

Why He Really Doesn't Get Her: Deleuze's Whatever-Space and the Crisis of the Male Quest

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When in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) Scottie suggests to Madeleine that 'it's kind of a waste for the two of us [...] to wander separately', she answers astutely: 'Only one is a wanderer, two together are always going somewhere.' Scottie (James Stewart) does not realise that the only wanderer is himself. This is true not because wandering is his 'occupation', as he thinks he has made Madeleine (Kim Novak) believe, but because he is blinded by his desire and the puzzle she poses for it. Scottie really doesn't get her: not only does he fail to obtain the objectified Madeleine, he also doesn't 'get' her suggestion that the quest he thinks he is pursuing is in fact staged around the impotence that is his vertigo.

Vertigo is a paradigmatic manifestation of the crisis of the male quest in post-war narrative cinema. This crisis, I argue, coincides with what Gilles Deleuze conceptualises in his *Cinema* books as the 'crisis of the action-image'. Many critics have written on these books, including Jacques Rancière, whose critique of Deleuze's project I will address later in this essay. However, a connection that has remained unexplored is the link between this crisis of action, which forms the hinge between the 'movement-image' and the 'time-image', and the crisis of the 'Oedipal logic' that structures most narrative cinema.

I will approach this double crisis primarily through Deleuze's notion of the *whatever-space* (*l'espace-quelconque*²): a decentered narrative site that 'does not yet appear as a real setting' (Deleuze 2005b, 31) and that stands in a relation of mutual determination to its wandering, aimless protagonists. Some whatever-spaces are the dehumanised, ruined landscapes created by war, industry or city planning. But any space could be a whatever-space, as the whatever-space is defined by the undirected movement to which it gives rise.

The concept of the 'whatever-space' will thus be the lens through which I will look at the connection between the two *Cinema* books (taking a methodological lead from the way that Deleuze, in *Expressionism and Philosophy: Spinoza* [*Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, 1969], examines Spinoza through the concept of 'expression'). Through a discussion of three different types of whatever-space, in Italian neorealism and 'post-neorealism' (De Sica, Antonioni, Bertolucci) as well as in films

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² In the English translation of the *Cinema* books *l'espace-quelconque* is translated as 'any-space-whatever'.

by Hitchcock, Godard and Polanski, this essay brings to the surface the Oedipal substrate of Deleuze's taxonomical narrative of the crisis of action in post-war cinema, which is a narrative that is not necessarily historical and that primarily emerges through the examples – including *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954), *Umberto D* (Vittorio de Sica, 1952), and *Eclipse* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1962) – that Deleuze focuses on. On the one hand this essay reconstructs this narrative, while adding on to it the dimension of the waning male quest. On the other hand, in the last section, it extends Deleuze's narrative, now Oedipalised, by discussing the cinematic escapism through which the late Antonioni and Bertolucci attempt to re-imagine the whatever-space as a site of romantic, heterosexual encounter.

Given Deleuze's earlier critique in his and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (*L'Anti-Œdipe*, 1972) of psychoanalysis's tendency to reduce social relations to an Oedipal structure, it may seem ironic that the narrative thread connecting the *Cinema* books, i.e. the breaking-down of the sensory-motor link, hides an inarticulate, 'unconscious' subplot that leads away from Oedipus, without ever managing to completely abandon him. This does not amount to stating that the *Cinema* books are Oedipal in nature. Their aim is to form a taxonomy of images, rather than a history or a critique of cinema. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Deleuze in his study rarely explicitly valorises the time-image over the movement-image, or the whatever-space over the site of the action-image, at certain moments his preference for the former, loosened-up category shines through, for example when discussing the 'soul of the cinema' (to which I will return). This is not surprising. The whatever-space, certainly in its most emptied-out, thought-provoking form, is Deleuzian territory, as it is probably the closest that narrative cinema gets to the cinematic plane of immanence, that surface on which bodies and thoughts move around without any clear direction, bouncing into each other, before continuing their wandering paths, and on which vision itself, most of all the camera's, floats freely. The whatever-space thus constitutes a site of reflection for the interrelations between space, movement and desire, in the cinema as well as in the realities it expresses.

Two Types of Whatever-Space

Deleuze unfolds his theory of the crisis of action at the end of *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (*Cinéma 1, l'image-mouvement*, 1983). 'Action' in this context refers to a certain type of plot-driven cinema generally ruled by the 'sensory-motor schema', a logic according to which characters' affects and movements are strictly linked, and which proceeds by either situation-action-situation or action-situation-action sequences. Common genres ruled by this schema are the psychosocial film, the *film noir*, the Western, and the American comedy (Deleuze 2005a, 215).

Deleuze signals a crisis in action following World War II. A filmmaker who plays a pivotal role in this crisis is Hitchcock, as films like *Rear Window* and *Vertigo* challenge the sensory-motor logic through the development of a 'mental-image', the object of which is not movement but thought (ibid., 202). According to Deleuze, for Hitchcock it is not the what or whom (the *whodunit*) of the action that matters, but 'the set of relations in which the action and the one who did it are caught' (ibid., 204). Besides diegetic action and actor, there is a third party that is caught in these sets of relations, namely the audience, whose reactions (desire, horror, suspense) are an integrated part of the mental-image (ibid., 206). *Vertigo*, for example, by drawing on the viewer's expectations about boy-meets-girl and detective narratives, stages the viewer (two times) alongside with Scottie in a wandering that is believed to be a quest for the mysterious Madeleine/Judy.

The Hitchcock film that Deleuze considers most emblematic of the mental-image is *Rear Window*. In this film's opening sequence the narrative is not unfolded by the protagonist's actions or by dialogue, but by the camera. By showing the male hero's broken leg and pictures of a racing accident, the camera explains why the photographer L.B. Jefferies (James Stewart) is bound to his chair. In his character the sensory-motor link has been forced to rest, thereby prefiguring a cinema of pure vision. Deleuze writes:

[T]he hero of *Rear Window* has access to the mental-image, not simply because he is a photographer, but because he is in a state of immobility: he is reduced as it were to a pure optical situation. If one of Hitchcock's innovations was to implicate the spectator in the film, did not the characters themselves have to be capable – in a more or less obvious manner – of being assimilated to spectators? (Deleuze 2005a, 202)

The answer is of course 'yes'. Hitchcock's mental-images simultaneously mark the apogee and the crisis of action. On the one hand *Rear Window* and *Vertigo*, through Jefferies's accident and Scottie's vertigo, justify their protagonists' immobility; on the other hand they perform the loosening of the sensory-motor link. As Deleuze states: 'What Hitchcock happened to avoid, a crisis of the traditional image of the cinema, would nevertheless happen in his wake, and in part as a result of his innovations' (ibid., 209).

