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# THE IMPOSITION OF THE EGO: JEAN-PAUL SARTRE AND THE CINEMATIC APPARATUS

James Driscoll  
*DePaul University*

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# **The Imposition of the Ego**

Jean-Paul Sartre and the Cinematic Apparatus

by

**James Driscoll, B.A.**

**Thesis**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

DePaul University

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of the Requirements

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## **Dedication**

For Allen Frantzen

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Love and thanks to my family, who graciously accepted every answer to the question, “So is your thesis finished yet?”

Love and thanks to my friends, who graciously endured hearing me endlessly answer the question, “So what’s your thesis about?”

This project is a long, long time in the making. I have wanted to do a close study of Baudry since the moment I encountered both his work and its critics; that I am able to sit here having accomplished such a study is something for which I am truly grateful. I feel I should take a moment to acknowledge those who have contributed to the lineage of this project:

I would like to thank Dr. Jarenski for exposing me to my first “Theory” texts at Loyola University Chicago, and for being so supportive of my nascent analyses. It was in her undergraduate class that I began to understand what it is I wanted to do. From there I next encountered Michael Booth, whose introductory film theory course provided me my first exposure to Baudry’s apparatus, not to mention other difficult and foundational film theorists. The amount of time he devoted to explaining and criticizing these theories was profoundly

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## Abstract

### The Imposition of the Ego

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James Driscoll, B.A.

DePaul University, 2013

Thesis Advisor: Michael DeAngelis

Committee: Luisela Alvaray

This thesis applies Jean-Paul Sartre's early philosophy of consciousness and ego to two main concepts of Jean-Louis Baudry's theory of the cinematic apparatus. The first of these concepts, the "transcendental subject," is denoted by Baudry as the conflation of Cartesian philosophy and technology which ensures the transmission of representational knowledge in line with a historically dominant optical ideology. Since Sartre criticizes the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl in ways similar to Baudry's work, his structures and levels of consciousness apply well to the enforced cohesion of the transcendental subject, and impart a hitherto lacking cohesion to the concept. Following from a clear structuration of the transcendental subject, the thesis then moves to the "more-than-real," or the impression of reality found in dream that is then objectively staged in the apparatus. For Baudry, dream enacts the desire to endure unconscious representation in the same manner as waking perception, this desire itself stemming from a wish to return to the pre-subjective wholeness of infancy. Cinema, then, enacts an "artificial regression," or a simulation of the regression required for dream, in order to endure the more-than-real *in waking reality*. In order to explain the process of the more-than-real, the transcendental subject is then schematized in its interaction with the general projection situation and the spectator, from which is concluded that the transcendental subject engages with the spectator in order to produce for the spectator a position in which to experience "reality unfolding itself." Finally, the implications for both materialist film, Althusserian ideology, and the notion of "apparatus" in general are briefly explored.

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## INTRODUCTION: THE RESUSCITATION OF A THEORY

This project will re-examine Jean-Louis Baudry's concept of the "cinematic apparatus," not from a psychoanalytic perspective, with its emphasis on the unconscious, regression, and dream, but a Sartrean perspective, with its emphasis on unreflected consciousness, reflected consciousness, and ego. Firstly, I argue that the theory of the "transcendental subject," or a subject-effect based on a simulation of phenomenological consciousness, must be stressed and clarified in Baudry's work. While the metaphorical comparisons between cinema and dream found in "The Apparatus" have drawn the most attention and criticism, little work has been done on the philosophical structure of Baudry's transcendental subject. Since psychoanalysis has declined in popularity as an interpretive tool, the "subject" of "The Apparatus" and "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" has been relegated to a by-gone era of metapsychological film theory. By revisiting the apparatus, I intend to show that there exists in Baudry's work a consistent philosophical system of consciousness that requires elucidation and has consequences for other theoretical concerns, filmic or not. Finally, I argue that when the subject of the apparatus is properly understood, the "impression of reality" produced by the apparatus becomes clearer and provides new insight.

## THEORY/POST-THEORY

Obviously, such an endeavor intervenes in a discourse rife with contentious history. The concept of "the apparatus," as well as those writers and theorists herded under its banner (often glossed as "post-structuralist film theory"), are now largely seen as either discredited or simply outmoded. As New Lacanian Todd McGowan puts it, "film theory today is almost nonexistent. The universalizing claims about the cinematic experience made by figures such as Sergei Eisenstein, André Bazin, Christian Metz, and Laura Mulvey have disappeared" (McGowan ix).

As McGowan sees it, the current climate of film scholarship is comprised of local case studies and “particular claims” that remain within specialized boundaries of interest. “Proffering a universal and totalizing theory of the filmic experience,” he notes, “seems outdated and naïve” (ix). Perhaps this atmosphere results from what Slavoj Žižek calls “a stance of profound political resignation...a will to obliterate the traces and disappointments of political engagement,” an engagement so integral to the intellectual efforts of 1960s/1970s film theory (Žižek 13). Perhaps not. Whatever the reason, it does appear, as evidenced by some of the literature appraised in this project, that film scholarship has largely turned away from the grand ideological critiques that once dominated film studies (McGowan 1-5).

