence on counter-historicizing (what Foucault termed "effective history"). In contrast to Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari replaced "power relations of knowledge and power in favour of desire" in which "power is merely the zero degree of desire" (Goodchild 1996, 135), expressed through lines of flight creating thought through "heterogenesis" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 199)—that is, to move beyond present history into a time of becoming of the virtual and of the incorporeal, manifest through the upsurge of time and through desire as becoming. Hence, conceptions of history are transformed. For them, "History is not experimentation, it is only the set of almost negative conditions that make possible the experimentation of something that escapes history" (ibid., 111). The conception of becoming, largely derived from Nietzsche, is an ethical intervention in conceptions of belief about the world and truth that becomes "the powers of the false" (Deleuze 1989a, chap. 6). While aware of the dominant forms of treating the past consonant with the Nietzschean critique of monumentalism, antiquarianism, and subjective forms of history, their form of history is that of emergence, a becoming that is

> born in History and falls back into it, but is not of it. In itself it has neither beginning nor end but only a milieu. It is thus more geographical than historical. Such are revolutions, societies of friends, societies of resistance, because to create is

> to resist: pure becomings, pure events on a plane of immanence. What History grasps of the event is its effectuation in states of affairs or in lived experience, but the event in its becoming, in its specific consistency, in its self-positing as concept, escapes History. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 110)

Deleuze's escape from history is neither nihilistic nor ahistorical. It is counter-historical. Deleuze is concerned with "the peculiar way in which we can be said to be 'in time,'" with "images that make visible or palpable this 'acentered' condition or that 'sensibilize' us to it" (Rajchman 2010, 287). Thinking counter-historically is expressive of viewing practices that resist linear, exegetical, and coherent conceptions of the world through considerations of time.

The present volume focuses on strategies to generate forms of thought that work in and through the body and brain via the cinema screen. Deleuze's version of historicizing is not cynical (in the pejorative sense raised by Carlo Ginzburg in *Threads and Traces,* his 2012 book critical of postmodern views on history) but focuses on "reasons to believe in this world" (Deleuze 1989a, 172). Deleuze's position on becoming is an affirmation of thought in relation to the world, since the principle of becoming entails change and differentiation, developed through his Nietzschean position on sameness and difference as articulated in *Difference and Repetition.*

Counter-history is an investigation of what escapes history in the name of the real. No amount of reiterating events and striving to reproduce and retain impressions of the real can counteract antiquarian images and their religious and teleological narratives, except through considerations of time. The injection of time exposes how the desire to animate and preserve the past "as it was" becomes impossible and counterproductive to acknowledging change as difference. Subtending Deleuze's work is the proposition that time puts all thought into the crisis of filming history that is bound to chronology, objectivity, and causality. Deleuze does not quarrel with forms of thinking that are bound to historicizing but focuses conceptual energies on thinking differently by generating propositions about new technologies and their impact concerning ethics, choice, and determinations directed toward the future rather than the past.

Although Benjamin and Deleuze remain major interlocutors on counter-history, a few other figures have also been instrumental in challenging disciplinary forms of historical thinking. Hayden White in *Metahistory,*

Tropics of Discourse, and *The Content of the Form* elaborated on different structural forms and ideological forms to provide a philosophical method for thinking about how historical meaning is created through imaginative modes of figuration. White made the vicissitudes of representation critical to reconfiguring the notion of history as really happened. White's "metahistory" was influential for locating the differentia and investments of discourses for history.

Jacques Rancière's writings have shed further light on the various "names of history" through a poetics of knowledge that is aesthetically and politically heretical. He is aware of the three elements that are critical to a "new history": a scientific contract, a narrative contract, and a political contract, all of which entail connections between "science and nonscience" (Rancière 1994, 9), literature and common language, and the "multiple paths . . . by which one may apprehend the forms of experience of the visible and the utterable . . . in the forms of writing that render it intelligible in the interlacing of its times, in the combination of numbers and images, of words and emblems" (ibid., 103). In his concern for exploring the relationship between aesthetics and politics, Rancière offers a more immediately engaged sense of obstacles and possibilities for thinking art as counter-historical that seem to echo concerns involving changing conceptions of art over time, the nature of spectatorship, and, most recently, of cinema. Similarly Vivian Sobchack's *Carnal Thoughts* (2004) has invoked phenomenological thinking to address ontological issues germane to thinking involving the role of bodily affection and sensation in the creation and reception of cinema's uses of the past, and more recent cinema scholars such as Patricia Pisters and Elena Del Río have pursued this form of analysis.