Rear Window's opening sequence calls to mind an equally famous sequence in Vittorio De Sica's *Umberto D*, in which the displacement of action by vision does not depend on the disruption of the former. In this scene the young maid Maria (Maria-Pia Casilio) wakes up and, still half asleep, walks to the kitchen, lights the stove, drinks a sip of water, chases the ants near the sink, sits down and grinds coffee. At one point Maria's eyes seem to meet the viewer's, but they explicitly do not, as she

immediately looks away into the courtyard which in contrast to the one in *Rear Window* is totally lifeless, except for one black cat. Her gaze falls on her pregnant belly, and a tear wells up in her eye. And it is, Deleuze writes in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (*Cinéma 2, l'image-temps*, 1985), 'as though all the misery in the world were going to be born' (Deleuze 2005b, 2). Like in *Rear Window*, the sequence is interrupted by a ringing sound. But whereas in Hitchcock's film the phone call picks up the narrative thread, in *Umberto D* there is hardly any such thread. The doorbell does not really announce anything, certainly not action.

It is exactly in this absence of spectacle in De Sica's film that André Bazin discovers 'a glimpse [...] of what truly realist cinema of time could be' (Bazin 2005, 76). According to Bazin, the scene of Maria's awakening, together with the one in which Umberto goes to bed, show the making of "life time" – the simple continuing to be of a person to whom nothing in particular happens' (ibid.). Bazin states:

These two sequences undoubtedly constitute the ultimate in 'performance' of a certain kind of cinema, at the level of what one would call 'the invisible subject', by which I mean the subject entirely dissolved in the fact to which it has given rise. (ibid., 77)

The characters in *Umberto D* are rendered immanent to their everyday misery. While in Hitchcock's films any object or action is potentially meaningful, and any sound could be the announcement of an event, the world of *Umberto D* is emptied out of any significance or narrative turn whatsoever, a void that stands in a relation of mutual determination to the mindset of its travellers. We thus move from the mental-image to the purely optical situation, the latter being the defining mark of neorealism according to Deleuze. Whereas *Rear Window* and *Vertigo* invert their audience's perception of the sensory-motor image, in neorealism the characters themselves have become viewers (Deleuze 2005b, 3). This loosening of the sensory-motor link is inextricably bound up with a transformation of the plot-space. In contrast to the qualified space-times where the sensory-motor situations of traditional realism take place, the purely optical (and auditory) situation takes place in disconnected 'whatever-space'. This whatever-space is a place of wandering and aimless travelling that is inseparable from the protagonists' indecisive state of mind, their loss or their feeling of being lost. Unlike the classical realist decor and its strict pertinence to the diegesis, the whatever-space is 'a space that does not yet appear as a real setting' (Deleuze 2005b, 31). But it is also a landscape that is essentially modern, 'the undifferentiated fabric of the city' that gives rise to 'urban voyage', and that in the end remains utterly alien to its travellers (Deleuze 2005a, 212).

Despite its stark contrasts with the determined spaces of traditional narrative cinema, the whatever-space and its emergence in post-war European cinema are not completely ahistorical. Deleuze points out that ‘in the city which is being demolished or rebuilt, neorealism makes whatever-spaces proliferate – urban cancer, undifferentiated fabrics, pieces of waste-ground’ (ibid., 216). These real whatever-spaces are the craters in the late 1940s Berlin in Roberto Rossellini’s *Germany Year Zero* (*Germania, anno zero*, 1948), or the newly constructed Roman suburbs in Federico Fellini’s *Nights of Cabiria* (*Le Notti di Cabiria*, 1957) or in Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Mamma Roma* (1962). In the last two films the female protagonists are both prostitutes, their profession being indissolubly connected to the inhospitable environment the narrative is set in.

Yet every space is a potential whatever-space, as it is essentially the undetermined and circular movement that a plot-space is represented as giving rise to that transforms it into a whatever-space. One could therefore also think of the New York City of Martin Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver* (1976), the ‘scum’ of which, in combination with Travis’s implied Vietnam history, gives birth to an anti-hero who becomes a hero in spite of himself, a rebel without direction but with a cause.

According to Deleuze the whatever-space achieves a second form in Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Eclipse* (*L’Eclisse*, 1962), namely that of deserted space. Deleuze describes this transformation as follows:

What happened is that, from one result to the next, the characters were objectively emptied: they are suffering less from the absence of another than from their absence from themselves [...]. Hence, this space refers back again to the lost gaze of the being who is absent from the world as much as from himself, and [...] replaces ‘traditional drama with a kind of *optical drama* lived by the character’. (Deleuze 2005b, 9. Emphasis his.)

In this second, emptied out form the whatever-space is no longer just an environment that characters fail to come to terms with. Instead it has become a site of alienation. Not only are its characters alienated from the environment itself, but also from the people who perform and quite literally buy into its emptiness. In *Eclipse* this spatial and emotional desertedness becomes most visible in the scenes where Vittoria (Monica Vitti) tries to find her way through the construction sites in Rome’s southern suburbs (the EUR area³) with its mix of unfinished fascist-era and new buildings. This area forms an abstract, dehumanised landscape that in the final sequence is even alluded to as the dystopian prefiguration of a nuclear holocaust. At the

³ Esposizione Universale Roma. A large complex that was started in 1935 by Benito Mussolini and that was planned to open in 1942. During the 1950s and 1960s the unfinished buildings were completed. The area now is a suburban commercial centre.

same time the old Rome does not provide any relief either. It is presented as a materialist milieu whose concern with money and status reaches its culmination in the scenes showing the hysterical stock exchange. This is no longer the Rome of *la dolce vita*, but of this ideal's defilement through capitalism – a defilement that is emphasised during the film's opening titles, over the course of which a cheerful tune (with less cheerful lyrics⁴) is suddenly repressed by the menacing chords of a horn.