For McGowan, this trend finds its loci in a collection of essays entitled *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, edited by noted film scholars David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (McGowan 4-5, 212-13). The purpose of the anthology is to propose methods and theoretical paradigms that differ from Marxist and psychoanalytic frameworks. Rhetorically implicit to *Post-Theory* is a resolute indictment of “Grand Theory,” defined by Carroll as a mix of primarily French authors and theorists filtered through and conglomerated by English-speaking critics (Carroll, “PF” 37). Bordwell points to the four main offenses of Grand Theory: 1. Theory is based upon a “top-down” and “doctrine driven” application of faddish French theory, resulting in an “inadvertent narrowness” that produces minimally different analyses based on shared assumptions (Bordwell 18-21); 2. Theory deploys a dilettante mix of writers and disciplines that are only compatible through a strategy of imposed synthesis (21-22); 3. Grand Theorists “rely upon remarkably unconstrained association,” eschewing reason and logic for flights of literary metaphor (22-24); 4. Theory confuses filmic *interpretation* with evidence and verification of

theoretical premises (24-26). Both Bordwell and Carroll consequently advocate the pluralistic, localized interrogation of specific aspects of film (Bordwell 26-30; Carroll, “PF” 39, 56-61).

Aside from McGowan, Žižek provides the most explicit response to *Post-Theory*. In *The Frigate of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieślowski Between Theory and Post-Theory*, Žižek draws an adversarial opposition between “‘Theory,’ (which, of course, is far from a unified field)” and “‘Post-Theory,’ the cognitivist and/or historicist reaction to it” (Žižek 1). Žižek, himself an avowed Lacanian-Marxist, first argues that Post-Theory, through its explicit criticism and exclusion of psychoanalysis as an analytic paradigm, overdetermines the role of some mystic, powerful Lacanian discourse in film studies: “Who are these Lacanians,” Žižek asks, implicitly accusing Post-Theorists of fabricating a psychoanalytic politburo (1). Secondly, Žižek criticizes Carroll’s prescription that film theory be fundamentally “dialectic;” for Žižek, Carroll’s use of the term does not result in Hegelian synthesis but is rather “unending, so that no theory can claim to provide the ultimate standpoint” (Carroll, “PF” 56-59, Žižek 14-15). It is not that Žižek believes there need be a new Grand Theory (although he resides within prescriptive discursive fields), but that this type of dialectic is non-political, removed as it is from any being-in-the-world (engagement aimed at synthesis, i.e. *change*) and enunciated from a position of institutional authority and knowledge. For Žižek, Carroll effectively says, “Theory is never-ending because I have already pronounced its final answer: there is no final answer.” The result is endless academic exegesis.

These objections have themselves been disputed. In “Slavoj Žižek: Say Anything,” Bordwell criticizes Žižek for (a) representing *Post-Theory* as emblematic of some sort of sustained, hostile intellectual movement, (b) pretending as though the attacks waged by the likes of Bordwell and Carroll are themselves based on unfounded, hyperbolic notions of a

monolithic Lacanian discourse, and (c) failing to actually counter any of the arguments made against Theory in the *Post-Theory* volume (davidbordwell.net). For example, in response to Žižek’s “Who are these Lacanians,” Bordwell writes, “Žižek knows perfectly well that a great many film scholars have cited Lacan and used his work to bolster theoretical or interpretive claims.” Furthermore, Bordwell asks, “Why do Žižek and [Colin] MacCabe [who provides the book’s introduction] elevate a single anthology (*Post-Theory*) into a movement (Post-Theory)?” Bordwell further accuses Žižek of using invective rhetoric to (unsuccessfully) degrade *Post-Theory*, and of regurgitating established Theory doctrine without any justification or reply to its critics.

In order to establish my position within the Theory/Post-Theory debate, I offer an interpolation of Bordwell’s reproach of Žižek: Bordwell knows perfectly well that in graduate programs across the nation, not only has Theory been pronounced dead, its corpse is constantly exhumed and berated in order to exacerbate decay borne of premature demise. Through this re-examination of the apparatus, I aim to show that there is still work to be done, and that, if I am not attempting a “comeback” of Theory, I am stating resolutely that the apparatus is worth revisiting. Žižek does not have to be correct in his accusation of Post-Theory’s political apathy for there to exist a climate that is unreasonably antithetical to grand, less localized theories of film and film consciousness. As McGowan, speaking of psychoanalysis and *Post-Theory*, puts it,

Though the contributors to *Post-Theory* lament the privileged status of psychoanalysis within film theory, their attack comes about twenty years after the height of its popularity. Given the current position of psychoanalysis within film theory, *Post-Theory* is flogging a dead horse. In fact, it is psychoanalytic theory’s very lack of popularity—its weakened, degraded state—that has occasioned this attack. One attacks an authority not for its strength but for its weakness. (McGowan 219)

