

Passing Time: Immanuel Kant Goes to Cinema

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Can you imagine going to the movies with a philosopher? Almost certainly not. Wittgenstein, would readily have come along, but then again as Derek Jarman's film *Wittgenstein* shows -only to run away from the idle chatter of philosophers and to take shelter in the comforting darkness of the movie hall. We know for sure that Henry Bergson and Merleau Ponty would have hesitated to come, for philosophical reasons. For Bergson the moving pictures merely display bad habits of speculative thinking about movement. For Merleau Ponty cinema destroys the conditions of lived experience. Since Plato, philosophers have been directed to turn their eyes away from the deceptive moving images cast on the wall and to walk out of the theatres of deception into the daylight outside. Small wonder then if Plato's myth of the cave has made cinema the myth of everything that philosophy has always wanted to escape from.

The task of the philosophy of film is to take philosophy to the movies. Unlike the philosophy of language, or of science, this inquiry does not see itself as a meta-discourse on its object domain. A philosophy of cinema is not a philosophy about cinema. Here instead of subsuming the cinematic under philosophical concepts, we are led to acknowledge that filmmakers pursue and extend concepts through the practices of film. Philosophy takes cinema as a conceptual practice. This is not to see cinema as an expression of ideas. The task of philosophy is to propose concepts which respond to the inventions and innovations taking place in the history of cinema.

Kant lived prior to the birth of cinema. Our task here is not to apply Kantian philosophy to cinema. Instead, we wish to ask: Can cinema propose itself as something new to Kant. Does cinema have the power to pose a challenge to our thought in the way Newtonian science or the French revolution did? Kantian philosophy was an adventure of thought along three axes, each of which is constituted by an enquiry into one of

the following relationships—between thought and its outside, between thought and itself and between thought and the thinker. The fundamental question of Kantian critique was this: Under what conditions thought can open itself onto its outside in the person of the thinker? Taking Kant to the movies means to pose these questions with respect to cinema.

Philosophical concepts are not empty and pre existing molds which we can impose on other domains like science, art or politics. Take Kant's response to the unprecedented developments in Newtonian science or to the French revolution. His attempt was not to provide a philosophical justification to either science or to revolution or even to formulate criteria to judge them with. Nor was he trying to make philosophy an under-laborer of science or politics. Kant witnessed upheavals in human knowledge and social life, which took place without demanding guidelines or justification from philosophy. These events presented philosophy with something genuinely novel. They also threw reason into a crisis. When we try to account for the possibility of science or politics we realize that the faculties of reason, which make them possible, also are necessarily vulnerable to illusions and antinomies. Critical philosophy was a decisive response to this critical condition of thought. Here 'critical' may be better understood in its clinical sense where a situation is critical when all known means of solution are implicated in the problem and their employment can either improve or worsen the condition. So the problem here is: does cinema too pose a critical situation for thought?

An obvious way to start a Kantian inquiry on cinema is to treat cinema as a subject matter of aesthetics which is understood as philosophy of art or of the beautiful. Here unfortunately cinema does not stand a chance. Where does cinema fall within the classification of arts proposed by Kant? Does cinema merit the status of fine art? Much of cinema stubbornly resists being called art! Except a minority, the producers and consumers of cinema regard it as an industry or as entertainment. Only the so called art cinema pleads for the title of art. One of the great directors of contemporary cinema Wim Wenders once said that capital is the necessary presupposition of cinema irrespective of its being art or commercial. Moreover, cinema is a product of the age of technology and the latter's presence in cinema cannot be reduced to that of a mere tool or technique. As Walter Benjamin argues, the unprecedented presence of technology creates a radically novel aesthetic

experience which cannot be covered by a theory of taste¹.

Within the classification of arts Kant proposes in the *Critique of Judgment*² cinema shares the characteristics of those arts which fall outside the realm of fine arts—industrial art and the art of the agreeable or entertainment. Kant saves fine arts from the Platonic denigration of art. But both industrial art and entertainment have no claim to the judgment of taste. For Kant, industrial art merely seeks to actualize a possible object according to its concept. Among the arts which seek to actualize objects in view of pleasure, entertainment would fall into the class of agreeable art which is inferior to the fine arts. Agreeable art gives us pleasure from mere sensations whereas in fine art pleasure accompanies the presentation of aesthetic ideas.

Entertainment can be studied as a part of the cultural politics of art which the third *Critique* opens up. From this perspective entertainment may be seen as ideology or as popular or subversive art. We shall not take this path. Our task here is not to denigrate or celebrate entertainment. We shall persist with the aesthetic question about the nature of entertainment and see if cinema demands a radical transformation in the way we define aesthetic as a mode of inquiry.