Eclipse's optical drama does not confine itself to the public sphere. The opening scene takes place in the apartment of Vittoria's fiancé Riccardo (Francisco Rabal), and starts in the middle of their break-up. While Riccardo is passively sitting at his desk, Vittoria restlessly paces through the room. She looks out of the window, moves around some art objects, curls herself up on the couch and stands up again. 'Allora Riccardo', she finally interrupts the humming sound of the fan, the oscillation of which mimics his gaze as well as her wandering through the room. 'Let's decide', he replies. But Vittoria has already decided. Riccardo appears as a stranger to her, an emotion that is made palpable by a shot-reverse-shot of Vittoria standing in the doorframe and Riccardo sitting in the chair.

Technically the two perspectives between which this sequence alternates cannot be attributed to either Vittoria or Riccardo. They are not point of view shots. Diegetically, however, the whole sequence is imbued with Vittoria's perspective, or rather with the perspective of her alienated self. The first camera position (a shot aligned with her eyes framing the back of her head and a petrified Riccardo) represents her looking at herself as if from outside of herself and being gazed at by Riccardo's statue-like body. The second position (a shot of Vittoria's face from a high standpoint with the back of Riccardo's head in the lower right corner) represents her imagining of how her image must appear in the strangeness of the new situation. The sequence reveals Vittoria's vain attempt to recognise the man she once loved in the man now sitting in the chair, an optical wandering that is cut off by the confrontation with her own self-alienated gaze in the mirror.

Vittoria opens the curtains, and while she stares at the phallic water tower, Riccardo makes a final, half-hearted effort to save their relationship. 'Don't you love me anymore? Or do you just not want to marry me?' 'Non lo so', she responds: 'I don't know.' The couple's exhausting each other in the small apartment is echoed by a scene in Jean-Luc Godard's *Contempt*

⁴ This 'L'Eclisse Twist' is performed by Mina. It goes as follows: 'Le nuvole e la luna / ispirano gli amanti / sì, ma per tanti, / compreso me, / è tipologico / il vero amore / è zoologico / fin dentro il cuor. // La radioattività / un brivido mi dà / ma tu, ma tu / di più, di più.' 'The clouds and the sky / inspire the lovers / yes, but for many / including me / true love / is biological / is zoological / till' inside the heart. // The radioactivity/ makes me shiver / but you, but you / more, more.'

(*Le Mépris*, 1963).⁵ ‘Why don’t you love me anymore?’, Michel (Paul Javal) asks towards the end of this film. ‘*C’est la vie*’, Camille (Brigitte Bardot) explains. ‘Why do you hold me in contempt?’ Michel tries again. ‘That I will never tell you’, Camille responds, but when Michel keeps insisting: ‘The reason is you.’ Like in *Eclipse* it is she who doesn’t know, but he who really doesn’t get it, who doesn’t get her. Doesn’t get that it is his attitude that makes her hold him in contempt. He doesn’t get that it is over, even though she still loves him, in a way, like he loves her too, but it is his blindness to this love, the other person, the persons they once loved in each other, that makes the relationship unliveable. ‘*Non lo so*’ is also the answer Vittoria keeps repeating to the questions of Piero (Alain Delon), a stockbroker she hooks up with after her break-up with Riccardo. He doesn’t get her either, not at all in fact, not how it is possible that she doesn’t miss marriage without ever having been married, nor that by re-enacting ‘the couple [they] saw the other day’ they are in fact already re-enacting themselves. He doesn’t get that their love is a cliché. ‘I wish I didn’t love you’, Vittoria finally states by way of explanation, ‘or that I loved you much more.’

Eclipse’s last sequence shows an encounter that does not take place. ‘At eight, the same spot’, Vittoria and Piero agree earlier that day. But in the would-be meeting scene, the camera itself starts wandering, thereby turning the opening scene’s apartment inside out: we see the empty stadium, the same water tower, the leaking water drum at which they are supposed to meet, and a sprinkler that produces a final drop before dying out. People arrive, wait, leave, and we think we see Vittoria, but when night has fallen, and the water has disappeared into the gutter, neither she nor Piero has shown up. This time they both know, bringing the narrative back to the place it started: the fade-out of a relationship.

Antonioni’s portrayal of disillusioned love, in *Eclipse* and in his other films, bears the traces of a deeply melancholic vision of time. Love is stuck in a groove. As Deleuze writes:

If we are sick with Eros, Antonioni said, it is because Eros is himself sick; and he is sick not just because he is old and worn out in his content, but because he is caught in the pure form of a time which is torn between an already determined past and a dead-end future. For Antonioni, there is no other sickness than the chronic. Chronos is sickness itself. (Deleuze 2005b, 23)

Deleuze is right in pointing out that Antonioni presents the emotional alienation of his characters through their failed relation with temporality.

⁵ ‘*Pourquoi est-ce que tu ne m’aimes plus?*’; ‘*C’est la vie*’; ‘*Pourquoi est-ce que tu me méprises?*’; ‘*Ça je te dirai jamais, même si je devais mourir.*’; ‘*La raison, c’est toi.*’

His protagonists are aimless, and their emotional lives are caught in vicious cycles. However, Deleuze does not link this unhappy coupling of Eros and Chronos back to the whatever-space, and more specifically to the whatever-space in its second, emptied out form. For what Antonioni's films, and also *Contempt*, bring to the fore is that the whatever-space in both of its manifestations not only constitutes a site of disconnection and emptiness that marks the rupture of the sensory-motor link, but also seals the crisis of the male quest. In this crisis the immobility already present in Hitchcock's mental-image becomes bound up with impotence, both figuratively and literally.

The Waste Land

I will conceptualise this crisis of the male quest through Teresa de Lauretis's notion of 'Oedipal logic'. In *Alice Doesn't* (1984), De Lauretis expands on an argument made by Laura Mulvey about the intersection of the female character's diegetic position with her narrative position. De Lauretis writes that the woman's role in narrative cinema is often 'fixed by the mythical mechanism in a certain portion of the plot-space, which the hero crosses or crosses to' (De Lauretis 1984, 139). In opposition to this position, 'the male protagonist', as she cites Mulvey, 'is [...] a figure in a landscape free to command the stage [...] of spatial illusion in which he articulates the look and creates the action' (ibid.).

