CRYPTOPHASIA & THE QUESTION OF DATABASE

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Cinema was the first new media. New media did not begin in the 1980s in Silicon Valley; it began a hundred years prior at Etienne-Jules Marey's *Station Physiologique* in the outskirts of Paris...cinema is the first medium to bring together techniques like compositing, recombination, digital sampling...and machine automation, techniques that, of course, are present in other media but never as effectively as the singular synthesis offered by the cinema. (Galloway 2011, 379)

## *INTRODUCTION*

Over the last thirty years, once staunchly historical cinema scholars such as Thomas Elsaesser, Jane Gaines, Siegfried Zielinski, and André Gaudreault have abandoned history for historiography and film studies for media archaeology. With increasing attention on the "database" as a symbolic metaphor for postmodernity (Manovich 1999) and the decentered, networked tenants of the global present (Jameson 2019, 16), cinema is taking on the characteristics of new media, existing in intertextual space (Daly 2010, 81). Thus, the term "post-cinema" has been co-opted as a viable intermediary that accounts for new media conditions, as cinema is no longer emblematic of our cultural climate. As Giorgio Agamben wrote in 1992, "[t]he end of the cinema truly sounds the death knell of the ultimate metaphysical adventure of *Dasein*. In the twilight of post-cinema...human quasi-existence, now stripped of any metaphysical hypostasis and deprived of any theological model, will have to seek its proper generic consistency elsewhere" (2014, 23). Accordingly, we are no longer "moviegoing animals" (2002, 314) who seek images of ourselves among a collective in the dark but, rather, users interfacing within a network of moving images.

The term "post-cinema" is bolstered by a variegated amalgam of "digital" tenants, including: self-reflexivity (Schaffner 2009),[1] circular causation and feedback loops (Elsaesser, 2014), *mise-en-abime*, "hyper-text linking" (Berg 2006), hypothetical "alternate plots" (Branigan),[2] an awareness of "platform capitalism" and it's "experience economy" framework (Elseasser 2017), configuring a *viewser* (Daly 2010),[3] productive paranoia (Elsaesser 2009), and video-game logic (Buckland 1998). Granted, I am painting in wide brushstrokes while canvassing this motley rupture. However, despite the differences between the cited cinema scholars' arguments, the propinquity within this bevy is hedged on post-cinema's participation in its own world of cross-medial interaction and its reliance on "database" logic. This means that post-cinema's structured narratives (e.g., *Memento*, *Lost Highway*) reflect the storage-and-retrieval mode of the database.

Postmodernity's cultural database logic and the consequent filmic characteristics of the digital age were fostered by Lev Manovich's 1999 essay "The Database as Symbolic Form," whereby Manovich furthered Barthes' adoption of Saussurrean sign-systems to describe cultural phenomena. In particular, Manovich applied Saussure's description to postmodernity, delineating a juncture from modernism's narrative-thralldom in the computer age, as "[i]nteractive interfaces foreground the paradigmatic dimension and often make explicit paradigmatic sets. Yet, they are still organized along the syntagmatic dimension" (232). The interface design process in new media primarily revolves around choices as in the file/folder metaphor; however, these actions ultimately collapse from the infinite choices into the finite syntagma of narrative structure. Such is the database narrative.

In extending this Manovich's definition to post-cinema, film scholar Marsha Kinder has argued that "database cinema" reifies contemporary ways of processing, storing, and retrieving information, privileging the process of selection "of a story's elements over the story itself" (2002, 348). According to Allan Cameron, database narratives, or "modular narratives," contain disarticulated narrative pieces, often composed in an achronological arrangement, where the narrative structure "exposes or thematizes the dual

processes of selection and combination" (2006, 20). Regardless of the dissenting nuances, the database's storage-and-retrieval modality has remained the most irrefutable nexus in post-cinema discourse. I propose that "post-cinema" scholarship has ignored some extra-filmic implications and adopted a fairly superficial understanding of "digitality." Some may call this logos, others may call it a bit of madness, but by philosophically imploring that which the database *cannot* expose or thematize in its storing-and-retrieval process (through a particularly odd case study), I hope to puncture such "database universalism" for intensifying the platform capitalist process that Deleuze presciently called "dividual-ization," or the data-fication of subject.

## BACKGROUND

As Deleuze reminds us, it would appear that Foucault was aware of a coming shift in the way biopower operates and, retrospectively, we can see this in the trajectory of *Discipline and Punish*. In the very beginning of the text, we are introduced to Robert-François Damiens at his execution for parricide in 1757. Foucault guides us with great detail through a period characterized by the abrupt abandonment of judicial violence as a public ritualized event and its removal/relocation to invisible sites. By the end of this text, power is described as it is exercised in the 20th century, far more economically and efficiently moving toward self-disciplining behaviors. Consequently, contemporary theorists such as Tony Bennett and Douglas Crimp have extended Foucault's self-regulation towards auto-surveillance in their readings of the crystal palace exhibition and museum spaces, respectively.