Kant gives examples of entertainment—charms that can gratify a dinner party, arranging the tables, music of the orchestra during banquets. All of these involve fleeting, unreflective and irresponsible pleasure. No one is brought to book for what one utters in a conversation over the dinning table. Whatever is said there is merely for the entertainment of the moment. It is not expected to last for a duration so that it becomes the object of reflection. The banquet orchestra produces agreeable noise. But we agree to it without paying any attention. It does not hinder a free flow of conversation and helps to create a genial atmosphere. Kant provides a covering definition for entertainment; these are arts which are “attended with no further interest than that of making the time pass by unheeded”.³ This is the meaning of entertainment. It allows time to pass without us noticing its passage, without it affecting us.

Here entertainment receives a characterization not with respect to taste but as a relationship to time. Time is the subject matter of aesthetics but not when it is a theory of the beautiful or art but when it is a logic of sensation as in the Transcendental Aesthetics of *Critique of Pure Reason*. In Kant the Transcendental Aesthetics gives way to an analytics

and its antinomies which will be mediated by a dialectics but only to return in the third *Critique* as a philosophy of the beautiful. The task of this paper is to retrieve the sense of aesthetics in the first *Critique* with respect to the challenge of cinema. This would mean to pose the Kantian question on cinema as a question of space and time. We have already arrived at this question through the popular characterization of cinema as entertainment. However, this is not the only way to arrive at the connection between cinema and time. The great masters of the so called art cinema too have seen cinema as an art of time. For Tarkovksy filming is sculpting in time⁴. Philosophers like Bergson⁵ and Deleuze⁶ too questioned cinema in relation to time. My inquiry follows the temporal clue provided by entertainment to pose the question of cinema as a question of time. This opens up the Kantian transcendental aesthetics to the challenge of cinema.

Let us return to the Kantian definition of entertainment. It is that which demands no more interest than needed to let time pass without affecting us. This definition links two crucial components; passage of time and affect. Entertainment does not give us pleasure by fulfilling our interest in any object. Aesthetic pleasure has already left such interests behind. The source of aesthetic pleasure is the subject itself. This is not the pleasure of objects affecting us. It arises from the play of the faculties of the subject. The pleasure given by entertainment is something different from both these. What is this pleasure involved in letting time pass unheedingly? Entertainment is often connected with leisure. It is expected to fill in the no-work time of leisure. However, merely spending time without doing anything in itself need not be entertaining. Often work is tedious and unpleasant but spending time having nothing to do is boring. It would seem that work, despite the tedium, is preferred to the boredom generated by the absence of any activity. When we are bored, it is as if time does not pass or it passes so slowly as to make us feel and suffer every small step of its movement. Doing nothing tires us more than doing something. When we are entertained, time moves so fast that we do not perceive its passage. So leisure is not entertainment. To be entertained we need to do something which is neither work nor mere contemplation of the harmonious play of our subjective faculties as it happens in aesthetic experience. What is this activity and what is its relationship with time? Do we really notice the passage of time? What do we have to do so that time passes without our noticing it? Can time not pass on its own? How can we affect its

passage with what we do?

II

Time does not pass without challenging speculative thinking with a tough paradox. Aristotle formulated this paradox as follows:

Again it is not easy to see whether the now which appears to divide past and future always remains one and the same or is for ever different. If none of ever differing parts of time are simultaneous with each other, except when one is contained and the other contains as the shorter time is contained in the longer; and if a now which does not exist but existed previously must have ceased to exist at sometime, in that case nows will not exist simultaneously with each other and the earlier now must always have ceased to exist. Now, it cannot have ceased to exist during itself because it exists then, but it cannot have ceased to exist in another now either. For let it be impossible for now to be next to each other, as it is for points. If in that case it cannot have ceased to exist in the next now but has ceased to exist in some other now, then it will have ceased simultaneously with infinitely many nows intervening between itself and the alter one: but that is impossible.⁷

If the nows are all different then this present now must be different from that past now. But the past now was – in the past, at another instant – a present now. Today's present is tomorrow's past. That previous present now becomes a past now only when it is pushed away or displaced by the present now. Aristotle blocks the possible ways of conceiving this displacement of now. If the present now can become past only when a new now appears or presents itself then the present now cannot pass nor the new now can present itself. A prior now cannot cease to be in the following nows because it will not cease to be as the same now. Also as a now which has been it will be beyond the action of a following now. The nows cannot follow one another by immediately destroying each other; in that case there will be no time. A now can pass only by being other than itself. It is not that the one self-same now changes into another self-same now. Now in its essence is the non same. On the one hand "now" is token reflexive. On the other it is the impossibility of coexisting with itself. It can be, only by being another. The now can pass by only if it is past at the same time as it is present. To pass time, the

now has to be itself and another at the same time— simultaneously. The now is always its own double. The “simul” of simultaneity testifies to this simulacral nature of the now.

