Image-Documents:
Found and Appropriated Images in Documentary Cinema

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A dissertation is a strange thing. The culmination of a string of encounters and acts, choices and chances, stops and starts. Writing a dissertation is often isolating but it is also a continuous reminder that you are never alone with your thoughts. Like the "image-documents" discussed in the following pages, sources for the concepts, words, and feelings assembled in this document are difficult to identify; they are sometimes, whenever possible, attributed to the appropriate personages but even these contributions mingle with those unnamed and unidentified collaborators I've appropriated to myself. Where they stop and "I" begin is almost impossible to discern. Here is a simple formula, though: you can find me in the mistakes, infelicities, awkward formulations, and questionable claims. Where the ideas and images stand out, when the evidence and facts take hold, the assemblage is at work.

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Dedication

For Helen Marie and Gerard Stork, thank you for a life full of pictures and words.

Abstract

Image-Documents: Found and Appropriated Images in Documentary Cinema is a conceptualization of the use of found and appropriated images—ranging from home movies to Hollywood films, from archival footage to television news—as the core of an immanent theory of documentary cinema. Through a series of conceptual encounters with central terms in documentary history and scholarship, this dissertation counters the rote critique of found footage as merely a convenient spectacle onto which documentaries graft their arguments. Combining readings of film theory, documentary criticism, continental philosophy, and contemporary theory with close analyses of specific films, *Image-Documents* at once lays bare the apparatus of documentary and its use of images to make truth claims, while redefining documentary outside the imperative to "represent reality." In place of the reified oscillation between critiquing documentary's rhetoric of objectivity and embrace of reflexive tactics and ethical witnessing, this dissertation argues for an understanding of documentary as a mode of expression irreducible to the accurate capture of "real" events. Image-documents are the unruly theoretical objects that articulate the documentary potential immanent to all images.

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Introduction: From Found and Appropriated Images to Image-Documents

> The whole, simple term of "documentary" has to be ruled out if we accept Rotha's laws for that term: "[Documentary] can, and does, draw on the past in its use of existing heritages but it only does so to give point to a modern argument. In no sense is documentary a historical reconstruction and attempts to make it so are destined to failure." Yet the (mis-?)use of this term was one of the first things that drew my attention to the "compilation" as a particular problem. What was the mysterious process that transformed mere newsreels into documentaries? The squirming, seemingly formless larvae of Newsreels, after a season on the cutting table, would suddenly spring into public notice (even demanding proper reviews) on the gorgeous wings of a respectable term, Documentary. This seemed worth investigating: what had made the difference?
>
> Jay Leyda, Films Beget Films

The super-imposed text reads "Souvenirs of a Shoveler," translating the illustrated Hungarian phrase in the title frame. Then more titling reads "Footage by György Pető during the Jewish labour service in 1940-41." Over the following five minutes, images of documents full of names, of men digging a trench beside a road, of men marching, and men eating soup occupy the screen. Some of the images are titled; others are not. As the men work they are overseen by a Hungarian army officer. The images are a grainy black and white, occasionally rendered as negatives. On the soundtrack a recording of a woman singing in Hungarian plays quietly in the background before another woman reads a poem in English. In the middle of the sequence are two posed shots of the men, along with their overseer, performing for the camera. In the first, two laborers, their full bodies in view, smile at the camera as an officer pretends to strike them with a switch, while the other worker plays at using his shovel as a weapon. A second posed shot echoes the first but this time with eight laborers grouped next to their overseer. The men (including the

army officer) once again smile for the camera, and another laborer pretends to use a shovel as a weapon.

This entire scene from Péter Forgács's 1996 film *Free Fall: Private Hungary X* is arresting, not least of all because it invokes the uncanny shadow of the Holocaust in its jovial images of a work camp. And among these already fascinating and ambivalent shots, the two posed moments stand out. While this footage from "Jewish labour service" strangely, perversely even, reproduces a fantasy version of the concentration camp that would soon consume many of these men, the raised shovels offer no such repetition. Instead, the shovel turned weapon, directed indiscriminately at soldier and worker, has no clear historical analog and seems to stand for an event that never entered the historical record.[1] There is nothing here that could be considered authorized information or rigorous knowledge. Rather, these images offer an ambiguous performance cleaved by obligatory servitude and what one frame titles, "Some merry moments from the life of the Jewish labour-company." This historical artifact is impossible to situate within the usual historical narratives because photographic capture here records only contingent human behavior. The men smile and joke, apparently enjoying themselves as they play at violence in the midst of obligatory labor. Just as the officer pretends to literalize the structural violence clearly on display, the Jewish laborers act out a fantasy of rebellion and resistance. These are images that inspire, to quote Theodor Adorno, "only

[1] Despite a dearth of attention, there were revolts in the concentration camps. Harun Farocki's film *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* (1989), offers a stunning account of one such rebellion, rendered through recovered documents as well as aerial reconnaissance photos.

infatuation, the unjust disregard for the claims of every existing thing, that does justice to what exists" (*Minima Moralia* 76).

This film, and most of Forgács's work, is composed of similarly haunting and beautiful material extracted from home movies left in the wake of World War II and the Holocaust.[2] *Free Fall* and its images, which might or might not be labeled "documentary," are generally praised for their experimental and poetic treatment of quotidian history in the tragic mode. Were they included in a more conventional documentary, these images might seem less profound and melancholy than distractingly illustrative of some general historical condition. It is tempting to ask, with Jay Leyda in the epigraph, by what "mysterious process" these images are transformed from the banal to the aesthetically and historically striking material the film makes of them. On the other hand, perhaps these images would stand out regardless, their uncanny gestures toward pleasure in violence disrupting whatever cinematic contexts they enter. Of course, this is unknowable since the experience of these images is based on *Free Fall* alone.

Found and appropriated images, like those described above, are a staple of filmmaking generally, and documentary especially. It is rare to find a documentary, whether of the rote televisual sort or a so-called "essay film," that does not incorporate some bit of pre-existing material. Given this ubiquity, it is not surprising that in most cases these fragments of footage pass by barely noticed, flitting across the screen, ensconced in the film's discourse. Nonetheless, at times these external objects placed within a film demand attention, whether the documentary justifies it or not, in the way the

[2] For more on Forgács and his films, see the edited collection *Cinema's Alchemist: The Films of Péter Forgács*.

raised shovels in *Free Fall* appear out of place in relation to their world historical background. Apparently justified by a presumed evidentiary function, found images of all sorts—home movies, archival footage, B-roll, Hollywood films, newsreels, television news footage, and even commercials—foreground, often more than any content, the fact that they are not *of* the documentary but are autonomous source material whose photographic, "indexical" charge is supplemented by but not wholly belonging to the film or filmmaker. This affect carries through even in images that offer no demonstrable evidence, information, or additional knowledge to the documentary.

In instances such as the one from *Free Fall*, found and appropriated footage approaches what Jacques Lacan in *Seminar III* calls "the signifier in the real," and associates with the phrase "the peace of the evening." He writes, "You are at the close of a stormy and tiring day, you regard the darkness that is beginning to fall upon your surroundings, and something comes to mind…" (Lacan 138). This something, "embodied in the expression, *the peace of the evening*," "comes to us like a murmur from without, a manifestation of discourse insofar as it barely belongs to us…" (Lacan 138). Like the calm before the storm, the sun's transition from day to night appears as already signifying, as already imbued with meaning. "We have now come to the limit," Lacan proclaims, "at which discourse, if it opens onto anything beyond meaning, opens onto the signifier in the real. We shall never know, in the perfect ambiguity in which it dwells, what it owes to this marriage with discourse" (139). The "signifier in the real," which the "peace of the evening" refers to without being, has no meaning beyond the potential of meaning itself; it only signifies the possibility of signification, the existence of language

as an exteriority in excess of the speaking subject. Found images, what this dissertation eventually refers to as "image-documents," are potential sites for an encounter similar to the experience of the "signifier in the real."

I. The encounter as methodology

In a series of texts assembled and published under the title "The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter," Louis Althusser erects a fragile and incomplete scaffolding for what is called either the "philosophy of the encounter" or "aleatory materialism." Moving through an eccentric—thus "underground"—genealogy of Western philosophy, from Greek atomism (Epicurus and Lucretius) to Machiavelli, Spinoza, Rousseau and Hobbes, through Marx to Heidegger, Derrida and Deleuze, Althusser posits a materialism that will not fall back into the idealism of teleology but is instead based on the aleatory encounter and the contingent worlds it creates; a materialism without any guarantees. Seeming to revise much of the rigidity and determinism attributed to the so-called "structural Marxism" made famous in *For Marx*, *Reading Capital* and "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser writes,

> …in this philosophy, there reigns an alternative: the encounter may not take place, just as it may take place. Nothing determines, no principle of decision determines this alternative in advance; it is of the order of a game of dice…. A successful encounter, one that is not brief, but lasts, never guarantees that it will continue to last tomorrow rather than come undone. Just as it might not have taken place, it may *no longer* take place…. In

> other words, nothing guarantees that *the reality of the accomplished fact* is *the guarantee of its durability*. Quite the opposite is true, every accomplished fact… like all necessity and reason we can derive from it, is only a provisional encounter, and since every encounter is provisional even when it lasts, *there is no eternity in the 'laws' of any world or any state*. (emphasis in original, Althusser, *Philosophy of the Encounter* 174).

The encounter is fundamentally undetermined and "…aleatory not only in its origins but also in its effects" (Althusser, *Philosophy of the Encounter* 193). From an instance of chance a structure is instantiated to order its contingent consequences (the structure itself being the primary effect of the encounter). Once in place, the "primacy of the structure over its elements" appears necessary and stable, even as its origin and durability remains contingent: "the necessity of the laws that issue from the taking-hold induced by the encounter is, even at its most stable, haunted by a *radical instability*…" (emphasis in original, Althusser 195).

Beyond the superficial fact that this awkwardly named, posthumously assembled, essay is built from remainders, nothing overtly connects the philosophy of the encounter to found and appropriated images in documentary cinema. Still, the appearance and experience of found footage is an encounter with images, images that are treated as documents. Every fragment of found film or video that appears in a documentary is the product of an encounter, really of multiple encounters, between the camera and the profilmic event, the image and the archive (whether a studio vault or garbage dump), and the documentary filmmaker and the image. Once incorporated within the framework of

the documentary this image is taken into a determining structure that assigns particular meanings to the image. This structure, despite its "taking-hold," remains "…haunted by a *radical instability*…" (emphasis in original, Althusser 195). Entering into new and different encounters, as do all its assembled elements in the process of exhibition, documentary's deployment of pre-existing images continuously rolls the dice, betting that its own structure will determine the function of its "elements." In this sense, the philosophy of the encounter re-opens the closed book of found footage in documentary, challenging the accepted status of such images as mere window dressing, blank screens for the projection of documentary arguments.

This dissertation's central concept, the image-document, is to some extent an attempt to rethink the use of found images in documentary modeled on the encounter. The critical consensus regarding found footage, nearly regardless of its source, form or content, is that these images cannot deliver what they promise and instead either distract the spectator or usurp the event (or both); in short, the external material incorporated into documentary is treated as the *fait accompli* of the films' arguments. Against this conception, *Image-Documents* argues for re-encountering found or appropriated film and video fragments in light of their indeterminate materiality, singularity, and aleatory potential. It is precisely as circulating *documents* that *images* at once exceed the representational logic of documenting, in which an impossible equation is set up to measure the image against the fullness of the historical world, while still embodying a contingent kernel of this world. As such, image-documents are not merely the building blocks or illustrative placeholders for documentary's rhetorical constructions, though

they are this too, but are also the resistant and indeterminate material around and through which documentaries open onto something akin to the "signifier in the real."

II. Staging conceptual encounters

The logic of the encounter described above is not limited to the experience of found and appropriated images in documentary. Along with these spectatorial, experiential, and speculative encounters, the argument that follows is a conceptual engagement with documentary and documentary studies. Obviously it is the image-document itself that must be conceptualized at the start; however, this is only the beginning point, the swerve of the clinamen, for a series of conceptual encounters between this concept and other persistent and prominent concerns within documentary studies.

If the fraught generic moniker "documentary" presupposes the act of documenting, as it seems to in its—nominal—first instantiations in Robert Flaherty's salvage anthropology, the image-document asserts the importance of images as documents for documentary cinema and scholarship. This does not mean merely taking these two terms, image and document, as given and stably defined signifiers but instead approaches them as concepts in their own right. Thus, Chapter 1, "Image, Document, Image-Document," represents a conceptual encounter between the image and the document staged through, on the side of the image, intellectual history, and, on the side of the document, a residual definition. Though both terms are approached by way of a minimal etymological impulse, neither is treated genealogically. Instead, the past conceptions and definitions of image and document, respectively, constitute encounters

out of which each assumes a particular, though far from fixed, function in their conjoined form. This contingent formulation dislodges the current understanding of the image as a purely representational entity in the name of the image as a conceptual and material object continuously passing between the interiority of the imagination and the exteriority of matter and empirical experience; meanwhile the document, while continuing to emphasize its materiality, is taken up in relation to its pedagogical dimension largely forgotten in the turn to evidence, bureaucracy, and legal contracts. In each instance, these reconceived terms touch on prevalent issues in documentary (imagination's relation to reality and documentary as education).

The remaining three chapters draw the image-document into further conceptual encounters. First, Chapter 2, "Image-Documents in Use: A theory of documentary value," turns to the question of documentary value in order to displace the apparent transparency of this phrase through a consideration of use value in Marxist political economy and its critiques. Rather than treat documentary value as an inherent property of so-called indexical images, image-documents—reproduced, repeated, circulated, and recirculated—produce a sense of documentary value relative to actual and potential uses based on the indeterminacy of their meanings. Chapter 3, "Documentary Enunciation: Indirect discourse, third person statements, and the murmur of image-documents," explores the ways this documentary value is realized through documentary enunciation. Challenging the emphasis in documentary scholarship on narration and voice as determining the meaning of image-documents, documentary enunciation treats image-documents as fragments of indirect discourse uttered in and through documentary's

direct, argumentative discourse; deployed in a form of third person enunciation, image-documents are statements drawn from the collective field of existing cinematic statements and, as such, cannot be attributed to any individual but to no-one or anyone. This collective sense of enunciation then allows for a specific politics to emerge through image-documents. Finally, chapter 4, "Image-Documents and History as Immanent Cause," brings this depersonalization of documentary to bear on the genre's relation to history and historiography. Through a consideration of the image-document's similarity to historical source documents, documentary's rendering of history turns away from the individualizing emphasis on subjective witnessing toward the mode of production as a formulation for social totality. Rather than treat history as a chronicle of recorded events, or a self contained narrative, or a dispersed field of subjective identifications, image-documents make history legible as a cause inseparable from its effects, an uneven, antagonistic, and overdetermined field of forces and temporalities. With history, the concept of the image-document's relation to the past opens onto the future of a changing social totality.

III. A final note on the texts

Until recently there were few studies of found footage either as a particular type of cinematic material or as a style of filmmaking. Art historical discourse on collage and ready-mades, along with work on seminal figures such as Joseph Cornell, present additional critical resources for studying found and appropriated images, but focused, obviously, on the history of experimental and avant garde film. While in film studies

interest in the topic seems to be growing, two stalwarts remain the flag bearers on the topic: Jay Leyda's *Films Beget Films* and William Wees's *Recycled Images*. The epigraph for this introduction is drawn from Leyda's insightful history of the form, which he calls "compilation" film; however, this is the only reference to it in *Image-Documents*. And this negligible attention is more than *Recycled Images* receives. Mostly, it is the conceptual nature of this project that separates it from these useful but ultimately descriptive, historicizing texts. Where the current work is an attempt to think through found footage specifically in relation to documentary, Leyda and Wees work to chronicle, catalogue, and categorize films through their use of pre-existing images. This is not to say they have nothing fruitful to add to this conceptualization but that the encounter with them was, in this context, not a lasting one.

On the other hand, three of the four chapters that follow draw explicitly, and at times heavily, on the work of Jacque Rancière; this is an encounter that "takes," or at least nearly. Rancière's function in this argument is vexed and is flagged here only to draw attention to the ambivalence of this presence. (Deleuze, another frequent reference, is a similarly ambiguous figure in this regard.) Briefly, Rancière offers something of an estranged reworking of late 20th century continental theory, which feels at once familiar yet noticeably different from the canonical thinkers (a group to which at this point Rancière probably belongs) he studied with as a student and peer; in short, it is uncanny. Rancière's work connects with Marxism, so-called post-structuralism, political theory, and film studies without belonging to them. This eclecticism is attractive, if at times frustrating. He is attuned to the centrality of the division of labor for social organization

under capitalism, yet continually distances himself from Marxism.[3] His turn to aesthetics as the "distribution of the sensible" seems informed, on some level, by a concept of the unconscious, but he is overtly skeptical of psychoanalysis. Language and images both appear as essential sites for approaching collective politics, but are also often treated as mere tools for communication. His insistence on the social as fundamentally heterogeneous borders on anarchistic but also seems opposed to concepts of self-organizing collectivities. It would require a dedicated study to work through the complexity and contradictions arranged around the name Rancière.

Nonetheless, Rancière is essential to *Image-Documents* in one central way: the assertion of an equality of capacity and potential to act. In various ways his continuous refusal of any natural hierarchy of subjects, forms, media, or concepts allows for and even encourages the sorts of encounters undertaken in this dissertation. Image-documents are to some extent an instantiation of this call to reject the sorting of the valuable from the worthless, the true from the false, and the able from the unable, by embracing the very properties—indeterminacy, promiscuity, impersonality, manipulability—that have branded found footage a degraded and illusory element in documentary. And though Rancière has produced a relatively sustained engagement with film over the last decade or so, it is his earlier texts devoted to education, history, and politics that most forcefully articulate this focus on equality and, at the same time, locates its expression in specific textual details that refuse their proper place. Still, the conceptualization of image-documents that follows is not Rancièrian, even if such a thing existed, since it is too

[3] Obviously this is, at least in part, an aspect and, perhaps, product of his break with Althusser following the 1968 student revolts. For Rancière's critique of Althusser and Althusserianism see *Althusser's Lesson*.

Marxist, too immanentist, too reliant on the unconscious, and too impersonal to fit Rancière's mold.

And, at last, a few words on the films discussed in the following chapters. They too follow the method of encounter; there is nothing necessary about their selection other than their selection. Two of the three more recent documentaries, *Grizzly Man* and *The Fog of War*, are as mainstream, widely seen, and commercially successful as documentaries come. Much has already been written about them and still more will be added. But this public prominence is neither an impetus nor a disqualifier for the roles they play here. Instead, the encounter with these films left an impression in precisely the terms they are here engaged through—value and enunciative statements. The same is true of the less well-known, but far from obscure, *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (Shub, 1927), *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu* (Ujica, 2010), and *In the Year of the Pig* (De Antonio, 1968). Regardless of their popularity, the analyses of these films, their use of image-documents, and the image-documents themselves relies on close reading, which itself presupposes both the singularity and contingency of the encounter. These films are important not only because of their historical position, rarity, or even quality, but because their assemblage of image-documents, like Lacan's "signifier in the real," "takes us by surprise...," and "…in principle escapes us," demanding that some account be made of them (139).

Chapter 1: Image, Document, Image-Documents

The aim of this chapter is to establish the concept of the image-document as a productive theoretical object before detailing its effects in the following chapters. This hyphenated term is, on a certain level, obvious. An "image-document" is an image treated as a document. But this obviousness gives way once the component terms are scrutinized. Before being nested together here, "image" and "document" are already complex and compound concepts. So far the word "image" appears in the dominant colloquial sense familiar to contemporary readers, i.e. a visual representation, especially a mechanically produced visual representation. And here the term "image" retains this commonplace; however, the concept's long, complex, and perhaps less familiar history remains within the frame of the present sense of the image as a particular type of mediating "thing." In particular, the traces of the concept's philosophical history persist in the image's fraught materiality, which may account for the way images are taken as things that are not things, real but not really real, mere illusions despite their substantiality. Indeed long before becoming an art object, bearer of information, site of scientific inscription, or notorious ideological veil *par excellence*, the image was a figure of the interstitial relation between the world of extension and the world of thought. It is as mental image and product of the faculty of imagination that the image enters philosophical discourse. Nor, to be sure, has

this conception entirely fallen away, persisting even in contemporary cognitive neuroscience.[1]

For its part, the term "document," though it does not have the illustrious past of the image, also calls for close inspection. In our historical moment dominated by bureaucratic procedures and "archive fever" the document appears the most natural and transparent of things. However, the current solidity of the document, with its ties to technocratic empiricism, archival storage and certainty of identity (at the risk of gross hyperbole we might think of so-called "undocumented people"), belies the term's now obsolete role as a pedagogical, rather than legal or scholarly, object. Despite the document's overwhelming association with evidence and the action of collecting evidence, this instructional past bears on questions at the heart of documentary cinema: Is documentary's purpose the production of verified knowledge and record, or the instruction of audiences? What, if anything, separates the two? Of course, the emphasis in proposing the term "documentary" for non-fiction film extends from the verb form as the root of documentary focusing on documenting and not documents. But after nearly a century of use, and over a century's worth of accumulated moving images, documentary engages with documents as much as it is engaged in documenting. As such, the document, much as it serves as a form of material evidence, carries with it this past life as a tool for learning and the exercise of intelligence. The pedagogical and evidentiary, as well as aesthetic and expressive, potentials of documentary are bound together in the document and activated in its circulations, repetitions, and manipulations.

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[1] See, for instance, Mark Hansen, "From Fixed to Fluid: Material-Mental Images Between Neural Synchonization and Computational Mediation" in *Releasing the Image*.

The aspects and capacities of images and documents that the "image-document" concept attempts to combine can only be explored through specific examples. Two films separated by nearly a century, *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* (Esfir Shub, 1927) and *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu* (Andrei Ujica, 2010), fulfill this requirement. Both films, unlike most films discussed in later chapters, are composed entirely of image-documents and both films are also historical bookends of sorts. *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* is often hailed as one of the first full-length "compilation" films in documentary history, while *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu* is a relatively recent best entry in the subcategory. Of course, there were definitely "compilation" films before Shub's, and Ujica's film doesn't promise an end—if anything, the expansion of archives, greater access to their images, and widely available technology for image combination (and manipulation) promises only more "compilation" films in the future. Nonetheless, these two films more definitely act as bookends in terms of "content" rather than release dates. Where *Fall* utilizes image-documents from Russia's czarist history to chart and celebrate the October revolution, *The Autobiography* deploys a mixture of images to look back over Ceausescu's rule, thus encompassing 20th century state communism. Assembled from state newsreels, Romanov home movies, and international coverage of Russian state ceremonies, *Fall* at once sets the historical stage for the rise of the Soviets and simultaneously stakes a claim on the communist future. *The Autobiography*, for its part, approaches the history of Romanian state communism as though it were Nicolae Ceausescu's life flashing before his eyes in the moments before his imminent death. Ujica's film traces an arc of failed promise by looking back, like the film's subject, with

horror, confusion, and astonishment. Thus, these two films, like bookends, lean toward each other, with the earlier film deploying image-documents of the past in order to secure the future and the later attempting to take stock of the failures of the previous century.

Fall of the Romanov Dynasty and *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*, both in their similarities and differences, are the products of image-documents and, as such, express the contingency of documentary encounters with "found" images. Through the image-documents they deploy, these films exemplify the fact that no state of affairs is guaranteed and that the fixity of image and document is only ever a point in an unfolding process creating both subjects and objects.

I. Images: Mental and Material

The opening of *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu* acutely expresses the complex relation between the technologically produced, and reproduced, image and the mental image. Nicolae Ceausescu, along with his wife Elena, both dressed in fur coats and hats, stare blankly to their right and out of the frame as a man reads the charges leveled against them in an ad hoc trial. The impassivity of their faces is only interrupted by occasional declarations of the tribunal's illegitimacy. These video images[2] at once register the Ceausescus' refusal to acknowledge this "court" and its claims against them, while also implying, in the very impassivity of the fallen dictator's expression, what lurks in his memory—as though his stoic look were merely the surface of a mind turned inward. Indeed this is the route the film follows, taking the emptiness of his stare as a cue to work

[2] These images also appear in Ujica's 1992 collaboration with Harun Farocki, *Videograms of a Revolution*.

through the images left in Ceausescu's wake: the images from state television, personal archives, and news reports that follow, are cast as wistful memories of his 25 year political reign, offering up a greatest hits of state celebrations, photo opportunities, and speeches. Simultaneously, these same images, carrying with them the gloss of propaganda and glimmer of its underside, are material symptoms bearing and revealing this fantasy as farce.

From the outset, then, the film is poised at the intersection of the image as the product of the imagination and the image as a particular sort of object. Ordered in this way, from Ceausescu's gazing face to the assemblage of moving images of his rule, *The Autobiography* points to the commerce between mental and material images. Of course, the film is composed only of the latter, yet both the framing strategy established in the opening and the type of image material—celebrations of Ceausescu's rule and the fantastic projections of the state—blur the distinction between these categories of image. Though an uneasy fit, the film remains within the tradition of documentary, insofar as it explicitly addresses the "historical world," even as it eschews certain conventions in the genre's claim to knowledge production and dissemination. Where documentary seems to draw a sharp line between the material image and the mental image, *The Autobiography* gestures toward their convergence and indistinction. The film, though, does not aim merely at undercutting the truth claims made in and through moving images, collapsing material into mental images as illusory, fantastic, subjective, etc. Instead, in drawing the two together, Ujica's film shifts the terms by which these image categories are distinguished from one another. On one hand, the film's form draws attention to the fact

that these images precede the film itself and highlights the artifactual quality of its images. On the other hand, their particular arrangement draws out an imaginary dimension of this historical reality.

What characterizes the history of the mental image (for much of this history all images were, at least in part, mental images) is the enfolding of extension into the subject's internal, cognitive processes. At least since the 17th century and even before this, the concept of the image was the province of the imagination, which appears, from the outset of the Enlightenment, as a constitutive, yet flawed, stage, collaborator, and, eventual rival to reason. Both reason's complement and foil, the imagination operates as a necessary passage between the vicissitudes of perception and the rigors of rationality, with images posited as the means by which imagination lodges material experience within mental processes. While "images" carry a strong association with the visible world, in much of this discourse they also operate on a much broader representational level. In the form of images, the imagination not only produces and retains surrogates of the external world but those images also become the substance of judgments, associations, inferences, fantasies, and a whole set of extra-perceptual representational content. Foucault's *The Order of Things* provides some context for the rise of the imagination in his description of a regime of "resemblance" preceding the two great *epistemes*, the classical and modern; through the 16th century "it was resemblance that organized the play of symbols, made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible, and controlled the art of representing them" (17). According to Foucault, knowledge was then a matter of mimetic linkages between things and words, words and meanings,

objects and uses. Piling resemblances upon resemblances,[3] this was an epistemology of associations and impressions between particular things and signs bound together by shared aspects that made even the most disparate entities alike, where the unlimited slide of words into things and things into meanings was buttressed only by interpretive authority. But what Foucault calls "the prose of the world" gave way to the gap between reality and its representation.

The imagination becomes, at least in part, the repository for the vestigial traces of this epistemology in 17th and 18th century thought (and, to some extent, even 19th and 20th century).[3] The faculty of imagination binds together disparate things through association, combining sensory impressions with affects and concepts, and linking empirical experience with beliefs and desires, while the fickle instability and unreliable interpretations of the epistemology of resemblance continues to haunt the imagination and its images. In his *Ethics* of 1675, Spinoza calls his first form of knowledge "imagination," which converts the impressions made by extension into thought. When the human body "is affected by a mode which involves the nature of some external body, the human mind will regard that same external body as actually existent, or as present to it…" and, writes Spinoza, "we shall call the affections of the human body, the ideas of which represent external bodies as if they were present to us, the 'images' of things, even

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[3] Foucault focuses on five "essential" similitudes: *convenienta*, *aemulatio*, *analogy*, *sympathy*, and *signature*. This last, signature, plays a regulating role on the others, offering a guide for which similitudes to follow between different objects and phenomena. Since the other four similitudes were not strictly visible or obvious, signatures drew out resemblances lurking beneath the surface of things: "The system of signatures reverses the relation of the visible to the invisible. Resemblance was the invisible form of that which, from the depths of the world, made things visible; but in order that this form may be brought into the light in its turn there must be a visible figure that will draw it out from its profound invisibility" (26).
[3] Jochen Schulte-Sasse makes a similar claim in "Imagination and Modernity: Or the Taming of the Human Mind," pointing especially to the "gradual disciplining of the human mind" in the Eighteenth Century (28).

though they do not reproduce the shape of things" (*Ethics*, II, Prop. 17, 132, 133). Of course, imagination is also "the sole cause of falsity" (Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, Prop. 41, 149) and images "are like consequences without premises" (Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, Prop. 41, 149 and Prop. 28, Dem., 140). Constituted from sense perception and connected to each other only by association and habit, images accumulate, mingle, become confused, and combine to form ideas of non-existent things (famously winged horses), false causes and erring judgments.[4] Reason—Second knowledge—intervenes to build from the singular images of inadequate ideas "common notions" that stabilize and regulate the imagination: "For all bodies agree in some things, which… must be conceived adequately, i.e. clearly and distinctly" (*Ethics*, II, Prop. 38, Cor., 145-146). Though reason, for Spinoza, is undeniably superior, imagination remains the condition of possibility for both the second and third kinds of knowledge.[5] Similarly, David Hume, in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, writes, "[I]deas produce the images of themselves in new ideas; but as the first ideas are supposed to be derived from impressions, it still remains true, that all our simple ideas proceed either mediately or immediately, from their correspondent impressions" (6-7).[6] The imagination transforms simple ideas—following more–or-less directly from

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[4] For Gilles Deleuze, in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, images, like all ideas, are "representative": "Our [inadequate] ideas are therefore ideas of images or affections that represent a state of things" (73). Thus their relation to each other and the experiences they derive from is, like linguistic signs, arbitrary and conventional.

[5] Third knowledge, intuition or the intellectual love of God, is Spinoza's intervention in this impasse. Notoriously obscure, intuition is the capacity to recognize the fundamental causal relations of substance—i.e. immanent causality—through the singularity of modal existence. Thus, rather than be overwhelmed by the haphazard impressions of the imagination or satiated by the abstract causal explanations of the "common notions," Third knowledge locates their shared adequacy and truth in their common being in substance.

[6] The faculties of imagination and memory are closely linked for Hume, along with most philosophers of the imagination. Both imagination and memory work on and through impressions from empirical experience but, according to Hume, "…memory is in a manner ty'd down in that respect [the order and form of the original impressions], without the power of variation" (9).

impressions—into complex ideas--combinations of diverse images or ideas—"guided by some universal principles" (Hume 9). Thus imagination and its images lead, as they do in Spinoza, to the ordering of the world through reason. Yet these very qualities also still engender the risk of illusions and mistakes: "Nothing is more dangerous to reason than the flights of the imagination, and nothing has been the occasion for more mistakes among philosophers" (Hume 267). Even with reason disciplining imagination, James Engell points out, "the imagination can be grossly misleading because it is so pervasive and ever-present" (54). The risk of illusion is simply a consequence of the imagination's role as active passage between thought and extension, interior and exterior, "which busily seeks out new objects or conjures up groundless fears" (Engell 54).

Both Spinoza's and Hume's conception of the imagination, though far from identical, suggest that the existence of both interior and exterior worlds is knowable only through images that simultaneously confirm the perceptions of the material world and engender the mental world. The problem, in fact, is that, to use Spinoza's formulation, within the imagination material and mental worlds are not "conceived adequately, i.e. clearly and distinctly," and instead fold into one another. For Hume this lack of distinction is unavoidable: "…let us chace [sic] our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can conceive of any existence, but those perceptions which have appear'd in that narrow compass (67-68). Chasing its own tail, this statement, on one hand, appears to embrace a Cartesian deductive logic of the mind as rational ground and, on the other hand, insists

that whatever persists in the *cogito* sprung from perceptions[7] of the external world; nor could it be any other way: "This is the universe of the imagination, nor have we any idea but what is there produc'd" (Hume 68). Though Spinoza pushes for a clear distinction between imagination and reason where Hume sees rational thought as an aspect of imagination, both philosophers position the imagination and its images at the nexus between thought and extension. In doing so they, and many of their contemporaries, struggled with the ways material existence and human consciousness bleed into one another, with images as the unruly offspring of this intercourse.

Over the course of the 18th century the tensions produced in the relationship between the imagination and reason by the indistinguishability of thought and extension are managed by the conceptual splitting of ideas from images, and thoughts from sensations, demarcating reasoned observation against the chance impressions and representations of experience in the psyche.[8] Images become the province of imagination and increasingly the object of judgment between the real and unreal, truth and fantasy, the illustrative and the illusory. Much as this change dislodges imagination from the core of mental life, it also provides a certain autonomy to imagination and its productions, which become not only conduits incorporating the outside world into the interiority of the subject but also a mode of returning impressions to the world in the form of both images and judgments. The price for this autonomy is a reordering of imagination through, as Jochen Schulte-Sasse points out, "a displacement of everything that is good about the

[7] Immediately prior to this statement, Hume makes clear that perception is a matter of empirical experience of extension, writing, "nothing is ever really present with the mind but its perceptions or impressions and ideas, and that external objects become known to us only by those perceptions they occasion" (67).
[8] See Schulte-Sasse, "Imagination and Modernity," especially 27-30.

human imagination into the aesthetic realm and a defamation of those aspects of the human imagination that resist being incorporated into the aesthetic" (28-29). The separation of images from ideas also entails the end of the synonymous relation between "fancy" and "imagination." Via a value-laden process of distinction, Schulte-Sasse calls the "taming and re-functioning of the human *imagination*," fancy or in more contemporary parlance, fantasy comes to represent the imagination's potential for unruly associative combinations and delusional pathos, while the aesthetic, both as a regime of judgment and particular category of phenomena (art objects and also the sublimity of nature, etc.), becomes the approved playground for imagination (Schulte-Sasse 36). In the context of modernity's general "disciplining of the human mind through logic in a number of fields…," the imagination, qua contact point between the material and mental world, is caught up in the "functional differentiation of society into separate, relatively autonomous but complementary subsystems" through the "relative autonomy" of the aesthetic (39). Indeed, the aesthetic becomes a release valve, "providing a realm that can compensate for the one-sidedness of other realms of social activity" (45).

Schulte-Sasse's focus on the aesthetic already suggests the central role Kant plays in the refinement and limiting of the imagination, especially in the *Critique of Judgment*. However, the imagination is also important to Kant's epistemology, going so far, in *Critique of Pure Reason*,[9] to suggest that without imagination there is no knowledge. Describing it as a synthesizing mediator between sensuous experience and conscious thought, Kant writes, "There are three subjective sources of knowledge upon which rests

[9] Hereafter *CPR*.

the possibility of experience in general and of knowledge of its objects—*sense*, *imagination*, and *apperception*" (*CPR* 141). Sense, through perception, confronts the appearance of what Kant calls the "manifold"—a mélange of empirical phenomena without any given relation to each other or themselves—which the imagination must reign in and make comprehensible: "There must therefore exist in us an active faculty for the synthesis of this manifold. To this faculty I give the title, imagination" (*CPR* 144). That is, "the transcendental function of imagination," according to Kant, is to bring, via the production of images, "the manifold of intuition on the one side, into connection with the condition of the necessary unity of pure apperception on the other" (*CPR* 146). (Apperception is the faculty of the mind devoted to unifying and making sense of the manifold of extension.) All of this concerns only the a priori aspects of Kant's epistemology, where the concepts sense, imagination, and apperception represent logically necessary presuppositions for reasoning beings.[10] Kant names the "pure," a priori imagination, "productive imagination"—the transcendental faculty for the synthesis of sense perception—distinguishing it from the empirical, "reproductive faculty

[10] A priori, or "pure," faculties provide "all objective validity (truth) of empirical knowledge" because through them "the order and regularity in the appearances, which we entitle nature, we ourselves produce" (*CPR*, 147). Though each faculty is treated as distinct, no line divides them since none is adequate in itself, and all are co-present to each other, mingling in their different functions. Nor is the series sense-imagination-apperception temporal or sequential but, instead, logical as the three sources of knowledge are synchronous with one another. Logically sense provides material for the syntheses of imagination and apperception unifies these syntheses in recognition; however, as is made plain in Kant's description of the "original apperception," the unity of apperception is necessary for the syntheses of imagination to occur, even as these syntheses are the material apperception will unify, and sense remains a constant back drop for both operations—the body, though elided here, presumably providing a basis for the original apperception of the "I" and its affinity with itself. (That is, the original apperception recognizes the affinity between the disparate sensations belonging to the various modes of perception synthesized by the imagination to produce the "I" as "objective ground" of experience (*CPR*, 145).)

of the imagination"—images produced by contact with contingent, empirical phenomena (*CPR* 145, 144).

The productive/reproductive binary is essential to Kant's epistemology and enables a key break from the treatment of images by Spinoza and Hume by introducing an opposition between "schemata" and "images." The concept of "schematism" Kant produces aligns "pure," productive imagination with "schemata" that bind the diverse instances of particular objects under a synthetic concept, while reproductive imagination is aligned with images which are derived from and represent specific perceptions within the manifold of extended experience:

> Indeed it is schemata, not images of objects, which underlie our pure sensible concepts. No image could ever be adequate to the concept of a triangle in general. It would never attain the universality of the concept which renders it valid of all triangles, whether right-angled, obtuse-angled, or acute-angled; it would always be limited to a part only of this sphere. The schema of the triangle can exist nowhere but in thought. […] Still less is an object of experience or its image ever adequate to the empirical concept; for this latter always stands in immediate relation to the schema of imagination, as a rule for the determination of our intuition, in accordance with some specific universal concept. (Kant, *CPR* 182)

This distinction between schemata and images distributes the risks associated with imagination, the fleeting specificity of experience and the unruly associations of fantasy, to the reproductive imagination, which is cast as a degraded form of the syntheses of the

productive imagination. Schemata are universal, stable, and rational products of cognition where images are the variable impressions of material reality left on a passive mind.[11]

The "Analytic of the Sublime" in the *The Critique of Judgment*,[12] especially Kant's discussion of the "dynamic sublime," exemplifies the effects this splitting of the imagination has on the way the role of images in mental and empirical life is conceptualized. "[C]onsider," writes Kant, "bold, overhanging and, as it were, threatening rocks, thunderclouds piling up in the sky, volcanoes with all their destructive power, hurricanes with all the devastation they leave, the boundless ocean heaved up, the high waterfall of a mighty river, and so on. Compared to the might of any of these, our ability to resists becomes an insignificant trifle" (*CJ* 120). Nonetheless, "provided we are in a safe place," these fearsome sights thrill and please the perceiver, despite dominating her material being, preparing the way for a reflexive turn: "though the irresistibility of nature's might makes us… recognize our physical impotence, it reveals in us at the same time an ability to judge ourselves independent of nature, and reveals in us a superiority over nature that is the basis of a self-preservation quite different in kind from the one that can be assailed and endangered by nature outside us" (Kant, *CJ* 120-121). In this mise-en-scène of the sublime, an image exceeds all given schemata but ultimately leads to the

[11] Within Kant's "Transcendental Doctrine of Judgment," schemata prepare the field of experience for images of specific events of apprehension to be connected to particular schema (e.g. without the schema "triangle" a three sided geometric figure remains only an isolated appearance in the spatial field). As Kant writes, "the *image* is a product of the empirical faculty of reproductive imagination; the *schema* of sensible concepts… is a product and, as it were, a monogram, of pure *a priori* imagination, through which, and in accordance with which, images themselves first become possible" (*CPR*, 183). No image ever has direct access to the pure concept—a dog, my dog, can never stand in for the concept "dog"—while a schema does not correspond to any particular example represented by an image. Though hierarchically positioned above the mere image, there is always a point of non-identity in the schema at which the image exceeds its concept.

[12] Hereafter *CJ*.

Ur-schema or reason itself. The strange and largely unsatisfying teleology of this analytic utilizes the image, in its most powerful incarnation, to assert the hierarchy of the mind over the material world. As Kant writes, "…it is nature's inadequacy to the ideas … that constitutes what both repels and yet attracts us at the same time, because it is a dominance that reason exerts over sensibility only for the sake of expanding it commensurably with reason's own domain (the practical one) and letting it look outward toward the infinite, which for sensibility is an abyss" (*CJ* 124). Where the image's function in the imagination was once ambivalently lodged in the core of cognitive processes, here the image is cast outward into "inadequate" nature in order for the imagination to synthesize its overwhelming power in the name of an even more dominant, and autonomous, reason. Though the images of the reproductive imagination remain a necessary aspect of human engagement with extension, they are preceded, superseded, by a "pure" imagination that orders the chaotic and threatening materiality represented by images.

Much as Schulte-Sasse suggests the aesthetic emerges as a repository for both the products of the imagination and the capacity for judging their value, Kant's splitting of the imagination in to productive and reproductive, and the attendant distinction between schemata and images, externalizes the indeterminacy, the liminality, of the images of the imagination. Where the image was once the sign of the influence of external, material bodies within the interiority of the mind, in the analytic of the sublime the image is the conduit for the affirmation and projection of reason's power. Indeed both the emergence of an autonomous realm of aesthetics and the reduction of the image to a simulacra of

natural phenomena represent a shifting of images onto the side of matter. Thus by the time Henri Bergson publishes *Matter and Memory* in the twilight of the 19th century, he can write: "Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of 'images.' And by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*—an existence placed halfway between the 'thing' and the 'representation'" (9). For Bergson the world is one of dynamic interaction, the "aggregate of images," and "image" conceptualizes the multiplicity of matter and action. As such, the question of inside and outside is neutralized by deploying "image" as a designator of conditional relations rather than stable states. Bergson writes, "Every image is within certain images and without others; but of the aggregate of images we cannot say that it is within us or without us, since interiority and exteriority are only relations among images" (27) There are only relations between images, within and without the subject. Through images that are not things in themselves but attributes of things as they interact in specific ways, Bergson mobilizes the image to reassert, in a way reminiscent of Spinoza's monism, the mutual constitution and indeterminate interaction between the human mind and extension. In contrast to Kant, whose hierarchy of schemata over image withdraws the mind from matter to assert its potency, Bergson refers to "living matter" as "*centers of real action*" directed "outward" in relations between images and the "indetermination that surrounds [action]" (emphasis in original, 31 and 33). The perception of an image, for Bergson, is directed by the interest of action; what is perceived in an image is that which stands out in an object, marking it for potential

actions.[13] Far from being inert and dumb, or, for that matter, pure mental representations of physical impressions, any image is an agglomeration of past and potential perceptions and actions between the image and other images to be enacted in and through "centers of indetermination." If, as Bergson claims, "The reality of matter consists in the totality of its elements and of their actions of every kind," then images are surfaces through which actions take place (Bergson 36). Thus "image" names not only perceived and active matter but matter in *all* its perceptions and actions within the "aggregate of images" over time and space making them irreducible to representations of things and events within the mind.[14] Indeed, Bergson's conception of the image is, in the end, disarticulated from the imagination in order to challenge the distinction between materiality and the interiority of cognition.[15]

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[13] Against a fully anthropocentric conception of images as instantiations of matter determined solely by human perception and action, for Bergson, images are not simply what is perceived in objects by living matter: "…an image may *be* without *being perceived*" (35). As matter, images have an existence of their own, which is realized in the multitude of potential movements, actions, and relations they are continually engaged in. "How then does [the image… I call a material object] not appear to be in itself that which it is to me?" asks Bergson, "It is because, being bound up with all other images, it is continued in those which follow it, just as it prolonged those which preceded it" (35-36).

[14] Deleuze argues that images are spatial, and thus infinitely quantifiable and divisible, unlike memory, which is the register of becomings and difference in kind, rather than degree. Yet this seems to me to overlook the relation between images and action that is at the heart of Bergson's conceptualization of both matter and memory. See Chapter 3 "Memory as Virtual Coexistence" in *Bergsonism* (51-72).

[15] With regard to the central problematic of duration and temporality in *Matter and Memory*, it is the virtuality embedded within the image, which illustrates Bergson's folding and subsumption of space into time. Images are neither isolated as time nor space but partake of both these dimensions of matter. As Bergson states, "*perception is master of space in the exact measure in which action is master of time*" (emphasis in original, 32). The image, following Deleuze's reading of Bergson, manifests the relation between the actual (space) and the virtual (time) by acting as the surface on which they comingle. Insofar as the image occupies space, carries out and receives actions, etc., it is actual and present to itself; insofar as the image carries forward past actions, unfulfilled actions, and potential actions, it is virtual. Thus the actual and virtual continually pass from one to the other in the image; it is as "actual" image that the "virtual" image of past actions, as well as past and future potential action, is expressed. In their actual state (which is always also virtual) images presuppose duration, in terms both of their own singularity and the aggregate of images to which they belong. Whatever point on a spatial grid an image occupies, or is assigned at a particular moment, it also represents a combination of expanded—the past and potential future—and contracted—the specific time of perception and its indeterminate, yet necessary, action—

With Bergson the image has almost entirely drifted from its status as a mental impression of material experience to become an attribute of matter itself. Rather than follow a straight line, the telos of the image just tracked is curved, nearly circular. That is, even though Bergson's conception of matter as "an aggregate of images" projects the image into the realm of empirical life, it does not stand in opposition to the 17th century conception of the image as the trace of matter inscribed on the mind. Spinoza and Bergson, of course, share the conviction that mind and body, extension and thought, are not separate, segregated realities with one positioned over the other, determining its value and meaning, but their respective senses of the image remain significantly distinct as what was once confined to the processes of the mind now circulates and participates directly in the world of things. First distilled as a figure of the imagination's conflicted but essential role in cognition, the image moved from essential, yet chaotic and threatening, fodder for the mind to discipline itself, through to the substance of matter's interactions. Throughout this process, the image has remained indeterminate, always positioned between these worlds, even as it leaned one way or the other. As such, by the time Bergson generalizes the materiality of images, the concept remains inflected, perhaps even infected, by its association with the imaginary, now projecting fantasy outward as a class of representational objects and aesthetic form. To be sure, neither the imagination, nor the understanding of the image as its product, disappear from philosophical discourse, remaining an important concern, especially, for both

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duration. As such, space is itself durational, constituted by the shifting relations between images and their actions.

phenomenology and cognitive philosophy.[16] However, rather than continue detailing the philosophical life of the image, the following section focuses on the combining of a more materialist conception of the image (in Bergson) with the emergence of technologically produced and reproducible images as it is developed in Walter Benjamin's "dialectical-image" and embodied in the strange fantasies and intractable details of *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*.

II. Dialectical-Images go to Market

Composed and published in the waning years of the 19th century, Bergson's recasting of images as material phenomena and jettisoning of the imagination coincides with the rise of technologically produced and reproduced mimetic images in photography and cinema. While Bergson hardly engages these technologies directly,[17] by the interwar period of the 20th century the photograph and cinema at once bring further prominence to the image, and also contribute to its sense of autonomy from the imagination; or, from another perspective, the photographic and moving image becomes the means for projecting the imagination into the material world. Walter Benjamin's work of roughly the same period, especially in terms of the enigmatic and never fully theorized dialectical-image, continues the image's trajectory outward, both philosophically and under the auspices of emergent image production (and reproduction) technologies, in the process decisively turning the

[16] Two figures that deserve specific mention in this regard are Jean Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In particular, Sartre's *The Imaginary* offers a thorough reconceptualization of the imagination as divorced from perception but fundamental to consciousness. For Sartre, the imagination is the ultimate faculty of the mind insofar as it is the site of thought without an object, thought working precisely in the absence of any referent outside of consciousness itself.

[17] Bergson's famous critique of cinema in the final chapter of *Creative Evolution* notwithstanding, I make no claim for a causal relation between the emergence of these media and Bergson's conception of images.

image toward history and politics. Benjamin, even more than his contemporaries,[18] engaged the emergent modernity of mass production and consumption through its products, including images. In doing so, Benjamin attempted to analyze the ways mass produced objects are at once singular things and interchangeable commodities, with images as, in a sense, the paradigmatic instantiation of capitalist modernity: the photographic image that captures and freezes the contingent profilmic event yet can be nearly endlessly reproduced and disseminated.

Though the term itself only appears in the "Paralipomena" to the posthumously published "On the Concept of History," thesis five of that essay captures the indeterminate relation to the subjective and objective world at the core of the dialectical-image, "The past can be seized only as an image that flashes up at the moment of its recognizability, and is never seen again. […] For it is an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear in any present that does not recognize itself as intended in that image" (Selected Writings v. 4[19] 390-391). Benjamin's reformulation of history is more fully explored in Chapter Four, but for now it is his turn to the image, which is left undefined and lacks the modifier "dialectical," that is of interest. In his descriptive language, Benjamin presents the image of the past as an exteriority "flashing up," assaulting the subject's perception in the present, even as the call to recognize the past points to an imaginative act. As Benjamin articulates the image it appears as at once a

[18] See for instance, the work of early, medium specific, theorists of film and photography such as Rudolf Arnheim, Bela Belasz, Abel Gance, and Jean Epstein as well as Siegfried Kracauer. Kracauer, of course, shared Benjamin's interests and context but is more decisive in his critiques, focusing on the massification that connects industrial production with popular consumption in the Weimar years.
[19] Hereafter SW v.4.

material event and a speculative point of contact with the past. As such the image, in "the concept of history," holds together the present immediacy of empirical experience with the subjective resonances of the past, where the "before" of history is decisively passed yet its trace remains in the present image, demanding recognition. Rendering the distinction between history and memory[20] porous, Benjamin collectivizes memory insofar as the present "moment of danger" is fundamentally social and political; it is not, or at least not primarily, the personal past Benjamin is concerned with (SW v.4 391). There for the taking, even as it remains inflected by a notion of subjective investiture, the collective and, presumably, material (in someway, at least) image constitutes, in the form of an "appropriat[ed]… memory," a recognition between past and present, in which the collectivized subject recognizes itself in a fleeting encounter with an indeterminate past.