Arguably, however, Deleuze's "Postscript" offers more tenable insights for new media. First published in 1990—the same year as the inception of the World Wide Web—Deleuze notes shifts from the analog to the digital, from closed sites to open circuits, and presciently remarks on latent capitalism's direction towards metaproduction—towards a service economy or Haraway's "homework economy," rather than one based on terms of mechanized production. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri describe

in *Empire*, the service economy is a product of the rapid decline in industrial jobs and a corresponding rise in service sector jobs (200, 286). Paired with the globalized rise of "multi-maximalist" sociobiological cybernetic systems, the "homework economy" work is *feminized*, by which Haraway means it is "made extremely vulnerable; able to be disassembled, reassembled, exploited as a reserve force" (1985, 166). As the collective Tiqqun states in their *Cybernetic Hypothesis*, the result is that commodity-cybernetic "neo-liberal" logic extends over *all* activity, "including that which is still not commodified" (2001, 72). In short, no subjects, occluded or included, are safe from the quantitative positivism of control society's epistemological regime, in which systems or networks "combine both human and nonhuman agents in mutual communication and command" (Galloway 2014a, 111).

Deleuze's commentary, that "control societies function with a third generation of machines, with information technology and computers" (1997, 180), distinguishes control society's *psychopolitics*—a politics of psychical formations—from Foucault's disciplinary society of *biopolitics* (primarily concerned with the body's management in space). Thus, despite Jameson equated postmodernism with the "new spatial logic of the simulacrum" (2019, 93), highlighting a shift from time to space as a primary feature of postmodernism's cultural logic, indeed it seems as if the sense of a perceptual present is moving away from spatio-temporal bounds and increasingly inching towards virtual linealities.

What I would like to underscore is that database logic and its enumerative condition are central to the function of what Deleuze called "control," the new and insidious form of power that he believed was replacing the top-down form of disciplinary biopower. Perplexingly, however, postmodernity's database logic has been embraced by cinema scholars for this very non-hierarchical, decentralized order. Is this not, in effect, blindsiding the inherent computational protocols of control (Galloway 2006) and the racio-visual implications (Nakamura, 2008)? The post-cinema camp's indiscriminate embrace of the database is perhaps best surmised by Vivian Sobchack's statement that the database:

...is no longer hierarchical, its order becomes that of a comprehensive but incomprehensible labyrinth: a vast and boundless maze of images and sounds, dreams, and visions in which one follows, backtracks, veers off, loses oneself in multiple trajectories, all the time weaving tenuous threads of association in the logically endless teleology and texture of desire. Here, the materials of the world are never fixed data or information merely requiring recollection; here...they are unstable bits of experience and can only be remembered. (1999, 31)

While he accurately examined the aesthetic logic of selection and the reversal of the relationship between syntagm and paradigm, Manovich unequivocally embraced the poetics of compositing, emphasizing navigating space, the waning of the temporal montage, and the rise of the spatial montage (2010, 378-79). Sobchak's emphasis on adroitness, dreams, and recollection mirrors Lyotard's description of postmodernity as the eschewal of metanarratives and the instrumentation of simulation. However, Sobchak omits the political environment of postmodern cyberconflict. If, as Fredric Jameson contends, the widespread introduction of computers and the database's consequent configuration of cyberpunk "black-box capitalism" has displaced the once-legitimate modernist proposal of utopic world-building, making it impossible to conceive of viable alternatives to the new cybernetic universe (2012, 117-27), what kind of models can we turn towards to thwart and contest the axioms of "control society"?

Friedrich Kittler and Wendy Chun have probed Manovich's privileging software applications by turning to hardware. On the other hand, Geert Lovink and Yochai Benkler have examined the social dimension of networking that Manovich's account excludes. Most recently, Tiziana Terranova and Eugene Thacker have elbowed new media discourse towards networks of information and the ecumenicalism of structure. However, despite that Manovich's database logic has been admirably complicated by such approaches, I hope to delegate postmodernism an extra-filmic propensity by returning to political cinema studies. Furthermore, by way of Alexander Galloway's monogram on François Laruelle, I would like to further audit "the digital" while advancing that these aforementioned "post-cinema" theorists relegate digitality to perfunctory analysis, failing to

examine the digital and its transcendental relationship between *differential being* (mediation and metaphysical cosmology) and *dialectical being* (mutations of contradiction) (2014b, 70).


## AMENDING DELEUZE'S TIME-IMAGE

As Deleuze proposed in his two seminal books on cinema, technology alone is not sufficient to produce new kinds of images or "space-times," which must be created. In *Cinéma 1, L'Image-Mouvement*, Deleuze's topographic approach towards the moving image necessitates the shot to be read "as a detail…read not as a privileged zone but as a locus of organic force equal to everything else in the frame." (Conley 2007, 8). By *Cinéma 2: L'Image-temps*, Deleuze invokes Bazin's aesthetics of action (or montage) to inaugurate cartographic events as "singularities" or "spatial arrangements" that regard the archive of cinema and moving images as an open whole of islands or aggregates. In the post-WWII break, Deleuze characterizes cinema's "time-image" via a "new, apparently dispersive, elliptical, errant, or dancing form of reality, operating by blocks, with deliberately weak linkages." (as quoted in Conley 2007, 8). Deleuze's cinematic "floating events" (*événements flottants*) indicate exactly how "cinema-thought" is unique from philosophy—cinema consists of images, which are not copies or representations but, rather, "the same thing as movement and time." According to post-Deleuzian cinema theories such as those of Alain Badiou, cinema uniquely "thinks with images, while philosophy thinks with concepts" (2013, 223).