A further exigency of this project is rooted in a more fundamental debate over knowledge and the legitimacy of method. In “The Bordwell Regime and the Stakes of Knowledge,” Robert Ray invokes the distinction between classicist and baroque science in order to better explain the contempt held by Bordwell et. al for “post-structuralist” approaches to film (Ray 32-33). Bordwell (here standing in for the Post-Theory slant) represents classicist science, with its penchant for singular method, rigorous research, and conclusions that are verifiable by available data (35). Post-structuralism, on the other hand, represents the baroque, as it emphasizes style, form, and “an aptitude for inconclusiveness” (32-33). Obviously the rhetoric of Baudry belongs to the latter category; his essays are full of momentary digressions that, while appearing to contain a bevy of meaning, remain unexplained and therefore cryptic. It is this latter approach to the theorizing of film that Ray argues has been outmoded at the behest of a classicist revival in the institution of American academia (40-41).

However, as Ray points out, “both classicism and the baroque produce knowledge. The questions are *how?* and *what kind?*” (Ray 33). At the moment, 1970s theory has been rejected as productive of knowledge for numerous reasons, some of which are outlined above: it is too eclectic; its writing style is unreasonably oblique; it fails to possess a serious methodology; etc. In short, “Theory” cannot produce proper knowledge in the current academic climate because it is not classicist. It is, rather, aphoristic, esoteric, and lofty. Its concepts remain necessarily inconclusive. But as Ray reminds us, aphorisms, turns of phrases, and stylistic dalliances *can* inspire formidable intellectual endeavors (51-53). As he puts it,

Contrary, then, to Bordwell’s complaints about the “[r]eliance on vaporous formulas rather than explicitly constructed concepts and propositions,” this constitutive vocabulary’s inchoateness should not count against [Theory]; in fact, its very imprecision fosters a “learning disposition,” that impulse toward knowledge that originates in vaguely motivated but urgent desire. (51)

It is the “urgent desire” of this project to interrogate the work of Baudry in order to rescue it from undue classicist damnation. While his essays certainly embody the baroque belief that aphorism, aside, and *belles lettres* in general can produce worthy knowledge, I see no reason why that should warrant a total abandonment of his project. To reject Baudry’s work on the basis of classicist bias entails a tragic loss of potent philosophical content that may help us better grasp the notion of film consciousness.

## THE TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT

### From Phenomenology to the Analytic Subject

Much like Lacan’s implicit analytic project of “reducing the privileges of the consciousness,” Baudry and film theorists of his time sought to debunk the “idealist belief in the homogeneity of all Being and the transcendent subject who can view it from afar” (Lacan 82, Jay 473). Martin Jay points out that “phenomenological realism,” or the belief, propagated by André Bazin and his followers, that cinema unites subject and object in a phenomenological reduction that objectively frames the life-world, “was often surrounded by an aura of religiosity and Platonic idealism that would not easily survive the intensifying politicization of film criticism in the late 1960s” (461).<sup>1</sup> Baudry and the apparatus therefore occupy a specific historical moment in film theory in which one theory of consciousness gains preference over another and political concerns (namely, those of ideology) explicitly enter the fore of film discourse.

As phenomenological realism comes to be rejected, then, a new focus on “the subject” and its construction emerges. In the introduction to *Camera Obscura*’s translation of “The Apparatus,” Bertrand Augst argues that “technology cannot explain cinema. The cinema-effect can only be explained from the view-point of the apparatus, an apparatus which is not limited to the instrumental base but also includes the subject” (Augst 100). Baudry’s work therefore

occupies, critically, a philosophical tradition dedicated to understanding subjectivity. “The apparatus” is not simply an imposed, ideological technology base that equivocally colonizes the minds of its spectators, but instead involves the simulation and production of structures of consciousness. “For Baudry,” Augst states further, “the cinematographic apparatus is a simulation apparatus, but an apparatus that simulates a subject-effect, or a state, not reality” (100).

It is this simulation of a “subject-effect” which must be stressed and re-examined in order to properly understand Baudry and the apparatus. Joan Copjec points out that the English word “apparatus” can actually originate from two different French terms: *appareil* or *dispositif*. The former usually refers to a literal machine or device, whereas the latter term refers not only to mechanics but a mechanics with “an adherence to a philosophical tradition...which sets itself against the empiricist position that facts exist outside the science that discovers them” (Copjec, “AIM” 57). For apparatus theory, then, the technology of cinema is inherently ensnared within a certain philosophical bias and reproduces modes of perception in line with that bias. As Jay points out, “the claim that film technology was neutral and based on advances in pure science was precisely what apparatus theory set out to dispute” (Jay 471). In other words, there is no such thing as an “innocent” technology; as Baudry says of “the technical nature of optical instruments,” “their scientific base assures them a sort of neutrality and avoids their being questioned” (Baudry, “IE” 40).