With its repetition of "flashes," the passing moment frozen in time and the fleeting replay of past events in the present, the conception of the image at work here points, at least obliquely, to photography and film. This linguistic resonance with the snapshot and moving image is also evident in what amounts to a definition of the dialectical-image in *The Arcades Project*: "image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is

[20] Though this chapter has not thoroughly, nor adequately, pursued the relationahip between imagination, images, and memory, memory is often the paradigmatic example of the mental image. Often as in Hume, memory, understood as recall of a particular, material experience, exists as a remainder available only to the subject. While it is buffered by the facticity of the past event, memory images are usually understood as internal to the subject of experience. For Benjamin, unlike other thinker's distinctions between (or within) the imagination and memory, this recognition "does not mean recognizing [the past] 'the way it really was.' (SW v.4, 391). Where for earlier philosophies of memory images, memory carries a nearly indexical relation to the past—i.e. a lasting imprint of events on the mind and fixed in their perception—Benjamin's intermingling of memory and history demands that images be flexible and mobile in order to render the past as different from itself.

dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical; is not progression but image, suddenly emergent" (Benjamin 462). In this formulation Benjamin presents the dialectical-image as holding together and binding disparate elements in an instant, here the past and present, allowing them room to play in relation to one another. This capacity of the image to express multiple and even contradictory contents simultaneously, allowing them to mingle while remaining in tension within the same object or figure, constitutes the dialectical component of the dialectical-image. As Susan Buck-Morss writes in the *Dialectics of Seeing*, the dialectical-image "can perhaps best be pictured in terms of coordinates of contradictory terms, the synthesis of which is not a movement toward resolution, but the point at which their axes intersect" (210). Indeed this conception of the dialectical-image as an encounter between different, seemingly incompatible things is already present in the earlier and now (in)famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," and its treatment of film, photography, and image reproduction. There the images of technological reproduction uncannily evince the characteristics of the dialectical-image *avant la lettre*.

Amidst and following from the central conflict between the "aura" of the ritualized traditional art object and the new media's transitory reproducibility the essay hones in on attendant tensions in contemporary image production and consumption, primary among them the relation between conscious and unconscious attributes of the new technologies. On one hand are the conscious human desires and intentions apparent in the new technical proficiencies among artist-technicians (the cinematographer as

surgeon) and emergent image literacy among consumers (the newspaper boys and their "quasi-expert" observations), as well as the explicit commodity nature of film and photographic images. On the other hand is the subtle enfolding and normalization of modern, technical life through the apparatus, inuring its audience to the shock of intensifying speed and massification on an unconscious level. Both conscious and unconscious aspects of mechanically produced images have revolutionary potential but "It should not be forgotten, of course, that there can be no political advantage derived from this control [of the image by artist-technicians and spectator-consumers] until film has liberated itself from the fetters of capitalist exploitation. Film capital uses the revolutionary opportunities implied by this control for counterrevolutionary purposes" ("The Work of Art" Second Version[21] 33). Technologically reproduced images stand at the intersection of these conscious and unconscious, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, drives and forces. And even beyond these new capacities, latent desires of the masses, and capital's hegemonic control, the unconscious dimension of technologically produced images expands into the "non-human" realm.

Film (and by extension photographic) images offer, according to Benjamin, "another nature which speaks to the camera as compared to the eye. 'Other' above all in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious" (Benjamin, WoA 37). Even as film and its camera familiarize and anesthetize spectators with "the necessities governing our lives," their technological effects such as image enlargement and slow motion, yield a "vast and unsuspected field

[21] Hereafter WoA..

of action" that "not merely clarifies what we see distinctly 'in any case,' but bring[s] to light entirely new structures of matter…" (Benjamin, WoA 37). The unconscious dimension on offer here is both material and machinic and the access to this hidden, unconscious world afforded by the film cannot (despite the scholarly embarrassment of the present) be disassociated from Benjamin's fascination with the film and photographic apparatus's "hands-free" reproduction of the visual field (WoA 20).[22] Benjamin names this the "optical unconscious" and sees it as an attribute of film and photography as "second technology." As opposed to "first technology," which "sought to master nature," "second technology" "… aims rather at an *interplay* between man and nature" through a form of differential autonomy in which the influence of a human controller is separated from the functions of the machine (emphasis added, Benjamin, WoA 26). While the camera is the privileged piece of "second technology" here, it is the image in its reproducibility that registers and disseminates the coexistence of the human and machinic, revolutionary and conservative, conscious and unconscious forces at play in capitalist modernity. After all, it is not through the viewfinder that the spectator encounters the "hidden, unconscious world" of second technology that Benjamin identifies in the enlargement and temporal variability of cinema but in the *images* produced with cameras.[23] Thus, if "[I]t is through the camera that we first discover the

[22] Actually, Benjamin's first gesture towards "hands-free" mechanical reproduction occurs in his "Little History of Photography" from 1931. See *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* (274-298).

[23] In addition, the necessity of combination and recombination made possible by reproducibility, and situated at the heart of filmmaking, introduces a hallucinatory associative interplay that both encounters and draws on the variable unconscious of the spectator to produce a form of "collective perception" (Benjamin, WoA 38).

optical unconscious,"[24] then it is *in* the images produced by the camera that its contours and potentials are realized (Benjamin, WoA 37).

The notion of an "optical unconscious" is the product of a dialectical-image; a product that itself turns back to the concept. The optical unconscious is only apprehended in a constellation with other, contradictory elements also engendered by photographic and cinematic images, such as the "what we see distinctly 'in any case,'" the inoculation of the masses to the shocks of modern life, and the "commodity character" of photographs and films. Such images hold together and in tension these antinomic terms, seeming to model the dialectical-image produced at a flash, ephemeral but awaiting redemption, activated in the mind of the spectator while existing in material form. Like Benjamin's descriptions of dialectical-images, mechanically produced images strike the subject from the outside, as material phenomena, but their impact operates at a cognitive level, seemingly between conscious and unconscious, reality and fantasy. In both aspects, dialectical-images emerge, like photographic images, "hands free" and in excess of human intention. Dialectical-images are, then, themselves attributes of this "entirely new structure of matter" revealed through media technologies. Benjamin's dialectical-image (constellated with the photographic and cinematic image) detaches the image from both the object it represents and the subject who perceives it, extending the tendency of the image to detach without losing contact with the imagination. Thus, image here ceases to

[24] The preceding discussion of the conscious/unconscious poles of the "Work of Art" essay is deeply indebted to Miriam Hansen's reading in *Cinema and Experience*, especially her elaboration of Benjamin's "optical unconscious (see chapter 5, especially pages 155-162). Along with her insightful interpretation, her work draws the reader's attention to the second version of Benjamin's essay, from which all the material above is extracted.

represent only another thing, situation, or mental perception and presents a new existence formed in the interplay of the past and present, subject and object, interior and exterior.

With Benjamin's dialectical-image we arrive at the core aspects of the "image" in "image-document." More specifically, Benjamin's conception of the dialectical-image, not only as a philosophical figure but also as a potential of photographic images, situates the image between and in tension with, on one hand, the represented event and, on the other, the reception and recognition of this representation, without reducing the image to either. "Image," understood in this way, becomes perhaps the most intimate alien relationship in 20th and 21st century culture. Never fully disassociated from either the creative production of the imagination or its counterpart, mere fancy, images remain, in part, the counterpoint and alternative to reason as an explanatory form unbound by the strictures of rationalistic rigor, but also a dangerous, illusory force for the same reason. In its opening gambit *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu* positions the film to come as an expression of the tensions that the image now holds together as past, present, and projected future mingle with empirical events and fantasized states. This tense constellation is particularly apparent in a paired set of images that are emblematic of the film's charting of Ceausescu's Romania.

During a sequence connecting Ceausescu's support for Czechoslovakian resistance against the Soviet invasion to hosting Nixon on his first trip to the Communist Eastern Bloc, we see Ceausescu visit a shopping center in Bucharest. In a series of short, black and white shots lasting barely a minute, Ceausescu interacts with shoppers and various workers in shops ranging from fruit stands to a bakery and general market. From

the moment of his arrival via public transportation (conspicuously lacking any other members of the public), Ceausescu is thronged by citizens in cramped framings as he samples the offerings in the market, engages in a back and forth with a proprietor, and inspects the bread at the bakery (Fig. 1.1-1.2). Everything in the images appears abundant, from the well-stocked cases and shelves to the people's good will toward state pageantry. Nearly every shot is crowded with people, lively props in the photo-op, energetically greeting Ceausescu and the camera, seeking the attention of both. As products of a staged event, which they clearly and unabashedly are, these images are explicit projections of Ceausescu and the state's desiring imagination. It is tempting, then, to see them as mere fantasy, a benign veil hiding the dictator's machinations, but the images here also seem to express willing cooperation from all participants, as though they were all part of imagining this plentiful present and hopeful future.

Fig. 1.1 *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*: Ceausescu haggles with a shopkeeper

Fig. 1.2 *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*: The leader as bread inspector

Viewed in the context of the *Autobiography* this sequence of images is exemplary of the indeterminate relations typical of the image in image-document. Its propagandistic thrust positions it squarely within the suspicious illusionism of the imagination, offering no grounds for determining the cause for this scene and the enthusiasms depicted. Yet its historical markings enforce and express the materiality and extension of these images as

well as of the event itself. Certainly from the vantage point of the post-Communist 21st century these images are imbued with a sense of foreboding, given the knowledge of what is to come; but in the absence of any explicit sign of the rising security state or the impoverishing effects of the cold war,[25] the apparent joy of the mass points to a different, unactualized future. Can we recognize in this image our own "moment of danger"? Does the scene's foregrounding of patriotic fervor "flash up" as a reminder to be wary or should we "hold fast" this "image of the past" as an unexpected reminder that triumphant capitalism was not, is not, and never will be *a fait accompli*?

Though it offers no definite answers to these questions, instead simply posing them anew, yet differently, the *Autobiography* returns for another shopping market publicity stunt later in the film. This return, over a decade later in Romanian history, seems modeled after the earlier scene and its images but is significantly different in tone and affect. Arriving by car, Ceausescu is greeted not by crowds but by representatives of the shopping center and bureaucrats from "commerce," who hand him flowers that he immediately and callously passes on to handlers (Fig. 1.3). In the ten shots that follow, Ceausescu and his entourage of suited officials and military personnel stroll through a mostly empty indoor market. Greeted with applause by small groups of men and the few shop workers we see, the frame in these images is full of empty space. Gone are the crowds from the earlier scene, as well as the piles of food. Once again these images are staged propaganda (Fig. 1.4), attempting to project Ceausescu's fantasy of prosperity but

[25] See Christina Vatulescu's *Police Aesthetics* for an account of the Romanian security apparatus under Ceausescu. Her argument there has compelling resonances with the film's formal methodology, especially in terms of the forced "autobiography" included in secret police files. On cold war scarcity in Romania, see Katherine Verdery's *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?*

here scarcity rules the day as both official players and the on the spot extras are unable to muster any enthusiasm for the spectacle. Like the concept of the image itself, material reality seems to have overtaken imagination as these images express a grim state of affairs, yet their mere existence testifies to the continued investment in imagining the present as different from itself.

Fig. 1.3 *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*: Flowers from commerce

Fig. 1.4 *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu:* A cursory inspection


Fig. 1.5 *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*: A knowing smirk

The tensions identified in the earlier scene are certainly not resolved in this repetition of images from the market but their coordinates have shifted significantly. Obviously these images register the failure of that earlier vision of the future but they still offer no causal explanation. Instead, there is a starkness to the images, exaggerated by the washed out and grainy quality of the video image, and a clear misalignment between the

orchestrators of the visit and its "authentic" participants. Just as the image in the film's opening appeared to catch Ceausescu, confronted by an ad hoc tribunal promising his demise, peering off into a contemplative distance, an image here captures a young woman behind a counter, situated on the left hand border of the frame, smirking and rolling her eyes at the farce she is forced to enact (Fig. 1.5). If at the outset the film suggests it contains the wistful remembrances of Ceausescu's time in power, this look casts a harsh and skeptical glance toward his coming end. Different times and temporalities are piled on top of each other here, each image holding together actual and virtual pasts and futures. That is, this second market photo-op is itself of the past even as it glances back at another event in the past, which is also an earlier scene in this film; and, simultaneously, these images are an actualized future repetition of that earlier moment in which the imagined promise of abundance runs aground on the rocks of history, even as they point to a future without Ceausescu. Again, we might ask, how can we recognize these images as our own? What is the danger they respond to?

The sets of images described above, these image-documents, are neither wholly products of the imagination nor infallible reproductions of the world but the point at which they encounter each other, interact, and differentiate themselves. In the movement from imagination to image technologies, the conception of the image as an imprint of the physical world on the human mind persists, even as the image now exceeds these confines, existing as a material reality in its own right while projecting the inscriptions of the imagination outward. Images now circulate at ever greater quantities and speeds, while both their use in scientific and fanciful production expands. (Indeed, we are now at

a point where images *of* the mind have become the resource for studying the effects of images *on* the mind.) It is this circulation of images as objects, fragments from the "new structure of matter," and their affects as sites of encounter between the world and the spectators asked to recognize it, that the "image-document" attempts to engage. *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*, and many other films, makes use of image-documents in just this sense, allowing the images to join internal and external, past and present, fantasy and reality together. This conception of the image also reverberates with the "document," in its dominant contemporary meaning as a piece of evidence and with the more enigmatic, anachronistic concept produced in the next section.

III. Document: Pedagogical Object

The word "document" is derived from the Latin *docēre*, to teach. It reaches English through Old French ("lesson, written evidence") in the 15th century and shares with the French the conjoining of teaching and proof. Of course, the evidentiary dimension of the document is well known and rivals the verb form of the word, to document, for the focus of documentary studies. Indeed, this sense of the term is at the core of the annual documentary studies event and publication series "Visible Evidence." The function of images as proof of events in the world is important to the image-document concept under construction here as well. Nonetheless, the aspect of the document that speaks to pedagogy, to the *ways* of understanding the world (rather than simply recording and storing its events) through objects, compliments the indeterminate materiality of the image and its function in documentary, especially when it comes to found and

appropriated images. It is not the authority of etymology that matters here but, as with the conceptual history of the image, the remainder and coexistence of a difference within the concept of the document. To this end, the relations between pedagogy and the document that this section attempts to tease out focus on the potential of images, as documents, to facilitate and realize the activity of subjectivization. This means distinguishing a particular sense of pedagogy from the more familiar model of information dissemination and explication associated with documentary.

Even as the evidentiary notion of document and documenting dominates the discourse around documentary film and video, education remains a consistent theme. The educational use of documentary, whether in formal institutional settings or in other venues, is far from a neglected topic. As anyone familiar with the academic, archival, and experimental film communities knows well, studies, conferences, anthologies, festivals, and preservation projects around "educational" or "instructional" film have flourished in recent years, while work on the history of documentary, from Eric Barnouw's seminal *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* to Jonathan Kahana's *Intelligence Work: The Politics of American Documentary*, consistently continues to detail the interrelation between the documentary and institutional efforts on the part of State, quasi-State, and non-State actors to educate the public. It is now a fairly uncontroversial historical narrative that documentary form coheres in the late 1920s and 30s around particular state projects and auspices, whether those of the new Soviet State and its push toward modernization or Western liberal states' appropriation of this ethos for their own nation building efforts (most notably Grierson's work in both the UK and Canada, as well

as the New Deal documentaries).[26] Not surprisingly, both in historical and conceptual terms, the model of pedagogy identified with this generative engagement with pedagogy implicitly or explicitly follows from John Dewey and his emphasis on the social nature of education. As Dewey writes in "My Pedagogic Creed," "the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself. Through these demands he is stimulated to act as a member of a unity, to emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling, and conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs" (427). Insofar as the State assumed the mantel of social unity, as it clearly does in the social problem documentaries of the first half of the Twentieth century, pedagogy in these films is a matter of enfolding the people into the state or the state into the people. As Jonathan Kahana argues in *Intelligence Work*, documentary form arises primarily to address a public (whether composed of state citizens or a more amorphous community such as those gathered around leftist documentaries of the 1930s and on) that the film partakes in producing.[27]

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[26]Regarding the coalescing of documentary form in the interwar years see Tom Gunning "Before Documentary: Early nonfiction film and the 'view' aesthetic," as well as Martin Loiperdinger's "World War I Propaganda Films and the Birth of the Documentary." On the institutionalization of documentary see also Paula Rabinowitz's *They Must Be Represented*, Brian Winston's *Claiming the Real II*, and essays in *Documenting the Documentary* by William Guyn ("The Art of National Projection" 83-98), Charlie Keil ("American Documentary Finds Its Voice" 119-135), and Jim Leach ("The Poetics of Propaganda" 154-170).

[27] For a more thorough examination of the historical/intellectual conjuncture around documentary's constitution as a force for public education and outreach, see especially the Introduction and first two chapters. Though Kahana focuses more on Walter Lippman, Dewey and other American Pragmatists make up the intellectual milieu contemporaneous with documentary's generic growth and its role in addressing the American "crisis of democracy" of the early 20th century.

At the core of documentary's initial pedagogical project, as it is constituted in this moment, is a two-fold gap. Though this gap is not the ontological gulf between the material world and human consciousness, i.e. the necessary and unavoidable fact of mediation—even as this decidedly bears on the gap assumed and instituted by this view of education—it occupies at once a general and particular register, evincing the doubled, compounded distance between, on one hand, the possessor of knowledge and the learner (the basic relation of teacher to student) and, on the other hand, the space separating the individual subject from its position within society (here concentrated in the mutual constitution of the citizen and the state). At the first, general level, this pedagogy presupposes that there are those with access to truth (teacher/state/filmmaker) and others (students/citizens/spectators) who must have this truth or knowledge given and explained to them. Simultaneously, the operations mobilized to reduce the space between those who lack knowledge and those who dispense knowledge also works, on the second level, to close the gap between the state, which is here the source and arbiter of knowledge, and the citizen, who is identified as the subject of the legitimate social order. Take, for example, Pare Lorentz's films for the Resettlement Administration and Farm Security Administration in the 1930s. Both *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River* present a problem, explicate its causes, and explain the (already initiated) solution (in *The River* at least). Performing the task of both informing the broader nation of a particular problem and explaining the problem to those directly experiencing, in these instances, drought and river erosion, these and similar films envision spectators for whom problem, cause, and solution remain beyond their capacities to comprehend and confront. At the same time,

their structure (what Bill Nichols famously dubbed "expository"[28]), which posits this inadequate subject, asserts their belonging in and subordination to the state and its capacities to authorize explanations and solutions.

And while these films offer to mediate between citizen spectators and their world, informing them about its past, present, and future, they also preserve some part of what separates the film and its makers from its audience. This interplay of promising to fill the gap between knowledge and ignorance, while at the same time securing the relation between a knowing (state) agency and a passive, inadequate (national) subject produces the rhetorical and promotional effect of the film through its more general concept of education. Obviously, a film like *The River* not only seeks to teach spectators but also to convince them of the truth of its diagnoses and the efficacy of the presented solution, dispensing information while withholding, foreclosing even, access to certain pieces of information and the process of decision making. In part a pragmatic necessity and an argumentative trope, the citizen subject posited/produced in this pedagogical arrangement submits to the expert's judiciousness, which the subject, as citizen, authorizes. Here the judicious minding of the gap operates in a particular national context—as it is always tied to a specific social regime as a model of instituted subjectivization—but its maintenance is key to the broader subjectivizing effect of this pedagogical relation in which Dewey's

[28] This first of documentary "modes" is generally associated with the use of authoritative voiceover narration (mor on this in Chapter 3), which both of Lorentz's films utilize, to make sense both of the problem the film addresses and the content of the images assembled to represent this problem. Chapter three of the dissertation, "Documentary Enunciation," more fully analyzes the relation between exposition and images.

"demands of the social situations" assumes an excess that the student, or in this case spectator, is not able, or not ready to access.

Beyond the terrain of didactic social problem films and their explicit educational attitudes, documentary remains generally premised on this distance between knowing and telling, creating films which promise, like those "expository" documentaries advocating state projects, to close the distance even as it is reinscribed. Without following the winding road of documentary dreams and critical rerouting, the continuous return to this gap catalyzed by the pedagogical procedures described above also harbors a different pedagogical potential borne by documentary's recourse to documents. *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*, and to a far lesser extent *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*, minds this gap too. Obviously, Shub's film explicitly embraces the project of producing the new Soviet subject through its assembled images, as we will see in the following section. For its part, *The Autobiography* utilizes material marked by this purpose, images of public spectacles, speeches, and promotion of government projects, etc. intended to legitimize the state's claim to paternalistic authority, while standing at a remove from this pedagogical impulse. *The Autobiography* offers a critique of precisely this sort of state education, yet doesn't entirely escape its pedagogical model, nearly ontologizing the gap through its refusal to draw clear conclusions from its strange history lesson. Nonetheless, the undermining of knowledge the film produces through its assemblage of documents is also an opportunity to refuse the hierarchy of pedagogy premised on the always receding horizon of the pedagog's access to greater truth. It is the film's reliance on documents that foregrounds the specificity of images and is exemplary of, but in no way unique to,

the way in which documentary images operate as teaching objects. In this sense, the use of such documents is an apt site for an alternative approach to documentary pedagogy.

"There was only one rule: he must be able to show, in the book, the *materiality* of everything he says," writes Jacques Rancière: "He will be asked to write compositions and perform improvisations under the same conditions: he must use the words and turns of phrase in the book to construct his sentences; he must show, *in the book*, the facts on which his reasoning is based. In short, the master must be able to *verify in the book the materiality* of everything the student says" (emphasis added, *Ignorant Schoolmaster*[29] 20). The verifying master invoked here is the titular *Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Joseph Jacotot. At the base of Rancière's recounting of Jacotot's "intellectual adventure" is an argument in support of a basic axiom: the equality of intelligences.[30] Rejecting the presupposed hierarchy of mental capacity, Rancière utilizes Jacotot's nineteenth century pedagogical experiment to undermine the unspoken and virtually unchallenged presupposition of unequal intelligence by showing that its discourse relies on its opposite: the equal capacity of the "unintelligent" to understand the commands directed at them by the "intelligent." In order to level this critique, Rancière hones in on the shared phenomenon of the message that simultaneously asserts inequality while enacting and actualizing the equal capacity of sender and receiver to understand. Putting aside—for now—the hegemonic maintenance of an unequal society, it is this mobilization of the *fact* of speech that bears on the document as pedagogical object. Starting from the very fact

[29] Hereafter *IS*.
[30] This claim is central to Rancière's entire project and is explored in greater depth and in the context of politics in Chapter Three, "Documentary Enunciation."

that Jacotot's experiment persisted in the form of documents stored in the archives, Rancière eschews the obsession with empirical causes and their explanation ("we will name facts without pretending to assign them causes") in favor of facts as common material between subjects, much as Benjamin's dialectical-image collectivizes the past that flashes up in the present (50). Facts are the center of the process of learning posited here not because they operate as supposedly neutral, authorizing transparencies but because, "Intelligence's act is to see and to compare what has been seen. It sees at first by chance. It must repeat, to create the conditions to re-see what it has seen, in order to see similar facts, in order to see facts that could be the cause of what is seen" (Rancière, *IS* 55). A fact is something whose existence, and not significance, is shared by those that encounter it and this existence is the starting point for whoever wishes to take it up, describe it, analyze it, and make use of it.

Perhaps the first fact, reminiscent of the initial images of the imagination, is that all of us are "surrounded by objects that speak… all at once, in different languages" (Jacotot, quoted in Rancière, *IS* 51). Though this fact (or facts, as it were) is fodder for initial language learning, targeted pedagogy requires focalization: a specific, finite fact, or set of facts, around which a community of intelligences gathers. For Rancière and Jacotot, both beginning from perhaps the most accepted repository of knowledge, it is the book—specifically the bilingual edition of *Telemachus*—that acts as "the thing in common, placed between two minds…," functioning as "… an always available source of *material* verification…" (*IS* 22, 32). Rather than a source of the unexplored and bottomless depth of the explicative gap in conventional pedagogy, the book in this

configuration is a cross between mute existence, its materiality, and open expressivity, which we might call signification. The book and its copies, mechanically reproduced by the printing press, are at once the same, displaying a particular arrangement of words, punctuation, etc. to all, and variable, calling out for, perhaps even demanding, to be read, understood, reused, and manipulated. Like the externalized image, the book is an imaginative object decoupled from the individual subject and put into circulation. As a "thing," indeed "the thing," the book is not only a stable nexus for an encounter staged between intelligences without any guaranteed result but an empirically shared testing ground; the book is "a totality: a center to which one can attach everything new one learns; a circle in which one can *understand* each of these new things, find ways to say what one sees in it, what one thinks about it, what one makes of it" (Rancière, *IS* 20). Mute, or polysemic, the book persists as a site of verification for the work of intelligence, where what is learned can be indicated, articulated, and shared between equals. Put differently, the book is a document in the pedagogical sense: not a fact to be memorized, nor a lesson to be ingrained in the pupil, but a variable constant, a paradoxical tool for the exercise of thought.

As fact and document the book has, as Rancière proclaims, "no false bottom" (10). In its materiality, the book does not contain a secret "depth" that the student has no access to and must rely on the master pedagogue to—someday, somehow—explicate for them. André Bazin draws out a similar dimension to indexical images in his championing of Italian Neorealism: "Facts are facts, our imagination makes use of them, but they do not exist inherently for this purpose. [….] The facts follow one another, and the mind is

forced to observe their resemblances… (*What is Cinema v. 2* 35-36). For Bazin, the stark images in post-War Italian film, and the fragmentary structure of their narratives, highlights the indifferent, yet engrossing, materiality of photographic and cinematic images, which appear as phenomena before meaning and remain so after meanings are extracted from them. This is the underside of the tautology "facts are facts:" while usually uttered to proclaim the transparency of meaning, facts only attest to their impassive existence. This characterization of images as facts, and as documents, at once makes the fundamental claim around which much of documentary studies has cohered—that the supposedly indexical quality of images is no guarantee of objective significance[31]—without reducing images to this measure. Instead documents and facts, as Rancière's turn to will over intelligence and Bazin's claims about aesthetics suggest, are produced and productive even if ambiguous and transient, and cannot be judged solely by a given relation of correspondence (representation). It is as shared, and thus contested, material objects through which, as Bazin (uncannily echoing his philosophical precursors) writes, "the imagination makes use of them," that documents enable and facilitate the "intellectual adventures" Rancière and Jacotot find in the shadows of conventional pedagogy.

Against the secret depth of the text, the document is the fact of the fact, its facticity, not a passageway to an always out of reach elsewhere but a surface to inhabit and situate oneself in relation to. In terms of education as an activity, and not an

[31] Certainly Bazin's work, especially its reception in English language scholarship, has been read in terms of the inherent meaningfulness of the world captured by film, a stance often associated with his Catholicism, which perhaps explains the general aversion to his work in documentary studies, despite what seem obvious overlaps.

institution, this conception of the fact, as well as the document, suggests a different, parallel model of subjectivization as well, though one that is no less social and collective than Dewey's. The conception of the document as a materiality shared between subjects, rather than an object of storage containing a standing reserve of meanings to be unearthed by those the social distribution of capacities authorizes, takes part in a process of subjectivization as a claim and enactment of the common capacity to think and express in and through the available facts. As such the meaning of a document is not limited to its relation to any single event, subject, moment, or truth but changes and differs from itself even as its configuration of elements remain consistent in the varied uses to which it is put. For instance, as the following section details, *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*'s assemblage of documents from the Czarist archive at once expresses a particular notion of subjectivization produced in the context of the Soviet revolution even as it continues to make these documents available for verification and subjectivization outside this historical context and its goals.

IV. Facts on the Conveyor Belt

Fall of the Romanov Dynasty was made and released within a discursive context ensconced in an investment in documents as bearers of facts and as facts themselves. Shub's film was produced within the orbit of avant-garde cultural production and debates around the place of art in the revolutionary Soviet state. Among the many reactions to this situation and heated conflicts around the appropriate aesthetic and identity for art production in the socialist future, *Fall* seems to embody the tenets of the "factography"

movement advanced by the writers of *Novyi Lef*. Yet, at the same time, its relentless didacticism also shows signs of the coming consolidation of Soviet art under the sign of "socialist realism." Indeed, Joshua Malitsky argues that *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* should be seen as a hinge text, situated between the modernist experimentation of the immediate post-revolution years and the ideological centralization of Stalinism and the "proleterianization" of cultural production. As Malitsky writes, "By the mid 1920s, this extended period of war, isolation, and famine had come to an end. Longing for economic and political stability and order was emerging. [….] Artists and the Party alike moved towards celebrating control over spontaneity, objectivity over subjectivity, and organization over inspiration" ("Esfir Shub and the Film Factory-Archive"). Though the critics and theorists of *Lef* were participants in the avant-garde—and thus in tension with the push for more "accessible," i.e. less experimental, cultural products in the name of the proletariat and modernization—in this reading their praise of Shub and theorization of factography embraced the quest for an authentic and objective composition of the Soviet past and future centered on the intersection of the archive and the factory as opposed to the chaotic intensity of Vertovian "newsreel." Assembled from footage stored in archives, *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*'s reliance on already existing images exemplified the move away from the elite artistic genius, which carried the taint of bourgeois ideology (and biography), toward the artist as worker—after all Shub's background included the labor of anonymously re-editing Western films for Soviet audiences. Malitsky links the method of putting together images produced by others to Taylorist

factory production and its highly rationalized reduction of the worker to mathematical efficiency:[32]

> The desire to synthesize work and art pervaded much of the critical thinking following the Revolution. In terms of critical work on documentary film, the film factory-archive became a space where Taylorist principles could be applied to non-fiction film production. By removing the subjective input of the worker, the film and industrial product alike became more objective and authentic. Most importantly, in doing so, these became efficient, productive spaces—spaces that could be relied upon in the future and, on account of their continuity, could shape the past. (Malitsky, "Esfir Shub and the Film Factory-Archive")

The point of contact between Taylorism and the "film factory-archive" is a division of labor that supposedly minimizes the subjective input of the worker, whether camera person or editor, in favor of the mechanical and objective functioning of a machinic system. According to Malitsky, the "factory-archive," which can be seen as intimately related to factography more generally,[33] relied on a "utopian element" derived from "a positivist assumption about filmic indexicality—a belief… that film's uniqueness rests in its ability to capture reality unproblematically" ("Esfir Shub and the Film Factory-Archive").

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[32] Though Malitsky makes no mention of it, Jonathan Beller makes a similar argument regarding Eisenstein's film theory and practice in "The Spectatorship of the Proletariat."

[33] Malitsky makes this link himself but it might also, ironically, be made via Vertov's dream of a "factory of film facts." Ironic because factography challenged Vertov's own polemics regarding the kino-eye.

"Utopian" here, as it so often does, implies illusory. In this case, beyond the naïve belief in unproblematic indexicality, the illusion supposedly linking factography, the factory archive, and Taylorism, was the belief that "By decreasing the subjectivity of workers, the object itself gained authority," with the result being an unambiguous and unfettered production of reality (Malitsky, "Esfir Shub and the Film Factory-Archive"). As such, *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* becomes "part of a larger project designed to tame excess, promote efficiency, and to achieve mastery through consolidation and detailed planning" (Malitsky, "Esfir Shub and the Film Factory-Archive"). According to this reading the pedagogical impulse and influence of this film is two fold: on one hand, its selection and ordering of images utilized documents, facts, to offer a clear and direct explanation of the historical causes of the Revolution and an endorsement of the Soviet future in the name of the new revolutionary Soviet consciousness; on the other, its method of production utilized a tightly crafted script to determine the choice and deployment of facts, producing order from the chaos of accumulated documents, and exemplifying the proper approach to documentary production and the handling of documents. From either perspective, *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* gives the lie to the illusion that the facts, materiality itself, are steering the ship. Instead there is a centralization of control and a rigorous shaping of reality by a new technocratic managerial system. From a different perspective, then, here is the Soviet version of Kahana's "intelligence work:" the factory of film facts was the assembly line bringing together newly produced Soviet subjects to complete the production of the socialist state.

Accepting the overall discursive context Malitsky posits for both the film and factography, it is also worth looking more closely at some of the texts of factography themselves. Though the course of history took up these elements of control and centralization, the "utopian" kernel privileging the material force of the document articulated in these writings and Shub's film is more dynamic than this history allows, especially when it comes to the subjectivizing potentials of facts and documents. Given the centrality of photography for factography and *Fall* alike, the notion that indexical images "capture reality unproblematically" is a good starting point for engaging these texts. In doing so, though, it should also be noted that the discourse of factography is not the product of film criticism or theory but an attempt to reform literature by building on Schlovsky's and Brik's formalism. This is especially important insofar as the movement's central figure, Sergei Tret'iakov, utilized film and photography as models for disrupting what he saw as the bourgeois ideology of the classical novel centered around a heroic figure and the unified, idealist teleology of narrative. In his "Biography of the Object," Tret'iakov replaces the conventional psychological novel's narrative trajectory with what would seem the equally linear figural line of the conveyor belt "along which a unit of raw material is moved and transformed into a useful product through human effort" (61). Yet the conveyor belt and the object it carries do not simply carry forward and consolidate in its wake people and events:

> The biography of the object has an extraordinary capacity to incorporate human material. People approach the object at a cross-section of the conveyor belt. Every segment introduces a new group of people. [….]

> Remember too that the conveyor belt moving the object along has people on *both* sides. This longitudinal section of the human masses is one that cuts across classes. Encounters between employers and workers are not catastrophic, but organic moments of contact. In the biography of the object we can view class struggle synoptically at all stages of production process. [….]
>
> Thus: not the individual moving through the system of objects but the object proceeding through the system of people…. (emphasis in original, Tret'iakov, "Biography of the Object" 61-62)

In this methodological statement, the object on the metaphorical conveyor belt is a document of the common production of the social, operating as a material node traversing "the system of people" as the ground of an encounter and catalyst for subjectivization. For Tret'iakov the conveyor belt is not simply the mechanistic and inexorable movement of material along a production line but the intersection at which materiality and intelligence collide and respond to one another. Against the privileged interiority of the psychological novel, which, despite its focus on the human, presents life as individual destiny, Tret'iakov's object passes between and among subjects, linking them in the process of their own production. This object is a fact of life whose meaning is carried through and across the social, cohering in certain configurations only to be reassembled in a different encounter at another point along the conveyor belt.

For Tret'iakov the snapshot distills the affective force the object is imbued with, echoing the disruptive affects of Benjamin's image on historical continuity, while

partaking in and making legible, via its indexical quality, the intermingling and shifting relations of a changing social, political, and material field. There is no doubt that the instantaneous and mechanical mimetic dimensions of the snapshot, its indexicality, are central to the role of photography, and by extension cinema, as tools and manifestations of dialectical-materialism. If dialectical-materialism "…sees the person as a product of the reality that surrounds him and as a force that transforms this reality…," then photography is "…the technical foundation for an active dialectical-materialist relation to the world…" (Tret'iakov, "Photo-Series" 73). Here, in the zone of images, what makes the snapshot a superior document to the painting—especially portraiture—is the dynamism or movement seized by the photograph. Where the painting starts from and inscribes stability and givenness, which Tret'iakov (echoing many of his contemporaries such as Eisenstein and Vertov) associates with posed figures, the snapshot points to the unfolding of the real rendered as a still image: "The 'snapshot' designates all kinds of life shot in motion.... If the painterly portrait (the monument, the icon) was based on stasis and universal generalization, then the snapshot is dynamic. [….] It extracts individual moments of movement from the present stream of events…." ("Photo-Series" 74). Yet this praise of photographic capture is not, in the end, "unproblematic." Indeed the very features that grant the snapshot its materialist power, like the unruly but inescapable images of the imagination for Spinoza and Hume, also complicate its ability to disclose reality in its normative, general universality. Instead, Tret'iakov continues, "the snapshot has its own internal flaw: the uniqueness and contingency of what it depicts. Only rarely does the snapshot capture a moment that is characteristically expressive, a moment that

reveals an essential internal contradiction" ("Photo-Series" 74). Thus the very fact of movement and the indeterminate flow of time halted in the photograph at once points to reality as a production, the conveyor belt *in media res*, and refuses to expose its systemiticity. Tret'iakov's solution leans in the direction of cinema. Against the singularity of every snapshot, he proposes a rigorous selection of representative images arranged in photo-series and then, more directly intervening in production, the practice of "*extended photo-observation*, noting every moment of growth and change in… condition" (emphasis in original, Tret'iakov, "Photo-Series" 77). This prescription to place the snapshot in the context of other photographic images, apparently chronologically ordered, undoubtedly confirms the attempt to tame contingency through mechanized subjectivization that Malitsky points to in factography's rhetoric. But this turn to producing order out of chaos, Soviet subjects out of peasants, workers, and the former petit bourgeoisie, by rendering necessity from contingency, does not flow directly from indexicality, which in fact seems to be precisely what must be tamed, and instead evinces the tension between drawing energy from the dynamism of the photographic document and the need to harness this power to advance a "planned society." Indeed, Tret'iakov's emphasis on culling an abstract consistency from the diversity of snapshots follows the path from images in the imagination to the syntheses of reason in Enlightenment discourse but situates the entire process on the level of material reality.

Fall of the Romanov Dynasty's compilation of images is in many ways the moving image compliment to Tret'iakov's "photo-series." In the combination and movement from tsarist footage to revolutionary footage, the spectator is called on to

recognize the shifting "system of people" embedded in these images. As the film unfurls its facts along the conveyor belt, the relation between these facts and the viewer, cutting a cross section of time, space, and subjectivity, seem targeted to reveal the structure underlying the conditions of the past and necessary changes in the future. Where no individual fragment of movement encapsulates either the feudal regime or the events in the process of revolution, much less the coming reinventions of the social, the intersection of one stream of moving images with another articulates the systematic arrangement of subjects and objects grounding the past and future of the Soviet. In a distillation of the role land ownership plays in the tsarist period, for instance, Shub assembles five shots whose continuity is not based on spatial and temporal consistency, where one moment gives way to another, one space leads into the next, but on synchronic and synoptic qualities.

Barely ten minutes into the film, the sequence establishes the film's historical discourse, beginning with the intertitle "The peasants' labor under the yoke on the landowners' land." The five shots alternate between scenes of agrarian production and aristocratic leisure, in which the land is at once source and reward of wealth. First, women bale hay in a nondescript field; then the implied owner and his wife sip tea in a garden as a dog plays around their heels; cut to a mass of cattle grazing on the hillside banks of a river and back, again, to the couple enjoying the sun; the sequence ends with a bookend shot of women baling hay. While the unfolding of this footage might conventionally imply the continuity of these spaces and events—*these* peasants work *this* landowner's land where he also raises cattle—their assemblage here brings together and

reveals the systematic social relations structuring feudal production in the pre-Revolutionary Tsarist state. In this, Shub follows through on the factographic impulse to make legible the "system of people" via its "system of objects" by replacing the continuity of time and space with the discontinuity of land, labor, and wealth. What is extracted from these facts and their articulation is put to use in the education of the post-Revolutionary Soviet subject; a lesson in what is being cleared away to make room for the new "system of people" based not on land ownership but collective labor. From the intertitle on, the arrangement seems intended to move the spectator from a limited position incapable of comprehending the relations of the past to one of recognizing the necessity of the new future.

Within its historical context, this sequence and the film that contains it are decidedly objects on the production line of the film factory-archive. Along with films such as *Turksib* (Turin, 1929), *Salt for Svanetia* (Kalatozov, 1930), and *Old and New* (or *The General Line*) (Eisenstein, 1929), *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* and the other anniversary films were intended to cut across the geographic and social diversity of the new Soviet state to produce a unified and modernized socialist subject that is the counterpart to the contemporary American New Deal documentary's liberal democratic citizen. As such, the shots described above not only take up the dynamism of isolated, fleeting moments (women baling hay, a dog and its masters, bovine grazing), positing their brute existence qua documentary facts, but are also arranged such that this specificity lays bare the general conditions undergirding feudal production and its exploitation of land and labor. Indeed, the series of images, following on the declaration

of the intertitle, works to convert the individual, empirical experience of feudalism, or at least its memory, into a revelation of structural positions and relations of exploitation between landowner, property, and peasant labor. In doing so, the footage must be effectively disciplined, its singularity leveraged but limited to the instructional needs of the film and its didactic purposes.

Still, as Tret'iakov's (who himself worked on the script for *Salt for Svanetia*) metaphor of the conveyor belt suggests, the film and its images continue to traverse the continually changing "system of people" even as it shifts, exceeding this initial context and encountering spectators with different pedagogical needs. This speaks to the strange temporality of documents and their relation to education and intelligence. On one hand, the images of landowners, peasants, animals, and land offer a stable past through which present subjects might channel and pursue a clear future. On the other hand, this authorizing solidity turns in on itself as the future's contingent unfolding remakes the document's very impassivity in its own terms. Where the conjuncture constituting the subjectivization of the post-Revolutionary Soviet State and its citizens called on and responded to the structural relations of feudal production with the goal of integrating Soviet subjects into the new socialist social order,[34] in our current conjuncture, for instance, these same images are also inscribed with details through which past and future are reconstituted. Without disregarding the trajectory of this scene within the film and its

[34] At the time of *Fall*'s release—on the tenth anniversary of the revolution—both the Soviet State and film industry were involved in ongoing debates around the reorganization of production following the New Economic Policy. As such, film's place in the subjectivization of Soviet citizens was firmly accepted even as the direction and methods of this subjectivization were highly contested. See Malitsky, "Esfir Shub and the Film-Factory Archive: Soviet documentary from 925-1928" and Denise Youngblood, *Soviet Cinema in the Silent Era, 1918-1935*.

initial context, these five shots continue to operate as, to use Rancière's phrase, a "source of material verification" for present spectators (sparse as they may be) engaged in their own process of subjectivization. In this light, along with the explication of land, labor, and leisure visible in the interplay between peasant, lord, and animal (Fig. 1.6-1.8), there is a trace of another, emergent, structural position whose presence might now appear prescient and pressing. Of the five shots in this sequence the fourth is the longest. For the most part this shot appears to simply repeat the previous scene of opulence, reiterating the fact that productive labor (baling hay, raising cattle) feeds aristocratic entertainments. But, perhaps in hope of intensifying this point, the shot lingers after the landlord, his wife, and their dog leave the frame and uniformed servants enter to clear the accoutrements of the afternoon tea (Fig 1.9). Certainly the presence of these servants does not undercut the film's explicit critique of the division of labor and the relations of exploitation in feudalism. Still it adds a complicating wrinkle by including this tertiary figure left unaligned in the conflict between those who work and those who own the land. Where productive land and labor are segregated from the shots of leisure through cuts, the work of these servants remains within the frame of leisure, where this labor mingles with and represents the rewards of ownership.

Fig. 1.6 *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty:*
Laboring under the yoke of the landowner

Fig. 1.7 *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty:*
Tea time for the Governor and his family

Fig. 1.8 *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty:*
Immobile and mobile property

Fig. 1.9 *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty:*
Service emerging from the background

In treating this image in its persistence over time other analyses, explications, and verifications of intelligence open up. If the power of this sequence, in this film, is and was connected to the clarity with which it rendered a rationale for the Revolution and the new "system of people," it now also attests to an underlying indeterminacy surrounding these categories. The servants, outside of any definitive identification of their position within the feudal hierarchy, might teach a number of things, one of which is the overlap in modes of production. That is, though this cannot be confirmed in the image itself, the presence of these workers points to the already existing regime, at least throughout the industrializing Western world, of wage labor based on the decisive severing of peasant

from land. It is not that these servants are necessarily representatives of the changing order of production, especially since they are not part of the industrial proletariat, but that their position slips the grasp of the given categories. Just as the Russian Tsarist state was itself anachronistic relative to the hegemonic force of industrial capitalism of the early 20th century, the image of non-agricultural work is a detail that runs parallel to the more orthodox focus of the film's critique. As such it suggests an alternative future for the new Soviet subject, neither explicitly feudal nor socialist, nor necessarily capitalist, but still rigorously hierarchical and exploitative. (Of course, as we now know, the Soviet Union proved to be a mélange of these economic and political systems.) Thus, even with the initial context working to tame the surplus of the image, its indexical overflow, it cannot help but include the productive overlap of this interstial figure. Indeed, on close inspection, the servants' persistent presence, like the synchronic existence of different forms of production, is registered not only when they take center stage at the climax of the fourth shot but are also, barely visible in the flora, there behind the landowners in every shot, waiting to serve.

For spectators encountering these images in the 21st century the appearance of this non-agrarian form of labor remains a potential site of subjectivization as these documents continue along the conveyor belt of facts, traversing new systems of people (and objects). Here this marginal presence, whose place is left both unidentified and unremarked by the film, persists and, perhaps, emerges as precisely out of place within the film's "system of people." A testament to the co-presence of overlapping modes of production (a recurrent theme in this dissertation), these documents continue to hold together, in the same

images, owner and servant, employer and employee, though the relation between these terms has changed. While on one hand the appearance of these servants, neither peasants nor lords, complicates the film's fairly clear cut analysis of exploitation in the Tsarist regime, on the other hand, these figures continue to confront spectators with the urgent question of solidarity within class struggle. That is, if the sequence of peasants, landlords, animals, and land reveals relations of exploitation and, in doing so, highlights sets of oppositions in the early 20th century—essentially eschewing any attempt to explicitly align[35] male and female waiters with either landowners or peasants—its status remains ambiguous in our present conjuncture, entering a different process of comparison and verification through which viewers on "both sides" of the conveyor belt continue to learn and think. In the absence of centralizing state authority, or another knowing schoolmaster, these images express the fact that there is always an unaccounted potential within the process of subjectivization by which the details of the document are available to those willing to appropriate them as proof of a capacity in excess of the social distribution of intelligences. What remains in the wake of fact is, paraphrasing Bazin, our imagination's capacity to make use of it.

The use of these documents, or more accurately the use of Shub's use of these documents here, while hopefully illuminating is ultimately less important than the way this use highlights the role of documents at the core of documentary's pedagogical dimension. *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* is an exemplary instance of documentary's

[35] Again, the overarching tone of the film and this scene appears sympathetic toward the servants here, offering no evidence of malicious cooperation between landowner and staff. By the same token, though, there is also no hint of solidarity between the peasant laborers in the field and the uniformed domestic labor in the garden.

relation to education as it is conventionally conceived; the film embraces its task of informing new Soviet citizen of who they truly were and who they should become, closing one gap as it opens another. The documents show spectators what they could not see themselves before informing them of what must be done to ensure the future. Above and beyond this explicit attempt to enlighten certain (now long gone) spectators and explicate social relations, the production of new subjects continues through these documents. In the readings of the sequence above, the highlighted details can be verified by any other viewer and, to use Ranciere's metaphor, translated by their intelligence into their own uses and readings. Beyond their revelatory, instructional, and authorizing functions, these documents are first and foremost shared facts between spectators, productive sites of encounter in which new and different articulations and expressions take shape.

V. Conclusion: Image-document

Though images have been treated as documents and documents as images throughout this essay, their articulation and linking by hyphen requires further explanation. What is particular about the image-document if one can already consider an image as a document and vice versa? In part, the answer, beyond the convenient shorthand the neologism provides, has to do with the generic framework called documentary. At this point there are many instantiations of documentary—literary, photographic, aural, juridical, etc.—but film and video (including television) remain the primary media of documentary for most viewers and scholars. As such, the term image-document reflects this privileged

place among those other forms of documentary via the insistence on "image" (photography, of course, is an unshakeable shadow left undisturbed by this term). Beyond this, nearly gratuitous, insistence on the primacy of moving image documentary, the locution "image-document" also attempts to posit a different grain of sand at the heart of the pearl called documentary. The document in image-document not only points to an underlying pedagogy that outstrips the educational, instructional, and propagandistic conception that dominates both the genre's history and its critical reception. The concept of the document also shifts emphasis away from the present recording of the event, the authorizing (if now fully discredited) first-hand account, to the product of these encounters (image-documents) as they traverse changing relations to their point of origin and its place in the historical world.

The importance of this alteration in what documentary is, or might be, is located not here at the level of generic definition, though. If it were then there would be no specificity to these examples of image-documents at work since "image-document" would apply equally to all moving images appearing in documentaries. Certainly this risk of allowing any and all images to slip into a *mise-en-abyme* of image-documents cannot simply be wished away. The key distinction, then, against the deluge of losing tree to forest is between potential and actual image-documents. Indeed every moving image is a potential image-document, whether fiction or documentary, animated or indexical, yet its documentary value as an image-document, as the next chapter shows, is only actualized in the image's movement into another documentary. As a scene in a Hollywood film or a fragment of film in an archive, images are not-yet image-documents insofar as they

remain as either part of another film or records in a storehouse. Once they are taken up in new documentary contexts, however, these images are actualized as image-documents through their persistence outside of preceding contexts and within new ones. Their general potential is thus only realized in particular instances of recontextualization and repetition, which enable and demand images cum image-documents to express a different dimension of the footage's reality. In addition, the image-document as an actualization of an underlying potential of moving images as such not only delimits image-documents from this larger field but also differentiates them from other designators such as found and stock footage, archival images, and b-roll. Any given image-document may well be one or multiple of these types, yet it is only via inclusion in new and different films that such images become image-documents. In this way the neologism is able to at once cover a diverse range of images yet remain specific not to their types but to their singular details. Such is the flexibility produced by the concept as it designates at once a thing, an act, and a relation.

As the discussion of the image sought to illustrate, an image is an enigmatic thing; a threshold object that is a product of and conduit for encounters between inside and outside, immaterial and material, mental and physical world. It is precisely the sense of indeterminacy at the heart of the concept "image" that is freighted in by the hyphenation image-document. Just as historically "image" was neither wholly a figment of the imagination nor a faithful representation of empirical phenomena, not belonging solely to the mind or the shared world, the image in image-document bears the trace of its genesis and previous incarnation within another context and is simultaneously marked as an

enfolding of an outside into the new interior of the documentary. And this liminality is not simply, or even predominantly spatial, since an image has always designated a synchronic temporality in which the past encounter is carried into the present as it gives way to the future. This relation to time is put into relief with the rise of moving image technology and media. Walter Benjamin's dialectical-image evinces this collapsing of before and after by drawing on the shocks of film and photography to augment his account of historical subjectivization. For Benjamin, the dialectical-image frustrated and pushed back against both the past and present as *fait accompli* of a fixed causal sequence by disrupting the function and location of historical facts. Similarly, the image-document is always caught in a historical back and forth between its artifactual status as "from the past" and its aesthetico-rhetorical use in the present that confounds clear dichotomies of fiction/nonfiction, real/unreal, story/discourse.

