

Notes on the articulation of space and time in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Zerkalo* and Robert Bresson's *L'Argent*.

By Rastko Novaković

The body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but to a work of art. In a picture or a piece of music the idea is incommunicable by means other than the display of colours and sounds. [...] although it is independent of the gesture which is inseparable from living expression, the poem is not independent of every material aid, and it would be irrecoverably lost if its text were not preserved to the last detail. Its meaning is not arbitrary and it does not dwell in the firmament of ideas: it is locked in the word printed on some perishable page. In that sense, like every work of art, the poem exists as a thing and does not eternally survive as does a truth. As for the novel, although its plot can be summarized and the 'thought' of the writer lends itself to abstract expression, this conceptual significance is extracted from a wider one, as the description of a person is extracted from the actual appearance of his face. The novelist's task is not to expound ideas or even analyse characters, but to depict an inter-human event, ripening and bursting it upon us with no ideological commentary, to such an extent that any change in the order of the narrative or in choice of viewpoint would alter the literary meaning of the event. A novel, poem, picture or musical work are individuals, that is, beings in which the expression is indistinguishable from the thing expressed, their meaning accessible only through direct contact, being radiated with no change of their temporal and spatial situation. It is in this sense that our body is comparable to a work of art. It is a nexus of living meanings, not the law for a certain number of covariant terms. (Merleau-Ponty, 2002:174) Let us step back and look at the question. The first qualification would be: 'spaces' and 'times'.

We encounter the space of the screen. Made up of two horizontals and two verticals which touch to form the frame, the border which exposes a certain segment of a flat screen – it is an absolute

material proof based on natural properties (we know what a horizontal and a vertical are before they are conceptualized for us, because they as we belong to nature) – a guarantee of our perception of space. Everything is possible, but within the frame. Then and only then can the perspective space of films which use emulsion and sonic waves exist. Editing then accommodates this space to fit threads of meaning but likewise accommodates these threads to fit the space, therefore existing in a constant tension. There is the space of the cinema, the space of the same film seen on video, the space of a still image from the film, the space of our memory of it, the space of our expectation of it... There is sexual, political, economic space. Space is (t)here before us and yet we constitute it.

The same goes for time. There is the ‘uninteresting’ time of seconds and minutes (displayed in notices and programming schedules), which should not be scorned. It guarantees the length, which never varies (1) and always moves at the same pace of 24 frames per second. Also, when we make a note of this time, we see that we are speaking of feature films, a dominant (spatio) temporal convention, like all conventions established out of necessity, the necessity here being money and the civilization which is governed by it (the society of the spectacle existing through the constant, reversible transformation of producers into consumers, dividing time into work and leisure). Then there is the temporality of the phenomena as captured or as created in images and sounds and set into units, constantly moving in different directions, strung up and pulsating. There is the time (for him and for you) during which the thin man with a beard sleeps through your favourite film. Time also is (t)here before us and yet we constitute it.

Both splinter and disperse. Yet there is also timespace. And there is audiovision. In analysis these are broken up to form rationally manageable aspects and are therefore corrupted, making what is essential to cinema inaccessible:

Indeed, before it is fragmented and dissected in critical and theoretical analyses, before the reified shorthand of formalist, realist, semiotic, structuralist, neo-Marxist, and psychoanalytic terminology abstracts aspects of the cinema’s “meaning” into discrete codes governed by montage, mise-en-scene, syntagmatic categories, binary and oppositional structures, and particular ideological and

poetic pathologies, a film makes sense by virtue of its ontology. (Sobchack, 1992:12)

And what is that essence? We are dealing with unity and connections which explode in every direction. What guarantees that unity is the subject and the film's embodied existence, finitely situated, presenting an ongoing situation of perception, a part of the world, but one which is materially and diacritically differentiated (Sobchack, 1992:12). This paper aims to inquire into the ontology of cinema addressing the perspective of existential phenomenology and apply this knowledge in a semiotic micro-analysis of examples from the two texts.

THE UNITY OF THE SUBJECT

Phenomenology of cinema is still a term of abuse. It is associated with the names of Henri Agel and Andre Bazin and suffers the charges of idealism and essentialism that can be raised against the philosophical project it rests on, that is, the transcendental phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (Sobchack, 1992:29). Husserl's project which started as a critique of Cartesian dualism and an attempt at a radical a posteriori, betrayed its foundations in the concept of the transcendental ego. Although the premise: 'subjectivity is intersubjectivity' was central to it, it retreated into idealism. It was left to Maurice Merleau-Ponty to remedy this, through defining the subject as embodied, situated and finite, as being-in-the-world and thereby establish existential phenomenology (scroll down to APPENDIX I, after the endnotes).

In film theory, existential phenomenology (whose most notable midwife is Vivian Sobchack) aims to reassert the viewing subject through questioning three presuppositions hitherto ignored: the act of viewing as the constituting condition of film experience, the cinema's and the spectator's communicative competence and film as a viewed object (Sobchack, 1992:20). The first two points can be summarized thus:

...the cinema uses modes of embodied existence (seeing, hearing, physical and reflective movement) as the vehicle, the "stuff", the substance of its language. It also uses the structures of direct experience (the "centering" and bodily situating of existence in relation to the world of objects and

others) as the basis for the structures of its language. Thus, as a symbolic form of human communication, the cinema is like no other. (Sobchack, 1992:5)

The viewer is seen as embodied and enworlded. The questioning of the third point has led Sobchack to assert film as both a subject and object. Sobchack's thesis is a direct response to the subject/object relation of psychoanalysis and is thus best understood through a comparison between the viewing subject of existential phenomenology and the viewing subject of psychoanalysis (film as object/subject is the focus of the following chapter).

In psychoanalysis the Other, the seat of repressed desires, thoughts and memories, and also that of language is defined as the constantly shifting line of horizon which forms the subject in negative terms (de Saussure). The subject is therefore no longer the 'individual' of Ego psychology, it is the 'split-subject', the 'subject in language' or 'speaking subject' of Lacanian psychoanalysis. In the words of Stephen Heath:

The passage into and in language divides and in that division effects the individual as subject... not [as] the beginning, but [as] the result of a structure of difference, of the symbolic order, and that result indexes a lack – the division – which is the constant 'drama of the subject in language' (Stam et al., 1999:135)

Lacan even goes so far as to state that we are not speaking beings, but 'speakings'. (Stam, 1999:137) For Lacan (cf. Freud) the unconscious is no longer clearly demarcated, on the contrary, Lacan sees the conscious and the unconscious as existing on the same plane, the model he puts forth in explanation is the Moebius strip, which also applies to the imbrication of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, the primary and secondary processes – the line which divides them, forming censorship and the subject. The Imaginary (a repertoire of images) pertains to the uncatheted, the primary processes, the oneness of the ideal ego, the fantasmatic process, all manifestations of the pre-Oedipal period. The Symbolic (the realm of signs) pertains to the catheted, the secondary processes, lack, repression, Law, language, structure, all manifestations of the Oedipal complex.