What, however, is left unquestioned? For Baudry, it is the belief in, and simulation of, omnipotent phenomenological consciousness. This is the point at which “the apparatus” as mechanics, “the apparatus” as a philosophical understanding of the subject, and the cause-effect relation between the two all merge to clarify the stakes of apparatus theory and its reappraisal in

this project. In *The Imaginary Signifier*, Christian Metz briefly stages a simultaneously neutral and critical dialogue between psycho-semiotic film theory and the prior phenomenological slant:

The ‘*there is*’ of phenomenology proper (philosophical phenomenology) as an ontic revelation referring to a perceiving-subject (=‘perceptual *cogito*’), to a subject for which alone there can be anything, has close and precise affinities with the installation of the cinema signifier in the ego as I have tried to define it, with the spectator drawing into himself as a pure instance of perception, the of the perceived being ‘out there’. To this extent the cinema really is the ‘phenomenological art’ it has often been called, by Merleau-Ponty himself, for example. *But it can only be so because its objective determinations make it so.* (Metz 53, emphasis mine)

Metz explicitly argues here that it is an objective “determination,” perhaps one could say a *technological simulation*, of phenomenological consciousness, which makes cinema appear idealist, appear as expressive of wholeness between being and consciousness, and so on. The crucial crux of this argument, however, is that for Metz, Baudry, and apparatus theory, that philosophical system which has been simulated is not the way in which humans, conscious or unconscious, actually interact with the world (53). Metz believes, in tow with structuralism, that the subject of phenomenology cannot see the reality of its situation. Hence, much like the structuralist-Marxist refutation of phenomenology and the efforts of Lacan to “de-privilege” consciousness, Metz, albeit with sympathy and nuance, criticizes phenomenology in favor of psychoanalysis (and its emphasis on projection, identification, the mirror stage, etc.) at the same instant he calls for questioning and criticism of cinema:

In other words, phenomenology can contribute to knowledge of the cinema (and it has done so) insofar as it happens to be like it, and yet it is on the cinema *and* phenomenology in their common illusion of *perceptual mastery* that light must be cast by the real conditions of society and man. (53)

#### Why Sartre?

It is here that the need for Sartre begins. Baudry’s work on the apparatus is located precisely in this problematic identified by Metz, and, especially in “Ideological Effects,” Baudry



attempts a critical investigation of the structural affinities between the apparatus and phenomenological consciousness. Much like Metz, he finds phenomenologists, namely Husserl, to be descriptors of a process by which Western epistemology has erred in assuming an ontological whole prior to experience, known as the “transcendental ego” (Baudry, “IE” 43-46). Like Metz, Baudry believes that *le dispositif* has determined *l'appareil*. However, as noted above, during the turn from Bazinian film theories to a political/psychoanalytic impetus, the terms “phenomenology” and “idealism” become unduly conflated and, although Baudry references Husserl in his essay, their nuances are not treated as thoroughly as they could be. Rather than simply agree with the contention, propagated by Baudry and Metz, that the subject simulated by the apparatus is at odds with the actuality of human subjective experience, this project asks: What if the subject of the apparatus *is* in fact “like” the phenomenological subject of the life-world, and what if its very simulation produces ideological effects and problematics concerning the impression of reality? What happens if we approach the apparatus from the standpoint of Sartrean phenomenology?

While the philosophical system laid out in Sartre’s *The Transcendence of the Ego (TOE)* will be explained and utilized in a subsequent chapter, it will do to enumerate some of the reasons for a critique of the apparatus through the lens of Sartrean phenomenology:

1. Like apparatus theory, Sartre’s existentialist phenomenology is also explicitly foregrounded as at odds with Husserlian thought; it is not regarded as orthodox phenomenology (Sukale 80-100).

2. Following from number one, apparatus theory’s rejection of phenomenology in favor of psychoanalysis ignores a crucial similarity between Baudry’s work and *TOE*, a text whose

very purpose is to provide a phenomenology that has no need for a transcendental ego (Sartre 36).

3. The very problematics foregrounded by apparatus theory, such as that of “perceptual mastery,” the false, inward unity of consciousness, the objective condensation of the ego, and so on are all explicit concerns of existentialist philosophy as practiced by the early Sartre (Sartre 32, 37-38).

4. By the time structuralism had developed and proliferated in France, phenomenology had been largely denoted as outmoded and incompatible with Marxism in its relation to the structuralist revolution (Poster 306-340, Flynn 113-118). Therefore the applicability between Sartre, structuralist Marxism (read: Althusser, a direct influence on Baudry), and film theory has not been tested.

5. Lastly, there simply has never been a structural theory of film consciousness that has relied on Sartrean phenomenology.