In the history of philosophy several attempts have been made to solve this paradox. Such solutions work by making distinctions - between the instant and the present or between the static and flowing time or between A series and B series of temporal flow⁸ - and by characterizing time privileging one term over the other. One can save time by locating the source of the paradox in the inessential aspect of time. If the paradox affects the essential aspect then time itself is denied any reality. Aristotle privileges the instant (objective) over the present (subjective) and hopes to solve the paradox by conceiving the former as a limit or caesura of movement. Augustine whom we may place on the opposite pole privileges the present. He locates time within the soul which can hold the past, present and future together and conceives of the passage of time as a movement of the soul. But as Ricouer has shown both these solutions fail to grasp time.⁹ The paradox reappears at the heart of these solutions.¹⁰

In this history of the aporetics of time Kant made a revolutionary intervention. Transcendental aesthetics does not offer yet another solution to the paradoxes of time. He realizes that the means used in the previous solutions are complicit in the problem itself. So the critical thinker shifts the standpoint for posing the problem of time. He changes the rules of the game or invents a new game. Those who see the history of philosophy as a collection of the same irresolvable problems or as a sequence of better solutions to the same problems miss the revolutionary import of the Kantian gesture. Today, to be a Kantian does not mean to accept or refute his solution but to turn the table or to change the game as decisively as Kant did. That is why, to think the question of time in a Kantian manner, I propose an encounter with cinema.

Kant located the kernel of the paradoxes of time in the prevailing ways of conceiving the relationship between time and movement. Prior to Kant, time was subordinated to movement. Time was regarded as the measure of movement. As Deleuze has shown Kant inverts this and frees time from the hinges of movement and makes the latter subordinate to the former.¹¹ Movement too undergoes a revision. Movement is no longer measured with respect to privileged points or poses. All points have the same ordinary significance. Experience of motion needs the

apriori of time.

Kant makes three crucial moves here. Firstly, he turns time from an *aporia* to an *a priori*. Secondly, time is given the status of a pure intuition. Thirdly, he makes time the form of the inner sense. That time is intuition means it has to do with our receptivity to the world. We have knowledge only in so far as we let the world be encountered by us. We have to be affected by beings for us to know them. This intuition is a finite one. That all thinking must relate to intuitions is the mark of our finitude. We encounter things as already existing and announcing themselves in front of us. We are not the origin of the object of knowledge. *A priori* intuition refers to the enabling on our part to be affected by beings¹². This enabling pertains to thinking. Intuition contains forms which are completely independent of experience. Hence, being such forms, space and time are pure intuitions. Time (also space) is not a thing or an attribute of a thing. It is a pure form of being affected by things. Time is an empty intuition.

Space and time are forms of our³ outer and inner sense respectively. The inner and outer should not be understood in a spatial sense. In fact, Kant gives time a definite priority over space. In space we encounter other beings. In time we encounter ourselves as beings open to encounters. Though both space and time are nothing if abstracted away from their subjective conditions, time involves our subjectivity in a more original sense than space.

Whatever the origin of our representations, whether they are due to the influence of outer things, or are produced through inner causes, whether they arise *a priori*, being appearances have an empirical origin, they must all, as modifications of the mind, belong to inner sense. All our knowledge is thus finally subject to time.¹³

The inner intuition has no spatial shapes but only a sequence of states – succession of moods and representations. Time is the form to which the succession of inner states is subjected. Here Heidegger notices an apparent paradox which provides a clue to the priority of time. Since the inner sense involves no spatial shapes Kant states that time cannot be a determination of the outer experience.¹⁴ Our knowledge of external objects does not seem to be subjected to time. Does this not contradict Kant's own claim that time is the formal condition *a priori* for 'all appearances whatsoever'? However, the paradox disappears when we

notice that, for Kant, the outer experience is time-determined only as mediated. External objects as the 'what' of representation are not immediately determined by time. We can recognize the priority of time over space only as implied in a mediated manner in the outer sense.

The mediated nature of time is the price Kant pays for privileging time over space. This has a drastic consequence. It makes outer representation of time using the spatial shapes of line, circle etc indirect. These spatial shapes involve time only as mediated. We can see time only as implied in these outer shapes.

Is Kant confusing time with space as Bergson accused him of doing? What is involved in representing time with a line or a circle? In what sense is time bound to the subject more originally than space. To answer these questions we need to look at Kant's discovery of the paradox of the inner sense and his proposed solution in terms of a characterisation of time as self-affection.

Inner sense represents even our own selves only as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves.

"For we intuit ourselves only as we are inwardly affected, and this would seem to be contradictory, since we should then have to be in a passive relation (of active affection) to ourselves."¹⁵

Passive relation to oneself is a contradiction. We appear to ourselves only as phenomenal beings. We have no intuitions of ourselves. We know ourselves only as internally affected by our own acts.