Nonetheless, cinema's sole internal rupture is not simply philosophical—cinema has seen ruptures within its history, and "post-cinema" arguably presents a new rupture as well. Deleuze's "movement-image," which conjoined seemingly irrationally linked images, gave way to the postwar "time-image," sacrificing imagery to industrial automation while making duration manifest. Nonetheless, despite rejecting Bergson's conception of *la durée concrete*, Deleuze still fails to captures something of a "full digitality of space." As Galloway contends, the time-image shows the "whateverness" (the metastable generic virtuality) of space without making it manifest as "a

relationship between the micro and macro levels," legitimizing the virtuality of *time* rather than the virtuality of *space* (2014b, 66-68). This last task asymptotically looms beyond cinema's grasp.

If, as Deleuze insinuates, we can politically reinvigorate "cinema-as-pharmakon" by "hi-jacking" speech (1997, 75), then perhaps the Saussurean paradigm of control—the enumerative database condition—can also be thwarted, to produce vacuoles in thought and open up new possibilities that the aforementioned post-cinema discourse has disregarded. Hence, in my posterior analysis, I will offer an example of language *out of* control, or outside the jurisdiction of database logic, to proffer a metaphor for ontologically approaching reactive new media objects as *dispositif*. In grounding my medial proposal within a case study, I will turn to non-translatable, permutative *cryptophasia* (secret twin language) as documented in Jean-Pierre Gorin's documentary *Poto and Cabengo* (1980), and divorce this linguistic phenomena from its textual bondage in order to challenge Manovich's a-political techno-scientific world of pure correlationism between new media objects and their apparatus. As I hope to evince, the metaphor of "radical cryptophasia" destabilizes the enumerative, cybernetic condition of control society's database logic.

## *WORLD OUT OF BOUNDS*

Before invigorating this analysis, however, it seems integral to first consider Manovich's abdication of politics—why does Manovich splice Dziga Vertov's *Man with the Movie Camera* for visual data while entirely uninterested in its engagement with and provocation of ideology? Manovich seems solely interested in Vertov as the "computational director" par excellence, disrobing him of his Marxist *kino*-politics. Galloway underscores Manovich's concern with the historical materialization of new media as a question of synecdoche rather than indexicality. However, I hope to go further and propose another approach—that positing something "extra-filmic," or outside the terrain of the database and its translation-based conditions, suggests what Quentin Meillassoux terms the "extro-science fiction world," or a world that, in principle, contains knowledge inaccessible

to perceptual observation so that "it cannot be established as the object of a natural science" (2015, 6). Meillassoux describes how the "extro-scientific world" diverges from Kant response to Hume's problem of induction via the transcendental deduction by proposing a world of pure diversity that "orders nothing" (24). For Manovich to conceive of the database politically would mean to accept it as an anti-utopic, authoritarian model.

Similarly, Eugene Thacker's "philosophy of horror," as articulated in *In the Dust of This Planet*, describes what this spectral extro-science fiction "world-in-itself" may look like, as its terrain lies outside the ambit of human wants and speculative desire(s). This is a world that "bites back," so to speak, or resists attempts to mold it into something accessible. A "subtraction of the human from the world" (2011, 14) poses a challenge for the scientific pursuit of "phantom objectivity" of the "world-in-itself." The Kantian epistemological mold of correlation, or the "digital relation," proposes "we only have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered a party from the other" (Meillassoux 2015, 5). Thus, as I will show, "radical crytophasia" gestures towards an extro-science fiction "world-in-itself," or a world beyond enumeration. As Jameson notes, cinema presents "the world without people," insofar as, from a Kantian standpoint, it neither speaks to the "thing in itself" nor to an "objective point of view," as "film becomes a very different kind of nonsubjective, but also really nonobjective, medium in which that strange no-man's land can be conveyed." (Baumbach 2019, 156).

Now, admittedly, turning to cinema to examine instances of political mobility risks faltering to the historical axioms bolstering what are called the "grand theories" of 1970s film studies—chiefly, Jean-Luc Comolli and Paul Narboni's oft-quoted proposal that "every film is political," by which "political" means "ideological" ("Cinema/Criticism/Ideology"). My goal is not to emphasize the role of the symbolic, as 70s film studies almost obsessively pursued, nor facilitate an Althusserian-Brechtian symptomatic emphasis on the politics of aesthetics (or "knowledge effects"). Both these approaches share the belief that films and film theories should thwart ideology understood as both *content* (familiar stereotypes from the social imaginary) and *form* (habitual, consensual approaches to mise-en-scène and

montage) that define the visible and thinkable (Baumbach 2019, 67). Rather, in Deleuzian tradition, I am turning to cinema's pedagogical politics—my goal is not to seek a "knowledge effect" or draw attention to the apparatus but to illuminate the characteristics of resistance that, uniquely, can appear through cinematic gestures and ideas. This is my way of attempting to navigate Badiou's 1998 query, "[w]hat does cinema think that nothing but it can think?"