If the "image" in image-document is a material bearer and expression of a certain indeterminacy at the heart of the image document, then "document" in a sense designates the challenge these images pose. Without itself becoming dematerialized, the document and its pedagogical character encapsulate, among other things, the way in which image-documents are negotiated by both filmmakers and spectators in order to activate particular details inscribed within them. Where the complex materiality of the image might be plotted on a temporal axis, the dimension signaled by the document is social and collective. Obviously, the document cannot and should not be disassociated from its historical relation—its artifactual and evidentiary character—but in the concept of the image-document it also indicates that the document is always a "thing" held between

subjects, a shared ground of encounter through which singular viewers confront highly specific details and utilize common capacities of intelligence. What is verified by the interaction with the image-document is not, at least not only, the look of an event or time or place but the intellectual processes and potential insights made possible by the indeterminate significations of the specific "contents" and relations within the image. The document here confronts everyone as a problem worked on and worked out through its status as a collective nexus; the image-document, qua document, is generative not of static answers but of dynamic responses to the relations put in play by a documentary.

This chapter's attempt to conceptualize the image-document serves as a starting point for the following chapters, all of which will engage more particular dimensions of the concept and its consequences for documentary studies. The following chapter achieves this by focusing on the idea of "documentary value," which was key to the initial formulation of the genre and remains, though perhaps in muted form, central to the way documentary, both for scholars and practitioners, attempts to differentiate itself from other genres of moving image texts. The various dimensions and degrees of indeterminacy, singularity, and capacity discussed in this chapter are revisited in terms of a certain type of measure in excess of quantification. As an algorithm for obtaining a numeric quantity of "documentary value" continues to elude researchers, the next chapter asks what is, or could be, "value" in the context of documentary and image-documents.

Chapter 2: Image-Documents in Use: A theory of documentary value

With the image-document concept now in hand, this chapter turns to the value of image-documents within documentary; that is, their documentary value. Following the mortgage and credit crashes of 2007-2008, the notion of value, what it is and how it can be measured, has reached a point of conscious crisis. Taking stock of the fallout (and subsequent bailouts) from the popped collateralized debt bubble, in a 2010 *New Yorker* article, John Cassidy writes, "By late 2007, the notional value of outstanding credit-default swaps was about sixty trillion dollars…. But wagers on credit-default swaps are a zero sum game. For every winner, there is a loser. In the aggregate, little or no economic value is created" (Cassidy). Even in the context of economics with a long tradition of defining and measuring value and value production,[1] there is insecurity around what is real value. Documentary value, by contrast, has no such history of directly accounting for the specificity of its value. Instead, the phrase has and continues to circulate in impressionistic and idiomatic ways. Nonetheless, documentary value is caught up in the crisis of value saturating the *fin de scièle* of the long 20th century, rooted in and exacerbated by the growth and expansion of digital image production, manipulation, and circulation over the last two decades.

[1] Of course this long experience with value has never stabilized the concept and modern economics has largely replaced "value" with theories of price. Nor is this challenge to value theory isolated to capitalist economists. Approaching the contemporary economy and its crises from the left, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in *Common Wealth*, the final volume of their *Empire* trilogy, write, "Even though measure remains indispensable for capital, all of the *dispositifs* intended to measure labor and value such as productive labor, labor-time, and the organization of the working day, the hegemony of labor composition and/or industry over production as a whole, and working wages and social income are now in crisis and cannot be applied in biopolitical society. […] At this point we need a new theory of value" (Hardt and Negri, 316).

Current and pressing as these specific crises are, neither is essentially new as both return to the question of "real," substantive value, which must be distinguished from counterfeits of various sorts. For Cassidy this distinction is apparent in the split between "notional" and "economic" value (putting aside the fact that notional value is in fact a category of economic value), presumably based on the (implied) authentic value of material production against the speculative shenanigans of finance capital. Similarly, Jane Gaines asks, in her 1999 introduction to *Collecting Visible Evidence*, "the defining edge that documentary has over the fiction film is the edge of indexicality, summarized in Bill Nichols's reference to the indexical 'whammy.' But if it can no longer be said [because of the malleability of digital images and the academic critique of documentary realism] that documentary has 'reality' on its side, what can be said of it?" (6).[2] Where the "whammy" of the index—a sign that bears the physical trace of its referent, pointing back to it and, in the lexicon of documentary studies, documenting its "reality"—once formed its ground, documentary value is now afloat among waves of ones-and-zeroes and "postmodern" fabulations that threaten to fully sever documentary's contact with the real. Since both capitalist economics and documentary, not to mention the *Visible Evidence* franchise, continue to trudge along unabated despite these crises, the pressure to discern true from false value, as well as establish a rubric for its measure, remains as pressing as it ever was.

[2] The anthology, not surprisingly, includes essays devoted to both theorizing the relationship between images and "reality" and the question of digital images in documentary. See Nancy Lutkehaus and Jenny Cool, "Paradigms Lost and Found: The 'Crisis of Representation' and Visual Anthropology," for the former, and Mark J.P. Wolf, "Subjunctive Documentary: Computer Imaging and Simulation," for the latter (116-139, 274-291). See also Dai Vaughn's 1995 essay, "From Today, Cinema is Dead," collected in *For Documentary*, which directly addresses the threat digital images pose for documentary.

Image-documents, defined in terms of their indeterminacy, make for a prime site for theorizing documentary value, caught as they are between a sense of transparent obviousness and a reputation for mystification. In fact, this tension around image-documents is a metonymy for the question of documentary value itself. As a category, image-documents, or as they are conventionally referred to, found footage, including archival images, home movies, and so on, are considered suspect within documentary studies, yet certain uses of image-documents, from Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog* to Peter Fogacs's *Private Hungary* series, are often emblematic of the richness of the documentary tradition. Thus whatever constitutes documentary value, as well as its infelicitous double, is to some extent instantiated in and through the use of image-documents. It is not necessarily a question, then, of if or how much documentary value an image-document possesses so much as it is a matter of drawing out what the phrase documentary value tends to connote and of modifying this haphazard definition in relation to image-documents. More specifically, image-documents, and the discourse around them, make apparent an underlying investment in documentary value as inherent to photographic images, while placing documentary value, as instantiated in image-documents, in the context of other understandings of value (economic, for instance) shows such a conception is untenable. Instead, once situated alongside other notions of value, it becomes clear that documentary value is a relation—between images and events, images and other images, and even images in relation to their own contents.

Working through the film *Grizzly Man* (Herzog, 2005), a film that at once treats a subject in little need of documenting (given the fact that the titular "Grizzly Man" filmed

himself obsessively) and expresses its own sense of the inherent documentary value of images, this chapter takes up the accepted notion of documentary value instantiated early in the genre's history and connects it to the matrix of value produced in the labor theory of value, especially in Marx. The "ready-at-hand" appearance of image-documents suggests it belongs among the "use-values" Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Marx posit as the ground of commodity production. However, image-documents also brush this association against the grain, making enigmatic what is often presented as obvious. In doing so, image-documents point to a formal, structural affect of use in value production obscured by the explication of "exchange-value" in classical economics, bringing documentary value into the orbit of aesthetic value. Documentary, economic, and aesthetic value forms a Venn diagram with the use of image-documents at its center. Once articulated this way, documentary value ceases to be a minimal unit of identification—this image documents something—and instead names the dynamic relations images form in and through documentary uses.

I. No matter how lacking in documentary value

In his 1926 review of Robert Flaherty's *Moana* (1926), John Grierson simultaneously—and unwittingly—describes the film and names the genre it will come to inhabit, claiming that, "*Moana*, being a visual account of events in the daily life of a Polynesian youth and his family, has documentary value" (Grierson 25). For Grierson *Moana*'s "documentary value" is a baseline attribute of the film, whose full worth resides in being "a soft breath from a sunlit island…" that "…induces a philosophic attitude on the part of the spectator.

It is real, that is why" (Grierson 25, 26). Echoing this sentiment twenty years later, André Bazin locates documentary value as an ontological property of photographic images as such, writing, "no matter how lacking in documentary value [sans valeur documentairè] the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction" (*What is Cinema vol. 1* 14). Both these early thinkers of cinema and documentary value understand this value as an inherent aspect of the photographic image itself. Though not stated explicitly in terms of value, what is at stake for both authors is the relation between the image's capacity to record visual impressions of events and the use to which these images are put. Where Grierson's "First Principles of Documentary," moves from documentary value qua record to what Jonathan Kahana calls a "supplementary relationship between… the 'documentary' and what [Grierson] refers to as the 'real,'" Bazin folds documentary value into his photographic ontology, making the image's testament to existence the essence of cinematic and photographic representation (5).[3] Thus whether it is the profound core of cinema or the superficial starting point for documentary, the consensus, which continues to this day, is that documentary value resides in the capture of the profilmic world.

If documentary value inheres in the indisputable material record of profilmic objects and events, attesting to their "actuality," then it is difficult to discern what the images in *Grizzly Man*, including the image-documents from Timothy Treadwell's

[3] For a relatively recent nuancing of Bazin's investment in documentary value see Philip Rosen's "Subject, Ontology, and Historicity in Bazin," in *Change Mumified:Cinema, historicity, and theory* (3-42). There Rosen argues that the "indexicality" of mechanically produced images is less an ontological matter than epistemological insofar as it situates the spectator's *knowledge* of the material relation between the image and what it represents as the central presupposition of Bazin's ontology.

personal archive, are meant to document. The cause of Treadwell's, and his girlfriend Amy Huguenard's deaths was no mystery. Beyond the facts of Treadwell's risky and irresponsible behavior as a naturalist, which were well established prior to his death, even his personal eccentricities were recorded and widely disseminated via appearances on *Late Night with David Letterman*, *The Discovery Channel*, and *Dateline NBC*, as well as in the classroom presentations that were the ostensible justification for Treadwell's videos. Nor, ultimately, does *Grizzly Man*, and its director cum narrator, make any such claim to discover the truth of "what happened"—aside, perhaps, from referencing yet withholding the audio recording of the fatal bear mauling. Instead, *Grizzly Man*, especially in the terms established by Werner Herzog's narration, investigates far more abstract questions regarding, amongst other things, the line between man and animal, the consequences of isolation and mental illness, and the aesthetics of image production. For all intents and purposes the film follows Grierson's dictum that documentary should be a "creative treatment of actuality," "pass[ing] from the plain (or fancy) description of natural material [mere indexicality], to arrangements, rearrangements, and creative shapings of it"; one might even say, borrowing from Grierson's *Moana* review, *Grizzly Man* "being a visual account of events in the daily life of a" bizarre grizzly bear enthusiast "has documentary value" but its true worth is in being "a soft breath from" the Alaskan wilderness (20).

Grierson's praise for *Moana* centers on the film's depiction of ritual tattooing, about which he comments, "Possibly I should become pedantic about this symbolizing of the attainment of manhood. Perhaps I should draw diagrams in an effort to prove that it is

simply another tribal manifestation of the coming of age? It is not necessary, for the episode is in itself a truthful thing" (26). In other words, the truth of Flaherty's images needs no expert verification or edifying justification. Instead, the images of the "fantastic design… pricked by a needle onto Moana's glossy epidermis" vouchsafe that "Moana… is really tortured and it affects us as no acting could" (26). Bearing the traces of this real torture, the film exceeds mere record and becomes a statement on "primitive simplicity" that a visual lecture on "tribal" rites of passage would only dull (26). Grierson's insistence that *Moana*'s bodily inscriptions and its affects are guarantors of the film's truth doubles down on the very indexicality "creative treatment" must supplement. In this way, documentary value is and is not in the image; the fact of "real" pain, and Flaherty's willingness to photograph it without explanation, elevates the film from "plain description" to documentary proper. Something similar is apparent in *Grizzly Man*'s repeated invocation of the fatal audio recording, which like Moana's tattooed body carries the trace of physical danger.[4] For Herzog, the tape and its sounds, produced through the same camera and microphone technology as Treadwell's other images, are banished from the film in order for the image-documents Herzog assembles to express their value based on the same principles.

It is in this vein that *Grizzly Man*, more than many documentaries, is overtly concerned with documentary value, almost obsessively returning to and commenting on the relation between Treadwell (the ostensible subject of the film) and the images he shot.

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[4] Bazin was also infatuated with images of mortal danger as the *sine qua non* of cinema's indexical power. See for instance his "Death Every Afternoon," which reviews *The Bullfight* and argues that the film transcends "documentary" through its connection to death; see also his comments on *Kon Tiki* in "Cinema and Exploration" (*What is Cinema vol. 1* 161).

For instance, following an interview in which ecologists Marnie and Marc Gaede speak of Treadwell's dedication to his cause, before reading "examples of vitriolic hate mail" celebrating Treadwell's death, the film cuts to an image-document shot inside a tent. In a handheld shot, black splotches produced by fox paws appear and disappear on the translucent blue roof (Fig. 2.1) of the tent as Werner Herzog comments, "I too would like to step in here in his [Treadwell's] defense, not as an ecologist but as a filmmaker. He captured such glorious improvised moments, the likes of which the studio directors, with their union crews, can never dream of." The scene then cuts to Treadwell exiting the tent, his hands and limbs occasionally visible in the unsteady handheld framing, before the next shot reframes the fox seated atop the tent. The sequence culminates in a long take of the fox running through a field chasing Treadwell and his camera. The four shots in this series, in combination with Herzog's claims, foreground the enchanting spontaneity captured (and produced) by Treadwell and his camera. The value of these images, according to the logic of the commentary, is in their display of frolicking and their embrace of the unpredictable and unplanned interactions between man and fox, an impression heightened by the herky-jerky movements of the camera. In order for this value to stand out these images must also be contrasted, via the voice-over, with the methods of "studio directors, with their union crews," suggesting that the documentary value praised in these image-documents—their glorious improvisations—intersects with and is in some way affected by the institutional, or individual, framing of the frame. There is, of course, no support for the film's claim that "improvised moments" cannot, and indeed are not, captured by studio directors via the labor of professional camera men,

even on the sets of fiction films; the basic impassivity of the camera persists across these divergent production situations and thus is, on a certain level, always open to the chance occurrence. As such, what the film repeatedly posits as the inherent documentary value of images is supposedly only realized in contrast to other regimes of value, presumably represented by the commercial filmmaking establishment.[5]

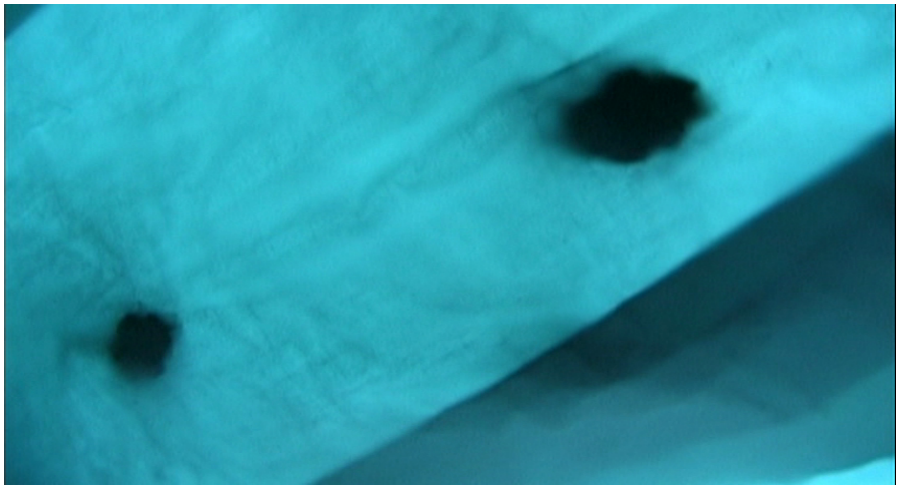

Fig 2.1 *Grizzly Man:* "…glorious improvised moments."

This scene's statement differentiating Treadwell's image-documents, and presumably *Grizzly Man* itself, from studio film puts documentary value in contact with commodity production, seemingly pitting documentary value against exchange value. The juxtaposition here is between the free ranging, contingent authenticity of Treadwell's images of the fox and the standardized products of Hollywood. Transposed into classical economics and the labor theory of value, this opposition maps onto the distinction between use and exchange value. There at the logical and historical moment of capitalist

[5] This is perhaps an opportune moment to note that *Grizzly Man* itself is a co-production by Lions Gate Films and Discovery Docs, who are surely untroubled by Herzog's dismissal of union labor; after all, regardless of their documentary value, Treadwell's image-documents are likely more economical than union rate technician wages, excluding, of course, Herzog's personal compensation (Lions Gate handled domestic theatrical distribution and Discovery Docs handled television and DVD).

nascence, use value, like documentary value, is an ambiguous concept which, standing in tandem with its ever-present complement, need—or, in its contemporary and ubiquitous guise, demand—is treated as given and transparent ground for the complex and mystified realms of exchange and surplus. Use, along with need, appears obvious because both seem to follow spontaneously and authentically from their materiality, while exchange responds to the dynamics of human social relations. Within economics, at least classical political economy, use value is bracketed out in order to explicate the processes of exchange value and surplus value in the labor theory of value. Given the emphasis on the supposedly inherent, technical capacities invoked in terms of documentary value, use value is a logical cognate for documentary value within the labor theory of value.

The splitting of value into use and exchange is arguably the founding analytic act of capitalist political economy.[6] It is by distinguishing "value in use" and "value in exchange" that Adam Smith traces value, exchange value, back to human labor (25). Both use and exchange value are co-present in the object, aspects of the thing apparent from different perspectives, but there is no causal relation between the two; use is not the source of exchange value. As David Ricardo puts it, "Utility… is not the measure of exchangeable value, although it is absolutely essential to it;" essential because use is figured in this value schema as the motive force of exchange (5). Ricardo establishes this minimum by describing use as the capacity of a commodity to "contribute to our gratification" (5). Here use is an unspecified potential to "gratify" equally unspecified

[6] Certainly the recognition and interpretation of the division of labor is also essential to the institution of classical political economy; of course, the division of labor clearly precedes and exists outside commodity production, while the distinction between use and exchange value only becomes fully comprehensible under capitalism and its regime of equivalences.

needs and desires, generating but not determining exchange value.[7] Use is the undefined capacity of an object that eludes the quantification necessary to calculate exchange value and thus constitutes an undeterminable variable for political economy and its rationalization of the capitalist market. Though intimately connected, need or demand can be rendered through certain speculative metrics while remaining, on one hand, entirely obvious (people need, and thus demand, food) and on the other entirely contingent and fickle. The immeasurability—and indeterminate diversity—of use and, at least at the moment of classical political economy's inception, need leads Smith to labor and the famous statement that, "It was not by gold or silver but by labour, that all the wealth of the world was originally purchased; and its value, to those who possess it, and who want to exchange it for some new productions, is precisely equal to the quantity of labour which it can enable them to purchase or command" (27).

Marx shows much greater interest in the diversity of commodities and their uses, writing, "[A]s use-values, commodities differ above all in quality" (Marx, *Capital volume 1*[8] 128). Use values are particular and contingent. In contrast to exchange value, the use-value of a commodity cannot be abstracted from the object because, according to Marx, "The usefulness of a thing makes it a use-value. But this usefulness does not dangle in the mid-air. It is conditioned by the physical properties of the commodity, and has no existence apart from the latter" (*Cv.1* 126). Whatever utility an object possesses, it is

[7] Use acts as a sort of primordial ooze from which exchange extracts itself. In this, the conception of use in classical political economy is part of the same mythological narrative of capitalism's pre-history and evolution out of primitive barter systems. See David Graeber's *Debt, the first 5000 years* for a contemporary critique of this origin myth in terms of the moral dimension of debt.
[8] Hereafter *Cv.1*.

determined by and realized through its materiality. Indeed, what is done with any object of use is—like use itself—presupposed in the body of the thing and given in its "physical properties." And just as the object is a material thing it fulfills an, "eminently material function. Wheat for example is used as food. A machine replaces a certain amount of human labour" (Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*[9] 37). On one hand (as in the quote above), need is a grounding supplement of use, where "To *become* a use-value, the commodity must encounter the particular need which it can satisfy" (emphasis in original, Marx *CCPE* 42). If the diversity of commodities and their uses is at first unwieldy, need steps in to rationally halt this slide by linking the materiality of the object with an equally concrete need (wheat for food, etc.). On the other hand, use, and by implication need, is also variable: "Every useful thing is a whole composed of many properties" (*Cv.1* 125). While use still flows from the body of the commodity, its "many properties" present a diversity of potential uses to satisfy various needs. And Marx recognizes that these needs, though linked to particular physical aspects of the commodity, are not transparently instrumental but social. Where wheat has an apparently obvious use, food for sustenance (begging the question of beer and grain alcohol), the same cannot be said of a diamond: "We cannot tell by looking at it that the diamond is a commodity [an exchange value]. Where it serves as an aesthetic or mechanical use-value, on the neck of the courtesan or in the hand of a glass-cutter it is a diamond, not a commodity" (Marx, *CCPE* 28). A diamond's surface simultaneously sparkles and is hard and sharp enough to cut glass, what use these attributes are put to depends on the

[9] Hereafter *CCPE*.

company one keeps; nonetheless, whether you are a glass-cutter or courtesan, the bond between use and need is point by point.

Documentary value as it appears in Grierson and Bazin, as well as those that continue to employ it, is a shorthand for the physical properties of photographic images and in this sense maps cleanly onto the description Marx gives of use value. It is out of the capacities of the medium that documentary emerges and, though "creative treatment" becomes a requirement for going beyond this fundamental property, it remains the grounding principle for the genre. The corollary consequence of this investment in a transparent documentary value is the subsequent critique of the adequacy of images to the needs they are used to serve, thus the crisis in documentary value. Yet even these critiques, despite their dedication to lifting the veil of the indexical bond and revealing the scant worth of documentary value, continue to hold out the relation between the medium and the need, or desire, or demand to make good on the promise of capturing the real. Indeed the same dynamic is apparent in Marx's understanding of use and need, which he at once, rightly, renders inconsequential to capitalist exchange yet holds out as a stable, authentic, and unambiguous relation to the material world.

Beneath the naturalizing façade that exchange relations make of utility, there remains a seemingly inherent link between use and need centered on the body of the object where material properties of the thing represent the transcendent identity of use and need. In this apparently self-sufficient determination of the object of use in need, Jean Baudrillard detects a latent and creeping idealism:

> Utility as such escapes the historical determination of class. It represents an objective, final relation of intrinsic purpose (*destination propre*), which does not mask itself and whose transparency, as form, defies history (even if its content changes continually with respect to social and cultural determinations). It is here that Marxian idealism goes to work; it is here that we have to be more logical than Marx himself—and more radical, in the true sense of the word. For use value—indeed, utility itself—is a fetishized social relation, just like the abstract equivalence of commodities. Use value is an abstraction. It is an abstraction of the *system of needs* cloaked in the false evidence of concrete destination and purpose, an intrinsic finality of goods and products. (emphasis in original, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*[10] 131)

Baudrillard sees in Marx's handling of use value the idealization of the relation between need and utility with the obviousness of the object, its material form, granting need an "authentic," or "proper," "transparency" against the obfuscation of exchange value. In bracketing out use value, Marx, according to Baudrillard, "retains something of the *apparent movement of political economy*: the concrete positivity of use value…. He does not radicalize the schema to the point of reversing the appearance and revealing use value *as produced by the play of exchange value*" (emphasis in original, *The Mirror of Production* 24). That is, use value in Marx, insofar as it evinces a determinate link between the commodity's materiality and its "intrinsic purpose," repeats the abstraction

[10] Hereafter *CPES*.

associated with exchange value through the "system of needs." Need, as much as exchange value, is produced by social relations and is not reducible to the given status of "subsistence," which Baudrillard argues is the limit of Marx's understanding of both need and use: "By not submitting use value to this logic of equivalence[11] in radical fashion, …Marxist analysis has contributed to the mythology… that allows the relation of the individual to objects conceived of as use values to pass for a concrete and objective—in sum, 'natural'—relation between man's needs and the function proper to the object" (*CPES* 134). At stake here are the abstractions "use" and "need" posing as "concrete positivity." As Baudrillard argues, use value is a historical and fully social product which functions through the structure of the sign; use value is a signified, or referent, holding the metaphysical ground on which the critique of exchange value rests. Thus, when Marx leaves use value unexplored in order to pursue exchange value and surplus value he fails to account for the interrelation of use, exchange and surplus, leaving use value the "natural," i.e. real value against which the exploitation of labor is measured.

The abstractions of use and need Baudrillard points to are certainly aporias in Marx but this analysis risks throwing the baby out with the bath water. Abstraction as such is not the problem; rather, the problem is that use and need, as historical social relations, are simply posited as presuppositions. Nevertheless, a wholesale rejection of use value as an idealism based on this undeveloped abstraction seems a missed opportunity. Though Baudrillard takes Marx's claim that use values are incomparable

[11] Baudrillard argues that the notion of use values as incomparable obscures the way in which the object is posited as a "functional equivalence to itself in the single framework of this determined valence: utility" (*CPES*, 134).

qualities as an endorsement of "intrinsic purpose," while minimizing Marx's stance that "[T]he discovery… of the manifold uses of things is the work of history," the multiplicity and irreducibility of the use/need relation indicates that objects are also caught up in the process of historical antagonism (*Cv.1* 125). In this sense, when Marx states, "[T]he nature of these needs [satisfied by the use of commodities], whether they arise, for example, from the stomach, or the imagination, makes no difference," he at once signals capital's indifference to the specificity of uses and needs, while leaving open the question of how uses and needs are socially produced, reproduced, and contested (*Cv.1* 125). Certainly this aporia in Marx's analysis, as well as its often mechanistic descriptions of the mode of production, does little to contradict Baudrillard's argument, but the invocation of needs and uses generated by the imagination, aesthetic needs for instance, troubles an easily identified, singularly "natural" use for objects, raising the question of both how certain uses are naturalized and the potential of a diversity of simultaneous uses for objects. Without decoupling use from need, the historical variability of both is an opportunity to rethink their relation in terms of its contingent multiplicity.

Baudrillard's critique calls attention to Marx's inadequate theorization of use value,[12] and its problematic presupposition of the naturalness of uses, but it does not—nor does it attempt to—address the specificities of objects at the heart of their incomparability. The "many properties" that make things useful are not, or at least not always or necessarily, mutually exclusive, remaining in play as relations of use and need

[12] Of course, Baudrillard is hardly the only thinker to note Marx's bracketing out of use in his analysis of the commodity. For a recent, and far more sympathetic, reading of the relation between use and exchange value in Marx see Frederic Jameson's *Representing Capitalism*, especially Chapter One, "The Play of Categories," pgs. 19 and 37-44.

continually shift. As such, we should take note of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's claim that, "Marx indicates the possibility of an *indeterminacy* rather than only a contradiction at each of these three moments constitutive of the chain: Value-(representation)-Money-(transformation)-Capital" (emphasis added, 116). The notion of "indeterminacy" Spivak deploys, much as it functions in the concept of the image-document elaborated in the previous chapter, complicates the dialectical "contradiction" both Marx and Baudrillard (obviously in different ways) rely on by introducing a sort of remainder or surplus in the relation between use and need. Where Baudrillard sees use value as a "metaphysic" of utility based on an ideal relation between commodity-use-need, "In my reading…," Spivak writes, "it is use-value that puts the entire textual chain of Value into question…. For use-value, in the classic way of deconstructive levers, is both outside and inside the system of value-determinations" (118). Use value is "inside" the system because it acts as motive force—if not for the potential of use there would be no exchange of commodities—but "outside" the system because its diversity—the "manifold uses of things" (Marx)—defies the schema of differential value measurement (about which Baudrillard has little to say). Here the abstraction of use does not act as a guarantee of equivalence between use and need, subject and object, but instead poses the indeterminacy of the relation between the two and indeed of each to itself. From a deconstructive perspective, use value partakes in the logic of the trace insofar as each instance of use, despite Marx's references to consumption and exhaustion, carries with it the possible other uses derived from the materiality of the object.

The indeterminacy of use value Spivak points to undermines the presumed stability of a "proper" function inherent in any object not only by denaturalizing the relations of value, "the system of value-determinations," but by then opening the relation between the useful object and its uses to overlapping, parallel, and competing potentials. That is, instead of settling for either the identity of use and need, or even the social selecting of appropriate uses from an anarchic diversity of possible uses, this indeterminacy foregrounds the various "physical properties" of an object as they shift in relation to themselves and the uses to which they are put. Conceived in this way, use value names the play of multiple relations that the material specificity of the object brings to bear in particular situations. Neither social nor ontological determination entirely exhausts use, as each determination reconfigures the relation between the social production of value and the material body of the object without negating other uses.

From the outset, represented here by Grierson's and Bazin's positing of documentary value, the property and capacity that dominates conceptions of lens-based images is the indexical relation to the pro-filmic. It is here that the image-document, along with other sorts of photographic and video images (and sounds), most fits the reductive, or "idealist," sense of a natural or authentic use; if the camera captures fleeting spatial and temporal events, inscribing their two dimensional visual impressions into lasting, material form, then these images should be put to realist uses. Starting from a particular conception of the photographic image and its empirical characteristics, the relation between use and need in this conception of documentary value, and by extension image-documents, is dominated by correspondence and the identity between the image

and the world it represents. Thus, "[T]he application of the adjective 'documentary' to film… most appositely flags the fact that… when dealing with this film form we are essentially and most critically in the realm of evidence and witness ('actuality')" (Winston, *Claiming the Real II* 13). But, given the complications of use raised above, this relation is neither exclusive nor stable. Indeed, the critical challenge to use value as authentic, demystified truth obscured in exchange—the rejection of an easy equation of signifier with signified marshaled by Baudrillard and Spivak—is familiar to makers, critics, and theorists of documentary.

Focusing on Grierson's infamous definition of documentary as the "creative treatment of actuality," Brian Winston, for instance, argues that while documentary rhetoric may "flag" its claim to evidence, "creative treatment" is an always-available supplement when this evidence is challenged. Complicating the image/world relation, he insists that social relations determine documentary value, not the material qualities of images:

> Were reception alone, though, to become the basis of documentary legitimacy (as it must), the audience would have to acknowledge that the relation of image to imaged depends not on the image's intrinsic quality guaranteed by science but on the 'caveat emptor' reception of it, pixels and all. The audience will therefore often still depend on intertextual, as well as experiential, inferential walks to determine the 'documentary value' of the accounts of 'the' world the film gives; but it would have to

> accept that the image, by itself, gives no earnest of authenticity. (*Claiming the Real II* 233)[13]

Here the relation between film and audience dethrones the naïve, given-ness of the image's "scientific" authority and authenticity, rejecting inherent value in favor of a broader network of meaning production. In fact, the "buyer beware" in this situation, articulates the "intertextual," "experiential," and "inferential" knowledge of spectators as external, supplemental relations subtending documentary value over and against the "physical properties" of the image. Yet this articulation neglects the very relation of the image to the audience and to itself, replacing the presumptive self-sufficiency of images as bearers of truth with an autonomy of meaning on the side of the spectator. What is left out in this reversal, then, is precisely the image, as an existent thing with particular qualities, and its uses ("pixels and all") that the audience must "beware" of. Without attention to the specificity of the images used by documentaries, the critique of "intrinsic" documentary value risks positing the social as another sort of self-sufficient truth existing outside and hidden behind documentary images.

Grizzly Man's sequence of man-fox play described above illustrates the ways both the inherent and social conceptions of documentary value can operate simultaneously, without either fully or finally determining what is real and what is false value. There Herzog echoes, almost literally, Winston's point that the viewer's sense of documentary value is formed not only by a faith in the attributes of the image but also in an

[13] Winston is far from the only writer to make this point. In fact these claims come out of a reading of Bill Nichols's *Representing Reality*, where Nichols claims that "documentary" is a shared construct produced by institutional discourses of makers, critics, exhibitioners and audiences. See chapter 1, "The Domain of Documentary," esp. pgs 14-31.

“intertextual” context that distinguishes documentary from the films’ of “studio directors.” In this sense documentary value is differential, establishing itself as a true cinema outside the commercial film industry, whose “earnest to authenticity” resides in eschewing entertainment and profit for argument and knowledge. On the other hand, much as the narration points to the social production of documentary value through institutional and generic distinctions, the combination of Herzog’s statement with Treadwell’s image-documents, especially the fox’s shadow footprints inscribing the index within the indexicality of the image, returns to the operations and capacities of the medium to substantiate the “true” documentary value of “glorious improvised moments.” What is striking about this scene is the way its fairly explicit and clear positing of documentary value not only aligns notions of its social determination with the technical attributes of images, in much the way Baudrillard argues Marx conceives of use, but does so through an indeterminate set of relations embedded in the image-documents themselves. The narration proffers the image-documents as evidence of what cannot be intrinsic—the difference between these images of a fox and those produced by commercial filmmakers—but does so in the name of inherent documentary value based on their physical properties. The image documents can neither confirm, nor deny either claim, much less their combination; however, through their use, the image-documents put these competing, yet compounded, versions of documentary value in relation to one another, along with other potential uses. As such, the indeterminacy Spivak teases out of use value is evident in the documentary value of these image-documents.

II. The useful exception

Image-documents play a special role in the conceptualization of documentary value because their very appearance in different documentary texts and contexts illustrates the indeterminacy and potential multiplicity of uses for specific images. In the contemporary context, image-documents are at the center of the crisis in documentary value as image digitalization and archiving, affordable editing software, and various electronic distribution channels enable the appropriation, manipulation, combination, and circulation of image-documents to proliferate, even as this expansion threatens to further devalue their use. For Winston, for instance, image-documents are emblematic of the false claim for intrinsic documentary value, writing "…the happenstance of archive footage [an essential form of image-document]… at best, presents general contemporary footage of the action being remembered" (*Claiming the Real II* 7). According to this critique, one image-document is, more-or-less, as good as another, even if they are never exactly the same. Indeed, like the object of use in commodity exchange, any image is or can be made equivalent to any other through formal and social relations. But, of course, it is one image-document and not another that one encounters in a particular film and even when their indexical status appears as merely a distracting sheen the material qualities of specific image-documents continue to enter into indeterminate and shifting relations. As material things, image-documents imply another existence prior and alien to whatever new documentary they become part of, which is part of their generic appeal, connoting a general sense of independence and, in many instances, impartiality regardless of specific origin or content. Still, beyond this base signification, the visual and auditory relations

contained within the frame, no matter how clichéd, remain the products of the image-document's singular details.[14] The relations immanent to image-documents themselves affect the uses to which they are put. To repeat Marx, "usefulness does not dangle in the mid-air" but is realized in relation to the material specificity of the thing; so too for documentary value (*C.v1* 126).

Of course the uses of image-documents and the relations that affect their documentary value are constituted not *only* by the indexical capacity of the image vis-à-vis the profilmic but also by the social relations they are ensconced in. Spectators are neither blank slates nor are they free to make whatever use they like of the image-documents they encounter in a film. Rather, like all use values, the relation between documentary film and its audience is, caveat emptor, historically conditioned. According to Jonathan Kahana,

> By definition, each work of documentary is, in a way, unique, the record of its producers' attempt to raise specific historical, social, or ethical questions by grappling with the subjects it speaks of, to, or for. Documentary is a kind of metagenre, constantly raising the question of how the social context of cultural representation becomes its content, that is, how the outside of a work of art becomes its inside. (23)

[14] The concept of singularity is far too complex to be engaged here. In short, I am using the term to denote the empirical impossibility of exact repetition. This is a banal fact that does carry with it significant consequences. There is a large and growing body of philosophical work on the concept of singularity, not to mention in physics and computer science [cybernetics?]. For my part the touchstones are Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, Alain Badiou's *Being and Event*, and Louis Althusser's *Philosophy of the Encounter*. I am here also putting aside reproduction and the relation between copies (i.e. whether each print or digitization of an image is the same).

This process of converting the outside into the inside that Kahana claims is fundamental to documentary speaks directly to the social relations that help constitute documentary value. Historicizing, elaborating, and modifying the titular phrase "intelligence work," Kahana focuses on the encoding of documentary's social context into films in the form of "publics."

"Intelligence work" harks back to the pedagogy of social problem films described in the preceding chapter insofar as the phrase, drawn from Walter Lippman's proposal to counter the opacity, inaccessibility, and complexity of modern bureaucratic institutions, foregrounds documentary's attempt to intervene in the process of subjectivization.[15] Despite the contextual connotation of "intelligence work" as the province of particular policy experts, Kahana expands the concept in relation to documentary, by arguing "that the faculty of social intellection I am describing as intelligence work is not only embodied in individuals who perform a specialized labor function—thinking—and therefore should not be thought of as a capacity of only certain people, but can be enacted intersubjectively, through a cultural technology like cinema" (14). The "intersubjectivity" at the core of documentary's intelligence work produces and is the product of the "public" immanent to a given documentary; a collectivity formed around a temporary and contingent point of intersubjectivity formulating questions about the social world in relation to the assemblage of images deployed by a film. "[W]hen documentary compels our attention or addresses us in certain ways," writes Kahana, "…it evokes forms of

[15] In doing so, Kahana also points to the influence of these debates on John Grierson's conception and practice of documentary. As an active participant in this discourse, Kahana claims, "Grierson inscribes an analogy between documentary and democracy, one that ties the cinematic impression of reality to a collective activity of perception—literally a common sensing" (12).

public subjectivity and civil interaction that transport viewers beyond the immediate context of viewing" (23). As *Intelligence Work* goes on to illustrate through various historical examples, the conjuncture composed of "intelligence work," particular problematics, and publics is historical and social; the images and sounds assembled by documentaries interact with and join existing social relations—in particular the relations of citizens to state and other political institutions—drawing this context into their own relations of (documentary) value.

While obviously a very different project, Kahana's study articulates the historically situated relation between the documentary text and its uses in terms of a contingent and indeterminate, yet entirely material, set of social relations. Without adopting its terminology of intersubjectivity and publics,[16] *Intelligence Work*, especially in its film analyses, details, though not explicitly, a notion of documentary value based on historical, social relations combined with the capacities of the medium to act as an intersubjective link between the spectator, the text, and the world they both share. These relations, which always factor into documentary value, subtend the transparency of certain uses for images, while also harboring the potential for conflict and contestation that renders any claim to inherent value, no matter its ideological strength, untenable. In addition, Kahana's insistence on the force and affect of social relations even on notions of intrinsic documentary value, addresses the ways documentary mobilizes the indexical

[16] Indeed, the notion of "publics," along with the now ubiquitous attendant term "counterpublics," invokes a discourse beyond the scope of this chapter and one I have many reservations about. More specifically, these concepts, albeit in my limited experience of them, seem coupled to an imagined subject whose assumed rationality and access to a signifying certitude—a civil space of equality and transparency—foreclose many of the potential uses documentary opens.

literalism of images to engage subjects and problematics that cannot be photographed. It is the social context that makes an image of a farmer's weathered face an index for necessary social intervention. While the political and institutional forces at the center of *Intelligence Work* more overtly do the work of socially grounding the documentary value of images, something similar is evident in *Grizzly Man*'s paired arguments about the value of Treadwell's image-documents and the border between man and animal. The use to which Herzog puts Treadwell's image-documents mobilizes socially produced conceptions of filmmaking, along with shared knowledge of its institutional and technical processes, to discern these image-documents', as Baudrillard's puts it, "*destination propre*." However, the film's enfolding of this aspect of documentary value into claims for the inherent capacities of the image is reminiscent of the complex relation between use, value, and labor in Marx's development of the labor theory of value.

Though Marx may neglect the indeterminacy of use when discussing commodities generally, the same cannot be said of labor, which constitutes a fundamental exception to the dissociation of use and exchange value. Labor for Marx and the classical political economists he critiques is the source and measure of exchange value. After all, "It was not by gold or silver but by labour, that all the wealth of the world was originally purchased." Human labor produces commodities at the same time it is exchanged for them; put differently, labor is the first commodity of commodity production and exchange.[17] Described on the (mythological) level of simple, direct exchange, labor fits in

[17] Labor is the first commodity of commodity exchange insofar as the human body is the first property in the discourse of private property. Indeed, John Locke's labor theory of property must logically precede the

the purportedly transparent relation of use to need: I use my labor, or the fruits of my labor, to purchase the commodities I need or desire. However in a full-fledged system of commodity exchange, it is not direct exchange of labor or the product of labor but labor in general, exchanged via a general equivalent commodity (money), that renders value. Labor is employed to produce a surplus for exchange and not a particular thing for use and in this its use value cannot be derived from a direct or determinate relation between use and need. In fact, the opposite is the case with labor: if the motive force of use value in relation to objects of use begins with their specific qualities, the use value of labor in general starts with its indeterminate multiplicity and abstraction. This fact enables a quantification of the use of labor and, in turn, a standard measure of value in exchange.

Thus, Marx writes in the *Grundrisse*, "labour confronts capital not as *a* use value, but as *the* use value pure and simple…" because for capital it "is not this or another labour, but *labour pure and simple*, abstract labour; absolutely indifferent to its particular *specificity*, but capable of all specificities" that drives production (emphasis in original, 295, 296). Labor is inseparable from the body of the worker yet to function in commodity exchange it must be abstracted from the material specificity of the worker in order to perform its function as use value for capital (Marx, *Grundrisse*[18] 296). Marx names the indifferent use value expropriated from the worker "labor-power," which, according to Marx, is "an ability, a capacity of [the worker's] bodily existence" (*G* 282). Capital purchases the use value labor-power, a generalized potential bourn by the body, but not

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labor theory of value. See the dissertation's conclusion for a somewhat more detailed rendering of Locke on property.

[18] Hereafter *G*.

the body itself, in the form of an equally indifferent "labor-time": "…it is the quantitative aspect of labour as well as its inherent measure" (Marx, *CCPE* 30). With labor-time *the* use value for capital is measured through the application of homogenous, segmented temporality, the longer the duration of production, the more labor-power is congealed in the commodity. However, as a measure of value labor-time, like the labor power it quantifies, is abstracted as "socially necessary labor-time":

> The total labor-power of society, which is manifested in the values of the world of commodities, counts here as one homogenous mass of human labour-power, although composed of innumerable individual units of labour-power. Each of these units is the same as any other, to the extent that it has the character of a socially average unit of labour-power and acts as such, i.e. only needs, in order to produce a commodity, the labour time which is necessary on an average, or in other words is socially necessary. Socially necessary labour-time is the labour-time required to produce any use-value under the conditions of production normal for a given society and with the average degree of skill and intensity of labour prevalent in that society. (Marx, *Cv1* 129)

Through these paired abstractions, labor-power and labor-time, Marx explains the singular conversion of use value into exchange value, of incomparable quality into the equivalences of quantity. Labor-power, then, is the unique use value whose heterogeneity motivates its exchange value, and, once homogenized through socially necessary labor-

time, becomes its measure. Labor-power's diversity makes it the font of exchange value insofar as it is ensconced in the social relations of capitalism.

Just as any other use value involves a relation to the social, the specific labors of men and women respond to socially constituted needs and desire; however, unlike any other commodity, this social use transforms labor-power into exchange value. The problem is not the social nature of production but the devaluation of labor-power by capital through labor-time which turns this sociality against the myriad capacities of the worker, reducing them to "the expenditure of simple labour-power, i.e. of the labour-power possessed in his bodily organism by every ordinary man, on the average, without being developed in any special way" (Marx, *Cv.1* 135). As such, every specific worker's labor-power confronts the totality of production, which flattens the potentials of indeterminate use value into exchange value by reducing it to empty equivalence. Paolo Virno, theorizing the post-Fordist mutations of contemporary capitalism, notes that "Labor-power incarnates (literally) a fundamental category for philosophical thought: specifically, the potential, the *dynamis*. […] …something which is not present (or real) [i.e. potential] becomes, with capitalism, an exceptionally important commodity. This potential, *dynamis*, non-presence, instead of remaining an abstract concept, takes on a pragmatic, empirical, socio-economic dimension" (82). From one side this potential is qualitative and indeterminate, i.e. use value, and from the other it is quantitative and determinate, i.e. exchange value. The "socio-economic dimension" Virno invokes regards socially necessary labor-time, determined through the cost of reproducing the labor-power of the worker. While this average labor-time produces a basic exchange value for

labor-power, this quantity of time makes up only part of the working day, i.e. "necessary labour-time," and the remainder of the working day is given over to the production of surplus value. Consequently, "surplus-value," capital's *raison d'etre*, is "merely a congealed quantity of surplus labour-time" (Marx, *Cv.1* 325). As Virno puts it, "here lies the secret of capitalist accumulation:" "Labor which has actually been paid out [actualized labor] does not simply reimburse the capitalist for the money spent previously in order to assure the other's potential for working [labor power]; it continues for an additional period of time" (82). This is the quantitative side of labor's potential, the capacity to work longer and more intensely to produce a greater proportion beyond socially necessary labor-time. Over capitalism's roughly five centuries of existence, and especially since the industrial revolution, this potential has been realized in the extreme, becoming nearly secondary to capitalist economics (thus the contemporary hegemony of financial capital and an increasing system of rents). However, the calculus this system produced continues to operate and thus affect the qualitative dimension of labor.

As Marx made clear at the moment of industrial production's ascendency, capital relies on and takes advantage of the indeterminate, qualitative potential of the worker's use value, "the labour-power possessed in his bodily organism by every ordinary man…" (Marx, *Cv.1* 135). The caveat, "…without being developed in any special way," speaks to the then nascent but now advanced automation of the capitalist factory (Fordism being its apotheosis), which cast the indeterminate capacity of labor as a lack (of skill, intelligence, etc.) and used this minimalism to establish wage rates (Marx, *Cv.1* 135). However, in the contemporary hegemonic economy Virno addresses, the indeterminate potential of labor

is reframed as work shifts from the supposedly limited and simple tasks of the assembly line to the diverse and variable labor of the informational, communicative, or affective capitalism of the present. Though the exchange value of labor-power continues to be set and measured by socially necessary labor-time, its use value expands through the institution of "flexibility," which widens the required range of work duties to take advantage of the myriad capacities housed in the worker's body and extends labor-time through segmenting this time in non-standardized blocks and the erasure of the distinction between work and non-work time. Despite the continued determining power and intensification of exchange value, the emerging production paradigm foregrounds the variability and indeterminate potential of labor as *the* use value of capital, which the present system of commodity production, Virno's "socio-economic dimension," attempts to harness. At this point the exceptional characteristic of labor as the indeterminate use value that determines exchange value, returns to the potential use value of the products of labor. As such, the complex and shifting social and material relations of use for both product and producer are sites of antagonistic contestations over potential value.

Documentary value is, in its own way, caught up in this contestation with image-documents as the nexus point between social and material relations of use. Indeed, the sequence from *Grizzly Man* discussed thus far is clearly enmeshed in this struggle over value, where the labor of "union crews" is proclaimed inferior to the "spontaneous" products of Treadwell's various toils as naturalist, adventurer, filmmaker, entertainer, and educator. In that instance, Treadwell is an auteur whose work and play are indistinguishable and essential to capturing what Herzog will soon label "the inexplicable

magic of cinema." Unencumbered by collectively bargained and certified duties, the Grizzly Man's capacity to roam the Alaskan wilderness is joined to the camera's physical properties of capturing contingent nature in the film's claim to documentary value. At a later point, though, the film appears to reverse course on Treadwell's film work, if not the image-documents he produced. Some fifteen minutes after praising Treadwell's cinematic vision, the film returns to the subject of movie making and (indirectly) documentary value, as Herzog intones, "Timothy used his camera as a tool to get his message across." For the next three minutes of screen time, Herzog's voice-over remarks that Treadwell's film practice is contrastingly "playful" yet "methodical," "way beyond a wildlife film," a character piece produced in an "action movie mode." Distributed over eleven image-documents, connected by jump cuts and interspersed with Treadwell's commentary (both synchronous and asynchronous with the images) on his method and its purpose, the sequence is nearly a "behind-the-scenes" montage for a "making of" DVD supplement; the trappings of filmmaking (cameras, lavaliere microphone, and headphones) take up the mise-en-scène, as the acerbic tinge of sarcasm in Herzog's narration undercuts Treadwell's claims. This oscillation between approving description and biting condescension culminates in three shots from the same static camera position, putting in play the relations of value between Treadwell and the image-documents he left behind.

Treadwell's face enters the frame in a close-up, literally foregrounding himself as filmmaker; speaking the language of the movie set, he proclaims that "both cameras are rolling…" for "…the last take of the evening" (Fig. 2.2). After carrying out the task of

director on the set—missing only a clapboard—Treadwell runs back through and out of the frame, another camera in hand, to find his mark before proceeding once again over the same terrain, this time performing the role of filmmaking adventurer. As Treadwell runs away and through the background, out of the frame, Herzog's voice labels this an example of Treadwell's "action movie mode" before asserting the value of his unintended bounty. As the dense foliage surrounding the footpath Treadwell uses to traverse this small hill sways in the Alaskan breeze, dancing in "spontaneous" splendor and rendered in slow motion, Herzog muses: "Treadwell probably did not realize that seemingly empty moments had a strange, secret beauty. Sometimes images themselves develop their own life, their own mysterious stardom" (Fig. 2.3). A counterpoint to this bit of profundity, Treadwell bounds back through the frame before muttering a last word in close-up: "Starsky and Hutch, over."

Fig. 2.2 *Grizzly Man:* Quiet on the set.


Fig. 2.3 *Grizzly Man:* Nature, ready for its close-up, Mr. Herzog.

Foremost in this scene is the interaction between the image-documents and Herzog's comments, which enter the frame to order the visual field in terms of a particular documentary value. The voice-over narration distinguishes the value of the image with and without Treadwell in the frame; both play on the same sense of documentary value and its different relations. At the outset the movement from Treadwell's presence and words to Herzog's narration draws out of these image-documents a certain record of Treadwell's foolishness and ineptitude; his performance for the camera testifies to his misconceived notions of filmmaking, which seem derived from precisely those studio directors (sans their union crews) whose work Treadwell should aspire to transcend. This particular bit of documentation transitions into a meta-documenting in which the image, now freed from Treadwell's overbearing presence, manifests this transcendence by impassively taking in the contingent and singular wind passing through the Alaskan bush. Both instances, Treadwell in and out of frame, rely on the conventional notion of indexical value but in relation to different regimes of

determination, different uses and needs. On one hand, the image-documents show, helpfully guided by the narration, the fool that Treadwell was by viewing them through the social valuation of the hopeless neophyte ruled by clichés; on the other hand, once the distracting clod is absent, the image-documents' inherent indexical value shines through and the beauty that is the unfolding world becomes their *destination propre*. Though all the image-documents in the scene share essentially the same basic physical properties and capacities there is a selection, a bracketing out, and hierarchical ordering of the effects of these physical properties, a sorting out of what uses fulfill the intrinsic purposes of these image-documents.