As Ricoeur points out, for Kant affecting is determining.¹⁶ But the Kantian notion of determination is different from that of Descartes for whom the undetermined existence of the 'I am' is immediately determined as 'I think'. For Kant, time does not allow the determination I think to directly bear upon the 'I am'. As the form of the determinable, time introduces a gap or a quivering between thought and being. I encounter myself only as determined within time, as a phenomenal being and not as I am. The spontaneity of the 'I think' cannot be the attribute of any 'I am'. The 'I' is assigned to me as if from outside. 'I is the other'. Kant shifts the locus of the passing time to the soul and inscribes the paradox in the very heart of the subject. Our subjectivity does not belong to us. As we shall see, it is cinema which is destined to draw the most radical conclusions from this Kantian teaching.

To the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* Kant adds a third element – the form of the passive self as time. The gap between thought and being is interiorised and represented as the passive self. Time here is the internal rupture or torsion within the order of representation. Hence time itself does not yield to direct representation. The unknowable thing-in-itself is nothing but thought ruptured by time. It cannot be represented not because it is an inaccessible essence kept beyond appearance. It is a rupture or a void which needs to be filled up or patched up every time it is subjected to knowledge. At the opposite pole of the passive self we do not find the spontaneity of the fullness of being but a crack.

What is involved in entertainment that allows us to pass time without affecting us? If passivity belongs to our inner sense in an essential way how do we overcome this? Is it by assuming a spontaneity which is denied to us? Under the form of time, Kant denies us this possibility. Is there another way? Is there an agency – a passion – proper to the passive self? Before answering these questions we need to understand how this passivity and finitude imply that our access to time will always remain indirect.

According to Kant we cannot represent time directly. We can represent time only through external or spatial relations. For example we may represent the flow of time by drawing a line in space. Here Kant is not, as Bergson wrongly accused him of doing, confusing space with time, and conceptualizing the latter in terms of the former.

Even time itself we cannot represent, save in so far as we attend, in the drawing of a line (which has to serve as the outer figurative representation of time), merely to the act of synthesis of the manifold whereby we successively determine inner sense, and in so doing attend to the succession of this determination in inner sense and in so doing attend to the succession of this determination in inner sense. Motion as an act of the subject (not as a determination of the object), and therefore the synthesis of the manifold in space, first produces the concept of synthesis of the manifold in space, first produces the concept of succession – if we abstract from this manifold and attend solely to the act through which we determine the inner sense according to this form. The understanding does not, therefore, find in inner sense such a combination of the manifold, but produces it, in that it affects that sense.¹⁷

It is not the shape of the figure we draw to represent time that matters. It could be a line or a circle. What is important is the activity of drawing itself. (It is wrong to accuse Kant and Enlightenment of subscribing to a linear conception of time. By making the representation of time indirect, Kant prevents us from identifying time with any spatial shapes whether it is a line, circle or triangle.) Time is not given to us directly as intuition. By attending to the act of drawing in space we produce the manifold of intuitions in the inner sense so that we know time. In allowing ourselves to be affected in our inner sense we learn about time indirectly. The act of drawing a line or circle is an act of producing which can be seen as staging or fictionalizing.

No time without affection. How can we entertain ourselves and let time pass while preventing the form of affection from affecting us? This would mean that we disown our subjectivity. It is against this Kantian restriction on the representation of time that we need to evaluate Cinema's claim to represent time directly and to offer us entertainment without affection. We shall learn more about this claim to accomplish a direct image of time from the writings of Tarkovsky and also from some of the great films of our time.

III

Tarkovsky's *Sculpting in Time* is a director's self reflective account of the practice of cinema as an art of time. This is not a philosophical work. It is more like a practical notebook of a working director. We cannot directly cull out a philosophical concept of time from this book or from his interviews. The same is the case with the films I shall discuss in this section. They are not disguised philosophical discussions on time. Films are not allegories of philosophical debates. The reflections of a director or a film attain philosophical significance only when philosophy from within its own practice works out a genuine opening towards cinema. A Kantian approach to cinema risks placing the most vulnerable point of philosophy – here the concept of time – under the aegis of the event of cinema in which these directorial reflections and films partake.

For Tarkovsky cinema is a mosaic made of time.¹⁸ Time is the organising principle of cinema. Though time is handled by other art forms like music they use only an abstract representation of time as a

given order of cause and effect. According to Tarkovsky:

Cinema on the other hand is able to record time in outward and visible signs, recognizable to the feelings. And so time becomes the very foundation of cinema: as sound is in music, colour in painting, character in drama¹⁹