There is also the realm of the Real, "the domain outside symbolization" (Freud), which is the basis for our relation with the world – that is where *need* is established and is later constituted as demand and desire (Sobchack, 1992:107)

'Both psychology and philosophy allow vision a central role in the constitution of the Self and Other.' (Sobchack, 1992:99-) In Lacan it is epitomised in the well-known 'mirror phase', which is an act of the Symbolic and simultaneously constituting of the Symbolic and therefore the split between it and the Imaginary, is seen as the decisive moment (crucially, it is the moment at which this distinction becomes 'spatial'). In the mirror phase (which occurs between the ages of six and eight months), the subject is constituted (posited) externally, through a splitting of here and there, self and other, seen and seeing, mind and body. Prior to the mirror phase, Lacan asserts, the infant makes no distinction between self and other, and the realm of the Imaginary is defined as *meconnaissance* – a deceptive identification with the world, where perception functions as illusion rather than expression (Sobchack, 1992:105).

Merleau-Ponty acknowledged and agreed with most of Lacan's explication of the mirror phase in his lecture 'The Child's Relation with Others' (Sobchack, 1992:115). But, Merleau-Ponty asserts that although the infant prior to the mirror phase has no self (it is not self-conscious), it certainly does have a center (a magnet for experience), guaranteed through embodiment/enworldment.

'Perception in existence [is] an original subjectivity. The 'thought' of Self is a secondary and reflexive reflection on that original subjectivity.' (Sobchack, 1992: 117) In phenomenological terms, the Real of Lacan can be seen as pertaining to operative intentionality and the Symbolic with intentionality of act. Where Lacan sees the subject as being defined from the outside, Merleau-Ponty sees it being defined from the inside. But this inside is never separate from the world or from its body, on the contrary, it proceeds from its unity with both. The difference can be summarized thus: Lacan's system defines *subjectivity as objectified* and Merleau-Ponty defines *subjectivity as intersubjectivity* (Sobchack, 1992:123).

For psychoanalysis (whose project is therapeutic), structures of language determine the structures of

being, signification is incommensurable with existence and language functions as a substitute for being. For phenomenology (whose project is descriptive), structures of being determine the structures of language, signification is synonymous with existence and language functions as an extension of being (Sobchack, 1992:100).

The implication of these premises is crucial. Psychoanalysis has developed a peculiar split from the body, in both theory – the primacy of language/structure rather than being/becoming – and practice – compare the 'talking cure' with Wilhelm Reich's vegetotherapy (Reich, 1999:299-368). It is not surprising then that in film theory Suture appears as the transposition of the 'body-in-pieces' (of the mirror phase) to the conception of 'film-in-pieces' and 'viewer-in-pieces'. In cinema the split between the Imaginary (a hypnotic immersion) and the Symbolic (relexivity and inhibiting self-consciousness) has a fixed spatio-temporal structure – the Oedipal drama is inevitable and every experience of viewing follows its path and necessarily posits a psychotic viewer (see Oudart in Browne, 1990:52). Oudart therefore asserts:

Nothing can be said about the relationship between the subject and the filmic field itself, since nothing is said in its process, although this syncopated jouissance – nullifying any reading and cut off from what is excluded from the field by perception of the frame – can only be referred to in erotic terms... Let us say that it is the phenomenal support which, given the materials at hand (i.e. the cinema itself), helps the spectator organize the space and the progression of the representation of his relationship as subject with the chain of his discourse. (Browne, 1990:48)

'Nothing is said' means, it does not speak to psychoanalysis. It is precisely the imbrication of the 'given materials at hand' and the 'help' offered to the spectator which is in focus here. Suture seeks out the closure of discourse and the regulation of the movement of the subject. (Heath, 1981:53) Yet 'instrument-mediated perception is never experienced as exactly identical to direct perception.' (Sobchack, 1992:178) It provides a situation, a ground within which the spectator acts. (cf. Heath, 1981:48) There is freedom within the frame. (2) Looked at through the embodied eyes of phenomenology, we see that the distinctions such as 'cut' and 'sound track' and 'image track', are

by no means definitive, that they stand as figures in the ground of spacetime and audiovision, manifested for us in a dialectical relationship between the embodied subject and world.

THE UNITY OF THE OBJECT

The hold of the narrative superstructure (and the resulting adherence to realism, vococentrism etc.) on the unity of film-as-object and its imbrication in the positioning of the subject (let us not say subjection, but instead – a situation in front of the screen) cannot be denied. Instead, I will refer to three aspects of the filmic object: form, the relationship between sound and image and off-screen space (and hence screen/scene).

In order to explore form we must start from the question ‘what is it?’ rather than ‘what does it mean?’ and we must shake off that horrible habit which separates form and content and treat film as an object which shares a world with us. Why does this habit stubbornly remain? Because we believe that signs are arbitrary, formed by us, and therefore like us above nature which is mute.

If one was to rotate this page by 180 degrees the ideas on it would disappear – all that would remain would be ink on paper. But, you could reply, we can use our intelligence in the laborious process of ‘flipping the words over’ and deciphering the text. Very well, let us remove the text from the sphere of human reason and present it to an untrained donkey. The donkey would perceive the ink on the page, but would also realize that he can rest his hoof on it, or kick the paper around. ‘Caliban! You stupid animal’, we would cry. If the paper was to fall into a nearby fire set by the farmers, it would be transformed into ashes. Manuscripts do burn.

The reader will have probably realized by now what I am driving at. What Caliban, the donkey and fire understand perfectly well is the material aspect of the page and nothing can convince them otherwise. And we all understand that there is something other to the burning of books than the restructuring of our culture and history, it is the annulment of culture and that which makes us human. This truism is based on our deep belief that ‘the significance of a thing inhabits that thing as the soul inhabits the body: it is not behind appearances.’ (Merleau-Ponty, 2002:327) – a belief that

we are not always prepared to acknowledge. How can we speak of the suicide of a farmer at the WTO summit at Cancun as ‘symbolic’ or as a ‘statement’. It is the ultimate gesture, one where the cultural and the natural world are revealed as inextricable. Merleau-Ponty writes:

*“In his *Peu de Chagrin* Balzac describes a ‘white tablecloth, like a covering of snow newly fallen, from which rose symmetrically the plates and napkins crowned with light-coloured rolls’.*

‘Throughout my youth,’ Cezanne said, ‘I wanted to paint that tablecloth like freshly fallen snow... I know now that one must try to paint only: “the plates and napkins rose symmetrically,” and “the light coloured rolls”. If I paint “crowned”, I’m finished, you see. And if I really balance and shade my napkins and rolls as they really are, you may be sure that the crowning, the snow and all the rest of it will be there.’ The problem of the world, and, to begin with, that of one’s own body, consists in the fact that it is all there.” (Merleau-Ponty, 2002:230)

The viewer provides the snow, the sexual or religious drama, the artist works from nature (always, but sometimes more evidently, as in experimental films, focussing radically on perception). To do so, he has to assert our species, he has to engage in the futile and tragic attempt to conquer nature. The product of this engagement is form.