If even the "seemingly empty moments" are imbued with "their own life," they are only ever "seemingly" empty and the segmenting of these image-documents based on Treadwell's presence or absence asserts a differential relation through which their "mysterious stardom" appears in relief. The fact remains, though, that the rustling of greenery does not emerge in the images with Treadwell's exit, but persists, along with myriad other features of the mise-en-scène, exposing the indeterminacy between the social and material relations of documentary value expressed in these image-documents. Treadwell's body is embedded in and merges with the ensemble of objects in motion that constitutes these image-documents and he, no more, nor less than the rest of the objects, cannot be excised from the frame. Thus, as objects, these image-documents are, among other things, a shifting set of framed visual and auditory relations derived from the meeting between lens-based recording technology, its operator Timothy Treadwell, the profilmic event, Werner Herzog's voice, and the assemblage of other image-documents

that surround them. Beyond these more-or-less indisputable characteristics, these image-documents, and *Grizzly Man*'s use of them, are also social products whose documentary value remains intertwined with other modes of valuation, such as those of commodity exchange. In this light, image-documents, like these used by Herzog to delimit documentary value, suggest that documentary value, like labor-power in commodity production, represents *the* use value of image-documents insofar as this value is the product of their indeterminate potential for documentary uses depending on the relations they enter into.

Thus, even within the opposition the film sets up between those images only captured by Treadwell and those that also point to his presence, the image-documents bind producer and product together in the production of value. While the intervention of the voice-over segments and foregrounds particular relations in and around these image-documents, their binding together of disparate elements, in which no single relation determines documentary value, is generative of the entire project of documentary as a form of sense making that requires and inspires, despite its seeming obviousness, Grierson's "creative treatment." On the more specific level of these particular image-documents, the relations the film points to between Treadwell and his accidental genius, which demands the negation of one for the realization of the other, mingle with an assemblage of other relations, both social and physical, immanent to the image-document.[19] That is, even as Treadwell's movement through the frame, disappearing into

[19] While one might argue that the explicit relation to social valuation only comes from the narration, which is strictly speaking not part of the image, Treadwell's onscreen antics and words are clearly indicative of

then reappearing from the foliage, is in certain ways clearly distinguishable from the contingent motion of the air and plant life, in other ways it is not; the wind that moves the leaves also blows across his bandana-ed Prince Valiant coif and whips his open flannel shirt, while blades of grass brush across his body as he pushes through them, all of which are rendered via the same physical properties of image-documents. The film and the dominant understanding of images present these elements as primarily representational, calling on the spectator to look through the image into profilmic Alaska and recognize the priority of the signified past over the present signifier. Nonetheless, these visual and auditory properties belong to the image-documents themselves and are not reducible to their "referents," as representation is only one potential use among many.

In the conversion of labor-power from the indeterminate potentiality of use value to a determinate quantity of exchange value, labor-time reduces the diversity of capacities to a single measure (the waged hour). Though it lacks the complexity of socially necessary labor-time, *Grizzly Man*'s endorsement of inherent documentary value also uses a flattening calculus that requires subtracting Treadwell for authentic value to emerge. Indeed, it is the film's formal structure pitting Treadwell against the image-documents he left behind that enables a reinvestment in indexicality, albeit here in aesthetic rather than evidentiary terms, as their essential documentary value. The very claim for a singular documentary value inherent to these image-documents, rather than a potential realized through the various relations they enter into, is itself an effect of documentary form as it attempts to naturalize its own status as truly valuable. Of course,

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the cultural forces that structure—if not determine—his self-fashioning. The social is on the set and in the frame, as it were. Starsky and Hutch, over and out.

this formal and rhetorical assertion of an essential documentary value realized or maximized in certain image-documents belies the fact that their physical properties carry across the gamut of image-documents regardless of the particular use made of them, thus making documentary value a potential of all image-documents. *Grizzly Man*'s strategy of using image-documents but attempting to order them through a sort of quotient of documentary value combines film form (the particular arrangement of image-documents to establish a differential sense of documentary value within Treadwell's footage) with social relations of value (documentary as authentically cinematic against the illusory products of commercial cinema) uncannily resonates, as the next section details, with the appearance of value in commodity exchange that Marx called the fetishism of commodities.

III. Behind the veil of fetishism

In the final section of *Capital*'s discussion of value, "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret," Marx offers this brief description of vision: "the impression made by a thing on the optic nerve is perceived not as a subjective excitation of that nerve but as the objective form of a thing outside the eye. In the act of seeing, of course, light is really transmitted from one thing to another thing, the eye. It is a physical relation between physical things" (*Cv.1* 165). This authentic "physical relation between physical things," is, similarly, why, according to Marx, "So far as [a commodity] is a use-value, there is nothing mysterious about it…," since, "…by its properties it satisfies human needs…" (*Cv.1* 163). Sight and use, both sensuous, material relations, are real and transparent

characteristics of a rational world, where commodities as exchange values "abound[ing] with metaphysical subtleties" (Marx, *Cv.1*, 163). However, the physical properties exemplified in both vision and sight still play a role in the illusion produced by commodity exchange as a social form. This complex of real and mystified, physical and social relations, use and exchange is at the heart of commodity fetishism.

What is mysterious is the commodity qua commodity, the thing as object of exchange, caught in the give and take of the market. Separated from the embodied labor-power that produced it, but bearing its stamp as price, there is a sort of transubstantiation where abstract exchange value melds with the body of the commodity. As Marx puts it in perhaps the most famous passage from this section:

> The equality of kinds of human labour takes on a physical form in the equal objectivity of the products of labour as values; the measure of the expenditure of human labour-power by its duration takes on the form of the magnitude of value of the products of labour; and finally the relationship between the producers, within which the social characteristics of their labour are manifested, take on the form of a social relation between the products of labour. (*Cv.1* 164)

Confronting each other in exchange, commodities carry a quantity of value that appears to derive from their diverse material characteristics and uses, though it, in fact, names the amount of labor-power congealed in the object. Thus, exchange value, which is a social relation, seems to belong to the commodity in the same way its physical properties do.

Commodity fetishism, and the commodity as fetish object, renders exchange value "as the socio-natural property of… things" in which its apparent "immutable" and obvious character results from a logic of substitution or displacement via commodity form (Marx, *Cv.1* 165, 168). It is as though exchange value were a sensuous characteristic of the object, and thus as unalterable as its chemical make-up; the coincidence of socially determined and measured exchange value and the physical givenness of the object (and its uses) enables a slippage and confusion of what the quantity of value names. Because use is understood as at once the *raison d'etre* of exchange and a "physical relation between physical things," it is the utility that inheres in the commodity that the "magnitude of value" seems to signify (Marx, *Cv.1* 167). This fundamental misapprehension of exchange value, which attributes the results of a social process to the objectivity of the object, resembles the investment in indexicaity undergirding documentary value. That an essential truth, whether of the speculative sort Werner Herzog pursues in *Grizzly Man* or the more conventional evidentiary fact of "what happened," is posited as a trait of lens-based images reveals a form of fetishism latent in notions of documentary value. And as the structure of *Grizzly Man*'s investment in indexicality illustrates, this fetishism is also a formal effect that naturalizes the relations of documentary value as inherent to the medium and genre.

Grizzly Man is a particularly acute, if also complex and strange, example of the fetishistic dimension of documentary value. Beyond the opposition set up between the foolish Treadwell and his image-documents, the film owes its existence to the fact of Treadwell's and his girlfriend Amy Huguenard's death and is thus haunted by the

presence of an audiotape of the event. The tape is, within the structure of the film and its discourse on life, death, and the human, a constant presence and its contents are described, but never heard, no fewer than three times over the course of the film. For instance, following a sequence of image-documents containing some of the very few shots of Hugeunard, Herzog's commentary gives way to the voice of coroner Franc Fallico describing the aural content of the tape. "Amy Huguenard was screaming," Fallico says in the sound-bridge from an image-document of a bear's face to the inside of the coroner's lab, before proceeding to narrate and interpret the contents of the tape, which the audience is denied. Here, in his second description of the sound of the attack, Fallico takes the opportunity to read in Treadwell's mortal exhortations for Huguenard to run from the attacking bear a sign of his ultimate humanity. (In the first installment Fallico interprets Huguenard's refusal—or failure?—to run as proof of her commitment to their relationship; stand by your man, indeed.) In his attempt to find the active psyche in what can only be a cacophony of voice and action, the interviews with Fallico compliment the film's approach to the copious volume of image-documents that act as supplements to the missing moment of death. Much as Herzog's narration, combined with Treadwell's own moments of self-reflection, offers an explanation for the Grizzly Man's eccentricities, delusions, and recklessness, the coroner hears in these death cries the truth of Treadwell's life. What binds these operations together, other than being assembled within the same film, is precisely the fetishistic investment in the technological recordings as bearers of truth.

On one hand, Fallico is given room, both temporally and spatially, to simultaneously present his testimony and undermine its authority through the laughability of his performance and the fantastic conclusions of his speculations. In this way, Fallico is offered as evidence that there is little value in the audio recording itself. On the other hand, though, the auditory contents of the tape are the product of essentially the same physical properties and processes as the image-documents the film argues are imbued with a "mysterious life of their own." From this perspective, the repeated references to the tape suggest that the hierarchy of documentary value the film produces is derived not only from the capture of a beautifully contingent world but also from a play of substitution in which the material and present object is imbued with the always absent value of real death. Continuing to follow the contours of fetish discourse, *Grizzly Man* skeptically engages with and subverts the illusory claims of value offered by others in order to locate authentic documentary value, despite the physical properties shared across these instances of indexicality, in certain image-documents.

The film's revelation of false value in the name of real value situates the question of fetishism and fetish discourse at the intersection of different regimes of value. Indeed, fetishism as a concept is the product and marker of just these sorts of confrontations. As William Pietz writes, historically the idea of fetishism "not only originated from, but remain[s] specific to, the problematic of the social value of material objects as revealed in situations formed by the encounter of radically heterogeneous social systems…" ("Problem of the Fetish, I,"[20] 7). Emerging out of 16th century Portuguese encounters with

[20] Hereafter PoF, I, II, or IIIa.

West African traders prior to becoming ubiquitous in post-Enlightenment European of fetishism throughout its conceptual history:

> irreducible materiality; a fixed power to repeat an original event of singular synthesis or ordering; the institutional construction of consciousness of the social value of things; and the material fetish as an object established in an intense relation to and with power over desires, actions, health and self-identity of individuals whose personhood is conceived as inseparable from their bodies. (PoF, I 10)

Where the first two themes center on the materially of the object, the final two focus on the social relations enfolding this materiality, making it clear that materiality and sociality, are not mutually exclusive but mutually constituting factors when it comes to value. Conceptually fetishism has a paradoxical relation to any notion of inherent value, as fetishism requires one "posits this double consciousness of absorbed credulity and degraded or distanced incredulity" while the critique of fetishism "holds an illusory attractive power of its own: that of seeming to be that Archimedian point of man at last 'more open and cured of his obsessions,' the impossible home of a man without fetishes" (Pietz, PoF, I 14).

In relation to this historical context, fetishism is a matter of social, commercial and aesthetic difference birthed by the Enlightenment's rational "truth of material objects… viewed in terms of technological and commodifiable use-value, whose 'reality' was proved by their silent 'translatability' across alien cultures" (PoF, II 36). While West African societies' "false perception of causality" supposedly attributed agency and power

to material objects, this flawed sense of value nevertheless functioned in exchanges between Europeans and Africans—unsurprisingly to the benefit of European traders (Pietz, PoF, II 42). The emblematic foil to Enlightenment rationality writ large (understood as "the capacity to apprehend the material world of nature as determined by impersonal operations (determined by mechanistic laws of causality)") and now a staple of critical theory, the fetish concept was always-already caught up in the economics of use and exchange and the relations of value production of various kinds (Pietz, PoF II 42).[21] Given this dubious history of fetishism—Marx himself picks up the term from Charles de Brosses 1760 text *Du culte des Dieux Fétiches*—the condemnation of both the fetishist and fetish objects as duped and duping is questionable. With use, either in the form of labor-power in production or the satisfaction of need in consumption, offered as real value against the illusion that exchange value belongs to the object itself, the indeterminacy of use insinuates itself into the contesting social notions of value at work in fetishism.

For both Marx and *Grizzly Man* the disputed values at stake in fetishism are not the product of cross-cultural encounters but internal social contests over value and its significance. The "double consciousness" Pietz identifies with fetishism is operative in these cases insofar as each acknowledges, in its own way, that the matter of value cannot be settled through analysis. While *Grizzly Man* is clearly aware that nothing would

[21] This is not to say this worldview remains the same. Mechanistic causality is, at this point, just as likely to be labeled a fetish as not; however, the concept of the fetish continues to function as *the* name for irrational over-investment vis a certain sense of materiality. In this process the role of objects or materiality is complex insofar as "reification" becomes the tandem term for the fetish, acting as a conversion of an idea into an object that can then be (mechanistically) over-valued.

convince Treadwell (or, in the inverse, Herzog, for that matter) that contemplative nature footage is truly more valuable than his dangerous attempts to bond with bears, Marx's commodity fetishist, caught in the inescapability of capitalism as social totality, may well be aware of the labor theory of value while continuing to act as though exchange value is an objective property of the commodity. Once again, it is the objectivity of the objects—commodities, image-documents, bears, etc.—that facilitates this double consciousness through the indetermination of use and need; even within the social determination of value in use and exchange, the object persist in a diversity of potential uses responding to an equally open field of needs and desires. This is precisely the dimension of fetishism expressed in the paradigmatic psychoanalytic phrase "I know very well, but all the same…."[22] This contradictory phrase encapsulates the structure of displacement and disavowal that frustrates accusations of ignorance by recognizing the role the object plays as a conduit of desire and a figure within the subject's imagination.

For Freud, the paradigmatically male fetishist finds his fetish arbitrarily in the instant of the traumatic encounter with sexual difference, by fixating on a chance substitute for the phallus-less female genitalia. To ward off the threat of castration, the fetishist treats an object, a shoe, a foot, a nose, a breast, etc., as a prosthetic phallus. Disavowing what he has seen, the fetishist remains cognizant of sexual difference, sustaining his belief in the universality of the phallus through a material substitute.

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[22] The phrase was initially formulated by Octave Mannoni in the title to his essay "Je sais bien, mais quand même…" and has since become a standard encapsulation of the psychoanalytic conception of fetishism. In a certain sense it has replaced "They are not aware of what they do but they nonetheless do it," which is presumably derived from Marx's "They do this [equate different kinds of labor with abstract human labor through the process of exchange] without being aware of it" (*C.v.I*, 166-167).

Beyond this genital formulation, the Lacanian structural revision of Freud, returns fetishism to the broader problematic of the subject's relation to the material world. The wholeness and (seeming) solidity of the fetish object grants brief shelter against the continual frustrations of a contingent and uncontrollable world. Typically framed in terms of lack and desire's unending pursuit of fulfillment, as Christopher Gemerchak writes:

> The fetish is empty, and so the locus of a radical negativity without objective content; yet it takes a substantial form that fascinates the desiring subject, arousing the expectation that what has been lost can be regained. The fetish, however, like the object of desire, is ultimately deceptive. It is a veil that provides the false intimation that there is actually something substantial to be attained beneath its phenomenal appearance, the desire for which keeps the negativity of desire in motion. (40)

The expansive notion of fetishism Gemerack articulates here draws its particular power from a supplementing disavowal where the subject's sense of insecurity and impotence grasps onto the fetish object as a life preserver in an undulating sea of social and material forces.

At its core psychoanalytic fetishism repeats the gesture of other engagements with fetishism by asserting the fetishist's fascination with an object as ultimately mistaken. As Freud writes in his first discussion of fetishism, "A certain degree of fetishism is habitually present in normal love," but once the fetish "becomes the *sole* sexual object" it is a pathological diversion from sexual procreation (emphasis in original, *Three Essays*

20).[23] On the other hand, though, the psychoanalytic theory of fetishism starts from the fact that fetish objects *work* as targets of desire and sources of pleasure, if not fulfillment. The encounter with the fetish object, though arbitrary and contingent, converts the *specific, material* characteristics of the thing into vehicles for the pursuit and maintenance of desire but fetishism is not a zero sum game. Viewed in terms of lack and negation, the fetish object is evacuated of all specificity yet the shoe does not cease to function as protection and covering for feet because it *also* titillatingly resembles a penis. Instead, the routing of desire through the fetish object foregrounds the indeterminate relation between desire and use that structures value.

References to libidinal investments abound in *Grizzly Man*, where in image-documents Treadwell filters his interactions with and interpretations of animal behavior, especially the bears, through his own relation to desire. Within the film these image-documents are material for a nearly explicit diagnosis of fetishism (in the psychoanalytic sense) by providing evidence that Treadwell's adventures are a response to displaced desires and his investment in bears is a disavowal of his own sexuality. Of course, this is not what the image-documents did for Treadwell nor do they necessarily index a misguided attempt to protect the self from the vicissitudes of socially endorsed desire. Parallel to *Grizzly Man*'s assertion that Treadwell's image-documents are proof positive of an absolute divide between man and animal, the same image-documents often show the opposite as Treadwell shares the frame with animals and, via the physical properties

[23] Freud more fully theorizes the process of fetishism and fetish formation in his 1927 essay on the topic; without departing from this initial treatment, Freud importantly dwells on the formal dimension of traumatic sexual difference, such that the fetish is the product of a series of particular temporal, spatial, visual, and linguistic relations.

of the medium, shares in their "physical relations between physical things." In doing so, Treadwell's investment in producing images as a medium of interaction with the bears pushes him closer to subjective dissolution rather than defending him against the threat of castration. If anything, it is the *verboten* audiotape that the film returns to again and again to police the line between nature and civilization—its contents delivering a death sentence for the crime of interspecies trespass—that acts as a defense mechanism against the seductions of Treadwell's image-documents. The fetishism of these image-documents, whether Treadwell's or the film's, is possible precisely because their value is indeterminate, offering multiple uses answering various needs and desires.

It is relatively rare to see this indeterminate and productive dimension of fetishism and its valuation of the fetish object discussed, especially in relation to the frequency of accusations of fetishism. Generally speaking, it makes no difference what is supposedly being fetishized so long as its thingness—indeed, the term is so ubiquitous it no longer needs to refer to a thing at all—obscures, hides, or mystifies authentic value. But in this drama of unveiling, as Jean-Luc Nancy points out, "One uncovers the secret, but the word 'fetish' still shelters an undisclosed secret: the very presence of the thing, whether it is named commodity or product, paid for in cash or by credit card, worshipped or utilized, the thing *itself*, the *pro-duced* thing: the thing driven to the foreground, brought forward in the strange element of presence in and for itself" (emphasis in original, 6). Here Nancy rejects both the emptying out of the object in psychoanalytic discourses of lack and Marx's notion of a true and transparent use value by emphasizing, Heideggerian phrasing aside, "presence in and for itself" as a potential that refuses any rational measure

of value (Nancy 7). The fascination of the fetish as presence requires taking the material specificity of the fetish object into consideration, though in his "disillusionment of the demystification" Nancy does not turn to or even mention the use of fetish objects or the value relations they encounter (6). Yet, as David Graeber reminds us (while still holding on to the notion of the fetish as always illusory), the investment by so-called primitives in fetish objects "was a matter of doing something meant to have direct effects on the world" (239). And though sober minded rationalists, whether nascent colonial anthropologists or contemporary leftists, insist that the fetish should not (in some cases cannot) do what the fetishist uses it for, the fetish object nonetheless continues to function, to work within a certain set of relations and have effects in particular situations.

In pointing to the residual potential of fetishism and fetish objects above and beyond their supposedly mystificatory function, Nancy and Graeber connect fetishism to art and aesthetics. Nancy places fetishism in the context of art's reputation for deception, writing,

> *So the word 'fetish' fetishizes itself, in the same manner as do other words that speak of the false, the phony, the tawdry, the lustrous, the artful, and of course the simulacrum of art—whether it be the most austere and the most secretive, whether it be the artfulness of the secret of art, the great art that has neither measure nor market, neither artifice nor religion...* (italics in original, 6)

Art, like the fetish, always employs and interacts with matter and faces accusations of manufactured falsity.[24] Both the fetish and art object are imbued with value irreducible to their rationalized utility and each threatens to usurp an authentic and original model through dissimulation. Nancy's enfolding of art and the fetish—and he is certainly not the only thinker to make this connection—foregrounds the "artful presentation of this very natural yet social life and production of society itself…" (5). What the fetish and artistic production are condemned for reveling in and even revealing is the active fabrication of the social and its relation to the material world. Graeber, for his part, argues that fetishes illustrate the function of imagination and creativity in world making, writing,

> in a situation of radical change, a revolutionary moment in which the larger system itself is being transformed, or even, as in the case of West African fetishes or so many Malagasy charms, a moment in which new social arrangements between disparate actors are first being created…. The larger social reality does not yet exist. All that is real, in effect, is the actor's capacity to create it. In situations like this objects do, in a sense, bring into being what they represent. They become pivots, as it were, between imagination and reality. (251)

The object, which Graeber understands only as a mediation, embodies the potential to reconfigure social relations insofar as it is the site of creative action. Though, in this instance, reality—i.e. the empirical world—is presented as the static background on

[24] Etymologically, as Pietz points out, the word "fetish" is derived from the Latin *facticius*, "manufactured," which contributes to the association of fetish objects with fabricated value (PoF, II, 24-36).

which humans' imagine or re-imagine their relations, the creative act of producing society is affected by the material it traverses.

Often, documentary and its use of image-documents implicitly defines itself against art precisely in terms of art as an artificial, manufactured reality, much in the way *Grizzly Man* sets itself apart from studio filmmaking. Though John Grierson insisted on "creative treatment of actuality" as a supplement to basic, indexical documentary value, the scandal of art has remained. Within documentary, art and aesthetics carry a stigma similar to fetishism: to "aestheticize" in documentary turns reality into a mere object of imaginary contemplation, a pretty picture, or a willful manipulation. In terms of documentary value, art and aesthetics are suspected of being counterfeit currency. Of course art and aesthetics are not synonymous, and where some documentary critics and filmmakers might balk at the charge of aestheticization, few would entirely reject the label of art. Indeed, aesthetics, despite its elevated connotations, is the more general concept for which art is just one, exceptionally privileged, category of objects and phenomena. At its inception, and before referring to art, aesthetics named a bodily relation to the world in terms of sensuous experience. According to Terry Eagleton, Alexander Baumgarten turned to the Greek concept as a cipher for "the whole region of human perception and sensation, in contrast to the more rarified domain of conceptual thought" (13). Aesthetic discourse was first and foremost an attempt to make sense of sense itself, and, thus, along with art, names a fundamental dimension of both material and cognitive experience and existence. It is the privilege, or at least attention, allotted

sensuous experience in this formulation of aesthetics that lends itself to the theorization of documentary value.

This conception of the aesthetic focuses on sensuous perception as a subjective effect of material experience. For Kant, who looms large in aesthetic discourse, aesthetic experience functions self-reflexively, producing a subjective judgment of experience itself, rather than judging the material experienced. Just as Kant's famous conception of the natural sublime, discussed in Chapter 1, converts threatening nature into a proof of the superior power of reason, the discourse of aesthetics often posits form and formalism as the resources of the autonomous imaginative producer in the rendering of a unified and harmonious sensuous field. Historically, formal aesthetics focuses on a presupposed inherent order and value as the core of beauty, reflecting and revealing the glory of a naturally rational world. The work of art should thus embody the proper order of sensation given in both the natural and social order as a static ensemble arousing in the spectator an appreciation of the "good." Aesthetics and form, then, function to supplement reason, disciplining sensation and sensuousness by allowing the spectator to recognize the natural, in-itself perfection of the existing order through the disciplining of sense in the object.[25]

This conception explains the critical interchangeability of "aesthetic" with "form" in documentary discourse insofar as both are understood as reflecting, representing, and

[25] See the first chapter, "Free Particulars," of Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (especially pgs 20-28) for a reading of the simultaneous emergence of aesthetic discourse and bourgeois sensibility. See also, John Guillory's critique of both the universalizing tendencies of aesthetics in post-Enlightenment philosophy as well as his critique of the critique of aesthetic value at the start of Chapter 5 of *Cultural* Capital, "The Discourse of Value" (269-278).

reproducing the universal and unified perfection of the social and natural order. Of course aesthetic discourse and artistic formalism do help produce and maintain dominant bourgeois society. Tainted by this historical legacy and seen as hopelessly devoted to managing the sensibilities of the status quo and naturalizing existing social relations, form and aesthetics are often reduced to a "decontextualization" and manipulation of the object, alienating it from the material and social forces structuring the world. Denied any resistant or oppositional role, aesthetics and form, strangely excised from the sensual world, become watchwords for the illusory manipulations of sense by power. Yet, as John Guillory points out, "There is no cultural product… which does not possess form, and therefore no way of experiencing cultural objects without having aesthetic experience" (336). Even in documentary, the sensual world remains a persistent problematic and so too the process of ordering sense.

At first glance the turn to the document asserted in the preceding chapter's conceptualization of the image-document might appear to endorse the rejection of form and aesthetics in terms of politically suspect manipulations and the naturalization of the status quo. After all, according to Dennis Hollier and Liesl Ollman, "A document is, by its very definition, an object devoid of artistic value" (5). Writing in about Georges Bataille's involvement with the journal *Documents*, they place the document's material existence at the core of its "anti-aesthetic:"

> A document is ready-made. Contrary to the products of the imagination, it is not endogenous. Like social acts in Durkheim, the document is transcendent. It is not up to me. I invent nothing. It has not yet been

> assimilated by an aesthetic metaphorization. Heterogeneous and foreign, it has an impact, it shocks (it has a shock-value) as a trauma would. (20)

Though Hollier and Ollman praise the document for its value in excess of the aesthetic, the very language they use to do so is itself, uncannily, aesthetic; "impact," "shock," and "trauma" are precisely expressions of sensuous experience produced in the encounter with the semi-autonomy ("It is not up to me") of the document. Ignoring or rejecting the constitutive relation between aesthetics and sense, aesthetics is here reduced to "the decontextualization performed by formalism" in the Kantian paradigm of "disinterestedness," while the document is elevated to the "transcendent" realm of non-aesthetic, pure materiality (Hollier and Ollman 7). This distinction between aesthetic, art objects and documents echoes Pietz's claim that the diagnostician of fetishism attempts to build "the impossible home of a man without fetishes:" that which makes the document decisively aesthetic, its material arrangement of sensuous properties, becomes evidence of its anti-aestheticism.

It is only as a static arrangement of sensible relations determined by a unified and stable socio-natural order—produced under the auspices of the individual artist—that the aesthetic can be understood as opposed to the document. But documents, image-documents included, are necessarily both sites of sensuous engagements and subject to formal ordering such that the aesthetic and formal character of documents presents multiple and shifting indeterminate relations between sensible elements. In the place of "disinterested" recognition, the encounter with the image-document entails an aesthetic experience of the thing and its formal configurations as relays between bodily affects and

the specific assemblage of physical properties. In this sense, the aesthetic dimension of an image-document and its uses is never solely the instantiation of a proper order but is always, to a greater or lesser degree, an indeterminate site of contested value. It is in this respect that the aesthetic and the fetish converge insofar as both require an engagement with the material world that troubles claims for inherent and transparent need as the determination of value, while also remaining irreducible to the reigning social order. Indeed, aesthetics and fetishism are both, in a sense, the product of indeterminate use value.

Where fetishism is cast as a form of misuse, and also a misrecognition of value (both in use and exchange), the aesthetic, in Kant's conception of its reflexive function, is defined by its "purposiveness without a purpose" (*CJ* 65). For Kant, aesthetics indicates an excess of purpose, of intention, beyond instrumental utility, in which, as John Guillory argues, use is exiled from aesthetic value (311). But sense, which cannot be divorced from the aesthetic, is neither reducible to intention nor use but stands at their intersection in the body of the object. Like the fetish, aesthetics cannot escape the materiality of sense, just as no object is without an aesthetic dimension. In this the aesthetic is, again, like the fetish, which in Nancy's words, "shelters an undisclosed secret: the very presence of the thing." That both documentary practitioners and critics would assiduously avoid association with the aesthetic is understandable, since documentary film is, after all, film with a purpose—to address "the" world and its truth. But to do so is to accept the consistent conviction within this shifting discourse of aesthetics and economics that there is an area of experience, a class of objects, or a transcendent position that is exempt from

the need to order sense or whose investments are fully rationalized. Throughout these discourses around fetishism and aesthetics, the reality or falsity of value is contested in relation to potential uses (or useless use, as in the case of aesthetics). Thus the persistence of an aesthetic dimension to the specificity of image-documents, like the formal play of fetishism always casting new players in the role of fetishist, continues to present an ensemble of sensible relations available for reconfiguring the ordering of sense and new claims on value.

In the draft introduction to his *Aesthetic Theory*, no less a thinker of both fetishization and aesthetics than Theodor Adorno writes, "The knowledge of artworks is guided by their own cognitive constitution: They are the form of knowledge that is not knowledge of an object" (*Aesthetic Theory* 347). Ultimately, documentary's investment in indexicality as the source of documentary value connotes an epistemological ambition to join Bill Nichols's "discourses of sobriety," but the use of image-documents relies on the immanent relations of sensible elements within and between images and documents to produce knowledge that is not "knowledge of [another] object." This is not to reject the claim to knowledge made on behalf of documentary but to reframe this knowledge in terms of the distribution of the sensible (à la Jacques Rancière[26]) and the capacity of image-documents to participate in reconfiguring the spectator's relation to the sensory, material and social world. Documentary value, then, does not reside solely in its relation

[26] Despite the centrality of Rancière's work to *Image-Documents*, his treatment of aesthetics remains outside the scope of this dissertation since grappling with it would require accounting for the often unelaborated relation between this more recent work on art (especially cinema) and his earlier theorizations of history and politics. The collection *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, especially the essay "Aesthetics as Politics," represents a decent distillation of this work.

to another object and the dictate of accuracy but also in the dynamic and indeterminate relations of image-documents to themselves, to other images, to the spectator and to the profilmic event. As such, documentary value, like the use value it is an iteration of, dwells in the inescapability of both fetishistic investment and aesthetic affects as productive aspects of the indeterminate use of image-documents that makes every image a potential document.

IV. Conclusion: "The only thing I know, the only thing I want to know…"

To conclude with the film, that is to conclude with the final image-document *Grizzly Man* uses, itself marked as the last images captured by Treadwell, means following the logic of fetishism in the ongoing sensuous encounter with aesthetics both within the film's argument and in the play of the image-document itself. This sequence of image-documents is not a coda on the "true" meaning of the film—though there is some suggestion of this in Herzog's narration—but a reiteration of potential documentary value in use. Present in these image-documents, including the text added to them, are the film's claims for documentary value, as well as Treadwell's own investment in his filmmaking and a certain distanced judgment of this activity and its consequences. At the same time, it also takes a speculative stance that, on one hand, gazes into Treadwell's imminent doom, and, on the other, sits pensively between this guaranteed end and the ongoing use the image-document embodies and promises. It is a culminating conclusion whose intensity is not exhausted by its placement within the film's trajectory but is instead fed by the indeterminacy of value that charges all image-documents.

As coroner Franc Fallico's narration of the unheard audiotape in the coroner's laboratory moves toward its unsubstantiated interpretive climax, the film cuts to an image-document of a tree in long-shot, just left of center in the frame, a strong wind pushing its limbs forward in unison with the grass beneath it and the brush and trees in the background. Droplets of water produce blurred patches on the surface of the image, obscuring the clarity of the camera's gaze. Fallico's final statement on the sound of the mauling, "Now is the time for Amy to get out," carries over into the image-document before the bellowing wind takes over the audio. Treadwell enters the frame from the right foreground, positioning himself at its center, with the tree occupying the background to his right. As he launches into a rambling send off to the "expedition," a subtitle appears labeling this "The last shot of his final tape October 5th, hours before his death." In typically aggrandizing fashion, Treadwell pronounces his brave stewardship of the wilderness, even as a "hurricane force storm" presses in on him, declaring the bears secure in their dens, "the work successful." Treadwell then proceeds to display, and proclaim, the effects of his hardship—torn clothes and lost weight—repeating his pledge to "bleed for them…," to "…die for them" and professing his love, once again, for the bears and the call of the wild. He then glances around, eyes scanning off-screen as though searching for something more to say just on the horizon but he can only muster more of the same. Herzog's voice fills the momentary lull of Treadwell's groping for words, commenting, "He seems to hesitate in leaving the last frame of his own film." Treadwell then offers a final endorsement of his chosen life, "it's the only thing I know, the only

thing I want to know" before stumbling out of the frame from the same direction he entered.

Like so many of the image-documents included in *Grizzly Man*, this one seems chosen for its proximity to death and danger, which the film draws our attention to in the details of the image. Between the notification of impending death superimposed on the image, Treadwell's pledges of mortal sacrifice, and the tree's skeletal limbs hovering over head, this image-document is replete with energy transubstantiated from the audio snuff tape. Here the "magic of the cinema" and its "strange, secret beauty," at work behind the back of its maker, seem to morbidly conjure Treadwell's final punishment; the "seemingly empty moments" once filled with contingent, natural glory, are transformed in Treadwell's aimless glances and awkward lingering into ominous premonitions. These details are fetishistic substitutes for the audio, their incontrovertibility supplementing the *post festum* value attributed to them in the film's ordering of the image-document. Yet where *Grizzly Man*'s formal structuring freights this image-document with the weight of decisive finality, there is also an unending quality to its arrangement and display of the image's "physical properties."

Indeed, where the thrust of the film uses this image-document as a melancholy, and condemning period on Treadwell's fascinatingly foolish life, there is a way that the image-document presents itself as an ellipsis. The ominous mise-en-scène and superimposed information may overcode Treadwell's gaze off-screen as an acknowledgement that his final judgment is nigh, but these same gestures also point to the indetermination that saturates the image-document as though its potential uses

virtually occupy the horizon he stares into (Fig. 2.4). In this sense, the hesitation that Herzog's narration casts as the reluctance to exit "the last frame of his own film," speaks to the ongoing documentary value of the image-document that persists beyond this final shot of Treadwell's filmmaking. It is amply apparent that death was on Treadwell's mind both generally and at this particular moment but there is no reason to believe he was not also contemplating what he, and maybe others like Herzog, would do with these image-documents. Like Marx's diamond, "We cannot tell by looking at it" whether the image-document "serves as an aesthetic or mechanical use-value," so both and many more potential uses must be accepted as the source of its indeterminate value.

Fig. 2.4 *Grizzly Man:* Staring into a blurry horizon.

Indetermination, or potential, is the life-blood of documentary value just as labor-power is *the* use value of capital. Image-documents embody this potential since their use, again like labor-power in capitalism, constantly testifies to the indeterminacy of images despite the promise of a stable ground in the documentary value of technical indexicality. Neither the "physical properties" of image-documents, nor the social production of need and utility exhaust documentary value, but neither do these forces fade away or simply

step aside to let new uses proliferate. Instead, the forms—aesthetic, rhetorical, cinematic, economic, etc.—that coincide in claims for documentary value are immanent to its production and circulation. Thus, an identification of documentary value as an indeterminate dimension of image-documents must give way to an account of how image-documents are used and what concept enables the ongoing contestation over documentary value enacted in the circulations, manipulations, and proliferations of image-documents. The following chapter turns to cinematic enunciation as the condition of possibility for the realization of indeterminate documentary value in image-documents.

Chapter 3: Documentary Enunciation: Indirect discourse, third person statements, and the murmur of image-documents

The theory of documentary value developed in the previous chapter, where the indetermination of use foregrounds the relational basis of value in the image-document, begs the question of what aspects of documentary form put value in play and function, at least in part, to activate the documentary value of image-documents. Another way to say this would be to ask what is the primary process of value realization—how are image-documents used, to what uses are they directed, and what other uses persist for image-documents within the documentary text. If, as the preceding chapter argues, the documentary value of an image-document is not inherent but a matter of potential, then what concept most productively describes the ways image-documents are made to express documentary value?

In the *Logic of Sense*, Gilles Deleuze describes what he calls "a blurred excess of the signifier." Discussing, at least by implication, Saussure's famous splitting of the sign into the constitutive parts, signifier and signified, Deleuze writes,

> It behooves it [the sign]… to be in excess in one series which it constitutes as signifying, and lacking in the other which it constitutes as signified: split apart, incomplete by nature or in relation to itself. Its excess always refers back to its own lack, and conversely, its lack always refers to its excess. But even these determinations are still relative. For that which is in excess in one case is nothing but an extremely mobile *empty place*; and that which is lacking in another case is a rapidly moving object, an

occupant without a place, always supernumerary and displaced. (emphasis in original 47, 48-49)

This paradoxical too much and too little of the signifier corresponds to the image-document (which falls safely within the larger set of signs in this schema) insofar as any image-document put in relation to a signified, so-called reality, fails to encompass or embody that which it denotes, while remaining itself a signifier unexhausted by this denotation; for instance, even as *Grizzly Man*'s image-documents of Treadwell in the Alaskan bear sanctuary are used to denote but cannot in fact capture the supposed line between man and animal, they continue to signify in spite of this inadequacy. Where the value of a sign, an image-document, tends, as it has in documentary studies, to be understood in terms of the signified (where it can only ever prove lacking), for Deleuze, "the signifier is the sole dimension of expression, which in fact has the privilege of not being relative to an independent term [that which is denoted by the signified], since sense as expressed does not exist outside of the expression" (*Logic of Sense* 45). What the signifier always expresses is precisely the difference between itself and the signified: "the signified is the proposition insofar as sense, or that which is expressed, is distinguished from it" (Deleuze, *Logic of Sense* 46).[1] Rather than understand this differential relation in terms of the signified as the ground and goal of signification, the critique of found

[1] The signifier emerges here as the privileged term, which may appear somewhat strange given Deleuze's critique of both the structural semiotics and Lacanian psychoanalysis that traveled under the banner of the signifier. Yet Deleuze's argument turns to the signifier in order to illustrate its dual function, binding the act of expression and the denotation of the signified together: "it is at once word and thing, name and object, sense and *denotatum*, expression and designation, etc. […] We must say that the paradoxical entity is never where we look for it, and conversely that we never find it where it is. […] It also fails to observe its own identity, resemblance, equilibrium, and origin. We will not say, therefore, of the two series it animates that one is originary and the other derived in relation to one another. […] But they are strictly simultaneous in relation to the entity by means of which they communicate" (48).

footage, of image-documents, beyond settling for a sorting of "good" and "bad" uses of image-documents, in effect demands a turn to the dimension of the image-document that is "a rapidly moving object, an occupant without a place."

Accepting Deleuze's claim that sense always inheres in expression, produced in the very act of the signifier's deployment and differentiation from the signified, attending to this "blurred excess" within the image-document means engaging those aspects of documentary form by which image-documents are incorporated and valued by texts. These are the very same formal tactics that facilitate the claim to the signified, the real, which itself motivates, ipso facto, their use. At the nexus of this relation between the expressive, "supernumerary" element of the image-document and its denotative, evidentiary aspect lies the necessary ambivalence and indeterminacy of image-documents, whose prior existence and apparent (objective) distance from the films they appear in at once justifies and complicates their use. It is the rhetorical and material independence (once again, that they precede and are coextensive with the documentary they appear in) of image-documents, borne on their surface and indicated in every aspect of their deployment, that must be *advanced* and, at the same time, *contained* in their expression by way of the conventions of the documentary text. Though the tendency of this advancement and containment is often explicitly, though not always, directed toward the signified real, this effort is only possible insofar as the image-document is also a signifier in excess of the referential, denotative relationship.

This chapter works through certain prevalent aspects of documentary form, certain conventions and tactics associated with the mobilization and control of image-

documents in order, ultimately, to advance enunciation as the most productive concept for engaging the image-document as "extremely mobile *empty place*" and "rapidly moving object." In contrast to the widely circulated concept of documentary "voice," enunciation recasts the questions of both narration and documentary form in terms of what might be called, following Roberto Esposito, impersonal signifying processes. Resisting the stabilization and centralization of meaning in the person of the documentary subject (interviewee), narrator, or filmmaker, enunciation places image-documents in relation to the manifold textual operations and relations constituting documentary expression. For this purpose Errol Morris's *The Fog of War* (2003), with its variety and complexity of materials and formal strategies, is an apt site for exploring the ways documentary makes use of image-documents. In particular, the film foregrounds its assemblage of preexisting material in combination with those images and sounds produced explicitly for the film, subtly inviting the question of how this diversity is unified and what remains as a surplus of this unification.

I. Voice and image from narration to interview

As the previous chapters make clear, at the moment of documentary's nominal conception, John Grierson immediately qualified the merely descriptive photographic image's rhetorical centrality for documentary film by invoking its "creative treatment." The raw image must be converted from mute and brute material to articulate and coherent discourse. This line bears reiteration because it constitutes the basic distinction between the actualities of the cinema of attractions and Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922), as

well as for that matter *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*.[2] It is in some sense the founding act in the history of documentary as a coherent film practice. Indeed, to become a meaningful representation of Inuit life (inaccurate as it is), Flaherty famously discovered he needed a narrative structuring principle to order his attempt at salvage ethnography, which he produced through the character Nanook. Nanook's adventures in trading and hunting form the visual material for the film as each action—traveling to the trading post, hunting seals, building igloos—is organized around the progressive movement from beginning to end and integrated into a larger narrative of life in the Arctic. Combining a recognizable narrative form, complete with protagonist, supporting characters, and dramatic obstacles, with intertitling, the film drew on the existing methods of fiction and nonfiction film to carve out an ostensibly seminal "documentary" space between epic long-form, silent filmmaking, in the vein of D.W. Griffith, and the generalizing exoticism of travelogues such as Edward S. Curtis's *In the Land of the Head Hunters* (1914). Where the daily trial of Nanook's life unifies the representation of different acts, subjects, locations, and events in the film, the intertitles function to project the (fictional) Nanook as typical "Eskimo," staking an epistemological claim for the film's content.

This truncated and altogether derivative account of *Nanook* highlights two primary techniques for converting supposedly descriptive and fragmentary actuality

[2] Tom Gunning, analyzing and countering Grierson's and many of his critical ancestors' distinction and hierarchy between "descriptive" actualities and interpretive documentaries, claims that the nonfiction films of the turn of the twentieth century display what he calls a "view" aesthetic. Rather than simply offering a mimetic visual description of an "actual" event before the camera, Gunning argues (building on his earlier work on the cinema of attractions) that actualities produced particular views on the profilmic real, such that what is seen is at once a visual display of physical actions and objects present to the camera and a specific perspective that at the very least implies that what is represented is worth looking at. See "Before Documentary: early nonfiction film and the 'view' aesthetic," in *Uncharted territory: essays on early nonfiction film* (9-24).

footage into properly "documentary" images, as well as two distinct critical trajectories for documentary studies: narrative and narration. Closely aligned as the two are, they remain distinct—not every narrative contains narration and narration appears in otherwise non-narrative texts. Where narrative produces coherence and meaning through an articulation of all textual elements in a particular arrangement (plotting, story, character/social actor relations, locations, times, etc.), narration is a mode of address presenting textual elements, whether fictive or nonfictive, narrative or argumentative, in specific ways. Narration affects a sense of disassociation from the material it treats, appearing as at once producer and interpreter of representations. In this sense narration is associated with speech and language, as for instance the intertitling in *Nanook* and other silent films, guiding the viewer's relation to the images. Narration confers meaning onto description, ordering and reordering details and guiding attention through particular, identifiable, and largely explicit semiotic acts. Narrative, on the other hand, is a logic of the whole where meaning is formally generated through the relations of diverse elements in a specific arrangement but is never reducible to any specific formal device, content, or set of attributes.

Of course, given *Nanook*'s fraught history and the demystifying legacy of its reception, narrative as a concept sits awkwardly in documentary studies, which has strategically positioned documentary, qua film genre, on the periphery of or even against narrative for substantive reasons (narrative's tendency to present a given rather than historically unfolding world, chief among them) and disciplinary/market reasons (securing documentary's value and distinction against fiction film). Instead documentary

studies prefers the concept of argument to narrative (though narrative itself is often a attribute of argument) when analyzing documentary films. This is a terminological and conceptual distinction this chapter follows as well. However, it is important to note, especially in light of the following chapter's analysis of documentary and history, that narrative remains a prevalent aspect of "disciplinary" documentary studies. This is clear, on one hand, in the accounts given of the genre's development over time, which appeal, explicitly or not, to a narrative form of unfolding that plots changes in film form, style, and interest in sequential terms of technological developments and historical events. On the other hand, documentary studies also often appeals to the narratological critiques of historiography in order to bolster its own analysis of the "reality effect." Yet in that context the critique of history's naturalizing narrative form, in which the emplotting of historical events makes an implicit causal argument, is transferred to the technical properties of lens-based media. This amounts to an inversion of the critical analysis; where narrative structure in historiography, as Hayden White and others argue, grants meaning and significance to fragments of the historical record through its management of temporal relations, documentary's use of photographic and so-called indexical images provides a patina of empiricism to documentary arguments. Of course, argument, like narrative, unifies the diversity of elements within a text but it also often employs a more direct style of address aimed expressly at convincing the viewer of its interpretations, and this goal forms the operative logic of the whole in relation to its parts in documentary. Thus, in documentary it is not the argument that is implied by narrative, but the objectivity of the argument that is implied by the "objective" status of its material. As

such, taking the form of direct discourse becomes a way to escape certain ambiguities of documentary form, such as enunciation, prevalent in film theory and its analyses of fiction film.

Narration, which sits easily within the preference for argument over narrative, remains a prevalent aspect of documentary production, criticism, and theory. Though silent, *Nanook*'s extensive use of intertitles to produce meaning, following the supposed inadequacy of Flaherty's first doomed attempt to document arctic life, presages the importance of spoken narration in the growth of documentary. Indeed, there is a standard (narrative) recounting of the history of documentary via its relation to narration that moves from the New Deal/Griersonian didactic films of the thirties, dominated (at least in these canonical accounts) by voice-over narration, to the verité/direct cinema rejection of spoken narration, and then the hybrid combination of interviews, narration, and observation now standard in documentary. While this historical narrative is in part a product of the sequential technological changes in filmmaking, as the gesture to the *Jazz Singer* might suggest, this trajectory is not reducible to technical capacities as social, historical contexts also offer interpretive rationales for the stylistic changes in narration in each period. For instance the alliance of state funded documentary and voice-over speaks at once to the particular purposes these films were put to as well as an overarching social context centered on the liberal state as paternalistic apparatus.[3]

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[3] For example see Jeffery Youdelman, "Narration, Invention, & History: A Documentary Dilemma." Youdelman gives this history in order to question the turn away from voice-over in political documentary through poetic counter examples from the Greirsonian tradition in films like *Song of Ceylon* and *Nightmail*. Bill Nichols's "The Voice of Documentary" (*Movies and Methods V.II*. ed. Bill Nichols. Berkeley, CA: UC Press, 1985, 258-273) is the most well known example of this historical sequence and is treated in greater

At the heart of the relation between documentary and narration, as with so many aspects of documentary, is the image. Taking narration in its most overt form as spoken language, narration in documentary conventionally covers those utterances that directly address either or both the material of the film and its audience. As such, narration can issue from a voice-over, an onscreen narrator, or via proxy voices within the film. What is essential is that the spoken language is combined with the image in the act of documentary expression. So-called "Voice of God" narration is the paradigmatic model of the encounter between verbal speech and moving images, in which narration issues from a disembodied voice that seems to transcend both the film and its subject. Though obviously a feature of the film itself, the absence of a visual point of origin for the narration implies that the source of the voice is external to the film, possessing superior knowledge of the images in the film and the events they represent. The distinction between the aural and visual register (despite their literal simultaneity and co-presence in the film) produced by voice-over commentary resulted in the more-or-less accepted critical interpretation that the two exist in a hierarchical relationship. Though the indexical quality of images is rhetorically positioned as the empirical authority of a film—the image as record of "actual" occurrence, etc.—it is the voice-over that purportedly determines the meaning of the image.

In fact, by the emergence of documentary studies as a subfield of film studies and theory, the critique of "Voice of God" narration was well entrenched. Pascal Bonitzer, writing in 1975, makes the case against voice-over *avant la lettre*:

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depth later in this chapter. This alliance is also apparent in documentary's pedagogical impulse discussed in chapter 2.

> …in the divided, heterogeneous space [because directed outward toward a reality external to the text itself] of documentary, the voice-off forbids questioning about its enunciator, its place, and its time. The commentary, in informing the image, and the image, in allowing itself to be invested by the commentary, censor such questions.
>
> This is not, one surmises, without ideological implications. The first of these is that the voice-off represents a power, namely the power of the disposition of the image and what it reflects from a place which is absolutely *other* (from that inscribed on the image track)—absolutely other and *absolutely undetermined*. In this sense it is transcendent: hence, incontestable, uncontested, and supposedly knowledgeable. Insofar as it issues from the field of the Other, the voice-off is presumed to know: this is the essence of its power. (emphasis in original, 324)

Expanding on the notion that images in documentary "allow[ing themselves] to be invested by commentary," Bonitzer claims, "this radical metonymy, this near emptiness of the image, makes *the real* shine forth…; and the commentary-off is then able to seize the real. It is the visual and perceivable support of the commentary—if one likes, its flesh" (325).[4] This analysis, especially in evidence in the longer quotation, bears the telltale marks of then dominant semiotic and psychoanalytic film theory. Here narration occupies the place of the "subject supposed to know," and speaks from the place of "the

[4] Bonitzer uses "-off" to refer to any voice without a represented source in the image, distinguishing different modes through description. In the context of this chapter, voice-over refers to speech that issues from a source absent from the image and unlocatable relative to the image, where voice-off would refer to speech whose source is in (implied) proximity with the events represented in the image.