Time of the image is not the duration of the film or of the events depicted or of the span of the story. It is also not that which is depicted using clichéd techniques like flash backs. Time runs through the shot. Tarkovsky calls this time-pressure or time thrust. "The consistency of time that runs through the shot, its intensity or 'sloppiness' could be called time-pressure: then editing can be seen as the assembly of the pieces on the basis of the time-pressure within them." Editing should be guided by time. According to Tarkovsky, the montage of Eisenstein which strived to order time only achieved an indirect representation of time. Conjunctions like time-pressure (Tarkovsky), time-image (Deleuze) reveal the direct presentation of time in cinema. Representation of any sort presupposes the indirection and invisibility of time. Time enters the image only by overturning the tables of conventional representation. Tarkovsky vehemently protests against interpreting his images as symbols. Image is not a symbol. A symbol is language struggling with or against time. Time is necessarily implied in the symbol and hence it cannot directly present it. In a Tarkovsky film a horse might suddenly gallop into the frame or it might rain inside a house. To see time in the frame is to see this horse and rain as real and not as a symbol of something else which is hidden from us. For Tarkovsky "rhythm" expresses the passage of time within the frame. Characters, visuals and sounds are components of rhythm, though we can think of a film without any of the former but not without the latter.

Time enters cinema as a fact, as directly observed. The mark of time is like the natural rustiness, the charm of old days, the darkened tone of a tree, the ruggedness of a stone or the scruffy look of a picture whose edges have been handled by a great many people. The present as it passes does not vanish into a non-existent past. For Tarkovsky the past is more resilient than the present. The passing time settles down in our soul as an experience placed within time. The rhythm of the cinematic image is the matrix of settled time.

How does cinema overcome the invisibility of time and make the time-pressure visible? The opening sequence of Tarkovsky's first film

Ivan's Childhood answers this question. It is Ivan's dream. It begins with a cuckoo's voice which we hear on the background of the emblem of the production company Mosfilm - even before the visuals start. Then we see Ivan's face in close-up, but just behind a thin veil of a cobweb and a tree. Or we might say that the cobweb weaves the face, and the trunk onto a surface. Ivan disappears to the left and the camera climbs up the tree disclosing a vast space behind the spot where Ivan was standing. Ivan appears again in the frame at the other end of the expanse, in the depth of field. This displacement of Ivan from the foreground to the background or from the surface to the depth violates our intuitions of spatial continuity. It discloses two levels of reality, one close to the surface and another deep down. During this sequence Ivan appears on both levels. Tarkovsky generates the gradient of time by grafting these levels onto the distinction between dream and reality. While following Ivan the camera goes past him to a goat face and then to the grass and finally a butterfly. The camera draws Ivan into his own point of view as one of the elements of the world. He sees as much as he is seen. Here the usual shifting between the subjective points of view becomes a displacement between the surface and depth. As Ivan follows the butterfly, accompanied by his joyful laughter, which is at once impersonal and innocent, the camera begins to swirl as if lifting Ivan to the heights of the sky, light and the leaves. Now the camera takes a vertiginous leap into the depth where it meets with the dry clay surface of the earth. The camera slides along the earth and catches up with Ivan's face basked in sunlight. The sunbeams passing diagonally in the frame weaves a veil of light reminding us of the veil of cobwebs in the first frame. Ivan turns his face and sees his mother in the depth walking with her back towards the surface towards a point where Ivan will meet her. She leaves the bucket of water she was carrying on the ground. Ivan kneels down and drinks from the bucket. Here the mother's body with its back turned towards us occupies the foreground and Ivan is in the background. He looks up at the mother. Panic descends on her face. We hear gunshots and her scream in the background. In a medium shot we see Ivan woken up by the gunshots outside.

Ivan's Childhood was criticized for indulging in psychological exploration of an orphaned child using the clichéd means of dreams. Interestingly, It was a philosopher- Sartre -who came to the defense of a 28-year-old Tarkovsky, almost immediately after this film received international attention²⁰. Sartre argued that Ivan was a monstrous progeny

of war and the cruelty he witnessed had deprived him of his interiority. This film approaches Ivan from the outside. The dream we discussed above cannot be predicated on the person of Ivan. As Norman Malcolm has argued dream experience cannot be predicated to an I as his personal video show, which he can see in the privacy of his sleep²¹. Malcolm's claim is not the trivial one that we can't speak about dreams in the present tense. He is right in pointing out that we do not have two lives, one for the day and another for the dreams. The present of the enunciation 'am I sleeping?' and the present of my past dreams do not coincide. But look at the waking up experience. Ivan wakes up to the shots he hears around him. But his dream narrative also reaches the same sound of shots at the same time, though it follows another course of events. What is the present of this time? It is divided between the same time of the dream and the same time of the day life. Both dream and reality relate differently to the dream-reality divide. Ivan's dream unfolds in this difference. It is this difference which creates what Tarkovsky calls the time-pressure.