Through the use of a philosophy explicitly interested in critiquing the same concerns of apparatus theory, what is understood by the latter as “the subject” is problematized and open for reformulation. Furthermore, by actively adopting a philosophical position that is not Lacanian, one may circumvent classic criticisms of the apparatus. For example, Bordwell emphasizes that for “subject-position theory,” of which Baudry is considered a part, “the subject” is a space, or position, in which knowledge (whether linguistic, historical, etc.) is attainable (Bordwell 6). It is a position determined by social forces that exist prior to any “individual;” consequently for subject-position theory, “subjectivity is not the human being’s personal identity or personality; it is unavoidably social. It is not a pre-given consciousness; it is acquired. Subjectivity is constructed through representational systems” (6). Apparatus theory, therefore, ultimately argues

that “an individual,” that is, a biological being, and “a subject,” or a category which imparts such a being its identity, are always somehow the same thing, regardless of temporality or cause-and-effect (8, 14-15). This is the height of theoretical determinism.

However, it is my appeal to Sartre’s early theory of consciousness, as well as the emphasis on its simulation (as foregrounded by Metz), which I eventually argue legitimates the determinism of the apparatus: the apparatus is the way it is because it simulates inherent aspects of phenomenological consciousness that the spectator in fact possesses. It is not that subjectivity is created by the apparatus; it is that the apparatus *utilizes subjectivity in a specific manner*. Once structures of consciousness are simulated in a technological apparatus, that which is inherent to human consciousness becomes formal and in-the-world in an objective way: for Baudry, this is the camera and the “transcendental subject” it embodies (Baudry 43-44). Whereas the temporal life-world is a spontaneous and irreversible tract of time, the apparatus, as conceived by Baudry, objectifies the consciousness which inhabits this life-world and renders it static, constant, and subject to a controlled irreversibility. In other words, the simulation of spontaneous consciousness (defined by Sartre as “unreflected consciousness”) embodied by the apparatus produces a “subject” that is simultaneously spontaneous and calculated, at once unreflected and ego-centered. The apparatus simulates consciousness so as to render it an objective arena in which to consider, and thus (re)produce, ideologically sound concepts and ideas of the life-world, all the while retaining a sense, and structure, of things as “just happening.”

#### THE MORE-THAN-REAL

It is this mixture of objectified subjectivity, condensed meaning, and seeming spontaneity that produces the effect Baudry names the “more-than-real.” While we have spoken at length about the transcendental subject and the need for its actual structuration, we have yet to touch on

the analogous relationship drawn by Baudry between the impressions of reality found in dream and cinema, both of which produce the more-than-real (albeit in different ways). For Baudry, the more-than-real is the result of a certain regression through which one satiates a desire to return to an undifferentiated state-of-being experienced in infancy. During that period, one's consciousness and being have yet to be separated from the exterior world, particularly the body of the mother. Dream is a hallucinatory regression that facilitates the return to such a position, as it simulates aspects of waking life and conflates them with unconscious representations. Since this conflation is not actually subjected to the constraints of external reality, the impression of reality of the dream takes on a heightened reality-effect, the more-than-real.

After illustrating how the cinema simulates the psychic regression of dream in a social space, Baudry argues that cinema, like dream, involves "obtaining from reality a position, a condition in which what is perceived would no longer be distinguished from representations" (Baudry, "TA" 121). What this means, to return to the notion of things "just happening" in the cinema, is that cinema offers the spectator, like the dreamer, the opportunity to experience within the life-world a momentary suspension of the externality inherent to reality. The dreamer experiences the representations of his or her unconscious as though they did not belong to him or her, as though the representations had no bearing on their waking subjectivity as it perceives, relates to, and accommodates the actions and agencies of others; in cinema, the spectator, within the simulated regression of dream, experiences ideological representations as though they were both of and not-of the self-contained world narrating itself on-screen, despite the presence of any *signified* contradiction. As John Ellis puts it, in apparatus cinema "it seems as though reality is telling itself" (Ellis 60). It is the interaction between the transcendental subject, the representation, and the spectator that produces the cinematic more-than-real.

While the two main components of this project—the transcendental subject and the more-than-real—have obviously been shown as abundant with complex histories, dense philosophical structures, and sustained, formidable opposition, there still exists a way in which apparatus theory has yet to be properly considered. These complexities perhaps find enunciation in Dr. Brian O’Blivion’s speech on television, the brain, and reality:

The television screen is the retina of the mind’s eye. Therefore the television screen is a part of the physical structure of the brain. Therefore whatever appears on the television screen emerges as raw experience for those who watch it. Therefore television is reality, and reality is less than television.  
(Cronenberg 1983)

Although both this speech and *Videodrome* deal exclusively with television, the relations between “raw experience,” mediation, and “reality” are direct concerns of Baudry and apparatus theory. Through a rigorous and sustained re-evaluation of the psychic structure of the apparatus, the problematics inherent to apparatus theory, succinctly expressed in this excerpt, will be better understood.

## CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

Chapter One will outline Sartre’s philosophical system of consciousness found in *TOE* and illustrate its affinity with the “transcendental subject” as constructed by Baudry in “Ideological Effects.” Key concepts explained will be: unreflected consciousness; reflected consciousness; ego; the non-positionality of consciousness and the positional objectivity of the ego; intentionality. The chapter will explore the similarities and differences between the ways Sartre and Baudry critique Husserl and the transcendental ego. Key to this chapter is the fact that, for Sartre, the ego is always an objective locus in which spontaneity is lost in favor of a static existence at the service of a false unity prior to existence (the transcendental ego). The argument

of this chapter is that the construction of Baudry's transcendental subject actually produces that "false" prior unity; the "transcendental subject" is the formalization of the transcendental ego.

Chapter Two will then take this subject, as now understood in a Sartrean sense, and use it to re-examine the "more-than-real" theorized in "The Apparatus." I will argue that the notion of an irreversible image tract in which the subject is unable to interfere, criticized most resolutely by Carroll, is not to be taken metaphorically but seriously and even literally (Carroll, *MM* 13-31, 89-146). The apparatus produces the transcendental subject in order to stage a controlled consideration of what experientially happens in the life-world, a consideration that is nevertheless experienced as simulated abandon. Reality, in the apparatus, is the experience of the reproduction of life-world conditions as though it were a revelation; through that experience is produced the "more-than-real," or a reality that is "really real." With the relationship between the transcendental subject, the spectator, and the more-than-real secured, Chapter Three will then briefly apply the findings of Chapters one and two to the Althusserian theories of ideology and the interpellated ideological subject.

## CHAPTER 1: THE TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT

The term “transcendental subject” has already instanced itself several times in this project, with no explanation or definition. What does it mean? Why would an ideological theory of the cinema depend so greatly on its refutation?<sup>1</sup> A simple definition is that the transcendental subject is a subject-effect produced and embodied by a technological base that utilizes a certain understanding of human subjectivity as the source material for its construction. The overall consequence of the transcendental subject, so the theory goes, is that a certain epistemological attitude towards the world, one in collusion with the capitalistic division of industrial society, is reproduced through every instance of representation formed by the cinematic apparatus.

Still unclear, however, is the exact philosophical ground upon which such a theory is built. For Baudry’s use of “transcendental,” and his ancillary concerns pertaining to the term, can easily appear vague and even barely-connected. This is of course not the case: as I intend to show, the construction of Baudry’s transcendental subject holds deep affinities with Sartre’s criticism of the transcendental ego as a structuring mechanism of phenomenological consciousness, and, in turn, his theory of the construction of the ego.<sup>2</sup>

With mention of the construction of the ego it will do to pause and make clear the parameters of this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to arrive at a clear structuration of the transcendental subject of the cinematic apparatus. It will not depict the way in which that subject functions to produce the cinematic ego of ideology; that production is integral to questions of the impression of reality, the concept to which Chapter two is dedicated. As suggested by its very name, this chapter sets out to construct the transcendental subject as the very condition for any cinematic experience to be endured in the apparatus.

A brief summary of Sartre's stake in his rejection of the transcendental ego will therefore help orient this chapter. A "transcendental ego," in the phenomenology Sartre attacks, is that pole which is said to *precede* and *accompany* every life-world experience. It is therefore a condition of consciousness, or *in* and *of* consciousness. For Sartre, this is not so; rather, "we should like to show here that the ego is neither formally nor materially *in* consciousness: it is outside, *in the world*" (Sartre 32). Sartre intends to show that rather than existing as an inhabitant of consciousness, which would render it *transcendental*, the ego is an object of the world, an object outside consciousness and therefore *transcendent*. It is an object produced, and its production is both the result of activity on the part of consciousness and a seemingly "magical bond," but the ego is never transcendental, never primordial in any experience (68, 81).

This production, this "magical bond" of experience, consciousness, and ego will be taken up in Chapter two. In that chapter, I take the transcendental subject, the condition of possibility of apparatus experience, and illustrate the way that experience takes place. Central to that chapter is the point that, whereas the transcendent ego can never precede any experience in the phenomenological life-world, the ego of the apparatus *always* precedes cinematic experience while still existing as a transcendent production. The transcendental subject exists to ensure the constant production of an ego that coheres a central bed of ideological meaning that somehow seems spontaneous and pre-personal.

For now, however, we will simply elucidate the structure of the transcendental subject.

#### THE STAKES OF "IDEOLOGICAL EFFECTS"

At a glance, the phenomenologically-oriented reader notices many passing references which immediately provoke a curious disposition, indeed a learning disposition, towards Baudry's essay "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" ("IE"). Regarding



consciousness, Baudry clarifies that “in point of fact we are concerned with nothing less;” he conflates his understanding of “the subject” and the (albeit, for him, psychoanalytic) idea of the ego; he notes that with the construction of a cinematic transcendental subject, the world of cinema will be constructed *by* and *for* that subject, bringing to mind the for-itself and in-itself distinction so important for existentialism (Baudry 43, 46).<sup>3</sup> His entire discussion of the transcendental subject is riddled with phenomenological concepts, all cohering and dismantling in a matter of moments and words.