Jan M. Peters, relying on the work of Hjelmslev, distinguishes between form and substance of an image, where the form is invisible (the idea) and substance is perceptive (Peters, 1981:1.2). Kristin Thompson, relying on the work of the Formalists, and speaking about a scene from Bresson’s *Lancelot du Lac*, writes:

Segment XIX [of the fabula], in which Artus and his knights ride to the tournament, contains no cuts without a graphic match. Every framing presents a centered knight, seen from the waist up and facing three-quarters front left, against a moving background of the dark forests. [...] One might argue that such matching serves a narrative function, but probably the only conceivable interpretation would be that Bresson is trying to suggest that these men are all similar. Yet, in fact, they are opposed to each other, and it would be difficult to demonstrate much similarity between

Gauvin and Mordred or Artus. We can only conclude, once again, that these graphic patterns form a purely abstract structure alongside the narrative – a structure with its own partially independent interest. (Quandt, 2000:365)

In fact, the answer is provided by Thompson herself. *Lancelot* is a film about the army, hence the armour which equalises and unifies them and the rhythms that Bresson finds in this subject matter. Moreover, it is a film about the Knights of the Round Table and the contradiction that Lancelot poses as ‘the best among equals’. It is this apparent unity of purpose that is the essence of the tragedy, as it exposes the mechanics of war, as well as all the contradictions and passions between the men. It also becomes a meditation on the grail and/as the woman (Guinevre, the only one who wears her armour on the inside). By framing all the men in the same way, Bresson sets the ground for these meditations, be they narrative or not.

Abstraction and invisibility. These methods of analysis lead to contradictions between the discursive and the referential as well as form and content (see Keith Reader, 200:140, where he interprets an auditive transition in Bresson’s *Le diable, probablement* from the perspective of montage). The interpretation changes with regards to what we choose as figure and what as ground, but their intermingling remains a mystery: ‘Forms that resemble ideas. Treat them as actual ideas.’ (Bresson, 1986:30) In moving away from Cartesian dualism, form becomes the point of contact between the material and the ideal, between nature and culture. (3) The more harmonious this unity – the purer the form. If we take this view, the Formalist construction of syuzhet and fabula becomes irrelevant, even in literature, where written language is commutable for the text and criticism about it.

On the other extreme, we find writers like Sobchack who claims that both film and spectator are capable of viewing and being viewed, both are embodied in the world as the subject of vision and the object of vision, but

The film’s vision and my own do not conflate, but meet in the sharing of a world and constitute an experience that is not only intrasubjectively dialectical, but also intersubjectively dialogical. [...]

Cinematic vision, then, is never monocular, is always doubled, is always the vision of two viewing subjects materially and consciously inhabiting, signifying, and sharing a world in a manner at once universal and particular, a world that is mutually visible but hermeneutically negotiable.

(Sobchack, 1992:24)

Machine-intentionality does exist, and it is certainly a phenomenon that filmmakers and viewers have to master. For filmmakers, it is inseparable from the world they are trying to capture, because it is their way of knowing it. It is also a reminder that although the machines involved in filmmaking were created and perfected for human perception, there is something uncannily autonomous about them, which prismatically exposes the contradictions of artistic unity. However tempting it is to posit 'subjectivity' for the filmic object, it still remains an object which relies on, steals from and participates in aspects of the world. (4) It exists in the world as a discrete and unified spatiotemporal flow which provides a wealth of perceptual situations, never fixed but constantly in the process of becoming.

The filmic object is revealed as (at least) dual – as audiovision. The unity of the object is inseparable from the unity of our own body:

Basically, this question of the unity of sound and image would have no importance if it didn't turn out, through numerous films and numerous theories, to be the very signifier of the question of human unity, cinematic unity, unity itself. (Chion, 1994:97)

Hence it is also revealed as synaesthetic and synoptic (5). Extending the idea of synaesthesia, to 'visualists' of the ear and 'auditives' of the eye, Chion writes:

If we extend this idea far enough, we might conclude that everything spatial in a film, in terms of image as well as sound, is ultimately encoded into a so-called visual impression, and everything which is temporal, including elements reaching us through the eye, registers as an auditory impression. This might be an oversimplification. Nevertheless a phenomenological analysis of cinema need not fall under the hypnotic spell of technology. Materially speaking, the cinema uses

auditory and visual channels, but this is not why it must therefore be described as a simple sum of 'soundtrack' plus 'image track'. Rhythm, for example, is an element of film vocabulary that is neither one nor the other, neither specifically auditory nor visual. In other words, when a rhythmic phenomenon reaches us via a given sensory path, this path, eye or ear, is perhaps nothing more than the channel through which rhythm reaches us. Once it has entered the ear or eye, the phenomenon strikes us in some region of the brain connected to the motor functions, and it is solely at this level that it is decoded as rhythm. My basic thesis on transsensorial perception applies not only to rhythm, but to perceptions of such things as texture and material as well... (Chion, 1994:134)

The importance of rhythm to filmmakers and especially to Tarkovsky and Bresson ('Nothing is durable but what is caught up in rhythms. Bend content to form and sense to rhythms.' (Bresson, 1986:58) and 'The dominant, all-powerful factor of the film image is rhythm, expressing the course of time within the frame.' (Tarkovsky, 1996:113)) is immense. It is therefore hardly surprising that both greatly admired Dostoyevsky (a master of rhythm) and cited him so often in their works, Bresson going on to make two adaptations and Tarkovsky forever regretting not being able to realise 'The Idiot'. Rhythm is a key to spatiotemporal articulation and in it becomes evident the impossibility of separating space and time, as well as sound and image.

But, this much we can say – whereas the image has a container: the frame, there is no analogous property for sound – one can pile them up endlessly. (Chion, 1994:66) Sound acts insidiously, magically and deeply. It unifies images through bridging the visual breaks temporally, by establishing atmosphere ('a heard space'), through nondiegetic music ('casting the images into a homogenizing bath'). (Chion, 1994:47) That is why sound is crucial in acting below narrative threads and in forming them. The image is revealed as a statement and a question: the division between the visible/screen/scene and the invisible/off-screen. But, through spatial magnetization of sound by image, off-screen space is revealed as ambiguous.

Burch writes that 'off screen space has only an intermittent or, rather, fluctuating existence during

any film, and structuring this fluctuation can become a powerful tool in a filmmaker's hands'.

(Heath, 1981:45)

The horizon that is presented by those audiovisual phenomena which are present is constantly shifting. This is the relay between sounds and images that Bresson speaks of. (Bresson, 1986:73)

The visible is expanded to those sounds and elements of the image which are in the background, in the distance, in the sphere of operative intentionality. We do not believe like the Siberian girl that Balasz speaks of, that what we see on the screen are dismembered bodies (we are back to suture). Rather, as in common perception, we realize that our knowledge is fragmentary and even in the images present we infer the invisible aspects of objects in their present spatial position, which itself cannot be seen separately from their past, present and future temporal position. The invisible is revealed as imbricated in the visible through motion, that epitome of human existence (and which is almost synonymous with intentionality) as well as that of the cinematic object. However, there is the cool, mechanical aspect of film, which fragments into visual fields and sonic waves. And dialectically, that same mechanism will unify and accommodate the most diverse images and sounds into a steady stream of 24 frames per second – an interval which was fixed to accommodate sufficient sound reproduction.