Let us look at Kant's response to Descartes' skepticism about dreams. Descartes regarded dream as a potential source of error. Knowledge needs to be fortified against the possibility of error. However, Kant showed that the possibility of knowledge can be demonstrated without any such prior guarantee. Such guarantees are not even possible. Moreover, lack of such guarantee is an enabling condition. While for Descartes sources of error were external to reason Kant gave illusions a transcendental status. The ground of illusion is the same as that of knowledge. In other words, that we know only through sensibility or affection is our finitude. Kant's first critique was an attempt to show how the form of sensibility – time – can be a clue to the possibility of knowledge. Time is Kant's solution to the Cartesian dream skepticism. Temporalisation—that mysterious art hidden in the soul – can guide our representation, though it can never be brought to representation directly. This is the most generous concession reason can make towards dream without losing its ground. Tarkovsky responds to the same enigma from the opposite side – dream. He begins with dreams and explores how far he can go towards reason. Here every "same time" has two presents; one in dream and another in reality, one on the surface and another in depth. At the beginning of the dream sequence, as we have said, the face, cobweb and the tree appear on the same plane. As the camera moves up, objects on the surface are pulled back to the depth. Here movement

is not across a continuous space. Things are stretched to another plane. This inner tension or stretching is the image of time. It moves things without involving movement in continuous space. It escapes the Kantian restriction that representation of time follows representation in space and accomplishes a direct representation of time.

Tarkovsky insisted that we should not search for symbols in his movies. According to him the dreams or the horses or rain in his films are not symbols for something else. They are there for their reality which for him is temporal. Dreams are not indirect symbols of something else that needs to be discovered through interpretation. They are metaphors in the literal sense of that term – that which transports but without movement.

In *Ivan's Childhood* the direct image of time appears under the watchful eyes of dreams. However, Tarkovsky's contemporary and friend Sergie Paradjanov went a step ahead and achieved the same result beyond the dream-reality distinction. In *The Story of Our Forgotten Ancestors*, the hero – another Ivan – is searching for the drowned body of this beloved who fell into the river. He sees a raft coming towards him. Having lost all hope of finding his love he climbs onto the raft and lies down. Here Paradjanov does not show us the raft moving away with Ivan on board. Instead, we see the raft stretching across the frame. This takes movement from space - as change of location - and gives it back to the objects.

Objects and their relationship to space pose an important issue for Paradjanov. In his films balls (free movement) and dolls (arrested movement) often take the place of characters. Toys offer him a new paradigm to think about movement and the nature of representation. Even his human figures look like dolls. The stretching of the raft in *Forgotten Ancestors* reminds us of the expansion and contraction objects and characters undergo in cartoons films. Where does the force of this deformation come? This is Tarkovsky's time- pressure. Paradjanov brings objects and souls directly under the force of time. Here Paradjanov is more of a Kantian than Kant himself. His cinema accepts the Kantian teaching that time is subjective. But he takes this insight to its limit. This subjectivity does not belong to us who as persons are the unifying center of the world or whose bodies are well coordinated with the objects around. The raft is no longer an object that falls within the unity of Ivan's perceptual world. This does not mean that the camera assumes a neutral

point of view. Kant's Copernican revolution has brought all such neutral standpoints under the rule of the subject. However, in our previous discussion, we have pointed out the standpoint of an utterly passive self that is not yet the subject but receives its subjectivity from outside. Paradjanov places his camera on this spot. The opening shot of this film also is taken from such a standpoint. It shows a tree falling. The shot is taken from a point on top of the tree and we feel as if the camera too is falling with the tree. This point of view could not possibly be occupied by any observing subject. It would seem an eye has been inserted into the tree itself. This is the true meaning of realism in cinema. Cinema is realistic not when it occupies a neutral perspective from which it can survey the whole field. Instead, it gives eyes to the objects themselves. The last sequence of Paradjanov's *Ashkerib* clearly shows this. After the wedding, the groom releases a pigeon to the sky. It flies away and settles down on the camera. Here the camera is not the limit of a perceptual world. Its eye belongs to the objects that appear within its field of vision. This is not the familiar self-reflective act which exposes the fictional character of the seemingly realist image. Instead, it brings out a direct relationship between reality and the image.

The cinematic image goes beyond the narrative closures not by multiplying narratives. Cinema allows elements of the narrative to stretch beyond such closures. Some things, like the grin of the Cheshire cat, persist even after the story is over. In *Ivan's Childhood* the gunshots that presumably kill Ivan's mother in the dream continue even after he wakes up. But Tarkovsky draws this persisting dream element into another narrative in the wakeful life – as the gunshots in real life which wake up the boy. Paradjanov does not try to contain the elements which slip out of the narrative within another one. In the last shot of *Ashkerib*, Paradjanov does not draw the camera into a meta narrative about the self-reflection of cinema. He lets the camera be, as an independent object and a shelter for the pigeons that fly out of the narrative.

So, Kant freed time from movement and Paradjanov frees movement from location. Cinema brings time directly to objects. Affection is no longer equated with determination. In *Ashkerib*, the bard is sentenced to be thrown to a tiger. Paradjanov throws him not to a live tiger but to a mechanical toy tiger which can turn its head through 360 degrees. About this scene Paradjanov once said that a real tiger could have scared any one but he wanted his hero to be threatened by toy tiger. Other

directors would have perhaps used a toy tiger but only to create the illusion of a real one. Or, the reality effect could have been created by editing the shots such that the bard and a real tiger never confronted each other. Instead Paradjanov uses a real toy without concealment.