## CASE STUDY

Now that we have made the argument to answer "why film?" let us also elucidate on "why *this* film?" What I want to highlight in lieu of contemporary capitalism and its reliance on decentralization is Deleuze's comment that control has to deal with people *excluded* from metaproduction (1997, 181) and, thereby, examine a case of resistance. If language is a set of instructions, manifest as "information" (39), I hope that, by metaphorizing the filmic instantiation of Virginia and Grace Kennedy's cryptophasia, we can perhaps conceive of the Deleuzian "creative act" of "counterinformation" and "resistance" (2007, 322) by destabilizing the terms of social organization (database postmodernity) that frame it.

Media scholar Mark Andrejevic's description of nested hierarchies in *Infoglu* consists of a nefarious terrain sprouting across the landscape and behind the airy rhetoric of "the cloud," where Big Data's factories and huge "server farms" put data to work (2013, 24), generating correlations and patterns, shaping decisions and sorting people into categories for marketers, employers, intelligence agencies, healthcare providers, financial institutions, the police, etc. Given the asymmetrical division between data generators and the "data population," new media objects now occupy a double-edged position for resistance. Given the decline of symbolic efficiency (Žizek 2009, 232) and the erosion of the boundary between the "real and the virtual" (Turkle 1997, 39) in a "post-deferential" information-age brimming with "information glut," "instant revisionism" (Latour 2004, 228), data-mining sociality, sentiment analysis, and the post-9/11 generalization of "total surveillance," skepticism has besmirched the once-lauded utopic, radical

potential for "interventionist media" and an "open source" communal internet counter-culture. My goal is thus, twofold: to effectively gesture beyond control society's domain and, also, to invigorate some kind of idealist possibility. Having adequately canvassed the cultural media milieu and qualified the theoretical fixture of this venture, let us now turn to *Poto and Cabengo*.

## POTO AND CABENGO

It has been almost forty years since Jean-Pierre Gorin—the filmmaker perhaps most infamous for *Tout Va Bien* (1972), radicalizing Jean-Luc Godard and cofounding the uniquely Marxist-Brechtian "Dziga Vertov Group"—filmed *Poto and Cabengo* (1980) at a San Diego Hospital from 1977-1979. Gorin, at visual artist Manny Farber's behest, had just recently expatriated from Paris to California to join the Visual Arts Department faculty at UC San Diego in 1975. An early contributor to *Le Monde* and onetime philosophy student at Sorbonne—studying under Foucault, Althusser, and Lacan—Gorin's filmography had always been both political and self-aware. If the Dziga Vertov Group films can be scrutinized for their "cretinistic seriousness" and devotion to the Althusserian maxim of aesthetic practice as a form of politics, Gorin's "Southern California Trilogy" (of which *Poto and Cabengo* is a part of) documentaries are decidedly more complex and whimsical in their political brandishing.

*Poto and Cabengoo* uses an amalgam of the visual essay and ethnographic study in examining and recording two vividly animated sisters—Grace and Virginia Kennedy—who spoke to one another in a "rapid-fire language that nobody else understood" (Gorney 1979). Interestingly, the surplus of physicians, linguists, and critical family members who appear in the film never explicitly terminologize the Kennedy twins' private language, repeatedly preferring to codify the Kennedy twins as "retarded." For the diagnostic and medical order, terminologizing their fluid private language would grant the twins certain semiological validity and disrupt Natural Science's closed system and its "rules of accumulation, exclusion, reactivation" (Foucault 1972, 200). For the extended Kennedy family,

terminologizing the cryptophasia as such would risk imbuing an aberration with presence and permanence.

Nonetheless, throughout the film, the Kennedy family observably holds out hope that English's slow genesis will take the place of the twins' cryptophasia and that it is simply delayed—in the end, it would appear that they were correct. However, the process of language acquisition occurs by way of auto-discipline—there are no "methods for administering" (Foucault 2011, 284) at play in the twins' language acquisition. The Kennedy twins are neither forced into "language therapy" lessons nor isolated in the clinic and harryingly prodded. There are no definite relations of power or techniques of individualization vis-a-vis overlapping subjection and objectification as per Georges Canguilhem's description of rationalization in hospital reform.  Aside from hope or, perhaps, *trust*, in control society's processual penchant towards the neoliberal achievement-subject, the circumscriptial authoritative bodies do very little in the way of disciplinary measures. Yet, their trust is not misguided and while they seem not to be entirely aware of it, the Kennedy family members and the physicians and linguists seem to unconsciously recognize the prevalence of self-disciplining "autosurveillance," which Byung-Chul Han terms *autoexploitation*, which occurs as "compulsion and constraint take the form of performance, achievement, or self-optimization" (Han 2017a, 83). This illuminates Merleau-Ponty's recurrent description of the extra-linguistic and non-perceptual cultural enfolding in language, understood as a multisensory immanent knowledge within the body, though outside of the domain of affect-as-sensation.