TOWARD AN ANALYSIS

An elucidation of the choice of texts is required. Although the films will be treated in all their particularity, there is an attempt at wider implication. *Zerkalo* thus stands as the defining film of Tarkovsky's oeuvre, in which we can find all of his techniques and motifs. It also stands for a type of cinema (and art) created from an inner world. *L'Argent* stands for the particular style that Bresson perfected in his last films and which is the culmination of his work. It represents a different type of cinema which is created from external reality.

The analysis which follows is very specific and almost entirely meaningless without the materials close to hand. The choice of sequences might strike some as perverse, yet I believe they exemplify

the filmmakers' clash with the material very well and present a good battlefield between the reader and the text.

The interpretation lays no claim to objectivity, but is an attempt at rigorous description and is inspired by a set of hermeneutic rules as outlined by Don Ihde. The first stages inform *phenomenological description*: (1) Attend to the phenomena of experience as they appear and are immediately present and given to the experience; (2) Describe, don't explain; (3) Horizontalize or equalize all immediate phenomena and do not assume an initial hierarchy of "realities". Then follows *phenomenological reduction*: (4) Seek out structural or invariant features of the phenomena; and finally *phenomenological interpretation*: (5) Every experiencing has its reference or direction toward what is experienced, and contrarily, every experienced phenomenon refers to or reflects a mode of experience to which it is present. (Sobchack, 1992:48) The analysis exemplifies this method in the manner of a tango, rather than a vector.

Zerkalo

The section using archive material from Spain has a very rapid rhythm. The first section up to and including the shot of the cloud of dust was shot in 16fps and is accompanied by a song with fast tempo. The second section returns to 24fps and is dominated by high contrast and cluttered visuals with an abundance of movement, especially at the edges of the frame. The sounds are layered shouts, speech and weeping which slowly die down. All these are crucial in forming the silence and the change in rhythm that comes afterwards (and vice versa).

In the last two shots of the episode with Spanish children we see faces turn in a wave and then a little girl with a doll also turning to camera. In the first shot there are many faces whose features we cannot make out because of the shot's length. We perceive the wave of movement and identify it with the siren. The following cut shows the back of a girl and her turning. Because hearing is a complex process which follows a sound event closely, but is not simultaneous with it (see Chion, 1994:13), the sound of the siren makes space and time pliable. Apart from the use of speed/brevity

which ‘eases’ most cuts in filmmaking and the sound of the siren which motivates both images in the same way and creates sequentiality, the cut announces the vectorization of the following shot. It is like a theme which is repeated, only we pass from the general (many faces) to the particular (one face) – this being the to and fro structure of the whole episode with Spanish children (also, the parents are no longer present, they are now alone). The movement in the second shot is less erratic because it pertains to one figure – it is larger due to the closeness of the camera. The space is alike, just bigger – the duration similar, just longer. The cut is revealed as the culmination of a situation, all that came before is questioned and answered – it allows us to see the shot as a (completed) figure rubbing against another figure. But, for a very brief moment, we are plunged into chaos: what is figure, what is ground? Of course, the cut is a figure in itself, one where two movements meet. Because of its instantaneous nature, a cut is experienced as punctuation, yet it is also imbrication. Nothing in the natural world presents us with such a complete and rapid change in our visual field. On one level, of course, it is just a significant change in grain, colour, perspective etc. However, the experience of a cut is also a movement from one situation into another (most cinema does not provide us with time to process all the changes because it is centered around spectatorship rather than observation) – it takes hold of us and asserts its presence/present – yet there is also the echo of the previous sound/image, a memory in the mind and in the body which forms the ground and the soil for the following shot (and vice versa). The cut is a horizon, asserted and denied by the object and the subject. It is asserted by the change in the physical properties of the image, as a redirection of intentionality, as a question. It is denied by the constancy of the embodied mind (constantly learning and becoming timespace and audiovision) and the constancy of the perceptual situation (the cinematic apparatus) – it is an answer.

We see the girl turn as we saw the faces previously, yet the shot continues. The realization of this lingering is accompanied by the dying down of the siren and the change in her expression. The tension eases: the erratic movements and the shouts have been stilled by the sound. The silence which is now emerging – previously the shouts took on the role of figure in the ground of the song,

the siren took on the role of figure in the ground of the shouts, and silence now emerges as the ground of the receding siren, soon to take the role of figure (and of ground, certainly), this time in relation to the image, because there are no other sounds – creates a halo around the little girl and her expression takes on a mysterious aspect. What is it that she sees? She sees us, the thousands looking at her (who would not feel surprised?); she sees herself at that moment between two worlds and between the past and the present (there are many moments like this in the film, which refer to the title); she sees this strange machine which was only a moment ago pointing at her back; she hears the grain in the image, she sees the silence which is emerging; and, of course there are the balloons. The balloons emerge as a manifestation of silence – calm mathematical shapes in washed out tones. The complete opposite of the high contrast, jerky images of commotion. The human figures are miniscule. We see two still shots where the balloons sway gently and the only thing audible is the grain – the silence inhabits the whiteness and vice versa, depending on our choice of figure. There is a continuity in the quality of the image and in the shapes, the small balloons segmented, centered around a project as yet unknown and unimportant. The temporalization is weak as there is little movement. All this gives the impression of a slowing down and of distance.

Then, after the third shot has been asserted, the music starts (the richness of the aural aspect and a detailed analysis of the relationship with image can only be hinted at in such a brief treatment as this, so what follows is a noting of the main phenomena in Pergolesi's score – scroll down to APPENDIX II, after the endnotes). There are three voices: the deep voice played by the bass intones the beat four times in every bar; the supporting high voice played by violins comprises of four groups of three descending notes, played in legato and equal in duration, which follow the bass voice and complete the cycle of the beat; and the high, violin voice, which plays the theme. In the 1st bar, the theme poses a question; in the 2nd it is answered; the 3rd bar is almost identical to the 2nd, except that it ends lower; the 4th and 5th bars elaborate on the question and answer, joining them into one theme which starts higher than the 1st bar and ends lower than the 3rd; the 6th and 7th bars

repeat the 4th and 5th ; in the 8th bar the second violins take up the beat, the first violins take up the descending legato of the second violins and the polyphonic theme is sung by a choir in two voices. The recording has not been affected in any way (apart from the initial fade up which softens the intonation), which means that Tarkovsky is 'cutting to the music' (the 'homogenizing bath' or 'soup' as Straub calls it), yet the subtlety of the editing leaves us in no doubt that we are dealing with a deep understanding of audiovision.

The following cut comes exactly on the beat, halfway through the first bar, asserting the flow of the music (and especially the main theme), because the shots are static and lack strong temporalization. The theme falls and rises and the image cuts, again to the beat, yet this time a quarter into the second bar, allowing the theme to recede into the background. The theme of the balloons has been established and likewise the musical theme (cf. the segment where the theme is repeated by the choir in bar 8) – yet the relationship between the two is still unclear.