There exist some variations on the way this structure of the woman as fixed point in a male plot-space is filled in. If the main protagonist is male, De Lauretis points out, the female character may be utterly passive in a confined space, as is often the case in Westerns and adventure films, or she may resist confinement and rebel against it, as in film noir. In the case of the melodrama or the 'woman's film', the female protagonist usually makes a journey, inward or outward, in order to reach the place where 'a modern Oedipus will find her and fulfil the promise of his (off-screen) journey' (ibid., 140). Yet in all of these cases the female protagonist functions as the catalyst of narrative closure, while the male hero's conquest of her coincides with the story's 'happy' ending.

To what extent does the crisis of the action-image and its rupture of the sensory-motor-link constitute a subversion of the male quest and its Oedipal logic? As demonstrated, the action-image was both perfected and destroyed by Hitchcock's development of the mental-image. *Rear Window*'s and *Vertigo*'s two-sided position with regard to the action-image is to some extent similar to their position with regard to the male quest, in the sense that both have as themes the rupture of the Oedipal logic, while simultaneously leaving this logic intact.

On the one hand Hitchcock's films constitute narratives in which the male protagonist is outsmarted by his female counterpart. Not only is the woman in charge of the plot-space in both films, she arguably either shows more intelligence (*Vertigo*) or is the one who performs the truly heroic deeds (*Rear Window*). In both cases the male 'hero' appears as helpless, dependent, and at times rather silly. On the other hand, in both films the male protagonist can fall back on a valid condition that excuses him for his 'narrative impotence'. L.B. Jefferies has his broken leg, the result from a mishap at the racing tracks. And Scottie has his fear of heights, a remainder from his career as a policeman that traumatically ended the day his buddy fell from a roof while trying to save him.

In both cases male lack of action is diegetically justified by the man's immobility, an immobility that at the same time forms the bodily insignia of their very manly professional accidents. Moreover, in spite of the fact that these two films lack unambiguously 'happy' endings (Jefferies ends with two broken legs, while Scottie, for the second time, is unable to prevent the death of his meticulously reconstructed ideal) they explicitly subscribe to an Oedipal logic. Whereas in *Vertigo* Judy represents the price Scottie has to pay in order to overcome his vertigo, in *Rear Window* Jefferies's second broken leg is more than fully compensated by his regained interest in Lisa (Grace Kelly). As Mulvey has pointed out, as soon as Lisa has crossed to the opposite side of the courtyard her character is transformed into the object of Jefferies's immobile quest.

This male quest begins to crumble with the crisis of the action-image and its rupture of the sensory-motor-link. A film paradigmatic of this crumbling is De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (*Ladri di biciclette*, 1948), the film that Bazin, before having seen *Umberto D*, considered to be 'the ultimate expression of neorealism' (Bazin 2005, 67). Though one could say that right after the bike theft the film takes the form of a quest, the more Antonio's (Lamberto Maggiorani) hope of retrieving the bike wanes, the more De Sica's film evolves into an aimless journey through the inhospitable streets of Rome. Deleuze quotes Antonioni describing his own approach as one in which he 'tend[ed] to do without a bicycle' (Deleuze 2005b, 22), and in fact in *Umberto D* De Sica already did so himself. Nonetheless, by emptying out the whatever-space Antonioni goes one step further in the disruption of the action-image. According to Deleuze, Antonioni's 'bicycle-less neorealism replaces the last quest involving movement (the trip) with a specific weight of time operating inside characters and excavating them from within' (ibid.). Hence the tired look in the eyes of *Eclipse*'s protagonists, all three of who are disillusioned, above all with love. Sooner or later all of the main characters come to the realisation that what they once held for genuine desire is in fact bound up with clichés. Their desire has become an object that stares at them like a mirror image they do not recognise as their own.

The result of this emotional hollowing out is the loosening-up of the film's narrative thread. Just like its characters, *Eclipse* keeps meandering and circling around its own emptiness, before becoming totally desiccated in the final scene's moon landscape that absorbs the last drops of passion, thus transforming the whatever-space into a site of narrative impotence. Though still not fully broken with, as *Eclipse* still inscribes itself in an economy of sexual difference, its Oedipal logic has been hollowed out to the extent that it is no longer capable of bringing the film to a conclusion, let alone a 'happy' conclusion.

The whatever-space is a plot-space of increased narrative freedom. To the extent that the events unfolding in it are less or even not at all structured by a male quest motif, it embodies the narrative's liberation from a preconceived Oedipal logic. Thus conceived of the whatever-space dovetails with Deleuze and Guattari's critique in *Anti-Oedipus* of psychoanalysis's alleged tendency to subordinate the social field to the Oedipal 'daddy-mommy-me triangle' (Deleuze, 1983, 51). Psychoanalysis for Deleuze and Guattari stratifies the unconscious, structuralises it, and thereby renders it unproductive:

All the chains of the unconscious are biunivocalised, linearised, suspended from a despotic signifier. The whole of desiring-*production* is crushed, subjected to the requirements of *representation*, and to the dreary games of what is representative and represented in representation. And there is the essential thing: the reproduction of desire gives way to a simple representation, in the process as well as theory of the cure. The productive unconscious makes way for an unconscious that knows only how to express itself – express itself in myth, tragedy, dream. (ibid., 54, emphasis theirs)

Though it goes beyond the scope of this essay to determine whether Deleuze and Guattari's attack on psychoanalysis is justified, I would like to at least point at Slavoj Žižek's critique of these authors' treatment of the Oedipal myth. In *Organs Without Bodies* (2004) Žižek accuses them of oversimplifying 'Oedipus', especially when considering Jacques Lacan's discussing of the figure of Oedipus at Colonus 'as a post-Oedipal figure' (Žižek 2004, 80). Drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari's image of the 'lone wolf' as the supreme case of 'the nomadic agent of deterritorialisation', Žižek poses the rhetorical question:

[D]oes Oedipus – this stranger who *blindly* (in both senses of the term) followed his trajectory – not stand for the extreme limit of the pack of human wolves, by way of realizing, acting out, the utter limit of human experience, finishing alone (or, rather, with a pack of

exiles of his own) as, literally, a homeless nomad, a living dead among humans? (ibid., 81)

Indeed, Oedipus at Colonus is the anti-Oedipalised Oedipus, the embodied self-antinomy. Though still the same in name and gender, he is a self-mutilated, hollowed-out man in need of the guidance of his daughter. A wanderer.