The growing scholarly literature on connections between popular film and historicizing reveals a rethinking of genre forms in relation to social and cinema histories regarding the role of spectatorship (Galt and Schoonover 2010). Rosenstone's *History on Film/Film on History* (2006) contests long-held positions that viewed historical films as, at best, mere entertainment or, at worst, as escapism, distortions, inaccuracies, and harmful fictions. In addition, film historians such as Adam Lowenstein, Robert Burgoyne, Amy Herzog, and Hannu Salmi have redeemed popular cinema from opprobrium when it comes to their treatments of history.

Lowenstein's *Shocking Representations* (2005) examines films that enact historical traumas in a manner that not only redeems these texts from trash aesthetics but demonstrates the power of cinema to create a strongly affective and critical encounter through allegorizing and surrealism.

In different fashion, Robert Burgoyne in his reconsiderations of Hollywood cinema's appropriations of the American past (2008, 2010b), as well as his edited anthology on the genealogy of the epic form (2010a), offers a reexamination of historical films from a historical and transnational perspective ranging from *Cabiria* (1914) to *Gladiator* (2000). Hannu Salmi's 2011 anthology of film comedy as history explores the power of humor and parody to unsettle classical versions of history. Amy Herzog in "Becoming-Fluid," her creative yoking of Tsai Ming-liang's *The Hole* and Esther Williams's aquatic world (2010, 154–201), conjoins contemporary transnational cinema, cinema history, and social history for rethinking the past in relation to affective treatments of bodies and catastrophe and of liberating clichés about representation. In these various forms for reconsidering history via media, cinema theory and history have returned to concerns about realism, artifice, animation, and intermediality, among a number of other theoretical and formal concerns. Digital media have become a challenge to cinema history, and texts that offer versions of history through cinema now take into account the effect of these technologies: the global reconfiguration of film production, an anastomosis of formerly experimental and popular forms through genre explorations of horror, science fiction, surrealism, and special effects.

The geopolitical character of machinic and electronic images has not only affected conceptions of genre production but has also challenged long-standing conceptions of the nature and fate of national media in such studies as David Martin-Jones's *Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity* (2008), as well his *Deleuze and World Cinemas* (2011). My discussion of counter-history is attentive to the dramatic alterations in conceptions of the national body, landscape, and language. In an interview, Godard claimed that "movie-making at the beginning was related to the identity of the nation and there have been very few 'national' cinemas . . . Italian, German, American, and Russian. This is because when countries were inventing and using motion pictures, they needed an image of themselves." And, on the subject of a Euro-cinema, he added, "Today if you put all these

people in one so-called 'Eurocountry,' you have nothing: since television is television, you only have America" (Petrie 1992, 98).

Godard's comments, contentious though they may be, are now one more compelling invitation to rethink cinema production and cinema history within and beyond the national boundaries and expressive forms pertinent for contemporary considerations of history making and unmaking. Godard's work on cinema, especially his *Histoire(s) du cinéma* documentaries (1988–98), projects a very different sense of cinematic memory, problematized through boundary crossings that complicate conceptions of national forms and their connections to both film and social history. He provides an alternative, pedagogical sense of the potential of the image in this cinematic essay series that is an intervention in the melancholy reflections on the death of cinema, one consonant with Paul Virilio's observations on the fate of the image in a regime of speed and acceleration, where "there is no more here and there, only the mental confusion of near and far, present and future, real and unreal—a mix of history, stories, and the hallucinatory utopia of communication technologies" (Virilio 1997, 35).

On these grounds, I examine counter-history as a form that contests deterministic, linear, and reductive thinking in order to situate media within a different cultural and political trajectory, one that acknowledges the dynamic and rhizomatic character of the cinematic image, with the assistance of the writings of Deleuze. His conceptions of the movement- and time-images are a major force for rethinking cinematic historicizing expressed as perception and affection that enable or frustrate conceptions of agency and action and, above all, unsettle certainty about events.

Changing events between the two world wars and fascism, among other world-historical transformations, contributed to a weakening of sensorimotor responses indicative of a crisis of the movement-image (Deleuze 1986a, 206–15). The time-image introduces a different dimension of cinematic form in relation to space and time, subjectivity and objectivity, and conceptions of the real and the imaginary. Critical to conceptions of counter-history is how characters become viewers through forms of seeing and hearing "what is no longer subject to the rules of a response or an action" (Deleuze 1986, 3). The body becomes central in a cinema in which "characters are constituted gesture by gesture and word by word . . . less to tell a story than to develop and transform bodily attitudes" (ibid., 193).

Hence, the modernist political film will demand a greater attention to optical and sound situations than to narrative or to common sense. Deleuze's writings on the movement-image and time-image have moved film study further in the direction of historical and global issues, reconsiderations of mimesis and representation, and complex assessments of affect, sensation, and reception.