Other"—that is, the "big" Other of the superegoic Symbolic in the Lacanian triad. The voice figures as a source of mastery over the emptiness of the image in a Cartesian-like splitting of body (image) from cogito (speech).

Beyond its psychoanalytic armature, Bonitzer's claim for the authority of the disembodied voice is supported by work on fiction film along with numerous cinematic (though unscientific) "experiments" regarding the effect of voice on image.[5] Indeed, these insights are a mainstay of "sound studies" and its challenge to the hegemony of the visual in film studies. Remarking that sound in the cinema has always privileged human speech, Michel Chion, building on Bonitzer, writes, "The added value that words bring to the image goes far beyond the simple situation of a political opinion slapped onto images; added value engages the very structuring of vision—by rigorously framing it. […] Thus if the film or TV image seems to 'speak' for itself, it is actually a ventriloquist's speech" (113-114).[6] This last phrase, "a ventriloquist's speech," sums up the hierarchical relation assumed in the critique of "Voice of God" commentary; the image is a dummy emptily moving its lips, while the puppeteer's voice infuses it with meaning. This hierarchy relies

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[5] Probably the most famous such experiment appears in Chris Marker's *Letter from Siberia* (1957) and its juxtaposition of different commentary, with opposing ideological content, over identical shots of a bus on the street in the city of Yakutsk and workers preparing the ground for poured cement. Earlier still is Bunuel's facetious commentary in *Land Without Bread*, which mocks the absurdities of ethnographic commentary through exaggeration, or, later, Woody Allen's *Zelig* (1983), which uses voice-over commentary to facilitate the incorporation of Allen's fictitious Zelig into archival footage from the inter-War period.

[6] Chion's example here is a broadcast of an aerial show in which the announcer appears to merely offer redundant information describing images the audience is seeing yet in doing so continues to direct attention to particular aspects of the images (the number of planes, the weather, etc.). This example is similar to the account Philip Rosen gives of the November 22, 1963 television broadcast covering President John F. Kennedy's shooting in Dallas. In that case, according to Rosen, the dearth of images of the event foregrounds both the unanchoring of the news anchor's speech, as well as the necessity of narrativizing images through both descriptive commentary and the ordering of images (see "Document and Documentary: On the Persistence of Historical Concepts").

on a claim regarding the workings of spectatorship and cognition in which, for all its privilege, the eye's relation to the mind is mediated by the ear (and voice). For his part, Bonitzer's embrace of psychoanalysis provides the ground for this claim via the Lacanian model of subject formation,[7] while Chion's claim is based in anecdotal evidence along with the specific deployments of sound in film (which presumes sound and image produce the intended cognitive effects in spectators as determined by the content of spoken language). Certainly the turn to spectatorship, sans hard empirical data, is a mark of the discursive milieu this work was produced in but the central argument persists beyond this intellectual moment.

Documentary studies, presaging the turn against psychoanalytic theory in film studies, always maintained its distance from these film theoretical claims while continuing to accept the relation of voice to image produced in these theories. In part, documentary criticism was able to reject or avoid the problematic of spectatorship, while still arguing that speech determines the meaning of images, by focusing on the documentary text and its workings. Thus, rather than stating claims in terms of the effect of sound and image on the spectator, the critique of voice-over narration in documentary focuses on the gap between what the film purports in the narration and what the image substantiates. The question ceases to be what the effect of narration's ventriloquism is on perception and becomes a question of how and why the voice that speaks for the image is deployed. As with most lines of inquiry in documentary study, the analysis and rejection

[7] Mary Ann Doane's germinal "The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space" (*Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, ed. Philip Rosen. New York: Columbia UP, 1986, 335-348) and Kaja Silverman's *The Acoustic Mirror* both take up, expand, and complicate this psychoanalytic model.

of “Voice of God” narration centers on the use of authoritative voice-over in combination with images to produce a rhetoric of apparent neutrality. As such the demystifying gesture illustrates the ways images, despite the very mimetic specificity that appears to lend weight to documentary images as empirical records, are primarily empty signifiers waiting to be filled with meaning by a knowing, transcendent voice, supporting a film’s claims in only the most general of ways.

Between the technological and stylistic shifts around cinema verité and American direct cinema, and the rise of the New Left politically, the centralized authority of “Voice of God” narration and its association with state-sponsored, didactic cinema were easy targets and apparently stable historical plot points for documentary criticism and historicizing. However, once the image is rendered empty, essentially lacking determinate meaning, all forms of documentary are subject to the same critique. The argument which insists on the hierarchy of voice over image, even when cast in terms of argumentative rhetoric, cannot stop with a particular sort of voice-over narration, or spoken narration for that matter, since it rests on the conviction that no image is adequate to the representation of reality. For instance, the move to an ethos of non-intervention and non-explanation that undergirds the rhetoric of Direct Cinema still retains the problem of directing attention to what is meaningful in the image—what is the meaning of torture in relation to, for instance, a talent show at Bridgewater State Hospital in *Titticut Follies* (Wiseman, 1967)?—while doubling down on the rhetoric of neutrality (objectivity) supplemented by the image. Similarly, embodied narrators and interview subjects simply add another layer of ventriloquism, as the puppeteer’s transcendent position becomes

diffused throughout the text, determining which interviews specify the meaning of which images, etc. Though the continued, if now more subtle and diffused, notion of direct address in documentary argumentation may avoid the presentation of an unmarked, given order of reality associated with narrative, the authority granted narration bears the weight of ordering the real.

At this point narration ceases to be reducible to voice-over and extends to other aspects of documentary. On one hand, this weight is borne by the speech of participants, especially interviewees, whose words offer a localizable point of origin (a body) and identifiable qualifications (names, professions, etc.) but remain themselves highly mobile, extending from an identified point of speech to interact with images whose meaning is then sutured, as illustration, extension, or contradiction, to the interview's claims. With the interview the human voice, as Chion suggests, appears as the locus of meaning but its extension and combinations with diverse images also point to the cinematic conventions that deploy the speech of multiple participants as parts of a larger whole (i.e. the film's argument). Nonetheless the critical logic that sidesteps the question of spectatorship in favor of analyzing the rhetorical tactics of documentary argument retains the concept of a narrational voice as a consolidating figure for the ways documentaries determine the meaning of the indeterminate image. Bill Nichols, in a germinal essay for documentary studies and his system of documentary modes, exemplifies this impulse, writing,

> …in the evolution of documentary the contestation among forms has centered on the question of 'voice.' By 'voice' I mean something narrower

> than style: that which conveys to us a sense of a text's social point of view, of how it is speaking to us and how it is organizing the material it is presenting to us. In this sense 'voice' is not restricted to any one code or feature, such as dialogue or spoken commentary. Voice is perhaps akin to that intangible, moiré-like pattern formed by the unique interaction of all a film's codes, and it applies to all modes of documentary. ("The Voice of Documentary"[8] 260-261)

While this passage offers a cogent and compelling (re)definition of "voice," locating voice at the level of textual "codes" irreducible to human speech, it gives no rationale for the term itself, beyond its historical persistence as the nexus of "contestation" in documentary. Given the scope of this new notion of voice, the question it raises for documentary is why "voice" is privileged over other, perhaps more appropriate terms, such as "text" or "discourse"?

The answer to this question of why "voice" comes, at least inferentially, in the sentence immediately following the quotation above: "Far too many contemporary film-makers appear to have lost *their voice*" (emphasis added, Nichols, VoD 261). Between these two statements on the "voice of documentary" there is a shift from voice as identified with the film itself ("that which conveys to us a sense of the text's social point of view") to voice as a property of the filmmaker through a continued investment in documentary as direct discourse. Voice then is an attribute of an intentional actor—the filmmaker—not of the film, unifying and, once again, reaffirming the hierarchy of speech

[8] Hereafter VoD.

over image in presenting a "social point of view" to the spectator. By at once identifying voice with "the unique interaction of all a film's codes" while proclaiming that this same "moiré-like pattern" flows from the filmmaker, meaning is centralized in the figure of the putative author (who is then answerable for its effects). This retreat to intention resolves the "tension," in documentary, "arising from the attempt to make statements about life that are quite general, while necessarily using sounds and images that bear the inescapable trace of their historical origins" (Nichols, VoD 262). Insofar as images "function as signs" within documentary, they are emptied out, becoming containers for the "meaning conferred on them by their function within the text as a whole;" a whole whose meaning is itself a product of the unifying voice of the filmmaker (Nichols, VoD 262). In this search for a source for the voice of documentary, leading first to the text and then to its author, the "inescapable trace" of the image's "historical origin[s]" is strangely effaced. The image, which is at the very least an aspect (qua sign) of meaning production, ceases to function as even a minimal unit of documentary expression and becomes merely a conduit for the authoritative statements of the filmmaker's voice directed at the audience. Ultimately, the silence of the "Voice of God" is replaced by the transcendent function of authorship as it dominates and converts the specificity of recorded images and sounds into the claims of the documentary speaker.

This documentary speaker, source of the "voice of documentary," is not identified with any single commentator or speaker in the film but with the film as a complex weave of "codes," suggesting that narration and the narrator function on the level of the film's overall argument. Rather than the utterances of a disembodied, transcendent voice-over,

narration saturates the film as the meanings of recorded images and sounds are determined by the unifying argument made by the voice of the film(maker). Displaced from any particular aspect of the film, voice names a point of origin and source of consistency for the deployment of, and effects produced by the diversity of materials and techniques constituting the documentary. The relation between voice, image, and film in the newly conceived "voice of documentary" is complicated by the prevalence of interviews in documentary since the middle of the last century, raising the question of the other, literal voices of participants if voice now resides in the "codes" of the film. Thus, according to Nichols "The greatest problem, at least in recent documentary, has been to retain that sense of gap between the voice of interviewees and the voice of the text as a whole" (VoD 266). If the film does not sufficiently distinguish between the voice of the documentary and those of its participants then, "The sense of a hierarchy of voices becomes lost," and, "Ideally this hierarchy would uphold correct logical typing at one level (the voice of the text remains of a higher, controlling type than the voices of interviewees) without denying the inevitable collapse of logical types at another (the voice of the text is not above history but part of the very historical process upon which it confers meaning)" (VoD 266).[9] Thus the interview, like the images that (may) transmit it and at times are its object, is and must be ordered and determined by the voice of the film and filmmaker, as the meaning of the interviewee's speech is conferred not by the speaking subject but the filmmaker and the voice of the documentary.

[9] Ultimately, Nichols is both developing his concept of a reflexive mode of documentary and endorsing this mode as preferable to those that rhetorically obscure the hierarchy of voices to present events as though they "speak for themselves." Documentary reflexivity is examined in Chapter 4 with particular attention to the conception of history Nichols deploys here and elsewhere.

This insistence on maintaining the centrality of voice, with or without explicit narration, through a hierarchical ordering of speakers and expression is symptomatic of the presumptive direct discourse of documentary argument. For documentary to retain its rhetorical position as presenting a case to the audience, no matter how seemingly impartial, its discourse must issue from a stable and locatable source. Though the film itself—the "moiré-like pattern"—embodies this position, its discourse is posited as the result of a more-or-less individual, agential actor and, consequently, the indetermination of the image is managed by being reduced to the statements of a determinable speaker. In this sense, the potentially radical diffusion of voice throughout the actions and materials of the film ultimately never moves beyond the terms of narration, simply transferring those concerns to a new evaluative schema (i.e. the proper hierarchy of voices) while continuing to embrace the ventriloquism of images.

II. Order-words: from voice to collective assemblages of enunciation

In terms of both images and interviews, the investment in this concept of voice marks the hinge point between narration and argument insofar as voice now names a stable source for documentary statements directed through a unified and coherent telos of direct discourse and argumentation. In this capacity, voice functions as what Deleuze and Felix Guattari call, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, an "order-word." Against the dominant strands of linguistics represented by Saussurian structural linguistics and Chomskyian generative grammar, they argue that language is a system of social compulsion rather than information dissemination or communication. They write, "Language is made not to be

believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience" (Deleuze and Guattari 76). Seemingly oppressive as this definition of language is, it is based on two connected facets of language: self-referentiality—that every statement is in fact the transmission of an already existing statement—and that language is first and foremost an action and not a representation. All words can function as order-words because they belong to language, though language described against any structural science of language (linguistics): "We call *order-words*, not a particular category of explicit statements (for example, in the imperative), but the relation of every word or every statement to implicit presuppositions, in other words, to speech acts that are, and can only be, accomplished in the statement" (emphasis in original, Deleuze and Guattari 79).

Situated at the heart of language, order-words bear the weight of producing stability within a system of continual variation, while at the same time partaking in this action of variation. As such order-words have both major and minor functions—"major" being for Deleuze and Guattari the movement to conserve and assert hierarchical order against the indeterminate becomings of linguistic variation, which they call "minor" and associate with minoritarian languages such as Black English. This is not a difference of kind but of perspective; an order-word is never simply major or minor but both depending on its use and effects as enacted in the statement and its reception. On one side "the order-word is a death sentence…. Order-words bring immediate death to those who receive the order, or potential death if they do not obey, or a death they must themselves inflict, take elsewhere" (Deleuze and Guattari 107). This hyperbolic characterization of order-words as death sentences draws out the way that the deployment of order-words in

the major "treatment of language" "consists in extracting constants from it [language]" (Deleuze and Guattari 106). The death sentence entailed by order-words extracts death as a constant, securing the normative binary division between animate and inanimate, while it also individuates both the sender and receiver of the statement within another stable opposition, issuing and instituting "the only judgment, and it is what makes judgment a system" (Deleuze and Guattari 107). Nonetheless, from the other side the order-word is "*something else*, inseparably connected: it is like a warning cry or a message to flee" (Deleuze and Guattari 107). The order-word carries within the statement a virtual directive to suspend and exceed the mortal judgment by defying the stabilizing binary and embracing variation as the condition of possibility for the impersonal language system. This dimension of the order-word that renders the issuer of the death sentence an effect, and not a cause, of the statement will be central to documentary's enunciation of image-documents articulated later in this chapter.

Within its major register, as exemplified in the critical discourse of documentary studies, "voice" operates as an order-word in documentary insofar as it demands that meaning inhere in a transcendent point outside the film. Even in Nichols's expansive redefinition of documentary voice, its order-word function operates within the same logic of "Voice of God" narration where, even relocated on the level of a film's combined "codes," voice continues to demand the emptying of the image and the hierarchical ordering of speech over image in documentary expression. The re-entrenchment of the filmmaker as the source of the voice directed outward to the spectator exemplifies the order-word's extracting of constants from the flow of variation. The combined material

of documentary, the interaction of images, sounds, text, conventions, and techniques that constitute the film text is by necessity engaged in a labor of difference, from the technical means for rendering movement (the minute shifts from frame to frame) to the interplay and overlay of recorded sounds and images that supply the "content" of a documentary. Yet the recourse to voice as a property of the intentional actor names, commands, and judges the transcendent filmmaker as executioner of meaning. As such it is the filmmaker as the source of the argumentative statement that the documentary and its spectator must obey, and the order-word "voice" is the sign under which "constants are drawn from the variables themselves" (Deleuze and Guattari 103). Both as a description of narration ("Voice of God") and as pseudonym for the filmmaker (the "voice of documentary"), voice is mobilized as a "universalization or rendering-uniform involving variables" even though "*Constant is not opposed to variable*; it is a treatment of the variable opposed to the other kind of treatment, of continuous variation" (Deleuze and Guattari 103). Thus the way voice is retained in the wake of critical rejections of overt narration ultimately returns to sovereign speaker/filmmaker as the order-word "voice"'s "relation… to implicit presuppositions."

Of course voice, qua order-word, could also be treated otherwise and serve as an embrace of "continuous variation" and a "message to flee." To do so would require treating voice not as a consolidator of meaning, a command to obey the filmmaker, and source of the statement, supplementing documentary's status as direct discourse, but as an avenue of escape into the variation of the many voices and their presuppositions that make up the diverse material of a documentary. In this would-be treatment of voice, as

Deleuze and Guattari uncannily put it, "Gestures and things, voices and sounds, are caught up in the same 'opera,' swept away by the same shifting effects of stammering, vibrato, tremolo, and overspilling" (109). Rather than pursuing an appropriate hierarchy of voices in which images, interviews, narration, filmic codes, and spectators are submitted to the rule and command of the filmmaker, voice would open up to the various directions ("lines of flight" in Deleuze and Guattari's idiom) each of these evinces in its relation to the presuppositions entailed in language and expression. In this light, according to Deleuze and Guattari, "the question was not how to avoid the order-word [voice] but how to elude the death sentence it envelops, how to develop its power of escape, how to prevent escape from veering into the imaginary or falling into a black hole, how to maintain or draw out the revolutionary potentiality of the order-word" (110). In fact this treatment of voice would be a way to develop in full the consequences and potentials of the voice of documentary "not restricted to any one code or feature," including the directives of the filmmaker, but as a "moiré-like pattern formed by the unique interaction of all a film's codes." This, though, is not the tack the remainder of this chapter follows.

Order-words, this instance of voice included, are the nexus point for language's two conditions of possibility or, as Deleuze and Guattari put it, "The order-word is the variable of enunciation that effectuates the condition of possibility of language…" (106). It does so by embodying language's fundamental operations as a system of continuous, self-referential variation and enactment. Language does not describe external states of affairs but transmits statements, meaning that every instance of language is a second

order citation of statements available to speakers (language always refers to language and not to a reality defined as its outside); yet language only exists in its enactment, the statement only coming to be in the issuing of a command expressing a social order. (Deleuze and Guattari insist on the centrality of linguistic pragmatics over conceptions of language based on synchronic rules of grammar or structural relations of semiotics.) As such the order-word leads to, demands, a concept of both what constitutes the statement's prior or virtual state before and within its actualization via its transmission in speech and of how this enactment is carried out. "Collective assemblages of enunciation" fill this role for Deleuze and Guattari. The order-word's expression of this dual foundation of language foregrounds the social insofar as the realm of virtual statements presupposes a yet-to-be differentiated collectivity of speakers and receivers who actualize these statements through transmission. Enunciation, the uttering of statements, is then the central action of language insofar as it enacts the transition of statements from virtual to actual. However, enunciation cannot be reduced to the individualized act of the speaker:

> There is no individual enunciation. There is not even a subject of enunciation. Yet relatively few linguists have analyzed the necessarily social character of enunciation. The problem is that it is not enough to establish that enunciation has this social character, since it could be extrinsic: therefore too much and too little is said about it. The social character of enunciation is intrinsically founded only if one succeeds in demonstrating how enunciation in itself implies *collective assemblages*. It then becomes clear that the statement is individuated, and enunciation

> subjectified, only to the extent that an impersonal collective assemblage requires it and determines it to be so. It is for this reason that indirect discourse, *especially "free" indirect discourse*, is of exemplary value: there are no clear, distinctive contours; what comes first is not an insertion of variously individuated statements, or an interlocking of different subjects of enunciation, but a collective assemblage resulting in the determination of relative subjectification proceedings, or assignations of individuality and their shifting distributions within discourse. (emphasis in original, Deleuze and Guattari 79-80)

Language presupposes the social and the social presupposes language; they are immanent to one another.

In this sense, much as voice may appear to ground expression by positing an origin for documentary statements, this hierarchical and stabilizing individuation occurs through the auspices of a collective assemblage of enunciation. Though it is true that images, as well as interviewees, cinematic conventions, and even Voice of God narrators, do not "speak for themselves," the same is true of the voice of documentary, whether understood as the film itself or the filmmaker. To the contrary, the paths traced by the various materials and facets of documentary are continually traversed in multiple directions, such that the voice that "confers meaning" on an image is itself affected by the image as both partake in the collective assemblages of enunciation. The interaction of documentary's literal speakers is perhaps the most obvious instance of this mutual constitution and the infection of documentary voice by (and as) collective assemblages of

enunciation, where each participants' statements within the film are in part transmissions of the filmmakers voice even as the filmmaker's voice is itself a product of the multiple utterances of participants; however, images, and especially image-documents, are also instantiations of collective assemblages of enunciation. So-called found footage, perhaps more than any other category of documentary images, is often regarded as the most empty of signifiers, simply convenient and distracting illustration lent to the commands of the voice. Yet image-documents, are also the cinematic material most connected to the sociality of film as a signifying or expressive system and the collective assemblages of enunciation that render it possible.

Thus the concept of collective assemblages of enunciation offers a way to transition from documentary's obsession with voice to cinematic enunciation as, to remain with Deleuze and Guattari for a bit longer, an order-word. While this pivot will eventually require looking at the specific discourse around enunciation, especially in its film theoretical manifestation, *The Fog of War* provides ample material to begin engaging the complex relation between voice and enunciation in order to justify this terminological shift. In particular, Morris's film foregrounds the interplay of voice, narration, interview, and image-documents in such a way that their heterogeneity is pushed to the point of indistinction and homogenization yet continues to work through (in the pragmatic sense) "continuous variation." In short, the film exemplifies the drive to "extract constants," while a dynamic tension remains in its assemblage of materials and their enunciations. Indeed the film's intermingling of materials, especially voices, is at the heart of the critical controversies and debates around *The Fog of War* and a prelude

for the larger firestorm caused by Morris's next film, *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008).[10] In particular, *The Fog of War*'s extended interview with former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara blurs the line between interview, narration, and commentary making it difficult for some critics to disassociate the film's argument from McNamara's claims and explanations.[11] In addition the film mobilizes a variety of aural and visual materials to supplement and augment McNamara's meditations on war, history, and human nature.

At a crucial point, just passed the halfway mark, the film turns to the Gulf of Tonkin incident after an extended explanation of McNamara's entrance into civilian government and the US run-up to direct military involvement in Vietnam, which McNamara presided over as Secretary of Defense.[12] The film's discussion of the Gulf of

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[10] While the outcry in response to *The Fog of War* was largely restricted to journalistic criticism and commentary, *Standard Operating Procedure*'s exploration of the Abu Ghraib images produced considerable disagreements in the academic community of documentary studies. The response to *Standard Operating Procedure*, from documentary scholars and critics alike, intensified the focus on sorting out the film, filmmaker, and participants voices in these films in order to determine the film's ultimate statement and its social responsibilities. Where academics generally accepted the gap between *The Fog of War*'s argument about US military power and Robert McNamara's account of events and ruminations on history, politics, and warfare, the arguments surrounding *Standard Operating Procedure* largely concerned the difficulty in identifying and explicating the distinction between the film's claims about the digital images of prisoner abuse in terms of the US pursuit of the war in Iraq, as well as the "war on terror" more generally, and the positions taken by the participants/perpetrators. For a concentrated sample of this controversy, see the dossier of papers by Bill Nichols, Jonathan Kahana, Linda Williams, and Irina Leimbacher, based on an SCMS panel devoted to the film, collected in *Jump Cut* No. 52, Summer 2010 (http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc52.2010/sopAndrews/index.html).

[11] A number of critics claim Morris's refusal to take McNamara to task as the decisive failure of the film. See Eric Alterman's "The Century of the 'Son of a Bitch'" (December 15, 2003, pg 10) and Alexander Cockburn's "The Fog of Cop-Out," (February 9, 2004, pg 9) in *The Nation*. See Zoë Druik's "Documenting Flase History: Errol Morris and *Mr Death*" (*Studies in Documentary Film*. 1: 3, 2007, pg. 207-219) for a refutation of these critiques and Lucia Riccardelli's "Documentary Filmmaking in the Postmodern Age: Errol Morris & *The Fog of War*" (*Studies in Documentary Film*. Vol. 4: 1, 2010, pg. 35-50) for a more thorough and focused reading of the film that is largely consistent with the analysis of the film's explicit argument offered here.

[12] It is worth mentioning that the circuitous route the film takes to addressing Vietnam is highlighted by one of the few instances we hear Morris's voice in the film. Morris says to McNamara, first over a shot of dominoes tumbling on a map of central Europe and southeast Asia, then from behind the camera/interretron

Tonkin is the primary example for McNamara's "Lesson #7: Belief and seeing are both often wrong." Following the black titling screen signaling the start of this "lesson," we see stock footage of a US Navy destroyer moving through the water and the date, August 2, 1964, followed by shots of (paper) documents regarding the August 2nd torpedo attack on the USS Maddox, before returning to the interview set where McNamara proclaims the indisputability of this "act of aggression." Of course, as McNamara immediately concedes, the US did not respond, despite the (or, at least, McNamara's) certainty of this attack and supposed pressure from military hawks ("very, very senior people") around President Johnson. The film subsequently cuts to a stock shot of ocean water, now with the date August 4, 1964 transposed on the image, then to two black-and-white images of torpedoes (one per shot) moving through the water, during the second of which McNamara's voice begins narrating the event. However, before McNamara can fully launch into his account, the film shifts to audio recordings of a conversation between Johnson and McNamara while scenes from a Navy vessel, including a sonar room, appear on screen. We hear a contemporaneous recording of McNamara on the telephone telling the president that the source of the reported torpedo attack is unknown before McNamara, in the audio from the filmed interview, gives details of the reports and the general confusion around what was happening, claiming that, after 10 hours of deliberation, Admiral U.S. Grant Sharp of the Pacific Command confirmed the certainty of the attacks.

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facing McNamara, "At some point we have to approach Vietnam and I want to know how you can best set that up for me...." McNamara responds, nodding, "Yeah… well… ah," shifting in his seat, "…that's a… a… a hard question. I think, ah… I think we have to approach it in the context of the cold war…" (jump-cut) "But first, I'll have to talk about Ford…. I've got to go back to the end of the war." The film then shifts to 1945 and McNamara's transition into corporate analytics. It is a strange transition since there is never any real explanation for why *this* context, McNamara's professional life, is so important to the question of Vietnam.

This certainty led to bombings in North Vietnam, McNamara tells us, as we see jets taking off from aircraft carriers and bombs exploding on impact, and finally Lyndon Johnson publicly signing a document (signifying, presumably, the signing of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution).

Here the sequence makes a decisive shift with McNamara saying, "Now let me go back to the August 4th attack." Rather than hearing McNamara return to those events though, the film cuts to more stock naval footage, this time highlighting sonar and telecommunications technology, while subtitled audio recordings of Admiral Sharp and General David Burchinal discussing the supposed attack by phone accompany these images. As the film proceeds through the series of phone recordings, images cut from an unidentified Naval officer on an onboard phone (Fig. 3.1) to two short shots of Navy men gathered around a radar screen. Using subtitling to note the passage of time between conversations (as well as reiterate the audio track), we hear (and read) Admiral Sharp inform Burchinal: "…many of the reported contacts with torpedoes fired appear doubtful… Freak weather effects on the radar and overeager sonar men may have accounted for many reports" (Fig 3.2). In the image two "sonar men" point and stare down at a radar screen, before cutting to another shot of three "sonar men" reframed around a different radar screen. Sharp and Burchinal's conversation ends with Burchinal asking, "You're pretty sure there was a torpedo attack, though?" To which Sharp answers, "Oh, no doubt about that… I think" (Fig. 3.3). Finally, McNamara, again on the interview set, concludes, "It was just confusion and events afterward showed our judgment that we were attacked was wrong," before continuing to muse on the

consequences of these events, interpretations, and the limits of perception. The scene and lesson culminate in Morris's interjection, a rare instance of his literal voice in the film, that "We see what we want to believe," which McNamara affirms: "Belief and seeing, they're both often wrong."

This description of five-minutes from *The Fog of War* illustrates the complexity and variety of materials being combined to produce the film's argument. Even reduced solely to speech, we hear five separate voices in three different conversations, each separated in time and historical context as well as their status of address (interpersonal conversations between public figures, military officers, and an interview for a documentary film), repeating descriptions of an event that is itself cast as an infelicitous repetition of the "act of aggression" from August 2, 1964. Meanwhile only one voice, McNamara's, is embodied and even this only occasionally. Instead of images of the speakers, their words are accompanied by images that are mostly generalized depictions of Naval ships, men, and equipment, interspersed with a few pieces of unspecified historical footage (such as Johnson's public document signing). Given the diversity and virtuosity of these sounds and images in movement, McNamara, whose voice and image are the most identifiable and consistent features of the sequence (and film), operates as a unifying figure, a "constant" amidst the variation and repetition of voices and images. As such it is tempting to see him as the source of meaning for the film and its interpretation of this event (as many critics did). On such a view it would seem that a.) it was not escalation of the war in Vietnam that was mistaken, only which event was used to justify it, and b.) that the responsibility for embracing this phantom attack ultimately rests with

Admiral Sharp whose certification of the authenticity of the torpedo attacks drew the long deliberations to a close on August 4th. Yet at precisely the moment McNamara calls for a closer examination of the events of August 4th, the film, as it had done earlier, introduces recordings of phone conversations, which in this instance do not include McNamara. And the content and trajectory of these conversations between Admiral Sharp and General Burchinal, without directly contradicting McNamara's account, complicate the assertion of Sharp's certainty insofar as this moment is clearly mitigated on the recording by the sequence of phrases: "no doubt about that… I think." Here McNamara's confirmation of certainty is undercut by the evident uncertainty ("I think") in the recording.

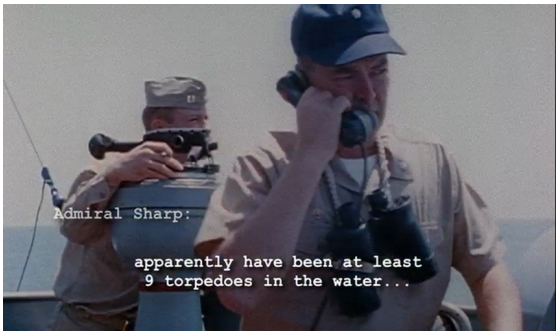

Fig. 3.1 *The Fog of War*: Down the telephonic chain of command

Fig. 3.2 *The Fog of War*: Overeager sonar men

Fig. 3.3 *The Fog of War*: No doubting allowed

If this renders McNamara an unreliable source of centralization and stabilization of meaning, then the authorial status of Morris provides a conventional and logical ground for the sequence's significance. And here, unlike most of this film and his others, Morris's voice is even present, directing the interview at its conclusion, inserting the judgment that nearly stands for this entire "lesson," perhaps even more acutely than McNamara's ("Belief and seeing, they're both often wrong): "We see what we want to believe." In fact the potential authorial marks in this scene proliferate as even images from Morris's interview with McNamara are riddled with overt jump-cuts signaling the editing and manipulation of this material, to say nothing of the "mute" image-documents—slowed down, repeated, reversed—that occupy much of the screen time. Thus, Morris produces an account of the Gulf of Tonkin incident that, on one hand, seems to support, through reiteration, McNamara's account insofar as he identifies the players and the mistake they made but, on the other hand, does not settle for this account. Instead, the argument Morris produces shifts from McNamara as arbiter of historical knowledge to the civilian and military apparatus he functioned within and that, ultimately, structures his beliefs and vision. Like the IBM punch-card machines McNamara and his technocratic experts used to evaluate probabilities and analyze data, the system of interpretation and decision making these faulty reports ran through could spit out only one answer regardless of the doubts registered in these audio recordings. Beyond simply typifying what the ships sailing in the Gulf of Tonkin in August of 1964 might look like, the multiple image-documents of Naval officers, sailors, and equipment that accompany the audio recordings and McNamara's claims all contain some piece of

communication technology; from the on-board phone to the sonar screens, to the radio dishes and light signals on the ship's deck, these image-documents visually link the event with the social technologies (both institutional and mechanical) used to interpret and respond to it. Of course this reading relies on identifying Morris with the film as a whole, attributing its coherence and effects to his controlling hands *outside* the film itself. As such, the marks of this control are registered in those moments of overt combination and recombination attributable to Morris's guiding hand: the jump-cuts, cuts between interview footage and image-documents, subtitling, Morris's voice from behind the camera, as well as any other instance that calls the production of the film and its meaning to the attention of the viewer.

Like voice in Nichols's argument, described this way, the utterances, whether of the literally vocal sort issued by McNamara or the more abstract sense of an act of signification, are referred back to an enunciating subject; that is, they are individuated, responding to the order-word "enunciation" as an authoritative, ordering statement directed toward the spectator. Each reading relies on a given sense of individuality and individuation; where McNamara (oddly enough for a figure so intent on nuancing his own historical responsibilities) sees the missteps of our neocolonial intervention in Vietnam as the result of individual failings (Johnson's, Sharp's, etc.), the film's analysis of a systemic failure/drive toward war in the Gulf of Tonkin incident is attributed to a knowing speaker whose distance from the material allows for the "connecting of dots." This individuation is the constant extracted from the film's argument. But what of the material assembled both/either to illustrate McNamara's claims in the interview and/or to

draw out the underlying apparatus of military and political decision making? This material, the image-documents of sailors and ships, sonar men and radar dishes, the audio recordings of phone conversations and voices inscribed on magnetic tape, cannot entirely be reduced to these individual acts of enunciation since each contains a dimension that exceeds its deployment or interpretation by McNamara or Morris. Even without Deleuze and Guattari's ontological claim that "there is no individual enunciation," these instances of enunciation are empirically multiple insofar as they all introduce acts of enunciation and expression performed by subjects other than McNamara, Morris, or even the film. These are literally utterance from the collective assemblages of enunciation and their effects are produced by the variations they enact and the differential relations they partake in.

However, even more than the fact that this scene and film combine the statements and expressions of multiple subjects and participants, the existence, especially, of both the audio recordings and image-documents points to the collective assemblages of enunciation that make the film possible. On a material level, the image-documents and audio recordings here belong to the social repository of language that every utterance draws from and contributes to. They exemplify Deleuze and Guattari's claim that language is always a second order statement containing, referring to, and transmitting previous statements that mark their condition of possibility. The image-documents from aboard Naval ships in *The Fog of War* are images of images and the film is entirely composed of such enunciations; even McNamara's comments, the performances of the sonar men and Naval officers, and the cuts and other cinematic techniques (jump-cuts,

etc.) are instantiations of the collective assemblages of enunciation that constitute specific modes of address and gestures, from military codes of rank and conduct to the conventions of documentary production that inform the film's production of meaning. Whether in the case of Morris's complex melding of these materials into a sophisticated argument or the less subtle guiding force of a "Voice of God" narrator, the documentary utterance is often treated in terms of an individual wielding these statement for particular purposes (which is no doubt the case) with little consideration of the residual effects of the collective assemblages of enunciation they are drawn from or the new affects produced by their retransmission in new assemblages of enunciation. Though it is perhaps more overt in film, and even more so in documentary's use of image-documents, the concept of collective assemblages of enunciation places indirect discourse as logically prior to direct discourse. As Deleuze and Guatarri write,

> Indirect discourse in no way supposes direct discourse; rather the latter is extracted from the former, to the extent that the operations of signifiance and proceedings of subjectification in an assemblage are distributed, attributed, and assigned, or that the variables of the assemblage enter into constant relations, however temporarily. Direct discourse is a detached fragment of a mass and is born of the dismemberment of the collective assemblage; but the collective assemblage is always like the murmur from which I take my proper name, the constellation of voices, concordant or not, from which I draw my voice. I always depend on a molecular assemblage of enunciation that is not given to my conscious mind, any

> more than it depends solely on my apparent social determinations, which combine many heterogeneous regimes of signs. Speaking in tongues. To write is perhaps to bring the assemblage of the unconscious to the light of day, to select the whispering voices, to gather the tribes and secret idioms from which I extract something I call my Self. (84)

This relationship between direct and indirect discourse is important insofar as any attempt to locate and centralize meaning in documentary—a genre that clearly embraces direct discourse, perhaps even more than any other—must reckon with the undercurrent of indirect discourse that flows through its materials. To assign to McNamara, Morris, or even the film itself, the power and responsibility of singular coherent meaning making is to forestall analysis at the moment at which "the operations of signifiance and proceedings of subjectification in an assemblage are distributed, attributed, and assigned, or that the variables of the assemblage enter into constant relations" while also neglecting the force of "the collective assemblage," that "is always like the murmur from which I take my proper name, the constellation of voices, concordant or not, from which I draw my voice." Yet this murmur, the inexhaustible affect of collective assemblages of enunciation, is only accessible and instantiated in the singular acts of enunciation that perform the task of "continuous variation." These enunciations, though, are *singular*, not *individual* insofar as each marks a different and differential statement from a collective assemblage of enunciation drawn from the myriad other collective assemblages. As such the specificity of enunciations is paramount in attending to the presence of the collective assemblage that marks their condition of possibility.

The need to look closely at enunciations underlies Deleuze and Guattari's claim that writing may grant some access to this "assemblage of the unconscious" as it works on conscious thought. Implicitly this embrace of writing is related to the way writing, as inscription, allows for and relies on the material actualization of a particular assemblage that persists yet remains in constant variation, both aspects depending on which "whispering voices" are selected and carried on to other assemblages. These same factors apply to documentary and are intensified in the use of image-documents. For every uttering of stock footage, B-roll, home movie, or recontextualized Hollywood image, from which some constant is extracted—some stabilization of the variables assembled under the title of the text and attributed to the author—there is also an opening up to the different "tribes and secret idioms" that belong to the collective assemblage of enunciation. Because cinema, like writing and perhaps even more so, partakes in language's transmission of statements within other statements and draws from collective assemblages of enunciation in order to produce its own assemblages that then circulate, it too enacts enunciations that simultaneously mark the attempt to assert control over meaning while also "speaking in tongues" that are not its own. Within documentary, the enunciations of and through image-documents "bring to the light of day" this double movement of direct discourse extracted from indirect discourse, of conscious arguments carrying unconscious affects, of a voice whose consistency disguises the "constellation of voices" that make it up. For this reason it is imperative that we attend to the discourse of cinematic enunciation.

III. Documentary enunciation from deixis to third person impersonal enunciation

If traditional fiction film is, as Christian Metz famously argues in "Story/Discourse," a discourse "masquerad[ing] as a story," documentary eschews such slight of hand (91). Rather than construct a peephole perspective on fictional actions, documentary's embrace of argument functions as a form of direct discourse by addressing a world the film presumptively shares with its spectators. Perhaps this explains the lack of a specific theory of documentary enunciation relative to its elaboration in fiction film. Nonetheless, documentary remains a particular form of utterance and, thus, is constituted through enunciations. Though the documentary text can safely assume the existence of its world, *the* world, and thus enunciates itself differently from fiction film's imperative for verisimilitude and identificatory positioning, documentary shares formal traits and techniques of enunciation with other categories of film. There is nothing essentially different about a cut, or a close-up in documentary versus fiction film. In fact, given the prevalence of speakers speaking more-or-less directly to the audience in documentary, enunciation is perhaps a more "natural" fit for thinking about documentary. Whatever the case, the film theoretical work on enunciation produced in the heyday of cine-semiotics and psychoanalytic criticism, along with the cresting wave of structural and post-structural continental philosophy hitting the shores of the Anglo-American academy in the 1970s and 80s, are useful places to start detailing enunciation in documentary and its relation to image-documents.

Enunciation constitutes a major strand in the debates around spectatorship, serving as one of the central concepts mobilized in response to the question of how the

spectator is positioned as at once the addressee and (imaginary) sender of the cinematic message. Emile Benveniste's work, along with Lacan's theorization of a linguistically constituted subject, was a touchstone for thinking the positions of an enunciating subject and an enunciated subject, an *I* and a *you* of cinematic discourse, thus structuring film's assemblage of moving images and recorded sounds. In the cinema, as opposed to situations of direct discourse in speech, both an *I* and a *you* are constitutively absent; the camera/director is never in the theater filming the movie being projected and the spectator is rarely present on the set observing the film's shots as they are captured, leading Metz in the seminal interlude in the *Imaginary Signifier* quoted above, to write, "Film is exhibitionist and at the same time it is not" (93). Film is "exhibitionist" because it displays itself for the spectator, but within the strictures of conventional narrative film it must never acknowledge its position as spectacle, thus its infamous standing as voyeuristic. In response to this paradoxical structure, Benveniste's conceptualization of the role of deixis supplemented film theory's attempt to analyze the politics of spectatorship in dominant cinematic realism's positioning of the viewing subject. In particular Benveniste's emphasis on the function of the deictic mark *I*, as a structuring enunciating entity encoding the source of the statement within the statement itself, was taken up in film theory: "what does *I* refer to? To something very peculiar which is exclusively linguistic: *I* refers to an act of individual discourse in which it is pronounced, and by this designates the speaker" (226). *I* marks the place and represented presence of a generic speaker from which any given "instance of discourse" is emitted, but who is this agent and how is this structural position identified in film where there is no specific

equivalent of *I* (Benveniste 226)? The same question can be asked of other deictic marks, especially the *you* designating the addressee of discourse. And the answer to both questions, at least in fiction film, resides on "the level of enunciation" extending over most aspects "of production—of camera movement, editing, composition, sound-recording, sound-mix, script, etc." (Silverman 46).

Film theory's interest in the role and influence of cinematic deixis, drawn from Benveniste's work on enunciation (and significantly modified through Lacanian concepts), is most prominent in analyses of the shot/reverse-shot structure common to conventional narrative film.[13] Often called the system or theory of suture,[14] this structure describes a process of enunciation through which the spectator is stitched into the film by identifying with the view of the camera in a complex series of shots supposedly mimicking an embodied (i.e. spatialized), yet invisible, vantage point on a visual field constituted by multiple shots (paradigmatically a conversation between two characters constructed in a shot/reverse shot pattern). Within this schema the shot to shot relations and frame compositions encourage the spectator to imagine themselves as the *I/eye* of the film's discourse, even as they simultaneously occupy the position of its addressee insofar as the image is offered as a presentation for a viewer. This theorization responds precisely to both the technical specificity of film, which presents no obvious deictic equivalents, and to the dominant imperatives of cinematic realism devoted to obscuring

[13] Most influential but far from the only detailed theorization of filmic enunciation. See the essays in *The Film Spectator: From Sign to Mind*, especially the entries from Cassetti, Jost, and Metz.
[14] See *Screen* dossier on suture featuring essays by J.A. Miller, Jean-Pierre Oudart, and Stephen Heath as well as Kaja Silverman's *The Subject of Semiotics* and Daniel Dayan "The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema."

"the level of enunciation" in favor of constructing a sealed world. In doing so, suture, and enunciation more generally, served the ends of analyzing the ways dominant fiction film accounted for the image's (imaginary) origin within the film itself, i.e. how it answered the spectator's unconscious questions: "how and why am I seeing this?"

The critical logic central to this account of cinematic enunciation is the demystifying and unveiling of a discursive core in fiction film's narrative presentation; the story must be unmasked to reveal the discourse it operates through. The problematic of suture and the reading of enunciation pursued in this variant of film theory, then, focuses on locating *I* and *you*, a first and second person, as marked within the film text. This logic is out of step with documentary on at least two fronts though. First, the coherence and existence—the verisimilitude—of the world represented by documentary is not in doubt; skepticism, the fact of formal construction, and perspective aside, documentary presents a world that spectators take to exist outside the film, a world that both the film and spectator occupy. As such, the textual act of obscuring the spectator's second person status by accounting for what spatial position he or she occupies within the diegetic space of and implied by the image is deemphasized nearly to the point of irrelevance. Instead, documentary film addresses a spectator who takes a position *on* rather than *in* the film's discourse, from which the spectator evaluates the documentary's claims.[15] Put differently, the documentary spectator understands he or she is, relative to

[15] Of course this shared sense of the external world presents its own set of doubts and insecurities revolving around the good-faith presentation of events and the stricture that the filmmaker has made no overt attempt to shape the events depicted for the purposes of the film being produced. For a thorough discussion of the issues surrounding filmic conventions and manipulation in documentary film and television see Brian Winston *Lies, Damn Lies and Documentary*.

fiction film, explicitly positioned as the *you* of the film's discourse. Second, and a symptom of the first, the basic formal convention, the shot/reverse-shot construction prevalent in classical Hollywood narration, is far less significant in documentary, such that the paradigmatic structural indicator "suturing" the spectator to the film as both subject of enunciation and enunciated subject is mostly absent. In a sense, documentary at once excises yet presumes the *I* so essential to the earlier incarnation of filmic enunciation, while more or less openly soliciting the *you*.[16] There is generally less need to encode viable on-screen substitutes for spectators since it is not a position the film encourages them to occupy, thus the relative dearth of a point-of-view structure encouraging identification with the camera.[17] Documentary discourse, rather than presenting a sealed world taken in by an invisible observer, offers itself as a form of direct speech that, in line with the idea of the voice of the film, offers an *I* that presents a position to a clearly defined *you* on a generic level.[18]

But the concept and function of enunciation, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, does not begin and end with deixis. Indeed Christian Metz, whose generative work on cinematic enunciation is evident in the suture arguments, mounts a challenge to the presumed centrality of deixis for filmic enunciation in his last (posthumously) published

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[16] Indeed, the clichéd and defensive response by documentary filmmakers that the goal of the film is to make the spectator think and that the spectator should "make up their own mind," aside from abdicating responsibility, illustrates documentary's open acknowledgement of an addressee for the film's discourse.
[17] Significant exceptions to this would include the work of Michael Moore, and Ross McElwee, among other contemporary filmmakers. For a reading of these directors and the overall trend see Paul Arthur's "Jargons of Authenticity," in *Theorizing Documentary*.
[18] There are of course exceptions, most obviously from the American observational cinema movement associated with Fredrick Wiseman, the Maysles brothers, D.A. Pennebaker and the Drew associates. For an analysis of Observational cinema's relation to narrative film and the continuity system see Bill Nichols *Ideology and the Image*.

text. Confronting the difficulty of finding deictic equivalents in film, Metz argues that this search obscures the fact that enunciation exceeds the set I-HERE-NOW,

> …[enunciation] is, more generally speaking, the ability some utterances have to fold up in places, to appear here and there as in relief, to lose the thin layer of themselves that carries a few engraved indications *of another nature* (or another level), regarding the production and not the product, or rather, involved in the product by the other end. Enunciation is the semiological act by which some parts of a text talk to us about this text as an act. (emphasis in original, "The Impersonal Enunciation, Or the Site of Film"[19]146)

In a more far reaching and radical version of locating the cinematic utterance in "the unique interaction of all a film's codes," "The Impersonal Enunciation, Or the Site of Film" makes the case that enunciation pertains to any apparent "meta-filmic" instance in which the film recognizes and offers itself as a productive act even in the absence of a consolidating *I*. These moments constitute the text as an encounter between the film as a discursive object and the spectator as viewing subject. However, as Metz points out, a film, like a written text, is not an exchange between participating subjects but an object "which is completed before it is presented and does not give either to enunciation, nor to the reader-spectator any possibility for modifying it, other than… to close the book or turn the television off" ("Impersonal" 144). There is no *I* present for the viewer's *you* to interrupt, question, challenge, and exchange positions with.

[19] Hereafter "Impersonal" (in parenthetical citations).

At this point it appears that filmic enunciation is an act that confronts the viewer with the binary choice of accepting or rejecting its claims, whether argumentative or narratological. But if, as John Mowitt reads Metz, "impersonal" enunciation "is an account of enunciation that begins by treating all films as discourse, that is, products that derive from sources that are rendered differently perceptible within the statements conveyed by them," then enunciative acts are, despite the apparently impassive character of a film, ongoing and continuous (25). Because no individual originating "source" grounds cinematic enunciation, neither any single mark, such as *I*, nor any privileged convention, such as shot/reverse-shot, stabilizes what "sources… are rendered differently perceptible" in cinematic utterances or what potential meanings might be drawn from them. More than voice, which ultimately relies on an individuated source external to the film, "impersonal" enunciation presents the text itself, filmic or otherwise, as "the enunciator, the film as a source, acting as such, oriented as such, the film as activity" (Metz, "Impersonal," 150). Conceptualized in this way, yet strangely never explicitly discussed as such, cinematic enunciation issues from a third person position; every aspect of a film, from the mise-en-scène to the score, is a potential mark of enunciation without ever pointing back to an originating *I*. Each instance of enunciation is only ever actualized in the particular way it registers itself as an act, an utterance, and at the same time opens itself up to spectators' variable perceptions from a position that cannot be definitively located either within or outside the film.

Certainly the mere fact of an image-document's inclusion in a documentary is an instance of enunciation, an enunciative act. Much as Metz claims that film offers only

"one sort of global and permanent deictic… an actualizing and vaguely demonstrative *'Here is,'* which is always tacit and always present and, in addition, proper to images rather than to film," the appearance of image-documents within a documentary cannot help but announce: we come from the outside; we are part of *another* film and, at the same time, we are also part of *this* film ("Impersonal," 147). Regardless of whatever the image is presented as evidence of, every image-document calls attention to the text as a particular arrangement of images, an assemblage, some of which precede the documentary itself and whatever claims made through these images can only be recognized in the text's acts of enunciation, the text as itself an action. But what sort of act is documentary enunciation? The "impersonal" aspect of cinematic discourse Metz describes points implicitly to the third person as the appropriate tense for film. Likely this aporia is due to an association of the third person with masterful omniscience and an invisible agent controlling the discourse. This is clearly evident in the critical analysis of voice, which strives to personalize the impersonal by individualizing and ascribing the film's argument to the narrator or filmmaker. In other words, the third person is a pernicious mask for the *I* speciously claiming transcendent "objectivity" to authorize its arguments. Yet there is a dimension of the third person, even within Benveniste's theorization of enunciation, that eludes this denunciation insofar as the impersonal third is identified with language itself, rather than an anonymous and hidden master.

The third person enunciation of image-documents in documentary draws out the effects of the collective assemblages of enunciation insofar as the third person is, as Roberto Esposito puts it, a "non-person." Addressing the place of the third person in

Benveniste, Esposito writes, "It refers to something, or even to someone, but to a someone who is not recognizable as *this* specific person, either because it does not refer to anyone at all or because it can be extended to everyone. One might say it is situated precisely at the point of intersection between no one and anyone: either it is not a person at all or it is every person. In reality, it is both at the same time" (107). Between the drama of the *I* and the *you*, which insists on individuation, the third person points to Deleuze and Guattari's claim that indirect discourse, the murmuring of collective assemblages of enunciation, precedes direct discourse as its condition of possibility. Even as documentary cinema employs an array of compositional effects and combinatory logics to enunciate various and heterogeneous image-documents to, as Nichols puts it in terms of voice, "convey[s] to us a sense of a text's social point of view," this assemblage cannot escape the indeterminacy issuing from third person/non-person enunciation. On one hand, image-documents, whether archival, amateur, or fictional, establish a baseline enunciation proclaiming their relative autonomy from the film that incorporates them, in order to garner a degree of authority based on their artifactual status; in this capacity, the image-documents issue from "no one." On the other hand, this extremely general utterance is compounded and complicated by the specificity of the image-document itself as well as the specifying work of the film's further enunciations, and in this sense are the enunciations of potentially anyone or even everyone.