I therefore agree with Žižek's assessment of Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of Oedipus as one-sided. Simultaneously, as becomes clear from the above quotation from *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis touches upon a recurring theme in Deleuze's oeuvre, namely the opposition between representation and production. As is often the case in Deleuze's writing, this opposition is almost but not quite diametrical. Deleuze is not against representation per se but against 'simple representation'. This 'imperfect' opposition between representation and production corresponds to that between traditional, qualified plot-space and the whatever-space. Unlike the former, which simply represents characters by moulding them into the framework of the action-image, the whatever-space lets characters speak, by mapping their desire, their alienation, and their wandering state of mind. As a result it becomes difficult to determine where characters end and space begins, as somehow the two spill over into each other. The perfect mutual immanence of character and environment remains an ideal. Nevertheless many neorealist films seek the limit of representation and strive to render the plot-space qua diegetic stage immanent to the plot-space qua frame, the latter being cinema's site of production, its plane of immanence.

In *Eclipse*, to return to Antonioni's emblematic example of the desire for productive cinematic space, this mutual immanence between the characters' desire and narrative space leads to an emptying out of the latter. Its whatever-space, certainly in the film's final shots, thus comes to resemble its archetypal form, that of the Waste Land, or in T.S. Eliot's words: 'A heap of broken images, where the sun beats, / And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, / And the dry stone no sound of water' (Eliot 2002, 53). Eliot derives his image of the Waste Land from the various Grail legends and Arthurian romances which found their first literary form in Chrétien de Troyes's late 12th century epic poem *Perceval ou le conte du Graal*. In this legend the Waste Land is the barren field that surrounds the castle harbouring the Holy Grail. In most versions of the story the Grail is the cup or bowl that Christ passed around during the Last Supper. All versions of the story contain a description of an infirm person whose condition is related to the infertility of his land (Nitze 1909, 365). This person, the inhabitant of the castle and the beholder of the Holy Grail, is the

Fisher King or the Rich Fisher, who in Eliot's poem is referred to as the 'man with three staves'.⁶

Due to his emasculation, either caused by old age or by a spear having pierced his thigh, the king's only pastime left is fishing, an activity that, in Chrétien's poem, he carries out from a boat (See: Troyes 1994, 761). The king's cure and the restoration of his land are dependent on the coming of the 'chosen one', Perceval, who must inquire about the Grail, but at his first visit to the castle fails to do so.

Perceval's journey is the male quest *par excellence*. In order to recognise how his encounter with the Fisher King has been taken up in recent cinema, we must first turn to a modern literary adaptation of the story, Anthony Powell's *The Fisher King* (1986). Most of this novel is told from the perspective of Valentine Beals, a writer of historical thrillers who like most of Powell's protagonists has a keen perception for 'latterday mythologies' (Powell 1995, 30). In the novel Beals recounts his observations during a cruise round the British Isles. His story centres around two of his fellow passengers: the famous photographer Saul Henschman, who as the result of a war accident is sexually mutilated and walks on crutches, and his beautiful wife Barberina Rookwood, a dancer whose 'beauty greatly surpassed photographs of her' (Powell 1986, 11).

During the cruise Beals becomes increasingly fascinated by a 'hypothesis' in which the personalities and activities of his fellow passengers are regarded through the framework of the Perceval story, the maimed Henschman in the role of the 'Fisher King'. Beals's analogy almost works out, yet as one of the characters comments to him at the end of the cruise: 'I could never see how Barberina Rookwood fitted into your Fisher King stuff.' Beals acknowledges this discrepancy between myth and reality, and at the same time relativises his theory: 'I can't be tied down. [...] Fanciful analogies mustn't be pressed too far' (ibid., 255).

Powell's novel bears strong resemblance to Roman Polanski's *Bitter Moon* (1992), the scenario of which was based on Pascal Bruckner's novel *Lunes de fiel* (1982). Similarly to Powell's novel the centre of narrative action in *Bitter Moon* is a cruise ship. Among its passengers are Oscar (Peter Coyote), an unpublished American writer living in Paris who is in a wheelchair as he is paralyzed from the waist down, and his beautiful wife Mimi (Emmanuelle Seigner), who is a dancer, just like Barberina. Regardless of whether Powell was familiar with Bruckner's story (or Polanski with Powell's), these characters invite us to read *Bitter Moon* as another modern day adaptation of the Grail romances. Oscar is the Fisher King, so much is clear. Perceval is played by Nigel (Hugh Grant), an Englishman in his mid-thirties. He and his wife Fiona (Kristin Scott

⁶ The Fisher King's name is connected to Christ's words in Matthew 4:19: 'I shall make you all fishers.' See: Nitze 1909, 369.

Thomas) are on their way to India, where they hope to rekindle the 'waste land' that is their marriage. Soon, however, the reserved Nigel finds himself caught in a quest for the untouchable Mimi. The path to her leads through the stories told by her immobile husband, who calls Nigel 'exactly the listener that I've been looking for'. Nigel, the chosen one, 'can have her', Oscar promises, but only after listening to story, told by the film in extended flashbacks, about his turbulent love life with Mimi, from their meeting in a bus in Paris to their mutual mutilations which left Oscar in his present state.

In this analogy Mimi is the Grail, just like Beals's analogy in *The Fisher King* can indeed be pressed further by positing Barberina as the object of the quest (which Powell clearly found explicit enough without stating it directly.) Mimi's character has been created for the viewer, who in Nigel's predictable fascination for Mimi's overt sex-appeal sees reflected his or her own Oedipal projections, whether these be sexual, narrative or both. When towards the end of the film Nigel, while dancing with Mimi, confesses his love, Mimi replies: 'Come on. I'm just a fantasy. An amusement on a boring voyage.'

But Nigel does not want to hear it. And does the viewer? Doesn't he or she feel disappointed too when confronted with the truth that the character of Mimi is just a spectacular image to look at on their cinematic voyage? Especially during the extended flashbacks, Mimi's character, the beauty of which shares the representational excess of Barbarina, enacts an array of male heterosexual fantasies, the stereotypical aspects of which are foregrounded by Oscar's saturated descriptions. Mimi moves from innocent *Parisienne* to erotic dancer, from voluptuous sex bomb to cruel dominatrix, and from harsh private nurse to bored *femme fatale*.⁷ And finally to the role of lesbian lover, because the person who *does* get her in the end is Fiona, Nigel's wife.