The shot that follows is in contrast to the preceding four which were all low angle shots. For the first time we see the ground and people on it, we see the base of the large balloon around which all the activity is and has been centered, and we know we are in Soviet Russia; the camera pans to the left to follow a smaller balloon – we get a better sense of size, of 'human' dimensions. The music asserts its lowest point so far, it rises again and sinks even lower – the image responds by asserting the horizontal in terms of the angle and the movement, it also dispels abstraction and claims 'proper size' (in relation to the human figure) and definite place. The shot is the longest of the three and it pertains loosely to the 2nd and 3rd bars – it is also the most temporally defined image-wise, with a long and definite movement. Like these two bars, this shot answers the questions posed by the previous two, so that we can no longer see them in the same light. It ends very soon after the last note of the theme is begun (slightly off the beat) – drawing attention to the concluding three notes of the second violins in the third bar as a pause out of which the theme of the 4th and 5th bars emerges.

The 4th bar starts with the theme soaring and the image responds with the largest movement in the section so far – the two figures mirror each other. The camera pans down as a man descends with a balloon in medium shot. The theme seems to be unsure of whether it has to descend (the second violins vary the common falling pattern with a return to the opening note) and as the theme rises higher than at any point so far, the image presents a strong downward movement of a man in his ‘proper size’ (we approach the golden rules of the storyboard, which are based on basic, everyday intervals in space). Just as he touches the ground the theme returns to the opening note of the 4th bar. There is a cut to a low angle of the large balloon ascending and simultaneously the theme proceeds to descend to its lowest point so far. By cutting the image to the central point of the theme and presenting the music with a contradictory movement in the image, Tarkovsky emphasizes its structure, also introducing a shot where people have disappeared and which is dominated by a sense of indifference (the chronic swelling of distance). It is by far the longest shot so far. At the end of the 5th bar the second violins again introduce ambiguity, the theme proceeds to start up again and comes down in exactly the same fashion, this time with the second violins resigned. All the while the balloon is drifting further away, its speed unvarying, its movement heedless – the music seems distant from it, yet simultaneously, these properties and its duration strengthen the cumulative effect of the 5th, 6th and 7th bars.

The following three cuts come in quick succession, all within the space of the 8th bar. The first cut falls on the beat, as the choir intones: ‘Quan-‘ we are plunged into a wealth of activity and motion. The shot is travelling backwards through a ticker tape parade; we see cars moving at the same speed as the camera and the surrounding buildings receding at a steady pace; everywhere and in all directions there is a movement of falling paper. It is as if the erupting voices have taken possession of the image, the swelling in the aural spectrum finding its perfect counterpart in the fluttering paper and the pulling backwards. We have been catapulted from the indifference of the previous shot (for we ‘are’ the movement in this shot), and have come full circle to the opening theme. The second cut

falls on the beat again, as the choir completes the word: ‘-do’ and the theme moves higher. The image moves from the center of the action high up onto one of the surrounding buildings, following the rising note, the camera remaining still and enveloped in the falling paper. The two notes (and two beats) pertain to the two shots of the parade, similar in texture, but existing in a dialectical relationship: in one we participate in the movement depending on our choice: either the cars are figures and the street is the ground or vice versa, but in both cases the perspective of the field is in flux; in the other case, the cars are definitely presented as figures – the movement is simpler, more easily definable. We are plunged into a situation and then taken a step back, announcing the following shot, which is yet another step backwards.

The sopranos continue singing (‘cor-pus’) and the altos simultaneously start afresh (Quan-do) – these two notes are sung in legato, as opposed to the first two beats of the bar which were sung in staccato. This is crucial. The third cut falls just after the fourth beat of the bar, onto the receding sung legato and the three legato notes played by the first violins. We return to colour in a high angle shot mirroring the perspective of the previous shot (with an almost exact graphic match in the diagonal), the two flat surfaces cutting short the depth of the previous shot and pushing the music into the background – yet the flat surfaces open onto Leonardo’s paintings. The shot continues as the choir sings: *Quando corpus morietur fac, ut animae donetur paradisi gloria* – While my body here decays, may my soul Thy goodness praise, safe in Paradise with Thee.

The use of *Stabat Mater* is thus revealed as infinitely subtle and completely entangled in the images. The music starts up from silence, peace and images of people participating in and celebrating natural phenomena (capturing air into spheres and forcing it to carry them – the ancient dream of flight), infusing the images with a passion, a longing for God and the end of suffering (the Spanish civil war). Yet, as the images show, humanity must remain in the decaying body, as the soul (the musical theme, the upward movement in the images) ascends. The self-styled blessing that comes through the parade – transforming paper into a celestial phenomenon (6) and the heavenly voices (which sing for and of humanity, for and of God – again the interrelationship between figure and

ground) into earthy matter (paper), encapsulates the entire section. The two ascending staccato images and notes stand for aspiration, and the two descending legato notes, which recede into the background of the image stand for resignation (see Tarkovsky, 1996:158). The balloons and the parade are also documents of the beginning and the end of a venture: the setting off of a balloon into the stratosphere and Chkalov's return from his flight over the North Pole (Synessios, 2001:38), together they form one image, a kind of haiku about transience and our limitations. The use of archive material is also revealed as metaphoric: the support of the images is perishable, yet it is the image which is eternal (the sight of that particular volume of paintings has particular resonance for Russians, as it is a widely owned first volume of a never completed two-tome history of art). It is no surprise then that Tarkovsky follows the theme of resignation (the paper free like snow, and the paper bound) with a contradiction: the images of Leonardo – printed, thousands of miles and hundreds of years away from the hand which painted them.

In Tarkovsky's words:

...there opens before us the possibility of interaction with infinity, for the great function of the artistic image is to be a kind of detector of infinity... towards which our reason and our feelings go soaring, with joyful, thrilling haste. Such feeling is awoken by the completeness of the image: it affects us by this very fact of being impossible to dismember. In isolation, each component part will be dead – or perhaps, on the contrary, down to its tiniest elements it will display the same characteristics as the complete, finished work. And these characteristics are produced by the interaction of opposed principles, the meaning of which, as if in communicating vessels, spills over from one into the other [...] A true artistic image gives the beholder a simultaneous experience of the most complex, contradictory, sometimes even mutually exclusive feelings. [...] In a word, the image is not a certain meaning, expressed by the director, but an entire world reflected as in a drop of water. (Tarkovsky, 1996:109-110)

L'Argent

The cut from an over-the-shoulder shot of the empty safe to the subway entrance moves the film

forward in a still undefined manner. There is no reaction from the couple; the fact is simply and succinctly stated: the safe is empty, where is the money? – we see the effect first ('Let the cause follow the effect, not accompany or precede it.' Bresson, 1986:92). The cut is bridged by the sound of an accelerating car, and crucially we never get to see the vehicle. The fact that it is precisely the sound of a car means that we are moving through space (from an interior to an exterior). The narrative itself is also moving forward in space and time, for what embodies movement more perfectly than a machine whose purpose is movement. It is also a sound we are very familiar with: the way a car moves towards us and away from us – it is a ready-made crescendo; it is a fixture of the urban soundscape, one which we do not question or need to look for the (visual) cause of.