Despite the third person's depersonalizing effects and intimate relation to the collective assemblages of enunciation, enunciations, even in the third person, also have an individuating and ordering force, akin to that of the death sentence function of the

order-word. In fact, from the perspective of a documentary's unifying argument and overt direct discourse, such as we see in the Gulf of Tonkin scene from *The Fog of War*, there is a twofold effect of enunciation with regard to image-documents: a primary, constitutive and reflexive uttering of image-documents as from-the-outside, and a secondary signifying effect that specifies, to whatever degree, the "meaning" of the image-document within the film's argument. In this capacity enunciation in documentary works to identify and direct attention to relevant details within an image-document as combinatory differentiations set image-documents apart from other footage and indicate which particular details are relevant to the film's argument. The mere juxtaposition of interview footage of Robert McNamara with the archival Naval footage distinguishes one from the other, while an additive logic combining different but resonating image-documents cumulatively foregrounds a preponderance of communications technology within the apparatus of war-making (Fig. 3.1-3.3). The overlay of audio—doubling the image-documents' archival character through the audible hiss of the magnetic tape recordings—and text on the image-documents also partakes, then, in the scene's emphasis on communication technology (here telephonic) while adding and drawing out the military-civilian hierarchy through the rank of the speakers, reiterated within the image-documents through shifts from commanders on deck to enlisted sonar men in a sonar room. Held together by the homogenizing force of the film's argument, these enunciations, each one a different variable, represent "metadiscursive folds of cinematic instances piled on top of each other" (Metz, "Impersonal" 159).

Nevertheless, this pile up of "metadiscursive folds of cinematic instances" reverberates beyond the scope of the meanings assigned by documentary arguments. Once enunciation is located at the level of the text—as itself a field of ongoing action—with its enunciations issuing from a third person, non-person, all its aspects become potential folds marking its (continuous) production through contact with collective assemblages of enunciation. Indeed, every image in a documentary is at once enunciated as a piece of its direct discourse and simultaneously enunciating, carrying with it multiple other utterances of indirect discourse in its details, from the exact arrangements of composition, framing, and camera movement, to the minute gestures of the filmed subjects moving within the image. Here image-documents fit Esposito's description of third person statements: "the statement takes the form of a pure multiplicity, an overflow of singularities, which cannot be derived from an individual or a collective consciousness, or from modifications proper to the same enunciative field" (134). Clearly, in one "enunciative field," there is a hierarchy of enunciated meanings over enunciating potential within the film's assemblage of direct discourse but this order is never fully stabilized, especially at the level of specific instances of enunciation in the process of enacting this hierarchy. Because a film's argument is never given as one, fully formed and unequivocal statement but assembled out of a series of utterances, following one after the other, accumulating resonances, reiterations, and differentiations, each act of enunciation is also a statement unto itself and irreducible to its function within the whole. In the terms of the preceding chapter, documentary enunciation is not a zero-sum game but an activity producing and realizing the surplus use value of images. However, unlike

economic surplus-value, the surplus here is not based on negation—the exhaustion of a certain quantity of use that leaves a remainder in its wake—but is borne in the act of enunciating images whose use is nearly inexhaustible.

The inclusion of image-documents intensifies this surplus dimension of enunciation. Image-documents are drawn into documentary precisely because they, by genesis if not definition, precede the making of the documentary itself and are rhetorically positioned as not wholly a product of the film. Even as the hierarchic ordering of argumentation enunciates, utters, these images to render particular enunciated effects, a documentary must also open itself up to those other parallel enunciations emanating from the specific details saturating the image-document's surface as well as the marks of other, prior and future, virtual enunciations implied, but ultimately obscured by their use in the documentary. More than the other images and enunciations throughout a documentary, image-documents, as the preceding chapters argue, maintain a higher degree of indeterminacy as part of their evidential appeal, which makes them particularly attractive examples of images as signifiers, but this indeterminacy is not a function of "emptiness" or lack. Instead, image-documents, as signifiers and statements, "topple[s] over into an exteriority where language itself speaks, in the impersonal form of an anonymous babble" (Esposito 135). Offering more (and less) than the authority of empirical (mimetic) realism, the enunciations of image-documents (both enunciated and enunciating) may be motivated by a hope to marshal and control this authority, to both authorize and be authorized by certain aspects of the image-document. But these acts cannot eliminate or even isolate the surplus opened up by the radical "exteriority" of third

person documentary enunciations of the collective assemblages borne by fragmentary image-documents.

At this point it should be clear that enunciation, especially in the third person, impersonal, or non-person, saturates all aspects of documentary and film more generally; it is a condition of possibility for documentary and its use of image-documents. As such, the promise enunciation holds for articulating documentary arguments through a diverse combination of materials also entails the risk of these enunciations and materials saying too much in their surplus reverberations, which are simultaneous, but not synonymous, with the telos of the film. Every documentary assembles voices, and "speaks in tongues" not *a* voice, and the work of enunciation, its call to flee the death sentence of voice, moves away from constructing hierarchies and identifying a unifying perspective as each "metadiscursive fold," produces Deleuze's "rapidly moving object, an occupant without a place." In terms of image-documents, the "blurred excess" of the signifier, which now combines with the surplus produced in documentary enunciation, is intimately related to collective assemblages of enunciation. Collective assemblages of enunciation always speak in the third person, registering, as Metz claims, the text as an ongoing action of continuous variation. In this sense, collective assemblages of enunciation make up precisely the "exteriority where language itself speaks," acting as both a source of statements and field of expression into which and from which third person utterances emerge. Partaking in a process of individuation and subjectivization, documentaries "extract" their direct discourse from the indirect discourse of the collective and in uttering image-documents, documentary explicitly transmits existing statements from the

collective assemblage of enunciation. Image-documents are promissory notes of this debt to indirect discourse as well as potential instances of *free* indirect discourse. That is, at certain points and under particular conditions, the surplus of potential enunciations operating within an image-document, and parallel with the enunciated argument, carry the film away from its own enunciations toward horizons of expression where "whispering voices… gather the tribes."

Bringing together the concepts of collective assemblages of enunciation and documentary (and film more generally) third person impersonal enunciation poses anew the question of politics and what it means for documentary expression. Certainly there is a definite politics in the discourses of narration, interview, and voice. These analyses, especially Nichols's argument for a more historically reflexive and openly critical "hierarchy of voices," approach documentary, and works in part to set the terms of its politics in relation to representational authority, and its ethics and goals. Within these discourses there are undoubtedly a range of arguments but they generally share an understanding of politics as a question of defining coherent positions from which representations of an external world are mobilized in order to draw out the implications of both the position presented and the form of its representation.[20] As such this politics relies on and presupposes stable points of contestation that a film, overtly or covertly, takes up, represents, and advances in particular ways, assigning political potential

[20] Where the critique of "Voice of God" narration targets the overtly "top down" assignment of meaning and dictation of the significance of images, demystifying the authority of the apparently transcendent narrator, the analysis of documentary's interweaving of diverse materials, including image-documents and interviews, tends to focus on identifying and evaluating a film's position on particular events or issues based on how the material is unified by the documentary.

essentially to whatever controlling entity (narrator, filmmaker, or film) is posited as the seat of expression. In terms of enunciation this politics could be encapsulated by the search for, identification, and evaluation of deictic roles, finding an *I* that represents *it* (or *them*) to *you*. However, the third person utterances of collective assemblages of enunciation cannot be reduced to this sort of politics precisely because the contestation of authority and power are not limited to existing, stable positions but are actively produced through a diverse, material assemblage of enunciations drawn from an indeterminate field of statements, each of which is itself multiple. That said, what a politics responsive to the description of enunciation articulated here would entail remains to be elaborated in the following section.

IV. "What has no business being seen:" image-documents between police and politics

Before Robert McNamara and *The Fog of War* tackle lesson seven's complications of perspective in acts and decisions of war ("Belief and seeing are both often wrong"), McNamara gives, as "Lesson #4," an imperative to guide war makers: "Maximize efficiency." This "lesson" begins by describing the introduction of the B-29 bomber into the U.S. air arsenal and its effect on military strategy. As Philip Glass's score plays in the background, a series of image-documents apparently from the wartime U.S. (roughly 1943-1945) shifts between animated maps of intended bombing runs and workers (mostly

women) arriving for work in plane factories, implicitly manufacturing B-29s.[21] Over the image of a poster advertising the B-29 "super bomber," McNamara starts narrating the aircraft's advantages, explaining the technological advances of the high altitude bomber and its promise to "destroy targets much more efficiently and effectively," before the film transitions back to images of factory work. Continuing his account of the B-29's rollout, McNamara describes the arduous task of moving planes and fuel from India into China to stage bombing runs on Japan over another set of animated maps illustrating the movement of planes and fuel. At this point McNamara breaks from his straightforward overview of the logistics to comment on the construction of the airfields in China.

Nine black-and-white shots of archival footage then occupy the screen showing Chinese workers building airstrips. The first four of these image-documents display women and children seated on the ground, breaking rocks with hammers, while McNamara in the interview declares, "it was an insane operation." The final five shots of the sequence exhibit groups of men at work clearing rocks and pulling giant stone rollers to smooth the gravel of the airfield, about which McNamara comments: "I can still remember them hauling these huge rollers to crush the stones and make them flat. A long rope, someone would slip, the roller would roll over them, everybody would laugh and go on." These bits of detailed remembrance and observation lead into McNamara's interpretation of the B-29 experiment as the failure leading to the discovery of "maximized efficiency" in the fire bombing of Japanese cities, which eschewed accuracy

[21] The factory images of worker recruitment, assembly lines, and women "clocking in" are all reminiscent of, if not identical with the iconic footage at the heart of Connie Field's (relatively) popular documentary *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (1980).

for coverage. Over a montage of archival images of airfields, animated maps, bombing plans and falling bombs, McNamara praises General Curtis Lemay's decision to move attack staging to the Mariana Islands.[22] Remarking on Lemay's focus on target destruction, McNamara matter-of-factly states, "In that single night we burned to death 100,000 Japanese civilians in Tokyo, men, women and children." Shifting between shots of McNamara in the interview and archival footage of Tokyo burning, Morris asks if the extent of lost life was expected. Returning to the interview McNamara, appearing uncomfortable, responds, "Well, I was part of a mechanism that in a sense recommended it," followed by the now iconic images of numbers replacing bombs falling toward their targets on the ground. After elaborating on his role analyzing data for bombing tactics, McNamara concludes that efficiency was ultimately served by the indiscriminate destruction of incendiary bombs and not the precision of the B-29s.[23]

The image-documents of Chinese labor act as a hinge between the presumed technological efficiency of the B-29 and McNamara's embrace of the strategic efficiency of total war. This footage, at least in part, plays the roll of typification, providing visual illustration of the hard labor McNamara describes. In this capacity, these image-documents are enunciated to substantiate the insanity of the U.S. war machine, yet the absurdity of this fool's errand is encapsulated, for McNamara at least, in the

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[22] McNamara served under Lemay in the Pacific as an officer in a newly created (by McNamara and others in Harvard business school) Airforce division of "Statistical Control." The division's recruits were selected using punch cards and IBM counting machines with the goal of selecting the "best and brightest." Statistics find statisticians.

[23] Kris Fallon, in "Archives analog and digital: Errol Morris and documentary film in the digital age," argues that the film utilizes a "database aesthetic" that links McNamara's quantitative analytics to the very means of documentary film production in the digital age, highlighting the ways visual and statistical models of knowledge production overlap and are subject to uncertainty.

characterization of callous "Orientals" chuckling at the deaths of their coworkers. While McNamara's off hand remark, in an uncanny example of future's past, echoes the racist sentiment driving certain aspects of the war-to-come in Vietnam,[24] its enunciation in this scene also reiterates the distance between the film's argument and its main participant by reassigning the callousness of unmarked death to McNamara and the efficiency of firebombing; a transfer of judgment highlighted by Morris's rare interjection. Within the film, then, the dubiously posited morbid laughter of the Chinese workers is answered by the cold, detached, and empirically confirmed "efficiency" of statistical analysis. From this perspective these image-documents remain generalizable placeholders, even as they countermand and complicate McNamara's account; their only detail of particular importance is that they *do not* depict brutal death and unfeeling mirth. From a conventional standpoint we can see the politics of this scene in its critically ironic rejection of efficiency understood both as technological advancement (the B-29) and numeric instrumentality.

The version of politics described in this sequence is one of positions, where the film enacts procedures (enunciations) to advance an argument about the appropriate distribution of, in this case, responsibility in acts of war. Indeed, the film stages a nearly ideal mise-en-scène of conventional politics in which two recognized speakers—the film(maker) and its subject—air differing and contesting interpretations of known events, and even though power may reside on the side of the film's controlling discourse, its

[24] McNamara's comments recall General William Westmoreland's interview in *Hearts and Minds* (Davis, 1974) where he states, "Well the Oriental doesn't put the same high price on life as the Westerner. Life is plentiful, life is cheap… in the Orient and… as the philosophy of the Orient expresses it… life is not important."

rhetoric demands the recognition of the other's position as legible, encouraging a response of measured deliberation. In *Disagreement*, Jacques Rancière, continuing an argument already in evidence in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, mounts a case against this conception of politics as manifest in the tradition of "political philosophy" and its debates about the proper apportionment of the social. Focusing on equality as the first principle of politics, Rancière renames what is usually thought of as the political sphere (the sphere occupied by McNamara), the "police," writing, "[T]he police is thus first an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise" (*Disagreement*[25] 29). As he acknowledges, this at once specific and extended definition of the police, moving beyond the conventional "petty police, the truncheon blows of the forces of law and order," is drawn from Michel Foucault's historical work on seventeenth and eighteenth century governmentality (Rancière, *Dis* 28).

In his 1977-78 lectures *Security, Territory, Population*,[26] Foucault argues that the term police shifts from loosely identifying any ordered and administered social arrangement (a town, for example) to a more specific designation of an institutional function within the state. There he claims, "From the seventeenth century 'police' begins to refer to the set of means by which the state's forces can be increased while preserving the state in good order" (Foucault, *STP* 313). The function of the police in this context is

[25] Hereafter *Dis*,
[26] Hereafter *STP*.

to advance the *raison d'Etat* through, among other things, the development of statics and, as its compliment, a "whole administrative assemblage" (Foucault, *STP* 315). In the process of unpacking this new institutionalization of state power, Foucault draws out a term that unexpectedly encapsulates the police's purpose: splendor. "What is splendor?" Foucault asks, "It is both the visible beauty of the order and the brilliant, radiating manifestation of a force. Police therefore is in actual fact the art of the state's splendor as visible order and manifest force" (*STP* 314). And at the core of this "splendor," this "visible order," is the division of labor[27] by which the power of state is secured. Thus, the police constitutes "a set of controls, decisions, and constraints brought to bear on men themselves, not insofar as they have a status or are something in the order, hierarchy, and social structure, but insofar as they do something, are able to do it, and undertake to do it throughout their life" (Foucault, *STP* 321).

The attributes of "ensur[ing] the state's splendor" as a visible order and division of labor are central to Ranciere's appropriation of the term "police." But it is important to note the specificity of Foucault's engagement with this concept of the "police," which, as is clear from the quotations above, resides in its relation to the seventeenth and eighteenth century European state. Thus, while the police as an institution represents "administrative modernity par excellence," Foucault positions its existence as a moment in a larger trajectory toward biopolitical governmentality, a moment that gives way to economic

[27] Typical of Foucault's reticence to mobilize Marxist concepts, he does not employ this brief phrase, preferring instead to utilize his considerable descriptive skills to produce a sense of the state's management of roles and tasks, refusing to separate governmental power from capitalist industry (or vice versa). For instance, he writes, "What is characteristic of a police state is its interest in what men do; it is interested in their activity, their 'occupation.' The objective of police is therefore control of and responsibility for men's activity insofar as this activity constitutes the differential element in the development of the state's forces" (Foucault, *STP*, 322).

rationality over the course of the eighteenth century: "Economic reason does not replace *raison d'Etat*, but it gives new forms to state rationality. [….] The governmentality of the *politiques* gives us police, the governmentality of the *économistes* introduces us, I think, to some of the fundamental lines of modern and contemporary governmentality" (348). What for Foucault is a temporally limited institutional technology of the state becomes in Rancière a name encompassing all of what is conventionally called politics, extending from its classical foundation into its contemporary neoliberal formation. Though he does not directly engage this mutation of Foucault's concept, Rancière does signal a distinction, writing, "while it is important to show, as Michel Foucault has done magnificently, that the police order extends well beyond its specialized institutions and techniques, it is equally important to say that nothing is political itself merely because power relationships are at work in it.[28] For a thing to be political it must give rise to a meeting of police logic and egalitarian logic that is never set up in advance" (*Dis* 32). Rather than announce his generalizing of the police on the level of the social as such, Rancière instead distances himself from Foucault by introducing politics as a product of "egalitarian logic," as much (if not more) than "police logic."

Within this generalized conception of the police order, and from its perspective, equality is a matter of first constituting the field of equality then deciding the "just" distribution of capacities within the society of equals. The police order is the arbiter of the official count, defining what is a legible expression of equality and what is mere

[28] Here Rancière seems to be referring to Foucault's conceptualization of the productive power of discourse, as much as the concept of police, which constitutes and determines the function of its objects. In this sense, *Discipline and Punish* offers a detailed descriptions of the police order *avant la lettre*.

"noise." And while the police order is infinitely expandable, it is conditioned by the fact of a permanent remainder, what Rancière calls "the miscount." This "miscount" is not external to the social but instead represents its fundamental heterogeneity, which the police must homogenize through distribution and repress through exclusion. This is the permanent "splendor" that police logic pursues. Irreducible to what Althusser called the "repressive state apparatuses,"[29] the police order is diffuse, spread across the social and instantiated in formal institutions and quotidian life alike. While, as Foucault tells us, this order finds its name in the seventeenth century, this police is a fact of, at minimum, all Western (Rancière begins with Greeks as founders of political philosophy) social structures; its mechanisms do not inhere in the state alone but take hold in all aspects of collective life, functioning through aesthetics as much as statistics, education as well as commerce. Expanded and dispersed, the police order, for Rancière, is just short of a social ontology.

Clearly within this scope, documentary, like all film, art, and entertainment, plays a role in the police order in which, according to Rancière, "… the unending exhibition of the real is today the normal form the police in Western societies takes" (*Dis* 31). Is there any more prevalent an example of this "unending display of the real" than documentary and its less reputable broadcast cousins, television news and "reality" television? In terms

[29] Of course Rancière distances himself from any such reference, writing "I do not, however, identify the police with what is termed the 'state apparatus. The notion of a state apparatus is bound up with the presupposition of an opposition between state and society in which the state is portrayed as a machine, a 'cold monster' imposing its rigid order on the life of society. This representation already presupposes a certain 'political philosophy,' that is, a certain confusion of politics and the police" (*Dis* 29). While here Rancière appears to be extending his by now well known rejection and critique of Althusser, this commentary also points, once again, to the difference between his and Foucault's notion of police, which is intimately tied to the state (if not the state as "cold monster").

of an "order of the visible and sayable," the sequence dedicated to the lesson "Maximize efficiency," which juxtaposes and combines McNamara's speech with the film's enunciations of image-documents and other documentary conventions in a distribution of legible discourse, reiterates the larger social field of the police order through its meting out of expression between film and interviewee. In this distribution, the image-documents of Chinese workers (not unlike those of the Naval sonar men) do not count as speech but as enunciated content of the film as speaker and producer of meaning. This is not a fault of the film but part of its condition of possibility and, within these limits, the film is generally admirable.[30] Nonetheless, this sequence exemplifies what appears to be the police order's first principle of social distribution, the division of labor. Just as the institutions, modes, and methods of policing described by Foucault become generalized conditions of the social in Rancière, so the seventeenth century investment in "occupations" becomes here synonymous with the social hierarchy—a decided modification of Foucault's description of the police—as the object of policing (*STP* 322). As such, "maximize efficiency," whether embraced or critiqued, lays out a field in which some bodies, some subjects, McNamara and the film, speak as equals and others labor on "insane" tasks assigned by those with speech.

If politics is not a matter of policing, which is, in fact, "the opposite of politics," then what is politics and how does it bear on documentary and image-documents?

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[30] As Rancière argues: "The police can procure all sorts of good, and one kind of police may be infinitely preferable to another. This does not change the nature of the police…. Whether the police is sweet and kind does not make it any less the opposite of politics" (*Dis* 31). Similarly, whether *The Fog of War* is subtle and sophisticated critique of war in the 20th century or a duplicitous platform for McNamara's disavowals and excuses has no effect on its belonging to and participation in the police order.

"Politics," according to Rancière, "exists because those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account…" (*Dis* 27). Like the police logic always at work in ordering the social through a distribution of capacities, "egalitarian logic" continually asserts the unstable heterogeneity of the social. Thus, at the heart of the police order and its distribution of bodies and capacities is a paradox. The police order that constitutes the legitimate social assemblage based on a distribution of the capacity for equality founded on the distinction between speech and noise must issue commands that presume their legibility even to those deemed incapable of speaking.[31] In other words, the instituted inequality of the police order seeks to reduce and contain heterogeneity through the identification and distribution of bodies and roles (workers and speakers, unintellegible and intelligible), but to do so requires engaging the heterogeneity of *capacities*, existing within all bodies and constituting an underlying equality within the social. In this sense, politics is the eruption of "continuous variations" of the collective assemblages of enunciation that "shifts a body from the place assigned to it…. [Political activity] makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise" (Rancière, *Dis* 30). Still, though politics exists in an essentially antagonistic relationship to policing, they are immanent to one another:

> We should not forget either that if politics implements a logic entirely heterogeneous to that of the police, it is always bound up with the latter.

[31] In significant ways *Disagreement* takes the argument developed in Rancière's reading of Jacotot and deploys it on the level of the social itself, in essence identifying the stultifying pedagogical model as the fundamental structure of the police order.

> The reason for this is simple: politics has no objects or issues of its own. Its sole principle, equality, is not peculiar to it and is in no way in itself political. All equality does is lend politics reality in the form of specific cases to inscribe, in the form of litigation, confirmation of the equality at the heart of the police order. (Rancière, *Dis* 31-32)

Rancière starts from classical political philosophy's investment in speech not because it is the sole expression of equality, but because "[P]olitics exists because the logos is never simply speech, because it is always indissolubly the *account* that is made of this speech: the account by which sonorous emission is understood as speech, capable of enunciating what is just, whereas some other emission is merely perceived as a noise signaling pleasure or pain, consent or revolt" (emphasis in original, *Dis* 22-23). Speech, and more broadly enunciation, are the model of a contestation over equality enacted by those deemed *incapable* of enunciating themselves. Though Rancière's concentration on speech suggests a sense of enunciation that hews close to the individuated "I" of diexis, the conception of political activity as that which "demonstrates the sheer contingency of the [police] order" suggests that both political enunciations and their consequences refuse the logic of individuation and embrace the third person expressions of indirect discourse (*Dis* 30). Rather than distributive individuations of the *I* and the *you*, out of which the order-word's death sentences are pronounced, politics consists of activities that, intended or not, verify and affirm the heterogeneous collective assemblages of enunciation subtending the social and its distribution of parts, groups, or identities. Within the context of documentary, it is not only the individually identified speakers who partake in and are

potential political actors (indeed the policing function of distributing voices, images, and other aspects of documentary discourse suggests that these voices are outside politics) but, beyond the locus of speech, "whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it."

Image-documents are essential to documentary's political potential because, whatever their role in a film's direct discourse, they instantiate an assemblage of materials constituting a "paradoxical mise-en-scène that brings the community [existing police order] and the noncommunity [the uncounted] together," in what Rancière calls "the assertion of a common world" (*Dis* 55). What is common to this world, shared by police logic and egalitarian logic alike, is the underlying heterogeneity of the social. As part of "the unending exhibition of the real," documentary, in its claim to nonfiction and the sobriety of direct discourse, announces its belonging to this common world that it helps order. Documentary's overtly aesthetic, formal activity distributes subjects, bodies, affects, and arguments by mobilizing and engaging material, often image-documents, from this common world whose very heterogeneity—its never completed "count" and unrealized "splendor"—simultaneously demands and exceeds the divisions of the police order. And far from disqualifying documentary from politics, "[T]he aesthetic configuration," such as a documentary, "in which the speaking being leaves its mark has always been the very stakes of the dispute that politics enlists in the police order" (Rancière, *Dis* 57). Beyond these logocentric marks of speech, third person, impersonal enunciation, emitted by collective assemblages within the heterogeneous common world,

make possible what Rancière calls "subjectification;"[32] an embodied process that defies the identificatory regime of the police by inscribing a subject that is never identical to its part. "By *subjectification*," writes Rancière, "I mean the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable within a given field of experience, whose identification is this part of the reconfiguration of the field of experience" (emphasis in original, *Dis* 35).

Subjectification is not individuation or identification; it does not produce so-called subject positions. Instead, "Political subjectification produces a multiple that was not given in the police constitution of the community, a multiple whose count poses itself as contradictory in terms of police logic" (Rancière, *Dis* 36).[33] Subjectification, rather than indicate a person or type of person, names the non-person whose indirect discourse constitutes the excluded outside inscribed at the core of the police order's "sheer contingency." Subjectification marks the moment the heterogeneity, the mixture, differentiations, and multiplicities of the "common world" cease to be identical with assigned, individuated selves but instead manifests capacities belonging to no one and everyone at once. Image-documents, situated within documentary's "aesthetic

[32] In general, "subjectification" seems roughly equivalent to "subjectivization" as it is deployed elsewhere in this dissertation and chapter. The operative distinction resides in the way subjectivization, per Deleuze and Guattari, admits the social assignment of "subject positions" in line with the order-word's commands, while also naming the virtual de-individuated subject becoming actual in fleeing the order-word's sentence.
[33] Elaborating on this point through the example of Auguste Blanqui's revolutionary proclamation to his judge that his profession, as the court demanded he state it, is "proleterian." According to Rancière, in saying this Blanqui announces that, "the proletariat are neither manual workers nor the labor classes. They are the class of the uncounted that only exists in the very declaration in which they are counted as those of no account. The name *proletarian* defines neither a set of properties (manual labor, industrial labor, destitution, etc.) that would be shared equally by a multitude of individuals nor a collective body, embodying a principle, of which those individuals would be members. It is part of a process of subjectification identical to the process of expounding a wrong" (emphasis in original, *Dis* 38).

configuration in which the speaking being leaves its mark," are enunciations through which "a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation" manifest the force of indirect discourse through which direct discourse is formed, yet also undermined. After all, documentary enunciates image-documents in its distribution of materials, uttering them within a particular order of meanings, even as these same image-documents themselves continue to offer impersonal enunciations irreducible to the documentary argument. Just as the commands of the police hierarchy are issued with the paradoxical presupposition that those deemed incapable of understanding orders will still obey, the image-documents that are treated as empty signifiers to be filled by documentary's voice are continuously signifying, carrying the murmurs of collective assemblages of enunciation. It is this indirect discourse, bordering on free indirect discourse, that subsists in the image-documents of Chinese labor from *The Fog of War,* joining documentary's police logic to the egalitarian logic of subjectification uttered in third person enunciations "counted as those of no account" (Rancière, *Dis* 38).

In the specificity of the nine image-documents of airfield construction the extracted indirect discourse of the archival artifact, put to use by *The Fog of War*'s direct discourse, threatens to break free of its assigned role. Sure enough, there in black and white, is McNamara's "insane operation" of "Chinese labor" on display in the images of women and children breaking stones with small hammers, men carrying buckets of stones, and of men pulling giant, deadly, rollers. On this level the image-documents perform their role, transmitting the order-word's death sentence; however their enunciations do not stop there. In shot six, a line of men carry buckets of rock strung

across their shoulders on yokes and though this is, quite literally, back breaking labor, the worker in the lead stares directly into the camera as he crosses out of the frame of this medium shot, while a flicker of a smile is just visible on the next man in line's face (Fig. 3.4). Then in the image-document that follows, as McNamara voices bewilderment at the jobs done by these men and their supposed disregard for each other, first one man's arm, and then another's, leaves the rope used to pull the stone roller to wave to the camera, risking, according to McNamara, brutal and trivial death (Fig. 3.5). In the remaining shots of the rollers, two lines of men trudge toward the camera, tugging on the ropes, as a foreman in the middle directs them; as they work these men stare into the lens, some implacable, others smiling, acknowledging that their bodies are being recorded.

Fig. 3.4 *The Fog of War*: Under the yoke, in front of the camera

Fig. 3.5 *The Fog of War*: Waving in the face of death

To be clear, these details do not suggest some sort of authentic pleasure in work or the easy acquiescence of docile laborers. Instead, what is inscribed here are precisely "actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation" irreducible to the silent place of "Chinese labor" within the "splendor" of the police order. These are not the raised fists of revolution; they are blurred signifiers of a refusal to remain identical to their part of the social. The waved hands and slight smiles, the steady and unflinching eyes meeting the

camera's gaze, dis-identify[34] these men from their allotted place of toil and suffering by asserting their belonging to the collective assemblages of enunciation and their call to flee into, rather than away from, the heterogeneity underpinning politics and the social. It is in and as image-documents that these marks of enunciation enact a break from the worker as merely worker and the image-documents as more than the redundant visual supplement. To produce its direct discourse and participate in the police order's debates around the allocation of responsibility and the role of particular parts of the social, the film draws on collective assemblages of enunciation, whose ongoing activity and continuous enunciations it disavows, or at the very least downplays. But these enunciations, the free indirect discourse obscured yet murmuring throughout these image-documents, persist as a politics irreducible to the distributions of speech authorized by the police order.

This politics, based in part on Rancière's generalization of the police and assertion of an essential heterogeneity of politics, draws its force also from the third person, indirect discourse, and the no one/every one that direct discourse policed by the *I* and the *you* cannot fully assimilate or cast out as noise. Without fully committing to what goes by the name biopolitics, this politics does approach the level of life itself insofar as it issues the order-word's warning to refuse the executioner's directive. On this note, Roberto Esposito, discussing Foucault's essay "The Lives of Infamous Men"—itself

[34] Rancière writes in the *Emancipated Spectator* that "dis-identification" is the political effect of the aesthetic: "a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world they live in and the way in which they are 'equipped' to adapt to it. It is a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible. As such it allows for new modes of political construction of common objects and new possibilities of collective enunciation. … As such, [the aesthetic] is political because political subjectivation proceeds via a process of dis-identification" (72-73).

devoted to archival documents of the condemned men of the General Hospital and the Bastille—writes,

> What counts is that these lives, never having played a prominent subjective role, slipping through the nets of history, so to speak, and lost in the anonymity of existence, never speak in the first person, never pronounce the pronoun *I*, and never address themselves to a *you*. […] Yet nothing captured the gaze of Foucault as much as these lives bereft of any brilliance or form; nothing made such an intense physical impression on him, or made him vibrate so violently as they did. Not just because of the striking lack of proportion between the dullness of these insignificant existences and the theatrical solemnity of the power that struck them down. But because of the passion, the energy, and the excess that life—when viewed from the other side of the mirror, from the side external to the line of the outside—evokes when it is no longer trapped in the metaphysics of the person, when it remains extraneous to its exclusionary effect, and it dully but obstinately clings on to itself. (141-142)

The men that "never speak in the first person," who according to Esposito pushed Foucault's thought the furthest into the "perilous terrain of the impersonal," resonate with, echoing across time and space, the enunciations of these image-documents, whose explicit purpose is shot through with the indirect discourse of collective assemblages of enunciation that makes all discourse possible (141). The politics of "voice" and "person" that have captivated documentary scholarship obscures these impersonal utterances,

missing their power to disturb the existing police order by not simply bearing witness to its victims but heeding their call to "gather the tribes" of no one/every one.

V. Conclusion

Documentary is the genre that at once most overtly embraces direct discourse, in the name of argument, and is most reliant on third person, impersonal enunciations to produce this discourse. Nowhere is this more apparent than in documentary's use of image-documents, whose very appeal—autonomy, impassivity, materiality—foregrounds the third person indirect discourse that conditions documentary enunciation. In the uttering of image-documents, the filmic assemblage of images and sounds that is documentary embraces, wittingly or otherwise, the fact its object, its signified, is no less an assemblage of already existing statements that documentary extracts, rearranges and retransmits. As such, the mechanisms of enunciation employed by documentaries like *The Fog of War*, police both assemblages (the filmic and the social), distributing responsibility and "occupations," individuating legitimate speakers, and maintaining the line between acting, producing subject and passive, given object. This policing, though, is always subject to the indirect discourse of image-documents, drawn from collective assemblages of enunciation, which always threatens to free itself from the "splendor" of the visible order.

Enunciation, the order-word at the center of this chapter, remains in contact, on one side, with the individuating drive of the *I* and the *you* of deixis and "documentary voice," while, on another side, naming the contingency of these seemingly stable

positions whose consistency depends on the "murmuring" of indirect discourse. Image-documents take part in both these enunciatory dimensions, embodying, in the process, the paradoxical specificity of the impersonal "everybody" producing collective assemblages of enunciation. This uncanny relation between the singular detail and the general condition of possibility for documentary expression by which enunciation partakes in politics, and not policing, also grants the image-document a privileged role in documentary's engagement with history, which has been a central concern of documentary studies since its inception. Obviously history has been at stake in all that is written here, both because the primary cinematic example is a history and because historiographic form plays a part in the movement from narration to enunciation, but this chapter leaves the concept of history itself unremarked. That the image-documents described above are historical is without doubt but what, or who, are they the history of and why does this history matter to documentary?

In the following chapter, these questions of history take center stage as the conception of documentary enunciation produced here turns to documentary's contested relationship to the past. Whether understood as a form of bearing witness to the victims of historical violence or as an analysis of the continuous changes in human sociality over time, image-documents are essential to any discussion of documentary and history. Indeed beyond, or in conjunction with, the image-document's place in documentary's historical impulse, their political potentials outlined here confront the dominance of ethical discourse in documentary studies and the limits of this approach to documentary as an aesthetic, political, and social form.

Chapter 4: Image-Documents and History as Immanent Cause

In the Year of the Pig (de Antonio, 1968) begins with a shot of a war monument. Before even the film's title, the black and white image of a statue memorializing a fallen Union soldier at Gettysburg occupies the entirety of the right half of the screen, the figure gazing right to left at a black void the title will soon occupy. The film's second (photographic) image, taking up the entire frame, is another memorial, this one an inscription on the Union Square Monument to Lafeyette reading "As soon as I heard of American independence my heart was enlisted." These shots of monuments play a complex role in the film, setting up the film's central analogy between the Vietnamese anti-colonial struggle and the American wars of independence and state making, which highlights the hypocrisy of the US's role in refusing Vietnamese self-determination. In addition these images immediately establish *In the Year of the Pig* as an historical film that, in its attempt to intervene in the then ongoing war in Vietnam, is concerned with the relation between the past and the present.

Of course *In the Year of the Pig* is hardly unique among documentaries in foregrounding the past as both fount and subject for the film. Indeed there is a way in which every documentary is of necessity a potential engagement with history since every film image is, as such, an image of the past. This is all the more the case when it comes to image-documents, which always call attention to this dimension of the image. But *In the Year of the Pig*, which is primarily assembled from image-documents, goes further than these generalities insofar as it is both explicitly a history of 20th century Vietnam and, more importantly, attempts to articulate the past as a mode of understanding the (then)

present. In doing so the film enunciates its image-documents as historical documents, approaching the form of disciplinary historiography.[1] Still none of this speaks to what sort of history *In the Year of the Pig* is or, for that matter, what exactly the concept history means beyond a concern for the past.

From the opening described above one might think the film is a work of memorialization precisely because here history operates in an ironic mode, playing with the ossification of particular historical moments and figures within specific national contexts.[2] By contrast, the idea of history as any and all engagements with the past is inadequate to the task of understanding not simply the fact of occurrence, or the production of strings of events, but the complex temporal and causal relations entailed by history. The film's title, *In the Year of the Pig*, is itself suggestive of this complex historical temporality by foregrounding the Chinese calendar's coding of years, months, and hours in a cyclical, overlapping series. From this perspective the title seems to uncannily resonate with Walter Benjamin's claim that "The Great Revolution introduced a new calendar. The initial day of a calendar presents history in time-lapse mode. […] Thus, calendars do not work in the same way clocks do; they are monuments of a historical consciousness of which not the slightest trace has been apparent in Europe, it would seem, for the past hundred years" (*Selected Writings, Vol. 4* 395). Of course, *In the*

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[1] De Antonio proudly embraces the historical and historiographic dimension of his films. As he says in an interview with *Cineaste*, "My bet's with history. I'm an American who believes in history. That's a very rare thing, because most Americans live by seconds, they try to live outside of history. But I live in history and I think that people will be looking at *Pig* and *Point of Order* long after I'm dead. I don't think it will be millions, but there will be audiences who will know that *Pig* is a history of the war in Vietnam as good as any book on the subject" (Crowdus and Georgakas, "History is the Theme of All My Films" 28)

[2] Despite their prevalence in the film, memorials and memorialization are not explored in this chapter. For a compelling reading of *In the Year of the Pig*'s relation to monumentalism, see Barbara Correll "Rem(a)inders of G(l)ory: Monuments and Bodies in *Glory* and *In the Year of the Pig*."

Year of the Pig was neither made in nor focuses on any iteration of the Year of the Pig; however it does obliquely reference the contemporary racial uprising in the US, which only adds to the film's overt and sophisticated foregrounding of history. Given documentary's investments in nonfiction and the technological means of capture and recording, especially in the context of a film as overtly, and yet subtly, invested in history, insisting on a more fully conceptualized notion of history is essential to drawing out what is productive in the epistemological and expressive interplay between past and present, stasis and change, cause and effect, in the use of image-documents. To be sure the term history is a staple of critical scholarship around documentary but it strangely seems more a cipher for documentary realism than a particular relation to the past; a name for the "real" within documentary that is less, though certainly not untainted by a naïve and politically compromised positivism.

This chapter details and endorses a conception of history as immanent cause, which documentary, and particularly image-documents, registers in important ways. This is not the only or exclusive definition of history but it is a dire one offered in response to our present *historical* conditions, as well as disciplinary preferences, though it is itself in no way new. Through a reading of *In the Year of the Pig* and a specific set of image-documents, this chapter returns to a particular variant of historical materialism in order to illustrate the capacity of image-documents to make visible history as a force irreducible to the recounting of "what happened," or the prelude to the *fait accompli* of present social relations, or the archiving of tragic losses. While this project is far more conceptual than historiograhic, a theory of history and not a writing of history, the turn to immanent cause

and historical materialism stems from documentary's proximity to historiography, especially in terms of image-documents; history links documentary to historiography both as ontological ground and in the ways the expression of past events enacts a shifting and variegated temporality in which change and stasis are indissociable from one another.[3]

I. Sober Discourse: history as death, history as pain

Philip Rosen begins *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* with this series of definitions: "By historiography, I mean the text written by the historian…. [B]y history, I mean the object of the text, the 'real' pastness it seeks to construct or recount in and for the present," and, "[B]y historicity, I mean the particular interrelations of the mode of historiography and the types of construction of history related to it" (XI). When it comes to documentary it is undoubtedly Rosen's "history," qua "'real' pastness," that is invoked. And more important than the "pastness" is the "realness" of the represented events. For Bill Nichols, whose reference to history set the terms of its deployment in documentary studies, history functions as firmer ground for documentary than the suspect notion of "objective reality." Disassociating documentary from fiction film, Nichols writes, "Documentary offers access to a shared historical construct. Instead of *a* world, we are offered access to *the* world. The world is where, at the extreme, issues of life and death are always at hand. History kills" (emphasis in original, *RR* 109). The singular

[3] NB This chapter foregoes the common distinction between history and History. Certainly, the focus on conceptualizing history suggests the capital "H" but the centrality of image-documents as source documents fits easily in what is considered little "h," practical history. Ultimately, this chapter rejects the line in the sand between history and History.

("*the* world") and severe ("History kills") stand out here to mark what is essential to documentary, maintaining its fundamental and privileged relationship to reality in comparison to fiction without making a claim to ideological neutrality or empirical objectivity. History, in this description, imbues documentary's object with a subtle insinuation of the "real" world, maintaining some of the "sobriety" that remains key to the genre's identity.

There is significant ambivalence in this use of history though. Here Nichols is in the act of pointing out the rhetorical[4] character of documentary by which, no matter how seemingly neutral any nonfiction film, it always presents an argument about the world and not a revelation of its truth. Thus the phrase a "shared, historical *construct*" signals that the historical world documentary represents is not given but a product of human action through time. Yet even as this is asserted, Nichols makes sure to clarify that, "Though our entry to the world is through a series of webs of signification [historical construct]… our relation to the world can also be direct and immediate [History kills]. […] *Material practices occur that are not entirely or totally discursive, even if their meanings and social values are*" (emphasis in original, *RR* 109). As such, history functions to name *both* the contingent world of human discourse and language, subject to

[4] For Nichols the concept of rhetoric plays a central role in understanding documentary's style, goals and manner of addressing its spectators. This emphasis on documentary as a rhetorical form foregrounds persuasion as the underlying necessity for any "nonfiction" film. As such, no matter how "objective" a film may appear it must convince its viewers that its view of events is accurate and/or correct. For instance, discussing the notion of objectivity dominant in science and journalism he writes, "The scientist, like the journalist, must still convince…. Rhetoric comes into play even if it is more constrained in its tactics by rules governing scientific or journalistic reporting. To those within the discursive community, accepted rhetorical ploys may seem both normal and neutral…. Rather than demonstrating the absence of rhetoric, this demonstrates its effectiveness…" (*RR* 137). See chapter 5, "Sticking to Reality: Rhetoric and what Exceeds It," in *Representing Reality* for a thorough elaboration of Nichols's understanding of the role of rhetoric in documentary.

change and contestation, as well as the invariable, necessary realm of mortality. Far from being a logical flaw, the tension between the empirical facticity of past events and their ensconcing in fickle human signification and ideology is fundamental to the enigmatic force of history as a concept. History paradoxically highlights the conventional and arbitrary work of signification while still remaining in contact with the recalcitrant materiality of events.

There is a substantial body of criticism regarding history as shared construct, however the "direct and immediate," that is "real," dimension of history as it pertains to documentary is left largely unelaborated in the critical literature. Instead history is presented with either the obviousness of "common sense" or the mystery of a cult object. For his part, Nichols follows up his statements on the relationship between *the* world and its representation this way:

> The world is where not only information circulates but also matter and energy. These physical forces can be unleashed for or against us by discourse, linguistics, or even more directly, by nature. Whatever else we may say about the constructed, mediated, semiotic nature of the world in which we live, we must also say that it exceeds representations. This is a brute reality; objects collide, actions occur, forces take their toll. The world, as the domain of the *historically real*, is neither text nor narrative. […] Documentary directs us toward the world of brute reality even as it also seeks to interpret it, and the expectation that it will do so is one powerful difference from fiction. (emphasis added, *RR* 110)

History is associated with the real and located outside the purview of representation. History, implicitly distinguished from historiography, is fundamentally outside documentary, which for its part can only point back to this exterior and "brute" existence as its objective outside. The excess this notion of the historical world ultimately relies on is uncannily positivistic, offering a sort of vulgar materialism to denote the limits of representation. "Brute reality" is "matter and energy," "nature," where "objects," "actions," and "forces take their toll," and history comes to stand for the temporality of their existence, their status as having happened and the consequences following from this fact of occurence.

The essential figuration of this outside to representation for Nichols and, though less explicitly, many other documentary scholars, is death. Mortality becomes the essential signifier of the real and is, in lieu of any other qualification, historical precisely because it is irreversible. Indeed this seems to be the *sine qua non* of historical temporality in this description; death is final and that finality is irrefutable, whatever interpretations and meanings that death may provoke. But death is also inevitable and, as such, ahistorical; it is unchanging in the face of passing time. Death is privileged in this notion of documentary and history because it bridges the gap between the materiality of "nature," where matter and energy reign supreme, and the human world that most concerns documentary. In essence, death, its inclusion in a film or its shadow over a film's argument, carries the weight of the real into documentary such that grave matters—"at the extreme"—become the index, especially when captured in an image, of documentary's claim to address *the* historical world. Linking the physical, natural world

to the social through death has the counterintuitive, but powerful effect of reasserting the distinction between the signifying/semiotic/discursive world of human sociality and a "brute reality" that functions as final arbiter of human action. As such documentary's particularity and privilege is tied to the most base and verifiable of facts (dead or alive), which supply the stakes for the genre's rhetorical and discursive interventions. History, once aligned with the absolute outside, then takes on the paradoxical role of the sovereign exception, both the set and an element of the set, as history comes to name the space outside of temporal change—gravity and the grave—*and* that which changes through time.

All of this is succinctly declared in the phrase "History kills." History kills because death is an identifiable change of state occurring in time (especially time understood as linear succession of events) and because history is "real," lasting, and verifiable. This striking phrase, though, is also a reference to another commentary on history and its relation to representation, echoing the language Fredric Jameson uses in *The Political Unconscious*, with the glaring exception of the recourse to death. Quoting at length, Jameson writes,

> The sweeping negativity of the Althusserian formula [history is neither subject nor telos] is misleading insofar as it can readily be assimilated to the polemic themes of a host of contemporary post-structuralisms and post-Marxisms, for which History, in the bad sense—the reference to "context" or a "ground," an external world of some kind, the reference, in other words, to the much maligned "referent" itself—is simply one more

> text among others, something found in history manuals and that chronological presentation of historical sequences so often called "linear history." What Althusser's own insistence on history as an absent cause makes clear, but what is missing from the formula as it is canonically worded, is that he does not at all draw the fashionable conclusion that because history is a text, the "referent" doesn't exist. We would therefore propose the following revised formulation: that history is *not* a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but that, as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and that our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious. (Jameson 35)

The overlap is clear. Like "brute reality" and the "historically real," Jameson, in his reading of Althusser, distinguishes history from its textual incarnation while maintaining that the textual remains the only avenue for accessing history. Offered as a corrective to postmodern, as Jameson will soon name it, absolutism and its dissolution of the "referent," the divergence from Nichols's description of *the* historical world occurs in Jameson's refusal to substantiate the existence of history, "the Real," through reference to physical "nature." Instead, Jameson offers a "revised formulation" that names history as "an absent cause," and not the realm of "matter and energy." Significantly this turn to causality in defense of history allows him to refuse the reduction of history to "history manuals" and the "chronological presentation of historical sequences" by rejecting

transitive causality. And, of course, the world described as "brute reality" by Nichols knows only transitive causes.

This difference is condensed and intensified in the pithy "History kills" and its implied reference, again in Jameson's *Political Unconscious*, "History is what hurts." While both phrases bluntly state the dire stakes of history in the emphatic terms of embodied experience, the shift from pain to death is not merely one of degree but of kind. This is especially clear once Jameson's invocation of harm is placed in its context as part of an affirmative statement on history. Here is the discussion's culminating paragraph in full:

> History is therefore the experience of Necessity, and it is this alone that can forestall its thematization or reification as a mere object of representation or as one master code among many others. Necessity is not in that sense a type of content, but rather the inexorable *form* of events; it is therefore a narrative category in the enlarged sense of some properly narrative political unconscious, which has been argued here, a retextualization of History which does not propose the latter as some new representation or "vision," some new content, but as the formal effects of what Althusser, following Spinoza, calls an "absent cause." Conceived in this sense, *History is what hurts* [emphasis added], it is what refuses desire and sets inexorable limits to individual and collective praxis, which its "ruses" turn into grisly and ironic reversals of their overt intention. But this History can be apprehended only through its effects, and never

> directly as some reified force. This is indeed the ultimate sense in which History as ground and untranscendable horizon needs no particular theoretical justification: we may be sure that its alienating necessities will not forget us, however much we might prefer to ignore them. (Jameson 102)

Though there is much here to be read in terms of mortality, for instance the invocation of necessity, inexorability, and limit, the paragraph's handling of these concepts pushes against such a reading. In particular, as with the earlier (and recurring) attention to causality, Jameson modifies the experiential levels of necessity, desire, praxis, limit, and pain by recasting them in relation to form and cause. Where the necessity of death is in many ways a content,[5] especially when understood as the consequence of particular events, necessity as the "form of events" complicates the *fait accompli* of occurrence by folding necessity back on itself; events are necessary because they have happened, their occurrence is their necessity, but this necessity is neither determined in advance nor the result of an identifiable causal chain. Unlike the necessity of death, which is only a matter of time, necessity as form foregrounds history in terms of change, as its movements convert contingency to necessity. Necessity understood as a formal imperative points to the continual shifting of relations in the historical process; once the contingent becomes necessary the historical world reforms around this necessity.

[5] Of course in the phenomenological philosophical tradition death is often understood as a formal force shaping human existence. Obviously too complex to be summarized here, Heidegger's "being-toward-death," along with Freud's "death drive," are attempts to think the ways death qua "inexorable limit" structures life, especially with regard to actions in time.

As such, “History is what hurts” shares with “History kills” the conviction that history, beyond the irreversibility of time, limits human agency and escapes stable representation. But the pain of history is not the crushing certainty of death so much as the fact of being subject to forces that can cannot be *directly* identified or affected. Where death is the known end point of the individual timeline, albeit one that may come unexpectedly, and whose cause can (generally) be isolated and identified, pain is ongoing and amorphous with compound, and at times unidentifiable, causes. If history is a killer then attention to the past entails tracing back the essential points leading to the moment of death. But if history is the chronic pain of ongoing changes in the body, rife with antagonism between forces seeking to maintain and grow the body’s power and duration, and other entropic forces pushing toward its dissolution and replacement by other bodies, then the task of reckoning with the past entails assembling a constellation of events and forces that at once play a part in producing what is, and what will be, in order to advance a particular relation to the present and future. Thus the metaphor of pain expresses a more complex notion of history and the real than reference to the physical world does, despite its gravitas. It is the complexity of history that limits agency and forecloses its direct representation because the pain it entails holds out no hope of fixing historical events as reified causes for present conditions.