## *CRYPTOPHASIA*

In 1976, when French psychologist Rene Zazzo coined the private language shared amongst twins as crytophasia he qualified the diagnosis with *retardement*—that such twins are "delayed" in adopting the hegemonic language.[4] Throughout his clinical psychological typology reviews, linguist Peter Bakker has built on Zazzo's research, making some formative qualifications about cryptophasia—Bakker's 1983 observations include that

cryptophasia is "completely unintelligible to speakers" of the model socialized languages, lacks the "morphology from which word order is derived," and that the private language's diction is deprived of the pragmatic principles of "saliency" and "semantic scope" (1987, 233-38). These terms describe the Kennedy twin's cryptophasia accurately—the Kennedy twins' language does not operate according to acoustic progression or logic and Gorin often capitalizes on this by de-coupling acousmatic devices or displacing sounds.[5]

However, in a subsequent study, Bakker attributes stability to cryptophasia, oddly at ends with Zazzo's qualification of *retardement*.[6] Bakker's idea of stability refers to exterior techniques—despite that crytophasia operates through an elusive logic, Bakker introduces the possibility of translation if given the cipher's rule (or *langue*). However, as Gorin shows with *Poto and Cabengo*, the Kennedy twins' instance of cryptophasia is re-inventive, dynamic, fluid, and boundless—radical cryptophasia is *motile*, juggling the constant potential of revision—it is neither "actively" nor "passively" informative in this sense, for it does not seek to inscribe itself as a dominant order and is denied this attainability.

The case of extralinguistic identical twins, physically driven from their once-united bind (the womb), presents the digital subject-relation manifest—it requires the "replication of a homogenous discrete substrate" (Galloway 2014b, 205), or a pure decision. On the other hand, the private shared language between twins presents us with the analog relation—pure synthesis.[7] Radical cryptophasia complicates the digital/analog delineation enacting the univocity of the Laruellean decision which "flees digitality by way of the analog, and ultimately flees the system of distinction entirely, both digital and analog" (205). Rather than Heidegger's theological "transcendental finitude" or Levinas' "transcendence-in-the-world" as a metaphysical relation (2013, 42), Laruelle does away with the need for transcendence altogether—for Laruelle, "[t]he One is immanence and is not thinkable on the terrain of transcendence" (1999, 141).

With the Kennedy twins, we see the prodigious synthetic force of the a priori automaton via the brilliant, seamless exchange of private semiologic codes.

Laruelle often evokes the language of causality and "repetition-without-return" (2015b, 18) via "cloning," for cloning is a kind of logic that produces a dual entity through an identical copy. What, then, could be more appropriate in metaphorizing our case study? It is not the Kennedy twins who clone the epistemological nature of the real but radical cryptophasia, for it indicates the very genericity of speech, which moves as "an explorer who is both blind and deaf," (Laruelle quoted in Henry 2011, 16), and, thus, is immanent to itself.

Of course, it is not that the Kennedy twins provide us with the sole mold of univocal genericity. For instance, we can turn to French pedagogue and psychologist Fernand Deligny's *lignes d'erre* to once again configure the political, prelinguistic, and primordial being of pure immanence. Beginning in the 1950s, Deligny and his co-workers collectively ran residential communes in France for autistic children and young people who otherwise would have been institutionalized. Deligny, who eschewed psychoanalytic theory's approach to autism, mapped the "arachnean" network of these autistic children, cartographically instrumentalizing the camera to trace their movement via *reterritorialization* (2014, 11). Tucked away outside of Monoblet, in the shadow of the Cévennes Mountains, Deligny facilitated a shared open-space living site (which he called "primordial communism") for his patients. We see how "wander-lines" come to cinematic form in Deligny's filmic projects from the early 1970s[8] as well as his pictorial representations. As Giorgio Agamben notes, when placed on top of one another, or "superpositioned," Deligny's "tracing papers allow a sort of circular or elliptical ring (*cerne*) to appear," beyond the tangible lines that include both themselves and ulterior points of disparate 'entanglement' (*chevêtres*)" (2017, 1231). Deligny's "wander-lines" produce an arche-cinematic and mathematically intuitive gesture, a free-floating graphicality unconcerned with any "unifier to-come."

This kind of permutative instability, at ends with the storage-and-retrieval process of the database, is central to the conception of the metaphor of radical cryptophasia—in flux and immutable, grossing an infinitude of possibilities, withdrawing from additive operations. Radical cryptophasia is purely generic—it "does not describe a community bound together by any

transcendental core," but, instead, the "generalized subaltern" (Galloway 2014b, 205) or Agamben's "whatever being," (*qualconque*). Radical cryptophasia draws from the possibilities of the relationship between movement and the Symbolic Other-equal (which frames the Imaginary), legislating the unconscious discourse of the Real while withdrawing from its libidinal reservoir. Radical cryptophasia, in its performative distantiation, is uniquely burred within the furrows of cinema's archive of world-images, ushered by a general disregard towards the constitution of ideology.[7] Deleuze also calls cinema's method "critical hypnosis," comparing it to Dali's "critical-paranoiac" method (1989, 302)—thus, the "creative act," in is simultaneous repetition and variation, separates itself from identification and, consequently, from "policing" by occupying the only explicitly political position—an evacuation from "policing."


## THE POLITICAL

It is Ranciére's opposition between the police order (*la police*) and politics (*la politique*) that I am invoking here. "Police" occupies not only the exodus of politics and the institution of pure policy but a way of thinking about theory as a kind of discourse in which both aesthetics and politics need to be eliminated. In *La Mésentente*, Ranciére, parting with Althusser's highly anthologized definition of "the police," no longer privileges the symbolic over the imaginary but reframes the partition of the sensible, acknowledging the aesthetic dimension of politics. For Althusser, "police" illustrates how ideology can transform individuals into subjects via interpellation and identification; for Rancière, "police" is a metonymic term for a set of procedures (policy) "whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution" (2008, 28). Thus, politics is a direct threat to the police. The "police" patrols Deligny's cartographic wander-lines via positivist psychoanalytic subjugation. In the Kennedy twins' case, the "police" manifests via the imposition of the dominant culturally performed language: English. Radical crytophasia, in turn, is immanently political and abject, it facilitates dissensus, whereby nature wills discord.