Bresson says:

'Image and sound must not support each other; but must work each in turn through a sort of relay.' (1986:52) and *'If the eye is entirely won, give nothing or almost nothing to the ear. And vice versa, if the ear is entirely won, give nothing to the eye. One cannot be at the same time all eye and all ear.'* (1986:51)

This relationship of image and sound is precisely the relationship between figure and ground. The stillness of the previous shot and that of the subway allows for the sound to take the role of figure and the image (and hence the cut) to pass underneath as ground, the friction between the two figures (the edges of the two shots) in the image track thus softened because our attention is elsewhere.

As the first shot in the subway series commences, we can see a flight of stairs and daylight streaming in from the outside. We see a person's back on the extreme right and simultaneously hear their footsteps. As the two people move away from the camera and approach the stairs, the sound of the car slowly recedes and is replaced by another set of more hurried footsteps (obscuring even those of the people on the right) – we see Lucien and his two accomplices walking down the stairs. As they walk just to the left of the camera, it is lowered so that the suitcase he is carrying dominates the entire visual field for a brief moment, the men exit frame and the shot is held on the image of the floor.

Through the movement and the synch sound of the two people walking away from the camera we are placed in a definite space, we know that it is on the intersection of the outside (the street) and the inside (a subway), it also provides an image of normality – business as usual. All these elements replace the vague sound (and place) of the revving car ('Image. Reflection and reflector, accumulator and conductor.' 1986:82). As the three men come down the stairs we recognize them, and make the link from the plot, to the empty safe, to the suitcase. There are three significant movements in the frame: the first being that of the person on the right, the second that of the three men walking in the opposite direction and the third that of the frame itself as it becomes the movement of the three men. The space is thus explored: bodies traverse its full depth in opposite directions, the car describes the absent street, the echo the subway unseen.

The pan down gives us a very good view of the suitcase: it is the cause of the effect we saw in the previous shot – the answer to a question. But let us think of another suitcase from another Bresson film. In *Pickpocket*, half-way through the long balletic sequence at the train station, the frame similarly becomes the suitcase, it drifts out of frame to the right and there is a cut to the same suitcase already in frame dominating the left side. This cut ellides the time and space of the several meters crossed by that character. In Bresson's words: 'See your film as a combination of lines and volumes in movement apart from what it represents and signifies.' (1986:81) This is not pictorialism and it is not formalism, it is hard-earned knowledge derived from observation. Bresson never for a moment allows himself to forget the materiality of the image and the role of raw perception. This movement asserts the importance of those characters (for what is about to happen demands that assertion), it is a transition from the macro (a group of people, (their limbs in) a wealth of complex movement) and general (a subway) to the micro (an object, a simple flat surface) that describes the space, and plunges us into uncertainty yet again.

The image of the floor is held for some time, accompanied by the sound of a train pulling into the station. The image is slightly out of focus. According to formalism, this moment has no porpoise, it is there just for the halibut. Yet in the realm of description, this moment is revealed as rich. It is

another example of Bresson's relay – the image as the ground for the figure of the sound. It is also the end of a melodic line – the figure of the gang. It is a perfect example of his treatment of space: wholly external, based on properties of the cinematic apparatus. Bresson always shot with a 50mm lens, and in *L'Argent* he often utilizes a fixed focus (e.g. the shot of the cell gate as Yvon enters prison). The result is the static, flat image expanded through sound. Precisely because of the incredible compression he subjects his narratives to, he has to allow the movement (and the pauses) a stately presence. We spend time in a space simultaneously vague and precise, which pulsates, yet is very concise (compare his treatment of the prison scenes with a film like *Shawshank Redemption*, or the car chase with that in *The French Connection*) – already in the 1950's Bresson wrote: *The eye (in general) superficial, the ear profound and inventive. A locomotive's whistle imprints in us a whole railroad station.* (1986:72).

Yet again, the cut is presented as ground for a sound whose cause is not revealed and again we are carried through space and time by it. We see a flight of stairs and a corner which are completely devoid of movement – this time we are looking down, as if we have moved through the floor – the sound of the train is allowed to swell, we hear the doors open. Yet we are unsure of the cause of the sound – although the image is perfectly in focus, the sound makes it blurry. So, there is another figure, that of the blurry texture, which shifts from the visual to the aural channel through this cut. We then hear footsteps and people start to appear from behind a corner, the sight of their image claiming the synch. In the same manner as in the previous shot, as they approach the stairs, we hear another set of footsteps and we see Lucien and his accomplices run down and turn the corner. Throughout we hear the noise of the waiting train. Like in the previous shot, the dominant movement is split into two areas: the left side pertaining to people disembarking from the train, the right side to the gang running to catch the train. The distance of the train from the corridor is measured in the speed of people's footsteps and through the echoing sound – it is in the realm of imagination. Just before the shot is cleared of all movement, there is a moment in which the left side of the frame is dominated by a woman's torso which is almost completely out of focus, whereas the

right is dominated by the three men turning a corner – the nearest and farthest aspects of the space (frame) existing in a tension. We hear the doors close and the train starting to accelerate, the sound growing, then deflating.

In the third shot we finally see the train in medias res, its last carriage disappearing into the tunnel. The space is completed, it is measured out, made concrete. And sure enough, there is a double movement within the frame: the train moving away from us dominates the left side and two women walking towards us dominate the right side. As the sound of the train disappears, the footsteps gain prominence, thereby reversing the formula of hearing the effect, then seeing the cause. As the sound of the footsteps swells, however, so does their visual prominence: as if a rod had been thrust through the middle of the space, the frame switches from a vertical to a horizontal orientation. A simple replacing of one aural figure by another brings a complete change in the image, so much so that it seems as though the perspective has changed. The silence is more prominent than at any point in the previous two shots, and the result is that the figure of the footsteps stands out more – the louder the footsteps, the smaller the image of the people however. The footsteps are doubled and overpowered by yet another set of footsteps, the frame is cleared and there is a cut on the beat: we are with a policeman opening a door.

This sequence describes three cells, three tubes each at a deeper level in space and a subsequent position in time ('Don't run after poetry. It penetrates unaided through the joins (ellipses).' 1986:27). It describes three corners; six contrasting movements (plus a seventh); one entrance and exit which arc the three shots and three entrances and three exits if we look at the shots separately. It is a small riddle about an absent cause (the train) which becomes a heard cause and finally a seen cause ('Unbalance so as to re-balance.' 1986:33). It describes several flickering positions of a figure (the gang): the emergence of a figure (culminating in the pan down), its eclipse by a totality (the train station), the reassertion of the figure within that totality bringing a change to its status, its eclipse again, and finally the subsuming of the figure in the totality – thus revealing the flicker as an alternating relationship between two figures/grounds (the gang and the train). This is also

exemplified on the soundtrack: the car, then footsteps, the train, then footsteps, the train, then footsteps, and finally more footsteps. This series of sounds is placed in the order of a descending flight of stairs: not only does each sound take us deeper into the subway, but they follow each other in the form of an imbrication ('No music as accompaniment, support or reinforcement. No music at all. The noises must become music.' 1986:19). It describes four moments with no movement in the frame ('Be sure of having used to the full all that is communicated by immobility and silence' 1986:20). It is described in pastel tones, there is no colour or lit surface which stands out above others. It is these pastel tones, the 50mm lens, the static frames, the lack of dialogue which form the ground for all the figures outlined above – they in turn forming the ground for the superstructural figure of 'an escape'.