Of course, though Jameson adroitly foregrounds the complexity entailed in the pain of history, a fact undeniably reiterated in the complexity of his prose and argument, there remains an insistence on a single treatment, and cause, for this pain. Predictably this cure-all is the Marxist dialectic of class struggle responding to the contradictions inherent

in capitalism. On this level history is, as Jameson prefers to render it, History: the field on which the relations of production and classes unfolds in a series of ongoing negations. Scolding Foucault and Baudrillard, he writes, "What one must add is that neither kind of analysis [Foucault's genealogies and Baudrillard's critique of signification] respects the Marxian injunction of the 'ultimate determining instance' of economic organization and tendencies" (Jameson 92). In this sense, the history that exceeds, yet requires, textualization is "ultimately" determined by and reducible to the economic relations that guide the suffering it metes out. For all the overdeterminations of formal necessity, which frustrate transitive causality, the economic base remains a stable articulation of cause and effect as the myriad relations within a given historical conjuncture are identified with the mode of production as the ground of analysis. While Jameson is careful to distance himself from the teleological narrative of economic stages, his hermeneutic response to "history is what hurts," focuses on "that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social, and historical life" (95). In other words, confronting the continual, ongoing pain of history felt everywhere but existing nowhere, turns on identifying the underlying tension *between* economic stages as they overlap and can no longer be repressed. The very force of history as "the form of necessity" becomes, in this formulation, a way to acknowledge and lay out the contingent and uneven complexity of change and stasis, yet still unify this diversity in the name of Marxist analysis. On the other hand, there is more to say and do with the mode of production than Jameson allows here.

Thus, while Jameson names this notion of history, following Althusser, "absent cause," it is better here to stick closer to the Spinozist terminology of "immanent cause." Why? Just as Jameson utilizes Marxism's insistence on historical contradiction to both reject positivist historical causality and step into the breach of history's unidentifiablilty, and thus unrepresentability, situating this cause as an absence maintains the structure of representation in which historical effects continue to point back to a transcendent point operating under the surface of events. Put differently, absent cause still consolidates the complexity of changing historical conjunctures and assemblages as a sort of coherent specter that lurks in the shadows guiding the process of history with the economic base at the reigns. Yes, this absent cause cannot easily be reified, if at all, and can only be "apprehended… in its effects," but cause and effect remain fully distinct and hierarchically differentiated. Immanent causality, on the other hand, holds that cause and effect are two sides of the same coin; effect and cause are not identical but simultaneous with one another, moving between the two aspects depending on the various relations of force, desire, etc. at work at a given moment. Immanent causality, in this sense, refuses the logic of representation by making cause and effect co-present in the event, meaning that what is recognized, or "apprehended," in the effect is not the trace of a hidden or missing cause but the cause itself as manifest in a specific effect. In terms of understanding history as immanent cause, events cease to be the end result of a linear process or string of causes and effects, and are instead expressions of history itself, history as the painful necessity of over/indetermination. Historical temporality, then, is no longer understood only as a past that begets a present, or a secret, invisible engine driving

change, but as the coincidence of past, present, and future made differentially evident depending on the particular assemblage of events and forces at work.

Perhaps the most important aspect of turning to history as immanent cause, rather than casting history as either the conceptual space of positivist empiricism—the arena of what really happened—or the noumenal realm just beyond the grasp of human comprehension, is that human social relations, shaped as they are by fickle discourse and signifying systems, etc., remain part of the same reality as that which exceeds discourse. History considered as immanent cause does not require any bridge between the social and physical world, nor the unification of material social life in the name of the determining economic instance, because it presupposes their concatenation and ultimate indiscernibility. At the same time, understanding history cannot be reduced to a choice between interpreting exceptional men and events or attending to the minutiae of quotidian life and the large-scale structural shifts of the *longue durée*.[6] Instead immanent cause offers an avenue to think historical totality, social totality, while maintaining history as a radically variegated field. Indeed it is this variation within both history and the social that immanent cause responds to, embracing difference as the very ground of totality. In terms of the social, immanent causality points to the interplay of antagonistic forces and contingent events whose effects on history, on the level of social totality, are cumulative and conjunctural rather than direct and transitive. It is not that there is no agent of change

[6] On the other hand, of course, neither the history of great men and events nor social and structural history are antithetical to a notion of immanent cause though in practice the examples of each tend to both embrace other conceptualizations of history. Certainly the invocation of the *longue durée* belies the ways the *Annales* historians' methodology has strong currents of this sense of history insofar as their work, especially the turn to statistics, is an attempt to reckon with the complex interactions of human agents across time and space. For a critical survey of this work and the relation between history and social science, see Wiliam Sewell's *Logics of History*, especially Chapter 1: "Theory, History, and Social Science" (1-21).

but that there are too many to pinpoint a single cause in isolation from the other actors and events at work in history. The diversity of events and forces, each of which displays its own singularity, is affected by and affects the composition of the social totality and its changes over time.

Finally, to return to the figure of pain, the temporality of history under immanent cause also changes. As a formulation for immanent cause "history is what hurts" undermines the easy identification of past causes for present events, where each passing death births a present, because, as an affect of the body, pain is simultaneously a cause and an effect; the wound aches not because it is the effect of the cut or because it causes nerve stimulation but because it is both at once. And along with framing history as a conceptual rejection of the clear lines between past, present, and future, immanent cause re-articulates the relationship between the diachronic and synchronic registers in history. Diachronically the process of contingency becoming necessity is continual and change is ever present. Diachrony thus appears as the primary subject for historical investigation as tracking and explaining sequences of changes motivates and animates the historical record. Nonetheless there is an aspect of totality that retains its consistency over time, as certain historical conditions remain relatively stable through these ongoing changes and shifting relations. As such, the synchronic, explicitly acknowledged or not, constitutes the plane on which diachronic instances take place, operating as the background (or base) against which the alterations of the social play out. Yet the synchronic is itself still subject to the diachronic as the historical social totality changes over time, whether these changes are understood as radical breaks or slow transitions. History is in this sense

another name for the ways the diachronic and synchronic are immanent to one another. Despite the foregoing critique of Jameson's Marxism, the privileged arena for analyzing the immanent relationship between the diachronic and synchronic, as well as the most pressing question for this chapter's consideration of history, documentary, and the power of image-documents, remains capitalism as a mode of production, though for different reasons than the determining "last instance." Capitalism represents a hegemonic, synchronic structure binding together radical changes in material, social relations as they have mutated over the course of roughly five centuries.

II. Necessities of Form: historiography and documentary

Having utilized the resonances and dissonances between Nichols's "History Kills" and Jameson's "History is what hurts" as an occasion for arguing for a conception of history as immanent cause, the question remains what this conceptualization means for documentary and the image-document. To do so, though, let us continue flogging the dead horse of history as "absent cause."

The Political Unconscious is, among other things and as already noted, a work of Marxist theoretical literary criticism. The theory of history advanced in the book's long introductory chapter sets the stage for the readings in subsequent chapters, ultimately serving to state the presuppositions for a particular approach to literature, especially the novel, expanded in the remainder of the book. Thus the concluding sentence: "This is indeed the ultimate sense in which History as ground and untranscendable horizon needs no particular theoretical justification: we may be sure that its alienating necessities will

not forget us, however much we might prefer to ignore them." History may not "need… theoretical justification" but this is precisely what the opening chapter of *The Political Unconscious* offers in order to make clear that history's "alienating necessities will not forget us" because they are inescapable. With this ontological horizon established and continually, inexorably, operating as both the subject and object[7] of interpretation and practice, Jameson argues for the importance of narrative as the apparatus for making the absent cause that is history present to historical subjects, consciously or unconsciously. More specifically, Jameson deploys and engages literary critical methods, especially Greimasian semiotics, to establish narrative's unique capacity to structure and render coherent, as well as (depending on the historical conditions of its production) explain, the text's present, which is also now our past.

The emphasis on narrative in a text subtitled "narrative as a socially symbolic act" is hardly surprising but it is essential to understand precisely what the relation between narrative and history that Jameson constructs is. As Hayden White writes in his extensive review of *The Political Unconscious*, for Jameson,

> [Narrative] is privileged because it permits a representation of both synchrony and diachrony, of structural continuities and of the processes by which those continuities are dissolved and reconstituted in the kind of meaning production met with in such forms of narrative as the novel. […]

[7] Indeed there is a way in which history itself is an analog for Lukács's theorization of the proletariat and its coming to consciousness. In a certain sense, Jameson's text might be seen as an attempt to revise Lukács in light of the unconscious—i.e. Jameson shifts emphasis away from the coming to consciousness of *the* world historical class toward the already existing political (which amounts to much the same thing as class for both Jameson and Lukács) unconscious confronting the "absent cause" of history as encoded in the works of literature.

> Moreover, in its purely formal properties, the dialectical movement by which a unity of plot is imposed upon the superficial chaos of story elements, narrative serves as a paradigm of the kind of social movement by which a unity of meaning can be imposed upon the chaos of history. (*Content of the Form* 157)

As an imaginative form, narrative has the advantage of providing a mechanism for grappling with the complexity of historical temporality insofar as the unfolding of plot, where events and actions are laid out in a sequence that suggests causal relation between them (diachrony), takes place within the larger framework of structural relations between characters, events, places, etc. whose ordering is not necessarily sequential but still constitutes the text as a whole (synchrony). These dimensions of the text perform the sense making act on the level of form, rendering the interactions of particular elements comprehensible and their presence in the text meaningful. The representations within a narrative presuppose their meaningfulness—anything and everything in the narrative is guaranteed meaning simply by its presence—while the ordering of these representations, the relationships articulated between them, works to produce specific meanings from this general meaningfulness. Indeed, this is close to the terrain of enunciation elaborated in the previous chapter. And because this work is the primary function of narrative, the contents encoded in this form (consciously or unconsciously) are taken up in this "socially symbolic act" where significance inheres in the relations between events and narrative agents.

For Jameson the advantages of narrative are particularly well suited for the Marxist historical hermeneutic he advances. "Marxist critical insights," he writes, offer "something like an ultimate *semantic* precondition for the intelligibility of literary and cultural texts" (emphasis in original, Jameson 75). This "precondition" requires that interpretation

> take place within three concentric frameworks, which mark a widening out of the sense of the social ground of a text through the notions, first, of a political history, in the narrow sense of punctual event and a chroniclelike [sic] sequence of happenings in time; then of society, in the now already less diachronic and time-bound sense of a constitutive tension and struggle between social classes; and, ultimately, of history now conceived in its vastest sense of the sequence of modes of production and the succession and destiny of the various human social formations, from prehistoric life to whatever far future history has in store for us. (Jameson 75)

Marxism is to interpretation what the economic is to history; each renders the other legible even in its absence. The three historical levels described above, ranged from the diachronic to the synchronic, make up the dimensions of content immanent to the narrative form. That is, there is a level of the text concerned with ordering events, fictive or historical; another level in which these events are positioned in a legible representation of the text's immediate social relations (i.e. its contemporary society); and finally, a level where the social totality, the modes of production, are apprehended and made coherent, if only allegorically. According to Jameson the process of reading these levels requires

seeing how each is molded to the narrative in order to assuage the felt contradictions manifest in the different "concentric frameworks." In each instance the point is not to judge the accuracy or correctness of these representations but to illustrate the ways the form works to process the real it attempts to manage. This "content," to be clear, is not the explicit address of any of these "frameworks" but the way the text "must rather draw the Real into its own texture,.. whereby language manages to carry the Real within itself as its own intrinsic or immanent subtext. Insofar, in other words, as symbolic action… is a way of doing something to the world, to that degree what we are calling 'world' must inhere in it, as the content it has to take up into itself in order to submit it to the transformations of form" (Jameson 81).

As we can see, the relation between history and narrative Jameson argues for here conforms to a particular notion of "intelligibility" determined by Marxist analysis. Hayden White responds that "For Jameson, the closure to which every narrative aspires is justified, as it were, 'ontologically' insofar as it conforms to a vision of humanity finally reconciled with nature and with itself, of a society finally delivered into the kind of community that both traditional religion and the Marxist master narrative of history envision as a moral necessity" (*Content* 165). This reading identifies Jameson's conception of narrative as socially symbolic act with what White repeatedly refers to as "the Marxist master narrative of history." Though, such an identification is, along with being a reductive approach to historical materialism, a misinterpretation of what Jameson means by history and, in turn, the argument he makes regarding narrative, White's discomfort with Jameson's Marxism registers the collapse of effect into cause instituted

by the determining economic instance.[8] When Jameson declares, and White quotes, "history is *not* a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise" he distances himself from precisely the teleological conception of history White attributes to Marxism. But with history as "absent cause" it is the question of legibility that is at stake in Jameson's turn to narrative. The triad of frameworks posited as the "semantic precondition" for analysis reflect Marxist historical categories—themselves theoretical fictions—that narratives render recognizable and comprehensible in particular ways. Thus, though Jameson's theorization of narrative is indebted to and remains in contact with Marxist historical materialism, history is *not* reducible to the narrative rendering of these analytic categories. Instead, for Jameson literary narrative combines with Marxist theory to articulate the "three concentric frameworks" and their structural relation to each other and their mode of production. Thus, literary narratives are not models for the story of man's coming emancipation from alienating capitalism, as White argues, but are the bearers of the manifold and "relatively autonomous" effects of the economic base, what Althusser calls the "primacy of the structure over its elements."

Though White misreads the relationship between history, Marxism, and narrative Jameson articulates, his skepticism of narrative's privileged potential to render history meaningful is well founded. An important aspect of Jameson's intertwining of Marxism and narrative is founded on the theory of modes of production and its attendant periodizations. Part of the appeal of narrative, as White points out, is its formal modeling

[8] White largely injects *his* reading of Marx from *Metahistory* into Jameson's, rather than actually responding to the notion of history as absent cause. This is understandable, if unfortunate, given White's investment in narratology and the problematic of narrative in history but it leads him to neglect the implication of this conception of history outside the terrain of historiographic critique.

of overlapping synchronic and diachronic elements, where the "moving parts" of the plot continually change yet remain stable on the level of the narrative as a whole. This form maps well onto the more-or-less well-defined periods of capitalist production as described by Jameson. As each literary narrative is situated in its appropriate historical period, its representation of the real produces a portrait of the three frameworks that accounts for the period's internal antagonisms, explains their unfolding, and, ultimately, stabilizes their relations within the synchrony of the narrative whole. In this sense Jameson's embrace of narrative does fold back on his conception of these Marxist categories and their internal consistency and dialectical relations. The question then is not whether history itself adheres to this phantom "Marxist master narrative" but whether the theory of periods Jameson relies on recapitulates Marxist dialectics as, "in the last instance," the cause of historical change, rather than an analytic apparatus for "apprehending" the self-causing effects of absent causality. The internal coherence produced by periodization parallels the ways absent causality, in contrast to immanent cause, retains the logic of representation insofar as the determining structure continues to consolidate cause as separate, and primary, over its effects. This investment in periodization as a stabilizing theoretical gesture does not make history legible so much as assert Marxist hermeneutics as a master code for historical necessity. As such, especially in terms of documentary's relationship to history, Jameson's engagement with narrative, though not the false teleology White claims, isn't particularly useful for grasping history as immanent cause.

Immanent cause, in which causes and effects coincide, frustrates the clarity offered by periods precisely because what is essential about history becomes the continual play of change and stasis, contingency and necessity, as a diversity of elements—natural, social, economic, cultural, and temporal—interact, overlap, come into being, differentiate themselves, and dissolve. It is in its openness to difference and foregrounding of contingent necessity that immanent cause produces history as a powerful conceptualization of social totality. Where both periodization and its compliment in narrative are tactics for making sense of this dynamic by producing a stable form or "framework," per Jameson, to order the cascading effects of immanent cause, documentary and its use of image-documents provide an alternative mode for "apprehending" history. As specific image-documents from *In the Year of the Pig* express, the question of modes of production and periodization remains important for documentary as a historiographic form; this question is pursued later in the chapter.

First, though, how has documentary scholarship understood the relationship between documentary and history, beyond Nichols's seminal comments, and how does this relate to the conceptualization of history as immanent cause? Just as history became a touchstone for producing a nuanced and less ideologically suspect resource for discussing documentary's claim to the real, the critique of history and historiography in terms of positivism, formal construction, and the rhetoric of scientificity are the base of support for analysis of documentary, especially in terms of realism and form. As such, Hayden White's work has played a key role in documentary studies, along with other theorist and

critics of historiography, especially Roland Barthes.[9] Specifically, White's argument that the scientificity of historical writing, its objectivity, must be rethought in relation to the literary techniques used by the historian to order and interpret historical data resonates with similar questions in documentary. Barthes, on the other hand, has provided fodder, in a number of places, for the critique of realism and its rhetorical affect in claims to objectivity in historical discourse.

As might already be apparent from White's response to *The Political Unconscious*, narrative procedures within historiography are central to his intervention in history. However, this investment in narrative is part of a larger project devoted to analyzing the structuring affects of language and form in history, guided by the conviction that all historical texts evince, explicitly or not, structuring presuppositions that determine the ordering and interpretation of events. As White writes, "in the unprocessed historical record and in the chronicle of events which the historian extracts from the record, the facts exist only as a congeries of contiguously related fragments. These fragments have to be put together to make a whole of a particular, not a general, kind" (*Tropics* 125). White's explication of the historian's "putting together" of historical fact-fragments is based on a theory of tropes. For him narrative history finds its coherence through the mobilization of a specific organizing principle, or trope, enabling the emplotting of facts, and producing a particular interpretation of historical causality as though it simply awaited the researcher. In the preface to *Metahistory* he states,

[9] Strangely Michel de Certeau's extensive work on historiography has not featured prominently in documentary discourse. This may have to do with the fact that, unlike Barthes, de Certeau was not incorporated in film studies' turn to French theory in its institutionally nascent days.

> Thus I have postulated four principal modes of historical consciousness on the basis of the prefigurative (tropological) strategy which informs each of them: Metaphor, Synecdoche, Metonymy, and Irony. Each of these modes of consciousness provides the basis for a distinctive linguistic protocol by which to prefigure the historical field and on the basis of which specific strategies of historical interpretation can be employed for 'explaining' it. (White xi)

An historian working in a given tropo-logic confronts the historical record not as "unprocessed" but in fact as "prefigured" by a guiding trope and thus narrates this record according to "a distinctive linguistic protocol."[10] For White the prefiguring trope "constitute[s] [the historical field] as an object of mental perception…" which will "prepare [historical events and figures] for the explanation and representation [the historian] will subsequently offer of them in his narrative" (*Metahistory* 30). In essence, tropes condition the real, such that the past goes from "these events have meaning" to "these events have this meaning." Where narrative form marries temporal sequencing to the assignment of causality, tropes provide a conceptual framework for the production of historical narratives. Here temporal sequencing—the order of occurrence—provides a certain minimal structure for the narration of the past, while the tropological schema

[10] White reads Marx and Marxism, thus, *ipso facto*, Jameson, as an example of the "metonymic" trope of history. The "metonymy" central to Marx's thought is the determination of the superstructure (society) by the base, which drives the narrative unfolding of history: "Thus, as Marx conceived it, the history of mankind in general represents a twofold evolution: an ascent, insofar as man gains an ever greater control over nature and its resources through the development of science and technology; and a descent, insofar as man grows ever more alienated from himself and his fellow man. This twofold movement permitted Marx to believe that the whole of history was heading toward a decisive *crisis*, a conflict in which man would either come into his kingdom of earth or destroy himself—and the nature he both arose from and opposed in the struggle for his own humanity" (emphasis in original, White, *Metahistory* 286).

shapes emplotment, enacting interpretive, causal arrangements. Intermingling and even merging with the descriptive recounting of "what happened" in the past, the theory of tropes helps identify the imaginative acts that undergird the historian's production of the past. The theory of tropes is, in fact, White's own periodization of historiographic thought.

The idea that all attempts to represent the "historically real" do so through conditioning presuppositions is clearly useful for documentary scholarship. Indeed the influence of White's schema of tropes is apparent in the continued proliferation of categories of documentary styles and modes.[11] For instance, Michael Renov, in the process of arguing for a "poetics of documentary," proposes four "fundamental tendencies" of documentary construction: "1. to record, reveal, or preserve;" "2. to persuade or promote;" "3. To analyze or interrogate;" and "4. to express" ("Poetics" 21). The resonance with White's tropes is unmistakable as the individual tendencies are meant "to show the constitutive character of each, the creative and rhetorical possibilities engendered by these several modalities" ("Poetics" 21).[12] As such, Renov's four tendencies, like many other subgeneric categories and descriptors, function as more

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[11] Nichols's positing of an ever-growing series of documentary "modes" is perhaps the most thorough example of this response, but he is far from alone. As of the first edition of *Introduction to Documentary*, Nichols had identified six modes of documentary: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive, and performative. (NB A second edition of this text appeared in 2010, which may contain additional modes.) See chapter 6 of *Introduction to Documentary*, "What Types of Documentary are There?," for an elaboration of these modes, as well as chapter 2 of *Representing Reality*, "Documentary Modes of Representation," for an introduction of the method of modes. There is an obvious, if not explicit, resonance between the concept of documentary modes and White's tropes.

[12] Renov acknowledges the affinity between his four "tendencies" and White's tropes without claiming them as a source. He writes in a footnote: "Long after fashioning this fourfold typology for documentary discursivity (which has evolved in my teaching over a decade), I noted the possible relationship to Hayden White's discussion of four 'master tropes'…" (Renov, "Poetics," 202n.41).

straightforward classificatory devices, while at the same time implying certain evaluative connotations.[13] Accepting the fact that documentary's nonfictive status is far more formal than epistemological (much less ontological), categorization in the style of White—and it cannot be doubted that White's position vis-à-vis disciplinary history is key to his importance in documentary studies—seeks not only to catalog ways of "representing reality" but to set up a continuum of types that more or less faithfully correspond to the "historical real," or lay bear the limits of representing this "historical real." On this level, it is a matter of identifying, in Althusserian terms, the structure that predominates over its elements in a particular film in order to determine the value of this rhetorical mediation of the real.

Yet White's own interest in "master tropes" serves a different purpose: to answer the historian's positivism with a reminder that the writing of history has not escaped its speculative, philosophical past. Ironically, given his reading of Jameson, White's typology of tropes avoids ontologizing one structure or form as *the* structure of history, only to ontologize structure as the being of historiography. Thus, his attempt to categorize points to the unifying fact of imposed structure, regardless of the particular category or trope, and is not an evaluation of which is better or worse but a diagnosis of what each disavows.[14] This is in the end a strange reversal when it comes to documentary.

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[13] These four "tendencies," as well as Nichols "modes," it is worth noting, form their own loose historical narrative, as the progress from one to four in the list roughly correlates to periods of documentary production. Indeed, this is a version of the narrative of documentary history discussed in Chapter 3 with regard to narration and voice.

[14] For better or worse, White's style of analysis and general refusal to evaluate and recommend historiographic methods seems at that heart of the continual accusations of postmodern relativism his work faces. The analytic distance White takes from the "substantive" question of how best to write history, which itself in some ways recapitulates the very critique he makes of scientism in history, overwhelms, at

Symptomatically, documentary scholarship tends to keep theory at arms length, largely in the name of a continued insistence on documentary's unique status in relation to the real, and this taxonomic impulse is operates as a covert, and perhaps unconscious, empiricism in which sorting objects (witness the strings of film titles that predominate in many documentary studies) displaces the abstract work of analysis. Nonetheless, the turn to White's arguments, more than any adoption of his analyses of narrativity in history, enables a critique of structure in documentary, allowing the diagnosis of what Philip Rosen refers to as the "centralizing and restricting [of] meanings derived from points at which actual contact with the real is asserted" (243).

Where conceptual presuppositions and formal techniques guide the production of meaning at the level of the whole, both history and documentary must also authorize these meanings by embedding representational evidence of the real into their discourse. As Brian Winston notes, "The centrality of [photographic authority's] scientific connection to documentary is the most potent (and sole) legitimation of its evidentiary pretensions" ("The Documentary as Scientific Inscription" 41). This amounts to saying, in the dominant idiom of documentary, that it is photographic indexicality itself that provides the pretense of evidence "'built in' to the cinematographic apparatus" ("The Documentary as Scientific Inscription" 41). In this sense the techno-scientific understanding of, and popular faith in the photographic process produces what Roland Barthes identifies in the realist novel and historiography as the "reality effect." Lacking the rhetoric of empiricism connoted by the camera, history and literature produce their

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least in the eyes of certain critics, his repeated claims for the value of historiography and the continued investment in the reality of the past.

"referential illusion" through the language of descriptive detail: "eliminated from the realist speech-act as a signified of denotation, the 'real' returns to it as a signified of connotation; for just when these details are reputed to *denote* the real directly, all that they do—without saying so—is *signify* it; Flaubert's barometer, Michelet's little door finally say nothing but this: *we are real*; it is the category of 'the real' (and not its contingent contents) which is then signified" (Barthes 148). In a manner reminiscent of his argument in "The Rhetoric of the Image," now in terms of literary language rather than advertising images, Barthes argues that the *modus operandi* of realist discourse is the use of particular details which ultimately have no evidentiary or epistemological value but serve to grant the work—history or novel—the texture of the real as verification for its claim.

Nichols, though without direct reference to Barthes, argues that documentary always offers a general statement similar to the "reality effect's" "*we are real*." He writes, "'This is so, isn't it?' is the gist of the most common and foundational propositions we find [in documentary]. This question… is the basis for the social construction of reality and for the work of ideology. In documentary what 'is so' is a representation of world, and the question, 'isn't it?' has to do with the credibility of the representation" (Nichols, *RR* 114). While Nichols is careful to point out that many documentaries consciously attempt to mitigate this nearly inherent ideological function of documentary (Winston's "'built-in'"), both the reference to Althusser—he compares documentary's "This is so, isn't it?" to the policeman's "Hey, you there!" in the famous ISA essay—and the identification of "this is so, isn't it?" as the dominant documentary

proposition, signal a critical relationship to the potential mystificatory and illusory function of indexicality in documentary. Trinh T. Minh-ha makes the claim more vehemently: "The real world: so real that the Real becomes the one basic referent—pure, concrete, fixed, visible, all-too-visible. The result is the elaboration of a whole aesthetic of objectivity and the development of comprehensive technologies of truth capable of promoting what is right and what is wrong in the world, and by extension, what is 'honest' and what is 'manipulative' in documentary" ("The Totalizing Quest of Meaning" 94). Importantly, Trinh puts the critique of indexicality directly in conversation with the critique of construction and structuring in documentary knowledge production. As such, a certain attitude toward images (as objective) produces a particular, normative style of formal construction ("a whole aesthetic of objectivity") that forcefully delivers on Nichols's proposition, converting the inquiring "this is so, isn't it?" into "this is so." Despite the difference in the tone of each of these statements, the problem that both identify leads to a shared solution. In each case, once the indexical image's essentially privileged relationship to the world is debunked, an evaluative and, ultimately, prescriptive response on the level of formal construction and style becomes the appropriate avenue for a course correction in documentary. Indeed, this is similar to the terrain covered by the discussions of voice and narration detailed in the previous chapter.

This solution amounts to arguing for a change in what Hayden White calls the "content of the form." In fact this response could be characterized as an attempt, via descriptive categories and evaluative hierarchies, to make "form" part of the "content" of films through reflexive gestures. Faced with the inadequacy of images to encapsulate the

real and their role in the now-disdained rhetoric of objectivity, documentary scholars have, for over two or more decades, advocated for films foregrounding their means and methods of production. Against a naïve embrace of the mimetic, empirical understanding of documentary's use of images, transparency in documentary no longer refers to the illuminated real that the film represents but the revelation of the film as a representation. As such, the documentary must acknowledge—however overtly or subtly, so long as the spectator-critic can identify and endorse the gesture—that the historical world that is documentary's object is never "raw" or self-evident but, as Michael Renov quotes from White, "all discourse *constitutes* the objects which it pretends only to describe realistically and to analyze objectively" (quoted in "Introduction," 7). Of course, this reflexive move does not annul the importance of an exterior, real world for documentary but elevates it to a transcendent sphere of unrepresentability.

With regard to history, this combined critique at the level of the form and means of representation reflects not only a view of the real but of history as well, since, after all, history has become a cipher for the real in documentary studies. The effect of these critiques on the analysis of documentary is two-fold. First, the categories, tendencies, modes, and even styles constructed to identify and sort out films in terms of both the tropologic and the textual tactics associated with each category also function as evaluative rubrics, as is already intimated above. That is, if we take Renov's four tendencies of documentary—"record, reveal, or preserve," "persuade or promote," "analyze or interrogate," and "express"—as an example, these tendencies fall on a continuum reflecting ethical, political, and aesthetic values. To be sure there is no pure

instance of any single tendency, just as no film falls perfectly into just one of Nichols's "modes," yet the more the "tendency" to "record and reveal" is manifest, the more ideologically corrupt and conservative the film is likely to be judged. And so on down the line with each tendency showing an increasing awareness and embrace of the fact of representation and its limits. In terms of history as "real 'pastness'" the addition of a temporal dimension is folded into this hierarchical grid such that the acknowledgement of the irreversibility of time and events is similarly reflexively rendered, with special attention given to what can never be recovered or preserved, only born witness to.

The other effect of the critiques shared between historiography and documentary is the inversion of value between (claimed) objectivity and (proclaimed) subjectivity, at least within documentary studies. Once the shibboleth of objectivity is demystified, revealing the complicity of these claims with the maintenance of the status quo, it is history and the real as subjective experience that is the appropriate content for documentary. Here subjectivity ceases to be the secret and disavowed underside of objectivity (the filmmaker's hidden "bias" as students never seem to tire of pointing out) and becomes the object of documentation itself. As Renov puts it in an essay entitled "The Subject in History: The New Autobiography in Film and Video," "The works in question [autobiographic film and video] thus undertake a double and mutually defining inscription—of history and the self—that refuses the categorical and the totalizing" (*The Subject of Documentary* 110). Here Renov posits history and the self, bound together by m-dashes at the excluded center of the sentence, as constitutive of one another insofar as each, in the wake of critiques of Cartesian subjectivity and so-called "master narratives,"

is irreducible to a stable and certain form of hegemonic knowledge. History is an effect of the subject as the subject is an effect of history; thus, to understand history one must traverse the winding path of fragmentary subjectivity and its irreducibility to given categories (even as these categories are deployed as authorizing marks of otherness). As documentaries turn inward, whether explicitly through autobiography, the exploration of personal traumas, or even the interpretation of "mentalities,"[15] their structuring principle becomes plumbing the depths of an unknowable and continually shifting subjectivity as it confronts its own material circumstances. Despite the fact that these analyses are borne out of critiques of the subject, this investment in subjectivity—marked as it is by instability—doubles down on individuation as a response to problems of objectivity. The rise in status of autobiographical and so-called essay films attests to documentary's current privileging of the first person over the third person and its attendant affects on questions of both politics and history.

Reconfigured through this emphasis on subjectivity, the history documentary addresses becomes histor*ies* where the effects of temporal change and formation are felt in the bodies of individual subjects, often in the act of interrogating the construction of their collective belonging within an identity group.[16] Thus the reflexive gesture, whatever

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[15] For instance, Errol Morris's biographical portraiture in both *Mr. Death* (1999) and *The Fog of War* (2003) takes the individual ensconced in history as its entre into major historical events. In both cases it is a question of the particularities, or in Fred Leuchter's case peculiarities of each subject that enable the film's to question claims of certainty at the heart of modern systems (the death penalty and the criminal justice system, and the US defense bureaucracy respectively). While each is a decidedly "unique" subject, they are also treated metonymically as representatives of modern (or postmodern) ways of thinking and being.

[16] Just as an increased openness to more experimental techniques of reflexivity are championed on the level of form, there is a complimentary interest in subjects excluded from the narratives of dominant, postivist history. The work of Marlon Riggs is exemplary of both aspects as his films *Tongues Untied* (1989) and *Ethnic Notions* (1986) are representative of each tactic, respectively.

its intention, stands for and signals the impossibility of knowing the subjects at the (slipping) center of history and stakes its ethical (though often presented as political) claims on the disruptive act of asserting these lacunae against hegemonic totalizations. This multiplication of history through an emphasis on the instability of subjectivity compliments and is reunified by the view of history as death in which the proliferation of subjects and their specific experiences is staked on the mortal threat posed by the regime of dominant culture; while difference often drives the investigation of subjectivity, it is the fact of death as inevitable, singular, and radically unknowable experience, that motivates these interventions. While the danger of slipping into a relativistic infinite regress is much remarked in critiques of the postmodern (and modernist) reflexive turn to the self, the violence of an uncritical objectivity and its insistence on a transcendent, supposedly neutral perspective more than justifies its rejection and the proliferating challenge to conventional forms of documentary rhetoric and the ground of indexicality. Nonetheless, the embrace of multiple subjectivities risks collapsing documentary's relation to history into an individual affair between the real self and the historical world; at stake in this conversion to subjectivity is a common sense of history as social totality, rather than existential fate.

In place of history understood as social totality, apropos of this emphasis on subjectivity within documentary studies, history increasingly intertwines with memory. Memory is presented as a complimentary concept that brushes history against the grain and grants limited access to the traumas of the past. The memories of past suffering (largely, though occasional pleasures too) are leveraged against a linear history of

triumphant and established events in order to excavate the lives lived in the shadow of the official record.[17] Through memory the task of thinking historical change becomes a matter of bearing witness to the ravages of past events left out of the historical record along with an admonition to guard against their repetition; that is, history becomes a matter of ethics. This work on the part of filmmakers and scholars takes advantage of the very "inconsistency" and unverifiability that has segregated memory from history to strategically refuse the given hierarchical ordering of events and privileged subject positions, producing a notion of history that is polyvalent and indeterminate, lived and felt, individual and communal.[18] Yet, in doing so, there is little, beyond generalized notions of violence and death, injustice and complicity, self and other, that links these diverse histories together. Though memory need not be reducible to the individual, as Walter Benjamin's "Theses" illustrates, there is little or no account in this emphasis on subjectivity for how memory is or becomes collective. As such the experience of history is reduced on one side to individual self, filled out through various identity categories, and death as the sign of the "brute" reality exterior to discourse.

And while memory offers a way out of the rigid framework of causal sequence, the question of causality, and thus historical change, is left largely untouched or becomes reducible to subjective relations and particular movements. Indeed, documentary studies

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[17] For a recent example of an argument that relies on the distinction between memory and "historical temporality," see Ernst Van Alphen, "Toward a New Historiography: The Aesthetics of Temporality." The understandable centrality of the Holocaust in the shift toward memory is undeniable. Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) is touchstone in this regard, as his interviews foreground the relationship between memory and history in order to express the irreducible subjective dimension of fascist genocide.

[18] Documentary film and its scholars are not alone in this turn to memory. Indeed, disciplinary history has debated the relation between history and memory in the past two decades. Perhaps the most well know entry in this conversation is Pierre Nora's "Between History and Memory."

has, in many ways, abandoned any attempt to address the ways documentary acts as a site for thinking history outside the specific events and subjects of particular films. To be clear, though, what is at issue here is not the films themselves but how to conceptualize the relation between the specific material of documentary and history as the immanent underpinnings of variegated, heterogeneous social totality. So long as history is treated as either official and hegemonic master narrative or the experiential realm of subjectivities and their traumas, documentary's capacity to make historical change legible, especially at the level of the social totality, must be suspended in favor of playing ethical witness to the tragedies of the past.

Where the shift toward history as memory aligns with the complimentary formal emphasis on reflexivity and the privileging of subjective experience in response to the critiques of positivist "objectivity," history as immanent cause and social totality does not, contra Jameson, necessitate a preferred content of the form or form for the content. The responses to the scandal of representation—that it is always inadequate in the face of the real—described above ultimately remains fully within representation, taking its limits as the new appropriate subject of representation, and in the process annulling the notion of history as social totality because it is "unrepresentable."[19] Certainly history as immanent cause and social totality exceeds representation and attempts to represent it have often callously reduced the different experiences of history to an unmarked but

[19] Added to the unrepresentability of social totality, there is the more troubling fact of the hegemonic depiction of the social totality through Western eyes. That is, the Hegelian idealist conception of world spirit remains a problematic figure for any attempt to grapple with history as social totality precisely because it reduces all experience to the telos of the Western nation state or, within the Marxist variant, the triumph of the industrial worker. Thus the representability of social totality is compounded by the unrepresentative quality of attempts to represent social totality through a rendering of all historical experience as equivalent or reducible to that of the industrial West.

privileged historical subject. However, the impossibility of representing history "adequately," i.e. fully, exactly, neutrally etc., does not require abandoning the problematic of totality but calls for a rethinking of representation, understood in terms of sign and referent, as the only way to apprehend this totality. Instead the notion of social totality must be articulated with history as immanent cause. That is, totality should be wrested from the grasps of a unified and transcendent essence, to which the diversity of singular experiences and subjects can be reduced, and instead conceived of in terms of history as common, shared experience inhering in its different effects. As such, the question of representation cannot be framed entirely in terms of closing (or highlighting) the gap between the sign and its referent, or the real world and its formal structuring, but as a particular instance of history as immanent cause and social totality. Representations are always-already real, insofar as they belong to history, and the real is always-already representation, insofar as it materializes the production of social totality. Documentary, then, is not charged with presenting a picture of history, or even a single historical event, but with partaking of that cause which is common to all that exists, i.e. history.

Neither the turn to reflexivity, nor to memory and ethical witnessing in documentary—whether by filmmakers or scholars—is anathema to or foreclosed by insisting on history as an expression of social totality and immanent causality. Nor, for that matter, is any form or content more-or-less appropriate or effective in apprehending history. There is no royal road to history or the real since both are immanent in their effects. That said, this conception of history does demand a different approach to reading documentary and its forms in order to attend to the ways history is legible in specific

films and images. Similarly, though immanent cause undermines clear distinctions between past, present, and future, as well as cause and effect, historical thought requires marking particular periods of consistency across time (i.e. the synchronic dimension) in order to engage the antagonistic and dynamic shifting relations between forces through time. In other words, beyond the grand synchronic of time itself, history, even as immanent cause, demands distinguishing between particular social modes, or expressions of totality, as they appear, overlap, and struggle for hegemony. The decision to name periods is itself historical, overdetermined by the very circumstances that produce the naming, and thus only finds its necessity in the act of naming itself. Thus, there is always a contingency to the marking of periods, even as such an act of delimiting is a necessity. What is required is a minimum of support for the name given based on an identifiable characteristic whose presence, regardless of its accuracy, binds together the diversity of events, subjects, and forces operating over a particular duration. To name a period is undeniably, especially in light of history as immanent cause, to make a cut in the historical field. It is, on one level or another, arbitrary. Understood in terms of immanent causality, though, the historical importance of any period is not in securing its stability in the face of the diversity of singular phenomena co-present with the defining characteristic but in thinking the changing relationships between the diverse elements at work within the period. It is the amorphous and diverse characteristic of historical periodization, contra Jameson, that history as immanent cause calls for, in much the same way that direct discourse is extracted from the indirect discourse of collective assemblages of enunciation, from the murmuring of language itself.

As it has since Marx, and following on Jameson, the mode of production remains the most salient periodization available for our present. More than any other social formation, capitalism roughly defined by the extraction of surplus value through the mechanisms of private property, wage labor, and the general equivalent predominates over other potential epochal designations, such as the democratic or the technological age. Capitalism articulates a relatively coherent organization of human subjects, events, and actions over approximately five centuries of global expansion without wholly doing away with the diversity and antagonisms continuously operating throughout the mode of production. Over this geographic and temporal span other forms of social relations—economic, political, cultural, etc.—have persisted, emerged, been assimilated or eliminated, as capitalism itself has mutated. And now, in the 21st century, capitalism appears as the unifying global form, even as it attempts to maintain its stability in the face of ongoing crises and resistances. In terms of history, the contemporary hegemony of capitalism demands that we recognize it as *historical*, i.e. not an unchanging "natural" phenomenon, while attempting to reckon with it as an ongoing, and complex product of immanent cause. At each moment capitalism, wrought by antagonism, must renew itself by continually converting contingencies—new technologies, national conflicts, labor struggles, state interventions, crises—into its own logic of necessity. With each of these conversions there is a point of transition in which old forms, present forms, and new forms of social organization coexist as the relationships between them shift. These transitions are at times as brief as a flashing up in the moment of danger, per Benjamin, or as long as the entirety of capitalism itself, as the ongoing enclosure of the natural and

intellectual world affirm. The challenge for apprehending this history and attending to the potentials for change, and thus the challenge for documentary, is how to register these effects that, as such, exceed representational logic. No matter how comprehensive a film or faithful an image there can be no complete picture of the conjuncture.

III. Making History Legible: Image-documents as historical cause and effect

If formal prescriptions do little to make history as immanent cause more perceptible, what about documentary can justify its privileged relationship to history? One answer turns on the periodization identified at the close of the preceding section and the way we understand the concept of the mode of production. Essentially, this comes down to a choice between accentuating and treating the mode of production as a relatively stable, autonomous, and coherent formation through time; or, on the other hand, approaching capitalism and the concept of the mode of production as a singular and shifting set of relations between diverse and antagonistic elements tenuously bound together by the logic of surplus value. As should already be clear, Jameson, both in *The Political Unconscious* and his later work on postmodernism, stresses the general coherence and consistency of capitalism as mode of production, leading to his embrace of narrative as an attempt to produce a "cognitive map"[20] of contemporary capitalism, even if filtered

[20] Though "cognitive mapping" is not a dimension of *The Political Unconscious*, the role Jameson assigns narrative (as "socially symbolic act") seems a temporal compliment to the spatialization of cognitive mapping. In both cases, narrative and mapping identify tactics through which subjects attempt to locate themselves within the social whole and make sense of this placement. For Jameson the crisis of representation particular to the postmodern centers on the waning effectivity of these tools in the face of "late-capitalism" and the rise (or return) to dominance of financial capital, the hegemony of "affective" labor, and the proliferation of the spectacle via information, communication, and computational technology. All of these features of contemporary capitalism, according to Jameson, undermine our

through the political unconscious. Though "late-capitalism" is characterized by its seeming fragmentation, promiscuous disregard for historical and geographic distinctions, global networks of production and exchange, and intensified abstraction of all aspects of life, its internal coherence around the determining and organizing logic of surplus value and the struggle between classes ground Jameson's conception of the mode of production. Accepting the accuracy of this description of contemporary capitalism, there is still another way to understand this most recent permutation of the mode of production as not wholly unique, or, rather, no more unique than any other moment in the history of capitalism. That is, there is a specificity to capitalism in the new millennium but it is not the complexity, diversity, or fragmentation that is new, only the particular, singular and emergent manifestations of this complexity. Indeed, history as immanent cause suggests that capitalism, like any other historical formation, from its nascent formations in the fifteenth century through its ascendant hegemony in the twenty-first has always been a complex and dynamic interaction of diverse elements whose shared existence does not inhere in any essence—not in property, the wage, or even surplus value—but in their shifting relations. History and the mode of production conceived in thusly call for ways of recognizing this complexity and the forces that vie to stabilize the mode of production and those that undermine this stability. Thus documentary's role vis-à-vis history is its manifestation of this complexity, i.e. the way documentary is itself an immanent effect of history. Presented with this task, aspects of documentary form—the use of image-

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capacity to grasp history as a totality (immanent or otherwise) and, as such, resistance to capitalism resides in finding new and different ways to represent capitalism to ourselves for the purpose of struggling against it. See *The Geopolitical Aesthetic* for a distillation of this argument, especially pp. 1-87.

documents primary among them—shared with historiography have specific potential for making this complexity legible without attempting to offer a coherent and adequate representation of the whole mode of production.

Shortly after the shots of monuments this chapter—like the film—began with, *In the Year of the Pig* presents the spectator with a series of archival images of 1930s, French colonial Vietnam. As "The Light Cavalry Overture" plays, we see uniformed colonial soldiers marching toward the camera intercut with Vietnamese rickshaw drivers delivering Frenchmen to a café and collecting their fares. The final shots of the sequence present a lone rickshaw man lingering at the café demanding further compensation for his labor, before finally cutting back to the end of the military procession, where colonial officers are carried past the camera by still other foot taxis. No additional information is given and no necessary relationship—temporal, spatial, or otherwise—between the different sets of images is established beyond the analogous appearance of the footage (black and white, grainy, thus archival) and the display of colonial labor. That these shots are even of the same time and geography is only implied. Descriptive rather than analytic, this scene precedes *In the Year of the Pig*'s chronicle of the 20th century Vietnamese struggle for independence and the film's argument against the then ongoing American military action in Vietnam. The scene is impressionistic and unabashedly aesthetic as its overt formal gestures combine the two different instances of the colonial past by linking military and economic domination through modernist collage—a technique reiterated on the audio track, which combines various recordings of "The Light Cavalry Overture" into a fractured whole. Though these images are, at least on their surface, from the past, their

evidentiary value is limited; at best they verify what needs no verification, merely typifying a past state of affairs. From this perspective, the scene operates as an establishing shot, though in the form of a sequence, that puts in place the dynamic that drives the film: the Vietnamese confronting foreign occupiers and resisting the continued exploitation and oppression of Vietnam.

In large part *In the Year of the Pig* frames this resistance, at least on the level of its explicit discourse, through the central figure of Ho Chi Minh. Within a few minutes of this set of archival image-documents, Professor Charles Mus introduces Ho Chi Minh to the film in terms of an innate bond with the peasantry. As a montage of shots of (presumably) Vietnamese agricultural labor and the countryside unfurls on screen before cutting to an on-camera interview, Mus explains,

> One of the most important things concerning Ho Chi Minh is the fact that he spent so long, years, out of his country and that, nevertheless, he has the touch and feel of the peasantry, of the village. For village life, in Vietnam, is the essential [sic] of the life of the nation. And I will give you just one anecdote to show you that connection. When he, for the first time… gave a press conference in Hanoi, in 1945, when he came for the first time as a leader of his nation in front of the public, he said to the people there, "I can't tell you what you have to do but I can show it to you." He put his thumb on the table and said, "If everywhere that you put your thumb on the sacred earth of Vietnam there is a plant growing, then we will succeed. If not, not." Now this is again one of the points where

> Ho, on one hand, is a Marxist economist who knows the importance of the base of production and, on the other hand, a Confucian scholar, because what you have to have in mind, to understand that idea of the thumb on the earth, is a simple Chinese proverb: "A thumb square of planting rice is more precious than a thumb square of gold."

This sequence of narration and typification (on the level of the image) aligns Ho Chi Minh's first appearance in the film—at least as a historical figure—with his emergence as national and revolutionary leader, thus immediately establishing his status as the embodiment of the Vietnamese anti-colonial struggle (Fig. 4.1). In the process Mus also provides the spectator and film with the two complimentary dimension of Ho as a leader: his Marxism and his nationalism, both of which ultimately converge on the land as mode of production and national identity. Before delving into the film's evocation of the mode of production, there is a formal, historiographic dimension to Mus's commentary that, in its own way, points back to the preceding sequence of image-documents and to the role of image-documents more generally.

Fig. 4.1 *In the Year of the Pig*: The essential life of the peasantry

In order to substantiate his claim that Ho remained connected to the Vietnamese peasantry despite his time in cosmopolitan Paris, Mus gives us a self-described "anecdote." As an anecdote its form, function, and content intertwine; the two sentence narrative of the press conference depicting Ho Chi Minh as an embodied speaker—temporally and physically placed both in exact (Hanoi, 1945) and descriptive terms ("When he came… in front of the people")—invoking, in a manner reminiscent of Barthes's "referential illusion," his material presence as ground for the verbal characterization of Ho Chi Minh's place as leader of the peasant revolution. Mus's use of an anecdote to introduce the political figure Ho Chi Minh is a rhetorical commonplace of historiography, and indeed most historically inclined scholarship. The anecdote, here and in many other cases, resides, when placed on a continuum stretching from fact to embellishment, on the side of the aesthetic, literary pole in historiographic rhetoric. Echoing Barthes, Joel Fineman argues:

> …the anecdote determines the destiny of a specifically historiographic integration of event and context. The anecdote… as the narration of a singular event, is the literary form or genre that uniquely refers to the real. […] It reminds us, on the one hand, that the anecdote has something literary [aesthetic] about it…. On the other hand, it reminds us that there is something about the anecdote that exceeds its literary status, and this excess is precisely that which gives the anecdote its pointed, referential access to the real. (56)

The little story of Ho Chi Minh's first address of the people contains precisely the mixture of literary expressivity and referential excess that Fineman identifies as the core of the anecdote. In addition to the already noted linguistic embodying of Ho Chi Minh, the sequence cuts to Mus speaking to the camera at exactly the moment he describes, and reproduces, Ho Chi Minh's gesture of placing thumb on table (Fig. 4.2). Literary language thus combines with the gestural to summon an exterior event into the body of the text, while still preserving its autonomous existence outside both Mus's speech and the film.