Flux is the central characteristic in describing radical crytophasia's movement, and it draws from Laruelle's "heretical or separated Real" (2018, 42) or what Bernard Stiegler terms the "temporal object...constituted by the time of its passing" (2011, 59). Radical cryptophasia poses a non-phenomenological solution by offering "given-without-givenness," or an "essence of the manifestation of the immanent Real, and therefore also of the World" (Laurelle 2018, xxix). The non-hermeneutic object that passes is constituted by the fact that, like the consciousness that it unites, it disappears as it appears while illuminating possibilities. Husserl's eidetic reduction, the philosophical basis for database logic, is concerned with appearance and the necessary factors that constitute that which is "really presented" (Henry 2011, 40). It parses morpho-logical concrete objects within the empirical realm—the "outlaying zone of apprehension consisting of marginal code-data" where "a thing can be given only in one of its aspects" (Husserl 2015, 125).

Husserl's phenomenological engagement with meaning-constitution serves as a fruitful premonition for symbolic technologies. Husserl's description of perception, while "restricted *by* the sense data and the techniques of outer perception" is "not restricted *to* the sense data or outer perception" (Palermo 1978, 71). Manovich stated that empirical epistemology is granted one tool—"perception"—with which "the goal is to decode the world purely through the surfaces visible to the eye" (90).  However, database logic is not simply limited to description but also allotted prediction-modeling—consider the promise of predictive analytics and the post-monetary prospect of "metadata-as-currency" alongside Big Data's established penchant for sentiment analysis, opinion-mining, and neuromarketing. If empirical conditioning allots machinery to peruse mental states using visual information, evinced by the advent of "predictive policing," the widely-adopted Saussurean model of postmodernity is no longer numb and aloof—"*retardation* via translation," as a cultural praxis, is the very logic of state control.

Gérard Genette remarked in 1979 that the discrete counting of "data factualism" requires anonymous pattern recognition rather than recognizing the personal narrator. However, Wolfgang Ernst has posited that

"[b]etween the discrete entries, there is always space left for biographical micro-narrative information" (2012, 38). Therefore, before we situate the metaphor of "radical cryptophasia" within the contemporary new media sphere of emancipatory "anti-media," let us consider the political possibility of translation-based media in space before moving past it altogether. For, while I maintain that translation is barred to appearance-based movement, it was not long ago that Hannah Arendt asserted that politics *requires* the space of appearance, as "it is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word...where men [sic] exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly" (2018, 198). Judith Butler has recently amended Arendt's assertion, offering that, to "rethink the space of appearance in order to understand the power and effect of public demonstrations for our time, we will need to consider more closely the bodily dimensions of action, what the body requires, and what the body can do" (2018, 73).

## A NEW ENCLOSURE

Let us now venture more readily towards the collective closure between critical theory and disability studies, which offers some of the most interesting discourse in navigating the political possibility of translation-based technologies. First, I would like to enter this discussion via the slippage of "retard" as it is used by the discursive bodies circumscribing the Kennedy twins and "retard" as a synonym of "delay." Andrea Hurst, in *Derrida Vis-à-vis Lacan*, ascribes the symbolic order of the Big Other as enacting a "limiting decapitation" and "limitlessness dissolution" according to the veil of alienation—according to Hurst, the transgression of stereotypes is "always already inscribed in the discourse as a logical moment on account of the slippage intrinsic to language..." (2008, 314). Thus, while the use of "retarded" in *Poto and Cabengo* is, existentially, a referent to an abstracted disability[9], it is also a gesture towards the symbolic order insofar as it is engaged in "containment" (320). If we consider the use of "retard" as a means of containing or *slowing down* radical cryptophasia, then it is even more noteworthy that "retard" serves to "comprehend and codify" the radical speech-movement that the Kennedy twins' cryptophasia performs.

For instance, at one point, Tom Kennedy (the family patriarch) nervously delivers a monologue to Gorin's camera, as he attempts to explicate the content of his daughters' private language.

John Derby's comprehensive study, "Disability Studies and Art Education," describes social networking on YouTube and other Web 2.0 avenues as having helped build a responding "disability aesthetic" (2011, 102), a byproduct of post-cinema's intermedial, networked (or database) character. Derby characterizes this aesthetic as organically developed by the disability community rather than as a "product of discursive practices," or practices that serve to create "an effect, rather than an origin, a performance rather than an essence" (98). How, then, can we understand the "essence" of the disability aesthetic if we are not to examine disability as it is performed? Perhaps by looking at the *movement* of the performance, as we have with radical cryptophasia, we can characterize instantiations of the disability aesthetic's self-constituting essence.