Yet we can ask: why is this sequence necessary? Why, when we see the plot, see the empty safe, the response of the robbed couple, Lucien in prison – so much is inferred in Bresson's films, why not condense it even more? *L'Argent* is a film about movement and transitions. Often we see vehicles carrying our characters and moving the story forward (Norbert's motorcycle in the opening sequence, or the police van driving through the night near the end of the film) – it is a denial of a facile and artificial (people being teleported) treatment of time and space. It is a film in which there is a door in almost every shot: the three-shot sequence I have been dealing with is preceded by a woman in a doorway, looking at the door of an open safe, we move to the entrance of a subway and into a train: an opening and a closing; it is followed by a policeman opening a prison cell. The door is an imbrication, a punctuation, a spatiotemporal progression/division, a cause and an effect. But above all, it is an interval: the small movements of every frame need to be linked to form the large movement of the film itself, to do so, they have to be organized in intervals. What happens through these movements between the first and the last shot of the film? In the first shot we see a cash machine close: someone has just taken out money. We are faced with the hard surface of a demon in wait: past it, and under its eye we hear the movement of people needed for it to exist. In the last shot a door opens, a man has been spent, but the onlookers do not turn after him, they remain gazing

through the open door. What do they see? What do we see? Money and its movement. '*The bonds that beings and things are waiting for, in order to live.*' (Bresson, 1986:70)

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

Guiding this text was a conviction that form and content cannot be separated. There was also a wish to look at films both through the eyes of a theoretician and a practitioner, to account for every shot within the outline of the whole film and treat it as a conflict with the material which has to be resolved by the craftsman. In order to do so, I had to abandon being a spectator and take the role of an observer: existential phenomenology provided me with the definition of an unhysterical, embodied viewer. But, the nature and order of the phenomena I found in the texts have surprised me. In these movements I found a rationalization of the unspoken perfection I had previously only partially grasped. In order to do so, I occasionally had to resort to reductionism and a translation of material phenomena into representational phenomena. I did so, spurred on by the tightness of Tarkovsky's and Bresson's binding of audiovisual and spatiotemporal phenomena. Yet I do not feel I have come to the bottom of the riddle: was it the grain, or was it the leaves (Lumière) which moved first? If you grasp one, the other is lost, yet in writing one cannot but divide them into figure and ground. That is why we must always return to the evidence and to the body. The two together allow us to experience that feeling of the absolute that these artists strove for. For Tarkovsky, it was the image which was inexhaustible and profound, for Bresson the image was opaque and it was the joins which opened up the possibility of transcendence. But we try to understand, we take our workbook out again, we slow the movement down, we note all the changes and the synchronous and asynchronous sections. At the atomic level, when the movement stops, there is no film, but as soon as there are two frames, a teleology starts to appear and it becomes impossible to say whether it is the mechanism or ourselves which is providing it. And the movements multiply: it is the grain, it is a surface, it is a face, it is a strand of hair, it is a word which is being formed in motion. And then the smile, the word 'maybe' and the camera movement are indistinguishable. To speak of films is like speaking of people: we try to be just, to take into account our prejudices, our admiration, the

other's shortcomings and virtues but we necessarily speak of them and ourselves at the same time, because we share an existence, which means we share space and time.

But we should not remain at this level, for it accounts only for the *how*. With the constant expansion of prosthetic perception/s(t)imulation, I believe that existential phenomenology will prove crucial in our understanding of *why* we are so drawn to it. If we come closer to the basis of our experience of mass audiovisual media, we will come closer to understanding why it is addictive and harmful, why it is used to repress and dominate, to the true meaning of 'medium is the message'. As content reaches the point of entropy, we will have to turn towards a serious analysis of the impossibility of distinguishing between form and content, sound and image, space and time – starting from the body and ending with the body. Then we will be able to answer whether cinema can remain an art form (as exemplified in the two chosen examples – at this moment both seem to me like calves on unsteady legs) or whether it has been spent and what remains is a structure and a mechanism devoted to the destruction of humanity: a decaying body whose only meaning can be expressed in money.

ENDNOTES:

(1) This sentence could very well read 'always varies' or 'occasionally varies'. If I do use such totalitarian language, it is by no means there for the reader to agree with. This text is a stroll ('It's going to be fun.') or a mountaineering expedition (for the Heideggers among us) depending on the reader and (the time, place etc. of) the reading. I would like you to approach it with a pugnacious attitude, in the knowledge that its sloppiness and inconsistencies are here as evidence in the unending prosecution against theory of art (which is practice, practice and three times practice), and, in the hope that you will achieve unwritten victories which are the purpose of our endeavours.

(2) I think back to the death of Agnes in *Cries and Whispers*. After the burst of sunshine and all the dramatic paraphernalia, comes the scene where they prepare the body. As the sisters fold her hands, one of her limp fingers drags as it brushes past her other hand. Everything about that death is in that little image. I am not referring to the hand as a semiotic unit and its place in the syntagmatic chain (the way it later appears hanging from the cupboard or Karin's 'clumsy hands' etc.). I am referring to the body which was moving only recently and is now lifeless, the care that the sisters take (similar to the combing scene, but there is no face to return their kindness), the slowness of their and the camera's movements, the project which brings them together (echoed in the last scene) in silence (as if they are afraid they will wake her). Above all, it is the fact that this image is there without being verbalized or microscopically enlarged (cf. the close up of the dead wife's hand in Lawrence Kasdan's *Wyatt Earp*) that allows it its power. There is nothing superfluous, nothing to detract from the essential: a woman is dead. The image of that finger rises out of the universally indifferent image that the camera produces (a ground achieved through the cinematic apparatus), because a certain spectator chooses it to be a figure (s/he could have equally chosen the sight of her legs, or the lowering of the dressing gown etc.). How does s/he choose? Through intentionality, which refutes the distinction between form and sensate matter and liberates images and sounds through attention.

(3) 'The link between the word and its living meaning is not an external link of association, the

meaning inhabits the word, and language is not an external accompaniment to intellectual processes'. We are therefore led to recognize a gestural or existential significance in speech... Language certainly has an inner content, but this is not self-subsistent and self-conscious thought. What then does language express if it does not express thoughts? It presents or rather it is the subject's taking up of a position in the world of his meanings. The term 'world' here is not a manner of speaking: it means that the 'mental' or cultural life borrows its structures from natural life and that the thinking subject must have its basis in the subject incarnate. The phonetic 'gesture' brings about, both for the speaking subject and for his hearers, a certain structural co-ordination of experience, a certain modulation of existence, exactly as a pattern of my bodily behaviour endows the objects around me with a certain significance both for me and for others.' (Merleau-Ponty, 2002:224)

(4) 'Like the thing, the picture has to be seen and not defined, nevertheless, though it is a small world which reveals itself within a larger one, it cannot lay claim to the same substantiality. We feel that it is put together by design, that in it significance precedes existence and clothes itself in the minimum of matter necessary for its communication. The miracle of the real world, on the other hand, is that in it significance and existence are one, and that we see the latter lodge itself in no uncertain fashion in the former.' (Merleau-Ponty, 2002:377)

(5) 'The eye carries information and sensations only some of which can be considered specifically and ineluctably visual (e.g. colour), most others are trans-sensory. Likewise, the ear serves as a vehicle for information and sensations only some of which are specifically auditive (e.g. pitch and intervallic relations), the others being, as in the case of the eye, not specific to this sense.' (Chion, 1994:137) (6) See Tarkovsky, 1996:213, where he speaks about Bergman's use of snow in *The Virgin Spring*. A direct line can be traced to *Andrei Roublev* and the snow in the church. Natural phenomena play a major role in all his films, especially *Zerkalo*. The parade provides a similar release and is a good example of his idea of image (resolutely not a symbol) and time, simultaneously factual and impressionistic (see Turovskaya, 1989:85).