There are many accounts of the relation between fiction and affect. For some when we invest our affect on a fictional character we are under an illusion. According to some theories we pretend to be affected. Some theories postulate a psychic mechanism – thought, imagination – which suspends our beliefs. Not only an actual tiger but the thought of a tiger or me imagining seeing a tiger also can cause fear in me. This thought, which is the propositional content of my belief, causally generates the emotion. We merely ‘entertain’ the thought without commitment to its being the case. A Wittgensteinian behaviorist might extend the scope of ‘entertainment’ to perceptual seeing itself²². All of these theories invoke ‘entertainment’ without taking it seriously. For them to entertain a thought, imagination or seeing is to weaken the power of the image to affect us externally while generating the affect internally. They expect a causal mechanism which works³ in a way analogous to spatial causality, to do the work of self-affection. As Wittgenstein has shown any such mechanism will only remain idle.

Much of the recent cognitivist philosophy of cinema merely applies to cinema what it takes to be the ready made results of philosophy of mind, with no attention to the specificity of challenges the latter poses.²³ Those who subscribe to this school forget that the task of critical thinking is not to subsume the object domain as an instance of a ready made theory but to encounter what is critical in the object. If the cinematic image is a direct representation of time and not of temporally determined objects then ‘entertaining’ the image becomes a complex issue. We have argued that to entertain is to take time seriously. This does not mean a weakening or subjectivisation of reality. Instead it amounts to affirming the reality of subjectivity itself or recognizing that subjectivity does not belong to us.

By parading a toy tiger Paradjanov counters theories which explain the relationship between image and affect by weakening the thrust of reality. A pictorial representation of a tiger is fictional enough. The toy tiger does not take the representation one more step away from reality. Instead of weakening, it intensifies the affect. The conventional theories, though they try to free affect from the reality of the tiger, preserve a bit

of reality out there to trigger the causal cognitive mechanism. The prepositional content which we allegedly 'entertain' is directed at a temporally determined state of affairs. Affect caused by the prepositional content is emotion. The subject of emotion is an embodied person. However, the toy tiger deflates the cause of emotion. It denies the affect any support in the external world. Paradjanov's human characters are like cut outs made from oriental carpets or two-dimensional figures walking out of playing cards. They are more like motifs in ornamental or decoration designs and lack depth or interiority to possess and express emotions. Hence, the affect generated by the fierce toy tiger is denied support on the side of the subject too.²⁴

Emotion is narrativised affect. In cinema movement escapes from the circuit of action and reaction and emotion loses its narrative anchors. This asceticism of cinema is a radical form of the Kantian disinterestedness. The feelings are liberated not only from the state of affairs but also from the subject. Paradjanov lets this affect to take hold of the objects. Deleuze is right in observing that in Paradjanov cinema achieves a material language of object.²⁵ The deformation of the objects—the raft, the tiger—are direct marks of time flowing into the image.

For Kant, as we have seen, time is the form of self-affection and affection is determination. Films of Tarkovsky and Paradjanov show how cinema breaks the equivocation between affection and determination. However, this does not mean that the affect cinema generates is indeterminate or incommunicable. A scene from Lars Von Trier's *Breaking the Waves* shows the nature of this unaffected affect and the way it communicates. Bess and Jan are married. After passionate love making, Jan dozes off, lying close to Bess and keeping her in a tight embrace. He snores. The camera settles down at the bedside catching a close up of their faces. Slowly, a naughty smile appears on Bess's face. Jan continues to snore. Bess puts her fingers in her ears, still smiling. This rather sedate shot is cut into a very intense one showing Bess and Jan near a stormy sea and Bess trying to throw herself playfully into the storm. Between the two scenes of passion and intensity—making love and playing in storm—Trier captures the couple in a bond of interpassivity. Isn't snoring—unlike the symbolically active dreaming—a passive act? Bess' smile dawns in front of the eyes of a sleeping man. By closing her ears she cuts herself off from the sensory content of snoring. It seems, Bess, while responding to the snore is actually looking at the camera or

the crew who is witnessing this scene. This glance could very well be an amateurish or awkward gesture by Emily Watson the actress who plays Bess. But Trier does not impose any meta level narrative on this shot so that we could ascribe this casual gesture either to Bess, the character or Watson, the actress.

The image captures the affective bond between the loud snore and a silent smile, both establishing independence from the person of their emitters. They do not fall into circuits of action and reaction. This is the image of two lovers in a state of radically unaffected affection. To let time – the form of affection – pass without affecting us does not mean that we lack affection. We free our affect from ourselves. In releasing the affect we realize ourselves not as the owners but as the fragments we find along the trajectory of our own affections.