What, then, are we to make of these references, these taut phrases brimming with potential for both synthesis and further confusion? How are we to begin? Must we wrench these words, force them to fit our arguments, or can we discern a theoretical trajectory that does not eschew such confusion but rather utilizes it, indeed departs from it? A close reading of “IE” will, hopefully, put to rest such queries and give some sense to the concepts contained within its margins (if not completely eradicate their inherent friction).

The stakes of Baudry’s interrogation of the apparatus are concerned with the extent to which its technological base reproduces capitalist ideology. Baudry asks,

do the instruments (the technical base) produce specific ideological effects, and are these effects themselves determined by the dominant ideology? In which case, concealment of the technical base will also bring about a specific ideological effect. Its inscription, its manifestation as such, on the other hand, would produce a knowledge effect, as actualization of the work process, as denunciation of ideology, and as critique of idealism. (Baudry 41)

If the material work of the apparatus is foregrounded, knowledge, rather than ideology, will be produced. This view is of course in tow with Baudry’s Althusserian position: the editors of *Film Quarterly* note that “Althusser opposes ideology to knowledge as science. Ideology operates by obfuscating the means by which it is produced. Thus an increase in ideological value is an increase in mystification” (41).<sup>4</sup>

The arguments by Baudry that follow are thus all related to the inherent tensions and ambiguities contained within the above contention. Most important to note is that while Baudry refers to “film” and “cinema” as a singular institution, and is arguing for their history and operation as inherently ideological (“it is an apparatus destined to obtain a precise ideological effect”), he is also trying to show why a material base that *does not have to be idealistic* (read: ideological) *is idealistic* (Baudry 46). Although he never maps a prescriptive schema for a non-dominant cinema, the very possibility of one remains clandestinely operative in his text. For at times Baudry hints at the possibility for a cinema that is non-dominant, non-narrative; predominately, however, he seems to argue for a teleological, deterministic pessimism. Recall the relationship between the *appareil* and *dispositif*; while the power of the latter perhaps wins the day in Baudry’s theoretical tale of ideological cinema, this is because that power has somehow conquered a material base.

We therefore immediately reiterate and foreground the following, in order to guide the ensuing discussion:

1. Baudry’s article is committed to an understanding of film-as-material, both in collusion with and in spite of the ideology of the *dispositif* (Baudry 39-41).
2. That materiality is, in Baudry’s view, elided by the idealism of “dominant ideology” as necessarily expressed and embodied by the technological base of the cinema.
3. This elision is carried out in service of “the maintenance of idealism,” or the continuance of a *dispositif* that stresses a centered, structuring and constituting subject (40, 46).

#### THE “EYE-SUBJECT” OF PERSPECTIVE

In “IE,” Baudry provides a history of the construction of the artistic “subject,” or “a fixed point by reference to which the visualized objects are organized” (Baudry 41). During the

Renaissance, according to his narrative, the “discontinuous” and “heterogeneous” space of Greek painting and theater was superseded by “perspective,” or “a conception of space formed by the relation between elements which are equally near and distant from the ‘source of all life’” (41).<sup>5</sup> Put simply, this equidistance ensures the perpetuation of an idealist dualism, based on lack, by which meaning is secured as both immediate yet eternally *elsewhere*. The consequence of this switch is thus a “hallucinatory reality” of representation in which the virtual coordinates of perspective “[lay] out the space of an ideal vision and in this way [assure] the necessity of a transcendence” (41). This “transcendence” can be glossed simply as a belief that, in art, the ideological permutations of idealist consistencies such as Truth, Beauty, and so on find their expression in and through the arbitrary convention of perspective, while seeming to remain, again, outside of material existence, outside of production. The “eye-subject” is therefore this “hallucinatory,” virtual space through which such transcendence is attainable and attained.

Extending this eye-subject to cinema, Baudry wonders whether one could argue that the film camera, with its inherent mobility and interaction with multiple images, which depict multiple and perhaps even discontinuous angles, is not only different from the eye-subject of still painting but could potentially even “nullify” that subject (Baudry 42). For Baudry this is not so, however, precisely because the differences between the cinematic images, which in projection are combined to create the illusion of continuity of time and movement, are effaced in order to produce meaning. A structuring principle, invisible and latent like the subject of perspective, is still required for the effective operation of the cinema; an “ideal vision” remains the aim of representation.