APPENDIX I: Merleau-Ponty and existential phenomenology

Merleau-Ponty defines consciousness as embodied and enworlded and identifies existence with intentionality (the ‘directedness of consciousness’ which assumes the mediation of an activity and an object – consciousness is always consciousness of something). The body is both subjective (perception) and objective (expression), ‘both modes constituting the unity of meaningful experience.’ (Sobchack, 1992:40) The lived-body is an intrasubjective (embodied) and intersubjective (enworlded) system which therefore exists in a dialectical tension. This enables the distinction between the speaking and spoken word – between the gestural production of signs and sedimented, habitual language. (Sobchack, 1992:44; see *The Body as Expression, and Speech* in Merleau-Ponty, 2002) We are determined by our body and the world (and everything we inherit from it) and yet we are free because we constantly reconstitute and unify them (see *Freedom* in Merleau-Ponty, 2002).

The implication of the identification of intentionality and existence is that existence is a reversible structure: the perception of expression and/as the expression of perception (act of consciousness-mediation-object of consciousness and/as object of consciousness-mediation-act of consciousness). The distinction between intentional form (consciousness) and sensate material (sensation) in Husserl is abolished because perception is defined as already a taking up of position, a perspective, and a judgement and interpretation (see *Traditional Prejudices and the Return to Phenomena* in Merleau-Ponty, 2002). Meaning is therefore reducible neither to consciousness nor an object of consciousness, it emerges at the intersection of consciousness and object, in intentionality.

(Sobchack, 1992: 66; see *The Spatiality of One own’s Body and Motility* in Merleau-Ponty, 2002)

This intersection takes place in the world, which teaches us its structures of primary meaning.

Intentionality is expressed by the body subject living in the world; it becomes manifest, signified.

Thus, “the human body is the vehicle of human communication by reason of its mere physical existence.” In conventional semiotic terms, the lived-body is the signifier of intentionality, but it is so only in its action as an existence that intends, only in its activity of signifying. (Sobchack,

1992:65)

That is why existential phenomenology has also been termed semiotic phenomenology.

Intentionality is defined as twofold: operative and active. The first is antepredicative and is apparently passive, spontaneous, given and is identical with being and presence. Active intentionality springs from self-consciousness and is necessarily centered around a particular project of perception. Both aspects of intentionality generate meaning because they implicate us in the world.

Our perception is necessarily synaesthetic and synoptic. (see *Sense Experience* in Merleau-Ponty, 2002) In other words, any one sense is implicated in all the others (intentionality groups or singles them out around specific projects, or perceptual fields), and all the senses are gathered around a centre – the body, which unifies them in a spatio-temporal existential project. This means that 'we must therefore avoid saying that our body is *in* space, or *in* time. It *inhabits* space and time.' (Merleau-Ponty, 2002:161).

The space and time which I inhabit are always in their different ways indeterminate horizons which contain other points of view. The synthesis of both time and space is a task that always has to be performed afresh. Our bodily experience of movement is not a particular case of knowledge; it provides us with a way of access to the world and the object, with a 'praktognosia', which has to be recognized as original and perhaps as primary. My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my 'symbolic' or 'objectifying function'. (Merleau-Ponty, 2002:162)

Space and time are situations defined through motion:

...in existence, the body's finitude and situation and its power of movement transform the abstractions of time and space, informing them with the weight of choice and the thickness of movement, with value and dimension. (Sobchack, 1992:59)

APPENDIX II: Pergolesi's score for Stabat Mater, annotated

Appendix II

XII
Chor

Largo assai

Sopran
Chor

Alt

1. Violine
p sempre e dolce

2. Violine
p sempre e dolce

Bratsche
p sempre e dolce

Violoncello
Kontrabaß
p sempre e dolce

Cembalo
(Orgel)
p sempre

Largo assai

6 4 11 9 7 3 6 3 4

Chor

1. Viol.

2. Viol.

Br.

Vel. Kb.

Cemb.
(Org.)

pp *sof. voce*

pp

pp

pp

pp

4 2b 4 3b 6 6 4 6 6 6 6 6 4 6

Chor

A.

1. Viol.

2. Viol.

Br.

Vel. Kb.

Cemb.
(Org.)

p *sostenuto*

p *sostenuto*

poco espr. (b)

Quan-do cor - pus mo - ri - e - tur fac. ut
Wann mein Leib einst wird ster - ben, laß d'ann

Quan-do cor - pus mo - ri - e - tur
Wann mein Leib einst wird ster - ben

p

p

p

p

p

4 3b 4 3 4 3b 6 4 6 7

BIBLIOGRAPHY

R. Bresson, 1986 Notes on the Cinematographer, Quartet Encounters, LondonN. Browne (ed.), 1990

Cinema and Suture (p45-57) by Jean-Pierre Oudart in Cahiers du Cinéma 1968-1972: The Politics of Representation, Harvard University Press

N. Burch, 1981 Theory of Film Practice, Princeton, New Jersey

M. Chion, 1994 Audiovision, Columbia University Press, New York

S. Heath, 1981 Questions of Cinema, The Macmillan Press Ltd, London and Basingstoke

M. Merleau-Ponty, 2002 Phenomenology of Perception, Routledge, London

C. Metz, 1982 The Imaginary Signifier – Psychoanalysis and the Cinema, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis

J. M. Peters, 1981 Pictorial Signs and the Language of Film, Rodopi, Amsterdam

J. Quandt (ed.), 2000 The Sheen of Armour, the Whinnies of Horses: Sparse Parametric Style in Lancelot du Lac (p339-372) by Kristin Thompson in Robert Bresson, Cinemateque Ontario, Toronto

K. Reader, 2000 Robert Bresson, Manchester University Press

W. Reich, 1999 The Function of the Orgasm, Souvenir Press, London

V. Sobchack, 1992 The Address of the Eye – A Phenomenology of Film Experience, Princeton University Press, New Jersey

R. Stam et al, 1999 New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics, Routledge, London

N. Synessios, 2001 Mirror, I. B. Tauris, London

A. Tarkovsky, 1996 Sculpting in Time, University of Texas Press, Austin

M. Turovskaya, 1989 Tarkovsky, Cinema as Poetry, Faber and Faber, London