The three selected film sequences we discussed above mark significant points in the direct representation of time. For Tarkovsky time is the stretching of the shot between the surface and depth, between dream and reality. Paradjanov brings objects directly under the pressure of time. Here he goes beyond the Kantian hesitation in submitting the outer sense to the direct determination of time. Despite their radical achievements these two directors too have their hesitations. A thin veil of dream-likeness protects Tarkovsky's image even while he denies the divide between dream and reality. Paradjanov's image refuses the protection of dream but remains suspended in the timeless space of legends and fairytales. Lars von Trier shows us the lived world of shared affects and interpassivity. Here we see the true meaning of 'letting time pass without affecting us'. In letting time pass we let our own affection to go beyond us. We let our 'selves' to cross the barrier and go to the other. This is the price that passing time extracts from us.

IV

In the previous section we tried to understand the nature of entertainment and its relation to time from some selected moments of great cinema which deliberately distances itself from entertainment industry. Is this concept of entertainment applicable to those films that happily claim to be commercial or entertainment cinema? Here I shall only indicate briefly a possible point of entry for our analysis into the

entertainment cinema. The Indian entertainment cinema is known for its song and dance sequences. They break the narrative continuity and introduce moments of stylized action. It is a mistake to see these sequences as serial additions of other forms of art like dance and song to cinema, making the latter a composite art form. We often hear the directors of these films justifying these additive sequences as introducing a relaxed stretch into the emotional tension building up in the narrative. However, as we have seen to relax an emotion is not to reduce its intensity but to release it as affect from the bounds of both our inner and outer senses. Stylization of movement, extra ordinary camera angles and extravagant *mise en scene* are employed for this purpose. This could be seen as an escape from reality. Is this escape an act of freedom or submission?

Here it is not a matter of cinema being a dream or the spectator identifying with the camera. Cinema breaks with the familiar nodes which anchor fiction in reality. As we have seen it was Kant who discovered that time is the only anchor we have while negotiating the divide between reality and representation. He transcribed the paradox of the passing present into the ontological predicament of we finding ourselves passive in relation to ourselves. However Kant denied us direct access to the sources of this passive self. Cinema is an exploration of this passivity. In this sense cinema, like philosophy, is a passionate practice of freedom.

Notes and References

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³ibid

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⁵Bergson, Henry: *Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Mitchell, (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1983)

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⁷Aristotle: *Physics*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, (New York, Random House, 1941), 217b

⁸McTaggart: *The Nature of Experience*, Vol II, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927)

⁹Ricoeur, Paul: *Time and Narrative* vol. 3, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988)

¹⁰Bertrand Russell offers another approach to the paradoxes of movement and time. He argues that these paradoxes disappear if philosophy gives up its metaphysics and unconditionally borrows the concept of continuum from modern mathematics. Russell Bertrand: *The Theory of Continuity in Our Knowledge of the External World*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1922). I appreciate this move to pose the paradox as a site for an exchange between philosophy and mathematics. However, for Russell it meant a total abdication of the task of philosophy to mathematics. For an attempt to relate cinema and mathematics see: Sanil V, *Mathematical Idea and Cinematic Image*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XXXVIII No 35, August 30, 2003.

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¹²Heidegger Martin: *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, Trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Mally, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press).

¹³Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), A 98

¹⁴*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 50

¹⁵*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 153

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¹⁷*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 154 - 155

¹⁸From a compilation created by Aina Bellis and Lars-Olof Löthwall for the Swedish Film Institute's English Programme Booklet for *Offret* available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/The_Topics_AT_For_Dummies.html

¹⁹ibid p 119

²⁰Sartre: *Discussion on the criticism of Ivan's Childhood* @ http://www.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/The_Topics/Sartre.html

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²³Noel Carroll vehemently argues against the claim that cinema as a medium has specific characteristics which distinguish it from other media. This argument is a non sequitor. Neither for Kant nor for great film makers like Tarkovsky cinema will ever be a mere medium with some distinguishable features. Cinema, like Newtonian science or the French revolution is an event.

²⁴Cartoons films often work by freeing the affect from its narrative ties. Take the familiar cat and mouse ones. The narrative repeats the cat's relentless pursuit of the mouse and the mouse's escapades. The enjoyment of the child who watches these films cannot be explained in terms of the cathartic identification with the victim, the mouse. The cat and the mouse, during the chase, constantly undergo deformation – stretching and contraction. Their movements are articulated through deformation. This deformation induces a delay in the action – reaction circuit. This delay interrupts the narrative which in any case is thin and almost redundant. Isn't the child responding to this rhythm of delays and interruptions? The fight sequences in films also illustrate this. Often they involve the over turning of carts or baskets carrying objects like tomatoes or eggs! More than the fate of the fighters who are anchored in the narrative it is the upheavals staged by these marginal objects which cause excitement.

²⁵*Cinema 2*, p 28