Amanda Baggs, whose YouTube handle is *silentmiaow*, is an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) activist who uses YouTube to perform and record her self-characterized "extreme autism." Although she does not speak via speech-sounds, Baggs can write rapidly at a rate of 120-words-a-minute and uses speech/type technology to communicate with her viewers. In her video *In My Language* (2007), Baggs first enacts her severe autism by flailing her arms, chanting, and rubbing objects against her face. The second part of the video, titled "Translation," shows Baggs using the type/speech interface to explain how her engagement with her environment is her enacting her native language, pedagogically engaging with disability, its performance, and its representation. Baggs' statement in her 2007 *Wired* interview (Brownlee) notes that her *language* is not rooted in visual symbols for interpretation—for Baggs to "cultivate form" and "be seen," as Judith Butler terms it, she is re-assuming the translation process (2018, 188).

"Being scene" calls into reference one of Deleuze's seminal lines from *Cinéma 2*, that "[t]he people no longer exist. . . the people are missing." (1989, 216). Deleuze here initiates a fold in the distribution of the

sensible by culling cinema as a mode of critique and a form of affirmation of another possibility or potentiality. Cinema, when it perturbs ordinary sensory relationships, interrupts habitual "modes of being and exposes an unconscious gesture, a new use for the data of common experience resistant to instrumental rationality" (Baumbach 2016, 178). Perhaps, then, we can offer a collective closure between the "disability aesthetic" of Web 2.0 and the networked nature of "post-cinema"—that they can reinstate the people and that the reactive image must take part in the "invention of a people." According to Deleuze, "[t]he people are missing is the new basis on which (film) is founded" (1989, 217). While control society, the master, and the colonizer claim in unison that "there have never been a people here," the "missing people" invent themselves and, thus, create a "people to come," or a "people emergent."

Deleuze's philosophy of the minor is unique in that it breaks from a dialectics-laden lineage of subjectivity and personhood (e.g., Hegel's master-slave dialectic or Frantz Fanon's treatment of alterity and violence in *The Wretched of the Earth*), though it is still committed to immanence by way of multiplicity. For Laruelle, the "non-philosopher" of pure immanence, humanity can only exit the endless vicious circle of dialectical power relations by entering into a condition of generic human ethics, or "generic humanity" (2016, xvi). Laruelle uses the terms "overrepresentation" and "overexposured" (2015a, 82) to describe "the type of visibility victims get from mediatic thought, directed from afar by the spirit of philosophy" (131). Laruelle problematizes "engaged," "committed," or "embedded" intellectuals, "who participate in the division of a world, even as they claim to sympathize with the victims they represent." (178). Laruelle's call, for the "pre-comprehension of the victim as of a universal" (233), lauds the *nonrepresentational* victim, which he terms the "victim-in-person." Laruelle advocates for a creative and inventive *auto-impression*—"non-worldly" and "non-perceptual" (2012, 6), this is the core of his "non-standard aesthetics" and his utopic "fiction philosophy." In contrast to Deleuze, the Laruellean political subject seeks to be "truly missing," rather than to "be seen" and surveilled, bound in translative processes. How then, do we situate Baggs' translation-based appearance?

Baggs' video uses performance to accentuate appearance and counter mechanisms of control via a distinct approach to entrepreneurship of the self, one that Judith Butler terms "recognition intertwined with power" (Quoted in Lepold 2018, 474). For Laruelle, Baggs' modus operandi—media intervention directed towards "recognition relations"—strays too close towards the "transcendent event...that occurs in the form of a flash, of an appearance/disappearance" (2015a, 115). What I would like to underscore is the *movement* of societal recognition-based appearance as *progressive*, for it uses translation to appeal to "the emergent vectorialist class" (Wark 2012, 63). This is, of course, a necessary political tactic for recognition after social exclusion; Baggs pursues the "subversive use-value" of the networked Youtube medium via the "neutralization of content" and the "manipulation of form" (Baudrillard 2007, 101) to achieve actualization. Nonetheless, this is the database's normative operative use.

Radical cryptophasia is privileged insofar as it does not care to be seen by "the emergent" for it is "expropriated of all identity, to appropriate belong itself" (Agamben 1993, 18). For Tiqqun, the ethical mode is not one of actualization, location, or identification, but of virtualization and indistinction: "[i]n order to be present. I need to become anonymous." (2001). In being politically mobile, radical cryptophasia can cloak itself from the database and withdraw from the world-system of identification; radical cryptophasia can repeat a previously used phrase, term, element or engage in the progressive permutation of enacting new possibilities, yet there is no probabilistic projection to be considered. This is what allows it to balance the possibility of moving forwards and backwards simultaneously, whereas Baggs' translation-based, interfaced recognition requires that appearance be quantifiable and enumerated within a pre-existing cybernetic network.

Thus, we have developed a metaphoric model of resistance via a Laruellean theory of the minor, one that occupies the "mid-space [*mi-lieu*] that dualizes the world as criminal," "a backwards margin for the world" that comes as "messianity for the relations of force; it stands before crime" (2015a, 290). This non-relation allows for the displacement and transformation of their relation.

## CONCLUSION

My conclusion is to propose that extending Saussurrean theories of language as a means to qualify new media objects apolitically—embracing the total dominion of database logic—means capitulating to control. Deleuze rebuffed this by posing the creative act, and Laruelle has further politicized a theory of pure immanence without ascribing to Deleuzian multiplicity. If film has meaning for Laruellean "non-standard" philosophy, it is because it suggests an arena of immanence whereby "truths" are possible. By "truths" I am coopting what Badiou calls "truths"—those rare moments where philosophy does not bolster the hegemonic status quo, or "democratic materialism," but opposes what Lacan called the "discourse of the university," which, today, can be readily termed the "discourse of the database," as it upholds that everything can be counted or categorized. I am offering radical cryptophasia as a metaphor to illuminate aesthetic production that cannot be grasped only in terms of its effects on bodies and languages but must construct a new, immanent relation between them "where life relates to life instead of subjugating itself to external ends" (Han 2017b, 23).