Yet instead of disrupting the film's Oedipal logic, this act of sexual transgression affirms it for three reasons. First, the way Mimi and Fiona's amorous encounter is presented has less to do with their own erotic experiences than with Oscar's stereotypical voyeuristic pleasure in watching them have sex. Second, whereas most of the other sex scenes are depicted in graphic detail, this time the lovemaking takes place outside of the camera's field of vision. Finally, a few hours after this 'perversion' of the heterosexual plot occurs, Oscar shoots both Mimi and himself. As Renee Hoogland writes:

⁷ This reading is further supported by the shot of Mimi and Oscar grabbing each others' hands while spinning in a merry-go-round (about 28 minutes into the film), a shot that quotes Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* in the Sistine Chapel. The film thus suggests that similar to God's act of creating man in his likeness, man creates woman according to his desire.

Conspicuously veiled, the critical 'lesbian' moment [...] has little to do with lesbian sexuality; that is to say with an active mode of female sexuality autonomous from men. Still less does the film suggest the viability [...] of lesbian subjectivity: Mimi's wandering from the straight path results in instant execution, whereas her one-night female lover [...] is resolutely restored to her stuffy British husband. (Hoogland 1995, 471)

To add to Hoogland's argument, it is exactly through this 'lesbian' moment that Nigel and Fiona are literally driven back into each other's arms in the film's final shot, an embrace suggesting their ability to reinvigorate their worn-out marriage, most likely through parenthood. In this respect, *Bitter Moon* bears strong resemblance to *Rear Window*. Much like in Hitchcock's film, in which Jefferies only regains interest in Lisa once she has become part of his spectacle, in *Bitter Moon* Nigel only rediscovers Fiona once she has become a character in Oscar's story, at the climax of which she is literally touched by his object of fantasy.

With Polanski the mental-image returns, or rather, is shown never to have disappeared. Like Hitchcock, Polanski stages his viewers' desires alongside those of his characters. And like Hitchcock he subverts the action-image and the male quest connected to it, while at the same time keeping them intact. This becomes most clear in *Chinatown* (1974), which is Polanski's *Vertigo*, like *Bitter Moon* is his *Rear Window*.⁸ Like these two Hitchcock films, *Bitter Moon* and *Chinatown* stage a male protagonist whose heroic aspirations are thwarted by a sudden immobility at the moment when movement is most crucial, a failure to act that is simultaneously offset by its diegetic justification. In *Bitter Moon* this immobility consists in the fact that Nigel cannot dance. Or as Oscar says to Fiona, in response to her remark that she has never before seen her husband 'in action' with another woman: 'You call that action? I didn't think he was getting anywhere.' In *Chinatown*, Jake's mission, much like Scottie's, is cursed by a traumatic experience during his former career as a policeman, an experience that now prevents him from saving the girl. 'Forget it Jake', says his former colleague, exempting him from all blame, 'it's Chinatown.'

How can this return, or rather persistence, of the mental-image be fitted into Deleuze's theory about the crisis of the action-image? In order to answer this question one must first briefly examine the overall scope of the *Cinema* project. Deleuze begins the Preface to *Cinema 1* by stating that: 'This study is not a history of the cinema. It is a taxonomy, an attempt at the classification of images and signs' (Deleuze 2005a, xix). Later in *Cinema 1*,

⁸ This connection between Hitchcock and Polanski I owe to Thomas Elsaesser, even though his pairing of the directors' films is different from mine. See: Allmer et al. (2007) *Johan Grimmonprez: Looking for Alfred: The Hitchcock Castings*. London: Film and Video Umbrella, p. 140.

in the section where he discusses the crisis of the action-image, Deleuze writes:

Certainly, people continue to make [situation-action-situation and action-situation-action] films: the greatest commercial successes always take that route, but the soul of the cinema no longer does. The soul of the cinema demands increasing thought, even if thought begins by undoing the system of actions, perceptions and affections on which the cinema had fed up to that point. (ibid., 210)

Without necessarily contradicting the first quotation, the ‘no longer’ in the second citation clearly suggests a historical shift, namely that between a cinema of the movement-image (the focus of *Cinema 1*) and a cinema of the time-image (*Cinema 2*). The term ‘time-image’ refers to a cinema in which time is liberated from movement. However, some directors Deleuze discusses in the first volume as examples of the movement-image (Bresson, Vertov), he in the second volume discusses as examples of the time-image. For Jacques Rancière this is reason to infer that ‘movement-image and time-image are by no means two types of images ranged in opposition, but two different points of view on the image’ (Rancière 2006, 112-3). According to Rancière it is actually Deleuze’s project itself that brings to the fore ‘a dialectic constitutive of the cinema’ that ‘jeopardizes from the outset any attempt [...] to fix a border separating a classical from a modern cinema’ (ibid., 122).

It is hard to assess the extent to which the creation of such a border was part of Deleuze’s intention. But it becomes clear from the *Cinema 1* quotation above that Deleuze was not interested in the development of cinema as such, but in the development of the ‘soul of the cinema’. How should this soul be conceptualised? Can we conceive of it otherwise than as an immanent soul? And wouldn’t its content, that is the films and directors that are counted as contributors to it, vary with the intentions with which one tries to think this soul?

Deleuze does not discuss Polanski, and it is therefore hard to determine if and how the mental-images of films like *Bitter Moon* and *Chinatown* can be placed in the dialectic shift between movement and time-image. But Deleuze also does not consider the relations between narrative structure and Oedipal logic. I therefore propose to consider this ‘soul’ along the same lines that I have examined the crisis of the action-image, that is, as indissoluble from a shift in narrative cinema’s deployment of desire, love and gender. When considered in this way, this soul definitely includes Polanski’s neo-noir love dramas, not just because his films in many respects reiterate Hitchcock’s pivotal position with regards to the emasculation of the male protagonist, but also because they form part of a tradition that exactly

by working through the cliché hopes to produce an ephemeral image of love, one that is still based within an economy of sexual difference.