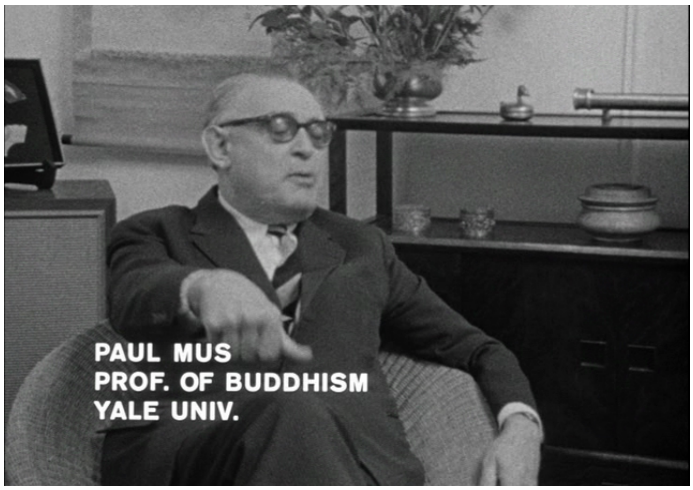

Fig. 4.2 *In the Year of the Pig*: Putting his thumb in the anecdote

The characterization of the anecdote, and Mus's use of anecdote, is also applicable, in a certain way, to the image-documents of rickshaw drivers. Just as Mus—and the film—introduces Ho Chi Minh by recounting this event, the scene of colonial labor, like many anecdotes, operates as an opening for *In the Year of the Pig*'s argument. And in the same way that the story of Ho Chi Minh's first press conference gives no specific information about his rise to leadership or specific political and/or military actions, the image-documents this section began with have little evidentiary value, yet

both work to enfold the real into discourse. In fact, Fineman's characterization very much assigns to the anecdote the burden often borne by the supposed indexicality of the image within documentary: photographic capture delivering, as such, the referential "excess" Fineman finds in the anecdote. Similarly, each image-document is, at the very core of its being, "the smallest minimal unit of the historiographic [documentary] fact," limited in its scope by a finite temporal and spatial frame, its impact is tied to its brevity and the materiality of its reference (Fineman 57). The footage described above may prefigure the film's coming argument, but as a fragmentary mise-en-scène of the colonial past, it is not yet entirely an interpretation either. Instead the scene draws attention to its soon to be, but not yet, subordinate position within the film as part of its formal effect. Like Mus's anecdote, this bit of archival imagery, "produces the effect of the real, the occurrence of contingency, by establishing an event as an event within and yet without the framing context of historical successivity…" (Fineman 61). That is, this series of images, like the story of Ho Chi Minh's thumb on the table, is *in* the film as a mark of its exterior, as an aesthetic device designed to draw attention to its contact with history. The anecdote, Mus's included, is an instance, like image-documents, of a third person, impersonal enunciation.

For Fineman, the anecdote's relative autonomy is part and parcel of the gesture outside the text, the point in this small narrative where the literary seems to touch the real. The power of the anecdote is that it opens onto analysis, functioning as the grain of sand around which the pearl of historical narration and interpretation form. And while the anecdote is privileged for its invocation of the external world, the anecdotal event need

not be overtly consequential. For as much as the anecdote is an acknowledgement and solicitation of the empirical world, it is also a sign of an additional excess in the real that this chapter names history. This aspect of the anecdote is especially relevant to documentary's use of image-documents like those in *In the Year of the Pig*.[21] Indeed where the written (or, more inclusively, verbal) anecdote seeks to make contact with the outside historical world through literary technique—for instance, the inclusion of more detailed descriptive elements or an affected journalistic tone—the relative impassivity of image capture ensures that a certain aleatory element remains in play, thus allowing, demanding even, aspects of the collective and contingent to seep into the images. In the case of both the anecdote generally, as well as the scene described above, what is included is positioned as simultaneously typical or emblematic and singular. The impact of the image-documents lies in the surplus of details that proclaim the image's belonging to the real, combined with an apparent unremarked anonymity (any Vietnamese/every Vietnamese); it is a matter of at once bearing the specificity of unfolding time while being indeterminately generalizable.

While the anecdote foregrounds the aesthetic production of an externality within the historiographic text, documentary expands this enfolding of the outside into the body of the film. As we can see in the deployment of Mus's anecdote by *In the Year of the Pig* (and supported by over two decades of documentary scholarship), the image in a sense

[21] Etymologically the Greek root of anecdote, *anekdota*, referred to unpublished accounts, written but never circulated. In this sense there is an intimate connection between the anecdote and image-documents, as their redeployment is, if nothing else, a *re*publishing. Whether they were previously exhibited or not, the archival scenes from *In the Year of the Pig* mark the entrance of these inscriptions into the world beyond the French colonial archive.

reenacts the gesture of the anecdote by doubling it via its re-presentation; we see an anecdote of Mus narrating an anecdote. However, in this case what is offered is not only an anecdote but a document of Mus's commentary, recording and disseminating his expert testimony (complete with his academic standing imposed on the image through titling) on Ho Chi Minh's legitimacy as leader. The relation between anecdote and document is important here precisely because documentary slides between the two registers, as images are the material for any cinematic anecdotes. Put differently, if Mus recites his anecdote in order for it to become a document, the sequence of image-documents of foot taxis is an instance of documents assembled to produce an anecdote. This play in the use of image-documents in documentary is a fairly direct intersection with historiography as both modes of addressing the past rely on incorporating representational artifacts to authorize their historical interpretation through third person enunciations. Documents, whether images or sheets of paper from an archive, offer material contact with events lost to the flow of time. Like the anecdote the essential characteristic of documents is the fact that they enter the historical text from the outside but with the added charge of being, as R.G. Collingwood put it, "something here and now perceptible" (247). Beyond even the anecdote's attempt to index an external referent, source documents' contact with the "real past" is continuous, as their authenticating authority lies in their material persistence through time. As such, historiography and documentary share an investment in documents based on their relative autonomy from

the direct acts of filmmaker and historian; their existence bridges the gap between the now absent event and its present interpretation.[22]

Philip Rosen also addresses the intersection of historiography and documentary in terms of the document. In an essay significantly subtitled, "On the Persistence of Historical Concepts," he writes, "If shots as indexical traces of past reality may be treated as documents in the broad sense, documentary can be treated as a conversion from the document" (240). "In the broad sense" documentaries are, as such, derived from documents with every image being an indexical trace of a "past reality." Following a now-well trod path leading from Barthes and Hayden White to Nichols, Renov, and a generation of documentary critics,[23] Rosen argues that the key to documentary and its emergence as a coherent genre or mode of filmmaking is the act of converting the document into documentary precisely by "controlling documents" (234). Mounting his argument via the film historical narrative of classical cinema's emergence from the sideshow "cinema of attractions" and its "actualities"—short, continuously shot, usually static images of everyday life in front of the camera—he remarks, "Evidently the actuality film lacked the elements implicitly or explicitly claimed by both the documentary and mainstream [narrative fiction] ethos. Basic to these is the value placed on sequenciation. This value lies in the great assistance sequenciation provides in

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[22] For his part, and to sound a recurring theme here, Barthes famously critiques the historian's idealist investment in source documents, pointing to the underlying theological character of the importance history assigns remainders from the past. He writes, "Secularized, the relic no longer has anything sacred about it, except that sacred quality attached to the enigma of what has been, is no more, and yet offers itself as present sign of a dead thing." See Roland Barthes, "The Discourse of History," (*The Rustle of Language* 139-140).

[23] To be fair, Rosen initially published the essay in Renov's 1993 collection *Theorizing Documentary* and was, thus, directly a part of beating this path and not simply following it. The revised version cited here is included in *Change Mummified*.

centralizing and restricting meaning derived from the points at which actual contact with the real is asserted—the realm of the document" (243). This focus on "actualities" as documents highlights a tension at the center of documentary uses of photographic and cinematic images. Images may depict too little in terms of direct and transparent historical information but they also display too much in terms of minute and specific aleatory details; like Deleuze's "blurred excess" of the signifier actualities and documents can never be fully extracted from the assemblages they are drawn from. "Seqenciation," as Rosen calls it, makes up for (or covers over) what is lacking in any given shot through the accumulation of images, sounds, and the other representational and rhetorical materials making up the totality of documentary. Sequenciation is akin to emplotment in narrative but does not necessitate the overarching structure narrative grants events, instead offering the sequence of images within the order of its direct discourse. This process of ordering not only attempts to fill in the lacunae of inherent meaning in the image, it also consolidates the plenitude of details and potential meanings available in each document. If "[T]he problem posed by actualities for documentary… is that they are too pure as document," then documentary as a formal apparatus must discipline this purity and direct it towards the "centralization of meaning through internal sequenciation" (245). Sequenciation, in this sense, is an enunciative tactic by which direct discourse is extracted from the indirect discourse of the collective assemblage of enunciations.

Concerned as he is with illustrating documentary's investment in history's "disciplinary requirements that an internally unified sequence should be inferred from the

source documents," Rosen leaves untouched the use of actual "actualities" within a documentary, simply implying that any and all images in documentary are subject to "sequenciation" and a "conversion from the document" (238). As such, he does not directly address the ways image-documents, like those from *In the Year of the Pig,* explicitly foreground their place as documents, often literally as "actualities," within whatever "internally unified sequence" is proffered by the film. Image-documents draw their power from their existence prior to the documentary and must maintain their connection not only to the profilmic real but also to their own existence outside the film. In order to advance the rhetorical claim to a more direct connection to the "real past," it is essential that image-documents are never wholly converted from document to documentary; where, for instance, the interview with Paul Mus is, in the very fact of its recording, more fully transformed and aligned with the film's "sequentiation," the image-documents retain and accentuate a dimension of themselves as unassimilated remainders expressed by the no-one/everyone of free indirect discourse. Certainly this does not suggest that image-documents are exempt from the conversion of document to documentary—after all, this is their *raison d'etre* in the film—but it does mitigate the attempt to control meaning insofar as documentary's continued desire to marshal the authority of the artifactual relies on maintaining, as least in part, their status as documents. At the same time, though, the material existence of image-documents that documentary trades on points back to the fact that the supposedly autonomous real is itself constituted by expressive, representational, and signifying objects.

Where Rosen's insight that documentary is "an *aesthetic* of the document" is ultimately confined to the analogy between documentary and "history, understood for more than 150 years as the construction of sequence…," the surplus of details that exceed the meanings assigned to image-documents by a particular film opens onto the conception of history as immanent cause advanced here (emphasis in original, 246, 260). Within the logic of the "internally unified sequence," the singularity of the image-documents of colonial labor from *In the Year of the Pig* are quickly subsumed by their own sequencing—De Antonio's cross cutting between the different sites/sights of French colonialism—and the film's oncoming interpretation of the Vietnamese anti-colonial resistance over the course of the twentieth century. In a manner not dissimilar to stagist, teleological understandings of historical materialism (like Hayden White's), in which one mode of production simply leads into and gives way to the next, the anecdotal series of image-documents presents the situation of colonial abuse against which resistance emerges. And, indeed, this is decidedly true but there are other specifics in the images that indicate another aspect of history operating simultaneous to the film's focus on the Vietnamese liberation struggle. The singularity of these image-documents does not contradict the use made of them by *In the Year of the Pig*, nor is the history they make legible, as we shall see shortly, discreet from the history of the Vietnamese struggle against France and the United States. As an effect of immanent cause, these image-documents hold together the particularity and precision of these images—their exact mise-en-scène—with the generalizing use the film puts them to.

Famously, Walter Benjamin writes, in "On the Concept of History," "There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (392). Though the phrase is uncontroversially understood as part of Benjamin's critique of the historicist investment in progress, moving from one monumental event of civilization to the next, overcoming barbarism all along the way, this statement also uncannily indexes the document as holding together, in tension, the contested and ultimately immanent force of history. Here and throughout his work, Benjamin consistently returns to the objects and materials of modern life as the bearers of history, culminating in the fragments assembled within *The Arcades Project*. Both in its conception and the existent material collected there, *The Arcades Project* advances a notion of history—Benjamin's eclectic "historical materialism"—that resonates with immanent cause, reading history's effects in the artifacts of capitalist modernity. As he writes, "…what matters is the thread of expression. It is not the economic origins of culture that will be presented, but the expression of the economy in its culture. At issue… is the attempt to grasp an economic process as perceptible *Ur*-phenomenon, from out of which proceed all manifestations of life in the arcades…" (Benjamin, *Arcades* 460). Rather than "apprehend" history and its expressions by analyzing the formal relations of narrative texts or the "sequenciations" of disciplinary history (or, for that matter, writing narrative historiography), Benjamin argues, "To write history thus means to *cite* history. It belongs to the concept of citation, however, that the historical object in each case is torn from its context" (*Arcades* 476). Against a notion of history, a historicist notion, that requires reducing historical objects—documents or anecdotes, events or figures—to as fully realized a context as possible, the

citation wrenches these objects from this womb "by making use of them" (Benjamin, *Arcades* 460). This tearing, violent and risky, is not a disavowal of context or embrace of ignorance, but a recognition that as a product of history the object bears within itself its own context which continues to exert its force. Put differently, the document, simultaneously civilized and barbaric, makes history legible as a cause inseparable from its effects. Thus, where interpretation has focused, quite rightly, on the dialectic of culture and barbarism in the document, the "at the same time," when combined with Benjamin's investment in the "citation" of "historical objects," suggests that history may be less a matter of the culling logic of *aufhebung* than the binding together of singularities in the document and documentary.

This section began by reframing the question of historiographic and documentary form in relation to how one approaches the mode of production. In this context, immanent causality enables a shift from emphasizing the coherence of the mode of production and its sequence of hegemonic organizations of the social whole, toward grappling with the dynamic overlapping and simultaneity of a diverse set of activities and subjectivities whose contingent relations are bound together by the logic of capitalism which articulates all different modes of labor and life through the extraction of surplus value. This massive and unstable conjuncture—capitalism as world system—exceeds any attempt to capture and illuminate it via a preferred formal structure, thus both narrative and other tactics of construction offer no privileged access to history. Instead, by turning to image-documents as at once potential anecdotes and source documents, specific and fragmentary in each case (singularities), the immanent complexity of history becomes

legible in the very ambivalence of the image described in the previous chapter through Deleuze's "blurred excess of the signifier" and its compliments in third person, impersonal enunciation.[24] History is legible in image-documents precisely because the coincidence and plenitude of details in the image, caught in a contest of meaning as they are taken up in particular arguments, makes visible the ongoing overlap and antagonism whose tensions express the push and pull of stasis and change within history.

IV. Image-Documents between peasant agriculture and so-called affective labor

Where the preceding section makes the general case for image-documents as bearers of history and the legibility of immanent cause in general terms, turning to the specific image-documents from *In the Year of the Pig* described above provides a more concrete expression of the ways history becomes legible in documentary. Given the weight placed on the mode of production, at issue here is the singular way the complex relations of the synchronic and diachronic registers manifest themselves in these image-documents of Vietnamese rickshaw men in the first half of the 20th century. In what follows, then, there is a certain play between the film's explicit account of the Vietnamese anti-colonial struggle and the legibility of history as immanent cause in these image-documents. In accord with the conceptions of the mode of production and the historical potential of image-documents advanced so far, the point of this parsing is not to show their

[24] See Chapter 3 and the discussion of Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* as well as he and Guattari's conception of collective assemblages of enunciation and Roberto Esposito's theorization of the third person.

contradictions, as Jameson might, but to explore the ways they are nestled within each other and thus immanent to one another.

There are many important historical features to the seven shots described above. Certainly the most overt and pressing is the documentation of the colonial system and its organization of the world. These aspects point the viewer to the once dominant global system, working in tandem with capitalism, and built on a reified geographic and racial hierarchy whose effects clearly continue to exert themselves both in the film's present (the U.S. war in Vietnam) and our own. In nearly every frame the brutal difference between colonized and colonizer is made visible, as the cross-cutting between marching soldiers and bourgeois colonials subtly expresses the cooperation of the military and civil apparatuses in the occupation of Vietnam. These details flow directly into the film's discourse and set the stage for the unfolding of events over the course of the following half-century. Viewed today, one could conclude that these image-documents speak to a bygone state of affairs now surpassed by subsequent independence struggles, postcolonial geography, and neoliberal globalization. Such a reading, whatever its possible merits, would tend to focus, though, on differentiating the past and present in terms of the diachronic chain of events. Put differently, when framed this way these details apprehend history in terms of a directly identifiable object of inquiry and critique (European colonialism) delimited by specific dates and locations, if not historical personae. Cast forward in time, such an analysis could be used to show the persistence of the colonial order within neoliberal "development" discourse but would not necessitate articulating

the place of neocolonialism within the larger conjuncture of the mode of production (nor, of course, would it foreclose such a discussion).

Three of these shots though are, more specifically, image-documents of colonial labor. Embedded here are not only the traces of imperial domination and exploitation but also marks of a division of labor whose global reach remains in place in the present, though not unchanged, as an aspect of what the previous chapter calls the police order. In the recent decades following the end of the cold war, the changing status of labor and, *mutatis mutandis*, production has emerged as a pressing and contentious debate both within academic and public discourse.[25] Indeed there is broad agreement that an ongoing historical shift in the organization of labor in contemporary capitalism is underway. Where capital's drive to extract surplus value from the productive force of labor continues to structure the relations of production and circulation throughout the globe, the mechanisms of production and, thus, value extraction—social and technological—are undoubtedly mutating across the global division of labor. There is neither a single standpoint from which this change can be identified or sector of society where it is complete, nor, more saliently for this chapter, a single cause outside the myriad machinations of global capital in partnership with nation states and other transnational institutions. Nonetheless, the effects of this ongoing change are felt by all through what this chapter calls history.

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[25] See for instance Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: for an analysis of contemporary forms of life*, as well as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*. For a popular, non-Marxist account of these changes see Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How it is Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*.

But what do these image-documents from early 20th century colonial Vietnam have to do with contemporary shifts in labor and production? Obviously these changes are occurring on and across the terrain of the mode of production, but these changes are felt unevenly and differently across the entire socio-economic and political field, thus creating or leaving overlaps in the specific regimes of production. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in perhaps the most influential text devoted to the contemporary mode of production, *Empire* (along with its sequels, *Multitude* and *Commonwealth*), pick up Jameson's argument regarding postmodernism in an attempt to specify the changes in economic and political life that "postmodernization" entails. In doing so, they maintain a tactical attachment to the periodizations Jameson, and other Marxists, utilize to describe the historical trajectory of capitalism: the feudal, modern, and postmodern regimes of production. They write,

> In our times, however, *modernzation has come to an end*. In other words, industrial production is no longer expanding its dominance over other economic forms and social phenomena. A symptom of this shift is manifest in the quantitative changes in employment. Whereas the process of modernization was indicated by a migration of labor from agriculture and mining (the primary sector) to industry (the secondary), the process of postmodernization of informatization has been demonstrated through the migration from industry to service jobs (tertiary), a shift that has taken place in the dominant capitalist countries, and particularly in the United

> States, since the early 1970s. (emphasis in original, Hardt and Negri, *Empire* 285)

Well aware that, though they claim the process of "modernization" has finished, all three economic sectors continue to exist, spread across a global system and division of labor, Hardt and Negri follow Marx's model of identifying and privileging a hegemonic organization of production as essential to all sectors; the vanguard of capitalist exploitation. Where for Marx it was the emergent industrial system in England that, though quantitatively minor, typified the tendency of capitalist production, for Hardt and Negri, "All forms of production exist within the networks of the world market and under the domination of the informational production of services" (*Empire* 288). As we can see in this statement, they are careful to maintain the coexistence of these productive sectors, rather than insist on one sector to the exclusion of the others.[26]

Nonetheless, *Empire* relies on and advances its argument about contemporary labor and production by concentrating on the "domination of the informational production of services." "We should note," Hardt and Negri write, "that one consequence of the informatization of production and the emergence of immaterial labor has been a real homogenization of laboring processes" (*Empire* 292). That is, while the "world market" continues to rely on all sectors of production in their diversity, these different

[26] Still *Empire*, along with the other texts in their "trilogy" (*Empire*, *Commonwealth*, and *Multitude*) and similar arguments associated with Italian "Autonomist" Marxism, are repeatedly accused of prematurely announcing the surpassing of industrial production by the "tertiary" sector. Indeed, they are careful here to make clear that their argument is not quantitative, though they do view certain quantitative measures as symptomatic evidence in their argument (as in the preceding quotation), and instead deals with the qualitative level of the organization of production. Thus. even if the shift they describe could be supported quantitatively, it would not be adequate to the task of rendering the meaning and complexity of this shift and its consequences for contemporary politics.

productive activities are now organized in largely the same way, via information and the computer. Within this conjuncture and its expansion labor supposedly becomes ever more "immaterial," reliant less on the materiality of bodies and resources for production and resulting in products that are increasingly "immaterial" in their own right such as services, texts, and affects. Where embodied time was the order of industrial capitalism, collective knowledge, communication, and cooperation are the drivers and organizers of postmodern capitalism. Hardt and Negri further specify "three types of immaterial labor that drive the service sector at the top of the informational economy [dominant capitalist countries]":

> The first is involved in an industrial production that has been informationalized and has incorporated communication technologies in a way that transforms the production process itself. Manufacturing is regarded as a service, and the material labor in the production of durable goods mixes with and tends toward immaterial labor. Second is the immaterial labor of analytical and symbolic tasks, which itself breaks down into creative and intelligent manipulation on the one hand and routine symbolic tasks on the other. Finally, a third type of immaterial labor involves the production and manipulation of affect and requires (virtual or actual) human contact, labor in the bodily mode. These are the three types of labor that drive the postmodernization of the global economy. (*Empire* 293)

Broken into a finer grained division of labor the "tertiary" sector is itself a triadic structure of immaterial labor in which "service" organizes what are presumably the sites of mass labor—the first, industrial type and the third "affective," "bodily mode"—in line with and at the command of those involved in "creative and intelligent" work. What is essential for Hardt and Negri is the way the features of immaterial labor—affects, concepts, and language—saturate all levels of production in the hegemonic economy. Because of this focus on the cutting edge of the contemporary historical trajectory and the tendency of postmodern capitalism to follow this newly dominant logic of the immaterial, their analysis understands the overlap and coexistence of different types of labor and production in terms of this determinate logic.

Returning to the image-documents from *In the Year of the Pig*, and their display of labor, it is worth noting, then, the appearance here of service labor. Where a nearly feudal plantation system, as well as ongoing, small scale peasant farming, dominated production in French occupied Indochina during the period these images were produced, this anecdote assembled from image-documents, the beginning of the film's historical interpretation, captures the service labor of rickshaw drivers, highlighting, in an intensifying trajectory, the uneven exchange of labor-power for general equivalent. Once the French colonial passengers disembark from their taxis in the second shot of the sequence, the drivers collect their fares yet are visibly unsatisfied (Fig. 4.3). After a cut away to the colonial military procession, shot four picks up with the rickshaw men conferring among themselves before disputing the adequacy of their remuneration (Fig. 4.4). The shot ends with the intervention of the café's valet who shoos the malcontents

away. Shot six concludes the transaction as the valet physically expels the lone hold out (Fig. 4.5), and the anecdote closes by matching the military procession with the café transaction through the presence of still more rickshaw drivers. Over the course of the three shots in front of the café, the spectator witnesses a labor dispute in miniature between workers in the "tertiary" sector and the colonial bourgeoisie, represented by a middle manager in this forestalled negotiation. As much as this scene is iconic of colonial domination, with Vietnamese rickshaw drivers in rags and bare feet hauling around white men in suits for meager wages, it also uncannily resonates with labor trends in the present economy (at least for subjects in the global North). Out of sync with the productive regime of its own present, this citation of work is, recalling Benjamin, ripped from

Fig. 4.3 *In the Year of the Pig*: An unfair fare

Fig. 4.4 *In the Year of the Pig*: Collective disenchantement


Fig. 4.5 *In the Year of the Pig*: Hands-on middle management

its initial context and transported to a present where this type of labor, as well as the means of disciplining it—contract workers submitted to the whims of midlevel functionaries while owners and bosses are shielded from antagonism—are increasingly hegemonic. Meanwhile, the global division of labor that enables the shift to a service or affective economy in the so-called developed world, relies on transforming post-colonial nations, like Vietnam, into industrial production centers manufacturing both the technological means of managing the flow of capital and the commodities that drive consumption, as well as tourist economies of intense service labor.

Viewed in this light the opening salvo of the film's historical interpretation, its first sustained citation from the colonial archive, opens the way for reading the complex temporality of history as immanent cause. This is all the more the case once the dissonant character of the labor of these image-documents—urban, service, waged labor—becomes apparent with Prof. Paul Mus's introduction of Ho Chi Minh in terms of land, life and labor. Where the film overall situates the Vietnam of its present (the 1960s) in the archaic regime of agricultural production (which according to Mus is its essence), the image-documents of foot taxis offer a glimpse of the future of labor in the new millennium.

Binding these together in their anachronisms is capital as overarching mode of production, pointing to its own future within a film dedicated to the struggle of peasants in a world of industrial production.[27] What is made manifest in this overlap and juxtaposition of untimely work, is the fact that history, in its continual modifications and changes, articulates the always unstable relations between a past that refuses to recede and a future that runs ahead of itself. In the jumbled ordering of types of production as they are conventionally sequenced, not only is a transitive string of events and types of life undermined—the rosary beads that are the target of Benjamin's ire—but so too is the coherence granted the mode of production when reduced to its hegemonic form. Put differently, these image-documents, situated within the shifting relations of the text and its contexts, neither express some "origin" for the rise of service labor in advanced capitalism, nor the vestigial remainders of a bygone era of production, but the concatenation of cause and effect, change and stasis that typifies history.

Identifying image-documents of colonial labor with the circumstances of mass employment in the 21st century's "tertiary" sector risks the violence of equivalence emblematic of capitalism itself, but only in order to draw attention to the fact that the hold of this mode of production (and any other) is always tenuous, no matter how securely entrenched its logic. The focus on emerging regimes of production such as the

[27] Regarding the tension and antagonism between the premodern, feudal regime of production in Vietnam and modern, hegemonic industrial production, *In the Year of the Pig* finds a complimentary argument in Harun Farocki's 1969 film *Inextinguishable Fire*, which interrogates Dow Chemical's role in the persecution of the war for profit. *In the Year of the Pig*'s heroic and resistant narrative of peasant revolution details one side of the struggle as Farocki's short film—featuring reenactments of corporate board meetings discussing the production of napalm, as well as a graphic illustration of its effects on the human body—analyzes the abstract power of multinational, industrial capital as its logic of surplus value coincides with the literal hot war against postcolonial communism.

"informationalization" of manufacturing and the "feminization" of labor in service and affective work (retail, food and leisure, child and healthcare, education) takes these sites of change as the hinge between maintaining and overturning capital's strangle hold on the human world. This has the advantage of engaging capitalism on its own horizon where tactics of intensified production and newly extensive apparatuses of surplus value capture threaten to break free of the very system that drives them, producing an unincorporated excess to be leveraged against capital. Tactically sound as this approach may be, it tends to reinscribe a sense of history teleologically following a transitive line in which the new will lead to the newer, whether that is a change internal to capitalism itself or a new and different mode of production. In doing so, this emphasis on a vanguard logic (not a vanguard *class*) also suggests a hierarchy of sites of resistance in which the factory shop floor is replaced by the call center and corporate campus (not as particular types of labor but as sites where this new logic is most apparent and "advanced"). History as immanent cause, though, compels us, to engage the mode of production not only in terms of its current tendency toward the immaterial but also in and through the persistent remainders and continual overlap of singularities that, along with emergent and nascent forms, constitute the composition of contemporary capitalism at this moment of crisis. In this sense, then, the parallels and resonances between the labor of Vietnamese rickshaw drivers and contemporary service workers visible in these image-documents from *In the Year of the Pig*, as well as the mixing of productive regimes they render legible within the film, suggests that the history that presses in on documentary here demands thinking

the complex intermingling of temporalities constellated, to use Walter Benjamin's term, within any present.

V. Conclusion: History in common, or the imperative social totality

To conclude it is useful to return to the beginning of this chapter and the opposition between history as pain and history as death. Both phrases emphasize the fact that history is a force exceeding any attempt to reduce it or control it; no text can account for history and no subject is outside history. This agreement is important presently because, as Hardt and Negri along with a host of other commentators tell us, the hegemonic mode of production that has held sway and bound together a global organization of social production is shifting under our feet. As such, it is history that designates this change, as it does the potential for a new stasis, to which all are subject, if in irreducibly different ways. The question of whether the current crisis of capitalism will proceed as merely a "restructuring," so common a response within capitalist institutions, or open onto something other than the continued extraction of surplus value, cannot be reduced to any one event, nation, or sector of the economy as all of these will experience the change differently, even as each is the effect of a cause inseparable from all others. History hurts and threatens mortality because wherever its trajectory is heading it cannot be reliably encapsulated, predicted or steered.

Nonetheless the divergence between killing and hurting affects our response to history as "inexorable force" and name for the social totality incarnate in the mode of production. Restating earlier claims, death understands history's all encompassing

movement as a finality, matching the irreversibility of time with the terminal moment of fatality, whose singular experience is shared only in its inevitable end. With history as executioner the world is divided between killer and killed, while only an interstitial space of witnessing is left for those neither in or behind the crosshairs. Pain, on the other hand and to embrace cliché, is shared. Still a singular experience, history's effects are felt everywhere in their difference and the harm which traverses these singularities is the result of history's indifference. The pain that spreads across the world of social production is never the same or equivalent but it is bound together by the conjuncture; though the scales remain tipped on the side of maintaining capitalism, even those who advocate a new stasis must face the potential for radical change.[28] Indeed pain allows for difference in a way that death's homogenizing finality does not, as old aches mingle with the fresh wounds of the present.

The question of documentary's relationship to history, then, cannot rest on the inadequacy of any representation of the real and settle for giving testimony to lives lived in the face of death. (This is not to say such subjects should be abandoned, only that this does not exhaust their place in history.) Instead documentary, as the concept of the image-document seeks to foreground, is a particular effect of history as immanent cause, and thus is an instantiation of this cause in itself. Documentary's relationship to history, to directly answer the question this chapter poses, is immanent and the challenge is to see

[28] And, in fact, those advocates for global capital and its now infamous 1% are most attuned to this possibility, greeting each proposed reform as bearing the seeds of a confrontation with their own logic. Unlike the reformers, the neoliberal proselytizers and operatives understand capital's fundamental drive to extract surplus value (in its many guises, including the surplus called the future, which debt speculatively quantifies and interest yields as a return on investment) and reject any truce as anathema to this logic.

in this immanence the ways history binds the most diverse acts, subjects and moments together. Image-documents, which frustrate distinctions between inside and outside, past and present, real and fictive, make the shared pain of history legible in their plenitude of details and dearth of meaningful evidentiary value. In this effort, image-documents are the work of history and are, in this instance from *In the Year of the Pig* and many others, part of a history of work that may help refuse the hierarchies and silences produced in and through the divisions of labor and instituted by capital's police order; in a world ruled by surplus value, work is a pain shared by all. Yes, even in these mute image-documents, the work of Vietnamese taxis speaks to this shared pain of a mode of production that claims what is common as a private largesse, in part by designating who can and cannot be seen partaking in history. In fulfilling their rhetorical function of summoning contact with the real, image-documents remind the attentive viewer that,

> …the places of speech from which the limitlessness of the working 'class' is projected are not the factories or barracks, streets or cabarets. They are texts, phrases, names: reference texts… that permit the articulation of an experience otherwise kept in silence by the separation of languages; phrases and arrangements of phrases that transform, into something *visible* and utterable, what had no place to be distinguished and was heard only as inarticulate noise, … words, removed from the common language of designations—names of classes that do not designate any specific collection of individuals but the very disruption of the relations of names and states of affairs. (emphasis added, Rancière, *Names of History* 93).

To stick with Jacques Rancière a moment longer, in an essay devoted to Jean Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinema*, itself composed of image-documents snatched from the film archive and deployed in a meditation on the span of the 20th century, he writes, "History is this mode of shared experience where all experiences are equivalent and where the signs of any one experience are capable of expressing all the others" (*Film Fables* 178). While money, the general equivalent, renders the singular and specific indifferent by reduction to quantity, especially the indeterminate use value of labor power, the equivalences of history are our belonging in common as members of an uneven and never complete social totality. Just as the image-document rendered by the machinic lens on impassive substrate takes in and binds together whatever and whoever is in the frame, history carries the collective assemblage along in its flow that, for now, turns the turbines of capitalist production. As such it is documentary's capacity, like the "texts, phrases, names: reference texts," to give body to the expression of experience in common, the third person indirect discourse of impersonal enunciation, determined in and by history, that makes it part of the "historical world." Sobering as the fact of history's disinterest in conscious human intention may be, history is also the complex driving force and field of potential where singular, diverse assemblages of subjects and affects, allegiances and antagonisms, continually encounter one another striving to change or maintain their general coherence and composition.

Conclusion: Image-documents as Property, Currency, and the Speculative Future

Following the last chapter's conceptualization of history it is difficult to imagine how to bring anything to a close or to sum up the manifold forces, uses, and potentials swirling around image-documents. Nonetheless, a provisional attempt must be made to wrap up this account of the image-document in documentary cinema. It is time to take stock of the path traced by the image-document and its encounters with these central documentary concepts, as well as indicate some of the possible lines of inquiry opened up by the image-document beyond these encounters.

I. Image-documents from material indeterminacy to historical overdetermination

The first principle and starting point for this dissertation is the supposition that so-called found footage and other pre-existing images taken up in documentary embody the central conceptual tensions in documentary cinema and its study. On one hand, they offer the promise of an autonomous and wholly objective account of profilmic events because they are, at face value, born outside the grasp of the interested and manipulating filmmaker whose own footage is hopelessly compromised by subjective motive. Such material is offered as an accidental and irrefutable witness to historical events. On the other hand, archival images, B-roll stock footage, home movies, television news, commercials, Hollywood films, corporate training videos, as much as surveillance video, remainders of reportage or the products of citizen journalists (like Zapruder and Holliday) are all equally germane for inclusion in documentary; the very materiality that purports indifference enables mobility and recontextualization, severing, or at least rendering

extremely tenuous the "indexical" bond that seems to ground the use of found images. Objective record or merely convenient and illusory filler? This opposition could be endlessly framed and reframed around found and appropriated images as they continue to populate documentary cinema from the most widely circulated (*Grizzly Man*, *The Fog of War*) to the experimental fringes of documentary (*The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*). The cataloging and sorting of the iterations of this problematic could be endless.

Yet the multiple accounts, existing and virtual, of found images—positivist, impressionistic, skeptical—all point to the fact that such material, even in its seemingly most transparent moments (Holliday's Rodney King footage, again), is always contested and its uses irreducible to any "content." The image-document is a conceptual response to this situation and an attempt to produce an account of its motivations and consequences for documentary. That this occasions a return to (Western) philosophical accounts of the image since the Enlightenment and a treatment of documents as pedagogical objects is not a necessity. Nonetheless asking what an image is at the moment of a particular conception's ascendency—the mass media spectacle of technologically produced, assembled, and disseminated images that Guy Debord claimed engulfed the industrialized world in the post-War decades—draws out certain persistent aspects of its course through the terrain of Western thought, intersecting with epistemological, aesthetic, political, and ontological discourses alike. Though the image moves from the interiority of consciousness and perception in the sixteenth century to the external, lasting objects of the present, this trajectory highlights the ways the image was always a figure of the

indeterminate relation between the supposedly immaterial interiority of thought and the exteriority of the material world and its events. Never fully mental or material, subjective or objective, images foreground the passage between what is ultimately an unstable border, where each side folds back onto the other as the objective, "thingliness" of the world inscribes itself on human experience; and thought, desire and action reinscribe these images on the surface of the historical world.

Situated in this liminal zone, at the edge of the empirical and conceptual fold, images offer no stability to accounts of events or a safe repository for their capture. Instead images become primary resources for the production and reproduction of the social and material experience. As such, for all its pretensions to evidence and the recording of the real, the document in documentary points as much back to the undecidability of images, especially as they circulate between media, contexts, subjects, and the affects they produce in those that encounter them. It is in this sense that the pedagogical dimension of the document bears on documentary, insofar as the images extracted from the global, informal archive of the visible world, and included in documentary, are shared sites for the exercise of a general capacity for intelligence. Put differently, what is important about images as documents is not that they are either wholly representations of objective occurrences or of their subjective interpretation, but that they render both indiscernible, enabling an encounter between contesting subjects in which multiple positions and antagonism are bound together by an object; a document is at once singular and collective, its details, like Barthes's punctum, subjectivizing individuals through their manifold specificity, which remain, despite the polyvalence of

this subjectivization, verifiable in and through intersubjective encounters. Conjoined by the hyphen, the image's indetermination enables its function as a document, reforming documentary through the continuous, and continuously contested, production and reproduction of the collective historical, social world.

As a conceptual object, the image-document confronts what this central indetermination and variability means for the value of image-documents in documentary. Once image-documents are no longer the secure ground of evidence or illusory material for manipulating spectators, their documentary value cannot be claimed as an inherent property, or as simply a distracting fiction, entering, instead, the circuitous routes of value production traversed by economics and aesthetics where value determination is always a relation between objects, subjects, and capacities. Value involves image-documents insofar as their deployment in documentaries turns on the uses films put them to, as well as the diversity of potential uses they carry with them. While the indetermination that the concept of the image-document brings to the fore insists on the contingent multiplicity of images, the circulation of image-documents in documentary remains dependent on the differential values opened up by the disparate details each image-document holds together. Indeed, within a process of valuation based on use—documentary use—image-documents lean back toward the underlying diversity of capacities inhering in the bodies of documentary spectators as labor power. In matters of value, image-documents continue to undermine the categorical stability of subject and object, internal and external, labor and commodity. It is precisely this linkage between image-documents and the spectators they encounter, and are encountered by, that the

problematic of documentary value brings out; the capacity of any and all images to become image-documents is the source of their value in use, just as it is the indefinite capacity to labor that undergirds value production in capitalism. For both image-documents and their spectators, the question of value is repeatedly posed by the plurality of uses borne by singular bodies, which constitute the condition of possibility for documentary and economic value.

Value is the hinge on which the door of the image-document swings from the image-document as a particular material, yet always also social and conceptual object to its function in documentary's formal ordering of the real. If the documentary value of image-documents is a matter use, then the primary mode of use—not purpose but means—through which image-documents enter the circuit of use value is their enunciation, their utterance as statements within documentary discourse. Certainly image-documents remain material objects, a fact that continues to condition their attractiveness to and circulation within documentary, but they are also language-like expressions put to signifying use by documentary's production of argumentative, direct discourse. In this capacity, image-documents signal the ways language, including images as statements, belongs to the real, while at the same time the world belongs to language. With image-documents the world-as-imaged enters documentary as a bearer of indirect discourse incorporated into the film's direct discourse, the image-document uttered *by* the film, in turn, embodying the "murmur" of indirect discourse from which direct discourse "extracts" itself. Enunciated and enunciating through the third person, eliding deictic individuation, image-documents are expressions of the impersonal, "collective

assemblage" that renders the world-as-imaged always-already social and material prior to their separation and ordering as subject and object. The indirect discourse of image-documents partakes in the individuating procedures of documentary's enunciative order, while also continuously illustrating a "capacity for enunciation" with the potential of drawing documentary into the realm of *free* indirect discourse. It is this threat and promise of free indirect discourse that undermines the hierarchical ordering by which documentary participates in the policing of the visible world, turning documentary toward a conception of politics irreducible to the representational logic of individuated positions and speakers.

Third person, impersonal enunciations of image-documents render documentary, at least potentially, a subjectless, yet subjectivizing, form of indirect discourse. As such, image-documents play a key role in making historical experience legible in its complexity. That image-documents are incarnations of historical source documents makes a certain relation to more-or-less conventional historiography easily recognizable; however, beyond this important analogic relationship, image-documents exceed their place as bearers of the mimetic past and witnesses in the process of collective memorialization. Askew from both positivist historical knowledge production and an ethical project of attending to subject positions, image-documents respond to the overlapping temporalities of history where past, present, and future are indissociable from one another, and thus constitute an experience of social totality based on difference. What image-documents make visible is the fact that historical change is a product of immanent cause where two impersonal forces—the logic of global capital asserting itself

in diverse, overlapping regimes of production, and the persistent, variable forms of life assembled within these regimes—encounter one another, often antagonistically, to produce the mode of production as cause and effect of history. In this capacity, documentary, through its use of image-documents, makes recognizable, visible, and sayable the singular assemblages and variable temporalities that constitute social totality through history as immanent cause. Interpolating Walter Benjamin, the image-document instantiates the possibility of recognizing the present in the flashing up of the past, as the indirect discourse from which documentary extracts itself speaks in and from both the past and present to express the future in its unfolding.

At the terminus of the trajectory laid out in the name of the image-document by this dissertation, and recapitulated by this summary, is the conclusion that the image-document is nothing less, nor more, than an immanent rather than dialectical, materialist theory of documentary. This is not a determinate and necessary end but it is an end that articulates new formulations for documentary studies that are not inherent but conditional and make possible different directions for documentary politics while embracing a speculative impulse often repressed by documentary's "sober discourse." Here the unstated but prevalent figure of labor—the use value of labor power, the division of labor, the overlapping regimes of labor—congeals in and throughout the sinews of the image-document's conceptualization. This implicit focus, itself the product of contingent encounters with specific image-documents, is but one avenue for engaging the stakes of documentary made possible by the image-document. Obviously, the encounters staged here respond to particular contemporary problematics that image-documents render

differently legible through their indirect discourse; the whispers and echoes of the collective assemblages carried by these image-documents are inflected by the changing relations of work, value, and force in capitalism's stumbling from crisis to crisis, and iteration to iteration.

II. Labor's others: image-documents in relation to property and money

From a pragmatic point of view, image-documents are more overtly implicated in current questions of property, especially so-called intellectual property, than of labor. From the perspective of copyright and property law, the indirect discourse of image-documents is rarely, if ever, free. Indeed, the terms of debate within discussions of intellectual property rely on distinguishing what is meant by "free;" as perhaps the most well known, and now erstwhile, commentator on intellectual property is (or was) fond of putting it: "…we come from a tradition of 'free culture'—not 'free' as in 'free beer' but (to borrow a phrase from the founder of the free software movement), but 'free' as in 'free speech,' 'free markets,' 'free trade,' 'free enterprise,' 'free will,' and 'free elections'" (Lessig xiv). Essentially reformist in thrust, Lawrence Lessig, along with a number of other writers and activists, approaches the question of copyright, though usually with a gloss on its history, in relation to digital technologies in the culture industries—especially digital audio sampling and, slightly later, file sharing.[1] Whether in terms of the new "new

[1] For more critical and far reaching analyses of intellectual property than Lessig offers, see Jane Gaines *Contested Culture: The Image, the Voice, and the Law*, and Kembrew McLoed *Owning Culture: Authorship, Ownership, and Intellectual Property Law*. Both these texts cover more diverse historical material and are less policy focused, which is both a strength and weakness. As Gaines title explicitly

media" (digital audio and video as well as software and other internet applications) or older forms of intellectual property (film, recorded music, commercial performance rights, published works, and patents), these materials and practices are treated as essentially different from conventional property, demanding "sensible" and "balanced" regulation in the face of, as one book's title puts it, "Brand Named Bullies" (David Bollier).

Both the notion of the uniqueness of "intellectual" property and the call for "common sense" reform reflect the strange conflations built into Lessig's list of positive "freedoms." Unlike "free beer," which apparently offends two times over by rejecting the sanctity of commodity exchange in the name of an inebriant, "free speech," "free markets," "free trade," "free enterprise," "free will," and "free elections" are staples of liberal capitalism, defining "free" in the normative terms of un- or—more realistically—lightly-regulated markets and sovereign, expressive individuals. In relation to these norms, intellectual property is presented as unique insofar as it mediates these "freedoms" by ensuring the right to expression for liberal subjects, on the one hand, while granting limited rights over reproduction and commercial exchange, on the other. Put differently, the supposed immateriality and easy reproducibility of expression and ideas defy the exclusivity assumed by private, physical property rights; yet they belong to their creators and must be allowed some access to the market of produced goods. Copyrights and patents initially represented, in this prelapsarian myth, the measured compromise between the "tradition of 'free culture'" in the public sphere and the right to profit from

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signals, and McLoed's only slightly less so, these authors approach the question of intellectual property in terms of opposition to dominant paradigms of property and culture.

one's sovereign labor in the market through state sanctioned, limited term monopolies on the reproduction and use of particular commodities. Thus, according to the reformists, it is only in the age of nearly instantaneous and easily manipulated copies (anarchic expression in violation of market logic, a civilization hopelessly intoxicated by mp3s), in tandem with corporate overreach which extends the once "reasonable" duration of exclusive commercial rights into perpetuity (intellectual property as the enclosure of free minds and free wills, Mickey Mouse as fascist corporate censor) that intellectual property ceases to function as it should.

Certainly, it seems absurd to demand royalties from Boy Scouts singing campfire songs or, perhaps more relevant to image-documents, for corporate media entities to prevent the distribution of the civil rights documentary *Eyes on the Prize* by denying reproduction and exhibition rights to the producers. But this is absurd only insofar as intellectual property remains essentially distinct from material property. In fact, on both sides of this debate, the question of intellectual property only functions to further naturalize the regime of private property rights either by extending it to any and all commodities or by cordoning certain commodities off as exceptions. Image-documents could certainly be used to confirm either stance toward intellectual property; however, they might also, as products of collective assemblages and enunciations of indirect discourse, reverse the valence of these intellectual reformists and extremists to challenge private property *tout court*.

Conceptually, private property, at least since John Locke's "Second Treatise of Government," was founded on the laboring body. The original private property is the

body and all other private property is derived from the labor of the body: "…every man has a property in his own person: this no body has a right to but himself. The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property" (Locke 79-80). Based on this conception, grounded in both the archaic sovereignty of God and the nascent sovereignty of the state, the enclosures of common land by property were carried out. Enclosure itself assumed the appearance of labor as the segmenting of land and crop specialization enacted by feudal lords-become-bourgeoisie was considered a "mixing" of labor with the land. Capitalism utilizes this labor theory of property to split the body from labor, as the worker possesses only his or her body and must sell its labor as a commodity, rather than appropriate additional property through work.[2]

Given this history private property is far less obvious or simple than is purported. On one hand, image-documents—and photographic, technological image capture generally—represent the potential to enclose the entire visual field as the private property of image harvesters; just as the fruit the hand picks becomes property, so too the filmed profilmic. On the other hand, image-documents, generally separated from this originary moment of production/enclosure, highlight in their circulation and reappearance (through third person indirect discourse) the fundamental sociality, or commonality, of all

[2] Indentured servitude, to say nothing of chattel slave trade, in the transatlantic European expansion represents, perhaps, the apotheosis of this logic as nascent proletarians sold their future labor on the promise of acquiring property, only to find themselves resigned to wage labor, or desolation, following their terms of service. See Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's *The Many-headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*.

production. Take for instance any of the images of labor discussed in the preceding chapters. As much as the peasants, servants, bakery clerks, airstrip construction workers, and rickshaw drivers perform their primary tasks, they also take part in producing these images, challenging the regime of individual, sovereign producer presupposed by private property. Documentary, which claims the historical world as its object, is already set at a distance from other forms of "content" ruled by intellectual property because the work of participants falls outside the regime of compensation that separates the laboring body from its products. In this sense, the fiction of non-fiction that conditions documentary undermines the legal fiction of property as the product and possession of discreet, individual subjects.

There is a dimension of the property-labor relation that this approach to image-documents and intellectual property cannot easily grasp, which leads to another potential line of inquiry based on the image-document concept. Famously, Gilles Deleuze writes in *Cinema 2*, "what defines industrial art is not mechanical reproduction but the internalized relation with money. […] Money is the obverse of all images that the cinema shows and sets in place…" (Deleuze 77). For Deleuze this "internalized relation with money" emerges in the matrix of financing, which structures cinematic production through its exorbitant expense, and time. With the time-image this relation becomes more overt as the "direct image of time" confirms and literalizes the cliché that "time is money." In this sense commercial fiction film is a continual display of the two-fold alienation of labor by property through money, as embodied labor, from the actors and actresses to the lowliest of production assistants, is reduced to a figure in a budget. But the image-document in

documentary potentially has a more direct relation to money as the general equivalent. The critique of found footage, though not expressed in terms of money, presents image-documents as essentially empty equivalences. Though each image-document is singular, the deployment of image-documents in documentary's direct discourse renders them nearly equivalent, with one image of sonar men, despite their material differences, being treated as functionally identical to any other. Like money, image-documents appear to annul difference through exchange and circulation. Similarly, through reproduction, the same image-document can enter into any number of textual transactions without changing its substance regardless of its particular use. (Money is, in this sense, the flip side of labor-power as use value; both represent fundamental exceptions in the labor theory of value.)

The image-document's "internal relation with money" is also implicated in the role of intellectual property in contemporary capitalism. Intellectual property, because it centers on the sale and exchange of "rights"—to publication, exhibition, performance, etc.—is a form of rent as much as it is an exchangeable commodity. The so-called content owner never sells his or her or the corporation's "intellectual property" but only sells limited rights to use and profit from its copies. Like liquid capital, images sit in archives, especially the large Hollywood archives, as a certain store of credit to be traded on and lent out by owners with ownership rights above and beyond the "permissions" they grant for reproduction, use, and alteration. Residual profit structures then function as variable interest on debt (though the variation here favors the debtor rather than creditor). On this level, images are material incarnations of financial capital, M-M', and thus a

privileged expression, as Debord argued, of contemporary capitalism's hegemonic logic. While image-documents function within this economy, their status as indirect discourse drawn from the realm of the third person/non person opens another front in the antagonisms of debt and rent. Image-documents compound the collapse of moral and economic debt by displacing the figure of the individuated author as owner.[3] Who deserves the moral credit for image-documents used in new contexts? By the rule of economic debt it is the content owner, regardless of whose labor went into the image, that is owed credit and it is the moral duty of the new user, not to acknowledge the work of producers, but to pay rent to the owner.

III. The future of the image-document

The use of image-documents promises only to accelerate, proliferate, and mutate with the spread of digital technologies. This will undoubtedly entail a continued struggle over their value as property and capital, along with an attendant crisis and renegotiation of their relation to the real in the face of ever-easier manipulation. These changes in the control and use of images present a possible return to the immateriality of the image and imaginary as image-documents lose some of their objectivity in order to be transmitted into and through computational networks, the celluloid inscription and magnetic tape becoming the ones-and-zeroes of encoded visual information.

Despite this apparent change, the image-document persists in relation to the past and a speculative future. Even the highly manipulatable digital image will continue to

[3] On the relation between debt, morality, and economics see Maurizio Lazzarato's *The Making of the Indebted Man*, and David Graeber's *Debt: The First 5000 Years*,

make a claim on the profilmic real that must precede its image. And even in the face of capital's ongoing enclosure and their control of circulation, the image-document will always have one side turned toward a future of new and different deployments and assemblages. As much as image-documents are treated as deposits in the content banks of media corporations, national archives, and university libraries, they also belong to the constitutive outside, to the social totality that is never fully stable but is in constant variation. For each police action that attempts to secure the proper distribution of image-documents and their unruly details, there is a political potential threatening to break free and, along with that dangerous beer, stumble through the uneven terrain of the mode of production, stopping occasionally to lean on its constantly flickering lamp posts.

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