I contend that a Laruellean film theory of "non-cinema" or post-cinema must further criticize *deep digitality* and move beyond the reduplicative *flat digitality* of political-architectural peripheries. This also necessitates a degree of complimentary praxis. Bernard Stiegler, for instance, has developed techno-ecological projects like Ars Industrialis and Pharmakon.fr, which question the subterranean economic imperatives underpinning computer and telecommunications industries. While I applaud the Italy-based Anopticon project, also known as "Big Brother Viewer"[9]—a project that maps CCTVs in Venice, Padova, Foggia, Urbino, and Solero—I am also pleading that we go beyond spatial discipline and address control society's terms of psychopower and autoexploitation. I maintain that, despite our post-industrial, automated moment of database logic—stilted on compulsory visibility, "total surveillance," and "disaster capitalism" —post-cinema's networked intermedial accessibility suggests radical political possibility. However, it is the transcendence of Capital stands that stands in the way of

life as immanence, or as performed by the Kennedy twins' cryptophasia. Protracing Galloway's keen little book, we may very readily remark that the transcendental, or "digital," event is now also the philosophical basis of Big Data's modulation-based control apparatus.

In a postindustrial, mechanized moment of pessimism (indexed by the popularity of Eugene Thacker's philosophy of nihilism and pessimism), informational glut, data analytics, sentiment analysis, and "instant revisionism" coloring the contours of Donald Trump's America, such tools to imagine a response to absolute control seem necessary. Radical cryptophasia, understood as an ideal, may provide us with ways to conceive of possibilities for Being (e.g., educating and democratizing hacktivist tools such as DDOS attacks) that are not concerned with appealing to translations in dominant, socialized systems and, alternatively, disembody these systems.

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## NOTES

[1] Anna Katherina Schaffner points to David Lynch's *Lost Highway, Mulholland Drive,* and *Inland Empire t*o underscore reflexivity, demonstrating how Lynch orchestrates and deconstructs clichéd binary representations of women via content, form, narrative, and hyperbolic-ironic use of mise-en-scéne. See: A.K Schaffner, "Fantasmatic Splittings and Destructive Desires: Lynch's Lost Highway, Mulholland Drive and Inland Empire*", Forum for Modern Language Studies* 45.3 (2009), 270-291

[2] Branigan complicates Bordwell and Thompson's notion of "forking-path narratives" in such films as *Sliding Doors, Run Lola Run, Nashville,*

and *Short Cuts*, by pointing towards films: 1) with multiple (hidden) histories (*The Lovers of the Arctic Circle, Voyager, Tape, Before the Rain, Underground*); 2) where forking paths reconnect (*The Big Chill, Four Friends*); 3) multiple partial plot and fragmentation (*The Thin Red Line, An Autumn Afternoon*); 4) with unconventional temporal structures (*Last Year in Marienbad, Sans Soleil, Weekend*)  (Branigan 2002, 105-14).

[3] "Viewser" is Kristin Daly's neologism of "viewer" and "user", where cinema-viewers actively "take part in the game"; this phenomena is perhaps best epitomized by Black Mirror's recent *Bandersnatch* undertaking. (Daly 2010, 81-98).

[4] "…it is the early language of twins that is strange and archaic, making use of sounds words and syntax that are not those of the language used to them by adults and other children. This special form of early language *retards* (or delays) the onset of socialized language." (90)

[5] As Vivian Sobchack notes in her 1984 article "16 Ways to Pronounce 'Potato,'" Gorin creates a dialectic between: speech and gesture; hearing and seeing; writing and reading; phonetic transcription and graphic translation; aural and visual punctuation. In effect, by decentering English via various articulations, *Poto and Cabengo* makes speech, itself, seem exotic.

[6] Bakker notes that "The language may stabilise at that level. If a model is completely absent, the children probably do not create a language. In ali cases known, the language consists of onomatopoeic expressions, some invented words, but for the greatest part of words from the adult language adopted to the constrained phonological possibilities of young children." See: Peter Bakker, "Autonomous languages of twins", Acta Genet Med Gemolloi 26 (1977), 233-238.

[7] The analog relation of the "two merging into one" is contrasted to the digital relationship of the riven real, or the "one splitting into two" (Galloway 2014b, 69). Kantian metaphysics bifurcates—the analytic *a priori* is the realm of transcendentals and the synthetic *a posteriori* the realm

of the real (the empirical). Laruelle's univocal immanence, unlike Deleuze's immanence of multiplicity, superimposes the analytic a priori *as* the real.

[8] *Le Moindre Gest* (1971, Fernand Deligny, Josée Manenti, Jean-Pierre Daniel), Ce *gamin, là* (Fernand Deligny & Renaud Victor, 1975; produced by François Truffaut);, *Le Projet N* (1978)

[9] See: http://www.tramaci.org/anopticon