The Whatever-Space Re-imagined or ‘Le Mariage Pop’

Let’s return to the whatever-space, this neorealist site of the discrepancy between people and their worlds. As Bazin points out, rather than a cinema of condemnation, neorealism is a cinema of love, for reality and for the image (Bazin 2005, 21). What kind of love? As Deleuze formulates the problem: ‘If images have become clichés [...] how can an Image be extracted from all these clichés, “just an image”, an autonomous mental-image. [...] What is an image that would not be a cliché?’ (Deleuze 2005a, 219). And what if love itself has become a cliché? These are the kinds of questions that lie at the heart of the soul of the cinema. Obviously there have been many different answers to these questions. In the remainder of this essay I will discuss the one given in some of the ‘post-neorealist’ films of Antonioni and Bertolucci, both of whom in their colour films from the 1970s explicitly returned to the whatever-space, while attempting to transform it into a plot-space of re-imagined love. It is a somewhat reactionary answer, it should be added, because unlike that of the deserted sites of neorealism, the re-imagined whatever-space’s potential is aesthetic rather than political in nature, to the extent that the whatever-space becomes a site of escapism. Moreover, the forms of re-imagination, both of love and of the cinematic image, are fully immersed into a heteronormative logic, and whereas the neorealist image may be conceived of as an attempt to unravel Oedipal logic, in the post-neorealist image the Oedipal logic is restored, albeit in a thwarted form.

A prime example of post-neorealist re-imagination we find in Antonioni’s *Zabriskie Point* (1970). In this film two young people adrift find each other in the middle of the Californian desert. Mark (Mark Frechette) is a radical militant student, and Daria (Daria Halprin) is a secretary. They are on the run, Mark from the police, Daria from her job, and both from consumer culture. The dried up lake bed in Death Valley National Park where they end up echoes the dried-out space at the end of *Eclipse*, just like other elements in *Zabriskie Point* (Mark’s air plane flight, the stock exchange) are implicit references to Antonioni’s earlier film.

However, despite the fact that *Zabriskie Point*’s erosional landscape by far surpasses the place of non-encounter in *Eclipse* in terms of physical aridness, in this later film the empty space has become a place of vitality and escape, however short-lived these may be. Daria and Mark admire the silence and the bare vegetation, run down the sand hills, and ultimately *make* love, as if reinventing it for themselves and liberated from the pretension it will last. In a brief but rapturous sequence Daria and Mark roll over the dusty earth until their naked bodies are hardly separable from the

desert, the short shots of their amorous wrestle being alternated with those of a kaleidoscopic 'love-in' in which their bodies are replicated all over the sand dunes.

What happens next does not really matter. What matters is that their orgy for two yields a glimmer of hope by means of which the whatever-space is revitalised, and thereby transformed into a site of ephemeral (sexual) liberation and escape from a clichéd outside world. And of course, this escape from clichés easily lapses into becoming a cliché itself. That is why this reinvested whatever-space cannot last, at least not in the form of an actual, geographical space that always faces the risk of reification. But Antonioni's film seems to suggest that it can last in potential, in the human mind, which by turning itself inside out can inspire the emptied-out spaces it ventures into. It is a type of plot-space that aims at reinventing the whatever-space as a site of potentiality and desire. In doing so, it both constitutes a continuation and a rupture with regard to the earlier types of whatever-space, in the sense that it turns the latter's aspect as a site of wandering into a place of encounter and connection.

In psychoanalytic terms: whereas the whatever-space represents the incongruity between the subject's desire on the one hand and the existing social order on the other, the re-imagined whatever-space inscribes itself in the realm of the imaginary, simultaneously giving account of its impossibility to fully cover over the cracks in the ideological realm of desire. According to Žižek, 'fantasy is ultimately always the fantasy of a successful sexual relationship' (quoted in McGowan 2007, 204), to which Todd McGowan adds that fantasy can only provide a glimpse of this perfect romantic union (*ibid.*). It is exactly this fleetingness of love's image that the re-imagined whatever-space renders visible. While at first sight constituting a site of seclusion from social reality, it simultaneously bears witness to the fact that the more capitalism realises its inherently expansionist tendency the harder real hiding places become to find.

There exists a strange relation between capitalism and the whatever-space (in all three of its forms). Capitalism does not know whatever-spaces, because it does not understand them, and if it thinks it does it has already destroyed them. The wastelands capital untiringly searches for and ventures into, on earth and beyond, are in fact already soaked by its immanent logic, a logic that is truly indifferent. Capitalism only believes in its outsides to the extent that it can keep its expansionist desire energised. Colonists, project developers, tourists, and other space-invaders: they have always already laid their reifying gazes on the deserted places of this world. Whether they are looking for gold, water (which in the desert is gold too, as Mark points out in *Zabriskie Point*), oil or diversion, they are all trembling to pose the rhetorical Grail question, hoping to hydrate, fertilise and render profitable the unexploited fields.

At the same time, in its intolerance towards the whatever-spaces capitalism artificially posits as outside itself, it creates real ones inside itself. They are the disconnected and emptied out spaces, the urban cancers and the city debris, the suburbias and the inhospitable city centres that have been represented by Rossellini, De Sica and Antonioni. The whatever-space can be any space, like any space can be connected, qualified space. The whatever-space is not an objective reality that exists independent of perception, but a reality that is only called into being by the real disconnection and alienation that people experience from the hostility or clichédness of the environment that creates them as wanderers, as people bereft of connections.

However reactionary it is in terms of sexual difference, the re-imagined whatever-space forms a direct reaction to the ones depicted in post-war cinema. The films in which this escapist plot-space emerges are love stories, often of the boy-meets-girl type, yet ones that in their own way try to negotiate the pitfall of the male quest motif, thereby merely thwarting this motif rather than avoiding it. In doing so they offer a representation of Eros that inscribes itself in, but cannot be reduced to the ideals of, non-institutionalised love in 1960s and 1970s countercultures. Apart from *Zabriskie Point*, the other film that I consider emblematic of this struggle to free an expressive image from a world of clichés is Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* (*Ultimo Tango a Parigi*, 1973). In this film, but also in the more recent *Stealing Beauty* (1996) and *The Dreamers* (2003), Bertolucci seems to directly address the question of love and the cliché raised by Antonioni and Godard. And his answer resembles that of Antonioni in *Zabriskie Point*.

The whatever-space in *Last Tango in Paris* is an empty, run-down apartment in the French capital. This apartment serves as the site of a chance encounter between Jeanne (Maria Schneider), a blunt twenty-year-old, and Paul (Marlon Brando), a middle-aged American widower. Their first encounter, which culminates in Paul's rape of Jeanne, forms the start of their passionate affair. They meet several times, in the same secluded place, and on conditions set by Paul: no names, no personal histories, just sex. The apartment, much like the desert in *Zabriskie Point*, becomes a refuge invested by their imagination. For Paul it is a place to forget about his wife who has just committed suicide. For Jeanne it is an escape from the ideal love story her boyfriend Tom (Jean-Pierre Léaud) forces upon their relationship, because in practically all of their interactions Tom is busy shooting a film starring Jeanne and himself. Yet what Tom presents as 'cinéma-vérité' is in fact a sugary romance.

Jeanne feels raped, not by Paul but by Tom. At one point she yells to him: 'Your film is over, you understand, over! I'm tired of being raped!'⁹ But even though Tom's only response is to slap her, Jeanne says 'yes' when

⁹ 'Ton film est fini, tu comprends, fini! Je suis fatiguée de me faire violer!'

he, again filming, asks her to marry him. Jeanne believes in marriage without having any illusions about it, a stance she eloquently explains while having her wedding dress fitted: 'What do commercials speak about, what do they sell? [...] The perfect marriage, ideal, successful. [...] But why not take seriously the marriage of billboards. *Le mariage....le mariage pop!*' [...] And if it doesn't work, one has to repair it like a car.' Upon which Tom asks: 'And love, is love also pop?' 'No', Jeanne responds, 'not that, love is not pop. [...] The workers return to a secret apartment, they throw off their overalls and become men and women again, and make love.'¹⁰

But for something to be not 'pop' it cannot last. First Paul, by telling Jeanne about his past, breaks his own rules, and after she has told him she is getting married, he becomes as pathetic as her future husband. Whether blinded by sadness or confidence, Paul simply cannot accept that for Jeanne their affair really is just an affair, and that her desire ultimately does not involve sharing her life with him. And most importantly, in his aspiration to transpose their relation from the secluded and imaginary realm of the apartment to the symbolic realm of the public sphere, Paul quite literally transgresses the incest taboo in Jeanne's eyes.

When he follows her to her parents' house, she shoots him with the gun of her deceased father.¹¹ Paul stumbles to the balcony, followed by the camera. In what starts as a point of view shot the camera shows Paul's last impressions of the city, upon which the camera moves up, like a soul leaving the body, before moving down, to the balcony's floor where now lies the lifeless Paul. His death has eluded us, just like the indeterminable shift in the narrative perspective has eluded us. But it is exactly at that moment separating life from death that the narration is liberated from the viewer's teleological desire, and that an image is born.

This image could be conceived of as the gaze, a potentially distorting gap in our field of vision that is the condition of our ability to see. Interestingly, this gaze makes itself felt during a shot that initially presents Paul's point of view.¹² In this understanding the gaze is not located on the side of the subject, but on that of the object. It is a stain in our perspective of the world that elides us, but that at the same time orients our vision. 'It also

¹⁰ 'De quoi parle la publicité, que vend-elle? [...] Le mariage parfait, idéal, réussi. [...] Mais pourquoi ne pas prendre sérieux le mariage des affiches? *Le mariage....le mariage pop!* [...] Si ça marche pas il faut la réparer comme on répare une automobile.'; 'Et l'amour aussi est pop?'; 'Non pas ça, l'amour est pas pop. [...] Les ouvriers rentrent dans un appartement secret, ils ôtent leur salopette et redeviennent des hommes, des femmes et font l'amour.'

¹¹ Incest or hints thereof is a recurrent theme in Bertolucci's oeuvre. *La Luna* deals with the sexual attraction between a mother and her son, whereas *The Dreamers* figures the intimate relation of two 'Siamese' twins.

¹² In classical Lacanian film theory the gaze has generally been conceived of as the male look. However, this interpretation of the term deviates from Jacques Lacan's own use of the concept. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1973) Lacan describes the gaze as an inapprehensible 'point of vanishing', and 'from the moment that this gaze appears, the subject tries to adapt himself to it.' The subject, Lacan states, 'becomes that punctiform object' (Lacan 1981, 83).

shows' (Lacan 1981, 75). In *The Real Gaze* (2007) Todd McGowan argues that 'the way in which a film deploys the gaze is [...] the fundamental political and existential act of the cinema' (McGowan 2007, 18). By this he means that film has the task of exploiting its potential to reveal the cracks within ideology. It is exactly out of those cracks that film must construct an image. In the balcony scene in *Last Tango in Paris*, the gaze is literally the narrative void that is opened up by Paul's death. A void that stares at us, but that 'also shows', namely the impossibility of the encounter between Paul and Jeanne, this encounter being the product of their own imagination that is unable to survive in the outside world.

The camera then retracts, from Paul's body to Jeanne, who is standing in shock, with her back towards the balcony. 'I don't know who he is', she keeps repeating, the gun still in her hand, Paul's body in soft focus on the background, 'He followed me in the street. He has tried to rape me. He's crazy.'¹³ This is technically the truth, but what else could she have done? How else could the film have saved its whatever-space from a *monde pop*? True, Bertolucci's film does not shun major clichés like the death of the father, and its narrative remains fully ruled by an Oedipal structure, but this final scene seems to be the only way through which it could have redeemed its moments of 'true' love between Paul and Jeanne from the one cliché that is even bigger, the quest of the male hero. It therefore in fact *does* matter what 'happens next' in *Zabriskie Point*, which is that Paul is shot by the police for a crime he claims not to have committed.

Conclusion

In this essay I have argued that Gilles Deleuze's notion of the whatever-space is ruled by a thwarted Oedipal logic. The whatever-space is a type of plot-space that stands in a relation of mutual determination with the alienated characters that populate it. First, in my discussion of *Rear Window*, *Vertigo* and *Eclipse* I followed Deleuze's narrative of the breaking down of the sensory motor link and the appearance of the whatever-space. The narrative that unites these films is one of a double crisis that unfolds itself through the whatever-space. On the one hand this is the crisis of the action image, as theorised by Deleuze, and on the other hand it is that of the male quest. Subsequently I extended this narrative by looking at the way that, in the wake of Italian neorealism, post-neorealist films such as *Zabriskie Point* and *Last Tango in Paris* can be said to reterritorialize the whatever-space. Under the diegetic pretence of a forfeited male quest for the Holy Grail, they transform this neorealist heritage into an escapist and arguably reactionary site of imagination that seeks to unite wandering with the heterosexual encounter.

¹³ 'Je sais pas qui c'est. Il m'a suivie dans la rue. Il a essayé de me violer, c'est un fou.'

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