This leads Baudry to conclude that the cinema “lives on the denial of difference:” cinema paradoxically requires a succession of disparate images and simultaneously requires that the

difference between those images be eradicated in projection (Baudry 42). What specifically, however, besides “cinema” in general, requires this denial? For difference can of course arise; as Baudry notes, the sudden interruption of a narrative film, “when the spectator is brought abruptly back to discontinuity,” is experienced as a disturbance to the cinema-effect (42). The “unexpected surging forth of a marked difference” is thus possible but remains denied (42). Why is this? The answer is found in a complicated argument in which Baudry foregrounds the *non-idealist* materiality of film technology (that is, disparate images) while stressing the production of (Baudry would perhaps say usage by) the idealist *dispositif* (continuity, meaning, eye-subject). Baudry asks,

Couldn't we thus say that cinema reconstructs and forms the mechanical model (with the simplifications that this can entail) of a system of writing constituted by a material base and counter-system (ideology, idealism) which uses this system while also concealing it? On the one hand, the optical apparatus and the film permit the marking of difference...on the other hand, the mechanical apparatus both selects the minimal difference and represses it in projection, so that meaning can be constituted: it is at once direction, continuity, movement. (42-43)

Keeping in mind the implicit importance of technological materiality in Baudry's work, one may gloss this section as such: While the cinema makes possible representational practices which are not subordinate to the ideology of the eye-subject, its material base can also, and, for the most part, does, constitute an apparatus through which the eye-subject necessarily intervenes and masks the possibility of its counter. The individual objectivity of the disparate film image *can* arise as marked difference, in disturbance of the ideology of continuity, but the very way in which the apparatus functions subsumes that possibility in the maintenance of the idealistic subject.

The “transcendental subject” is therefore the next logical step in the trajectory of perspectivist art and is made possible by the cinema. Baudry understands the “liberation” of the

eye-subject “in the sense that a chemical reaction liberates a substance” (Baudry 43). We may assume that this “liberation” implies some type of latent, possible state of being that, when given the correct condition (or “chemical reaction”), transforms the prior being into that-which-it-could-be.<sup>6</sup> While this is an idealism similar to Bazin’s myth of total cinema,<sup>7</sup> Baudry is being ironic here, playing at the idea of a teleology of representation<sup>8</sup> which the cinema both expresses and finalizes, a view he will later expand in “The Apparatus.” The aim of this irony is to dispense with the implied innocence of phenomenology’s descriptive tendencies and its desire to understand both the potentialities inherent to the life-world and the access of consciousness to them. In short, Baudry wishes to illustrate how phenomenology aids the construction of an ideological structure and process.<sup>9</sup>

#### THE TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT AND PHENOMENOLOGY

The transcendental subject must therefore be understood in terms of the phenomenology from which it constructs itself. The camera is most important in considering this subject, as Baudry states plainly that “the movability of the camera seems to fulfill the most favorable conditions for the manifestation of the ‘transcendental subject’” (Baudry 43). He argues that “the invisible base of artificial perspective,” or that virtual space which guarantees the transcendence of meaning in perspective painting (that is, the eye-subject), is through the camera “absorbed in, ‘elevated’ to a vaster function, proportional to the movement which it can perform” (43). That is, the movement of the camera as embodiment of the eye-subject imbues the camera with more sophisticated properties than the typical subject of perspective art. By movement, Baudry of course means that the camera can literally be moved from the place of inscription to the place of projection, but this implies for him a consequent second meaning: the conventions of the eye-

subject and the *dispositif* remain consistent throughout. The transcendental subject is thus a mobile instantiation of transcendental consciousness.

### Transcendental Consciousness and Phenomenology

The *Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy* defines “transcendental” as “the form of knowledge that is concerned not with objects themselves, but with the modes in which we are able to know these objects, namely, with the conditions of possible experience” (695).

“Transcendental” therefore refers to a set of pre-experiential conditions upon and through which empirical experience may be constituted. These conditions are known generally as *a priori*, or conditions prior-to. Greatly simplified, then, we may say that “a system of *a priori* concepts might be called transcendental philosophy” (695).

The problems surrounding this term arise from its extension to matters of consciousness, “transcendental consciousness” being the common term around which such conflict circulates. Transcendental philosophy holds that consciousness, in addition to being a set of *a priori* conditions necessary for subjective experience, is also constitutive of the field in which it operates and from which it departs. For this tradition, transcendental consciousness is categorical; consciousness contains a number of categories which form our interaction with and understanding of the objects in the world. Anything outside of this experience is transcendent (as opposed to transcendental) and cannot be fully known. Thus is produced the idea of the Kantian “thing-in-itself:” because transcendental consciousness is constitutive of the objects it finds, that is, because we only know objects according to categorical consciousness, we can never really know what things are themselves. We only have access to categorical representation. Therefore, the first definition of transcendental, that of simple condition, also implies for Critical

philosophy that the possibilities of transcendental consciousness are also constitutive of empirical experience, as opposed to self-effacing in its interaction with the world.

Phenomenology, which is a post-Kantian philosophy (and therefore not a mere rejection or supersession), was intended, among other things, as a critical elaboration of the “thing-in-itself.” In transcendental phenomenology (that of its founder, Edmund Husserl), the ultimate endeavor is to arrive at an irrefutable understanding of “the things themselves.” Husserl argues that the world, and the objects that dwell within it, exist independently of any intuiting subjectivity and should be approached as such (Husserl 61). Objects are out-there, in-the-world, and consequently do not require a constituting (transcendental) consciousness for either their existence or intuition. However, phenomenology also maintains that subjectivity possesses its own manner of intuiting, and intending (or grasping) the world; while objects retain independent existence, subjectivity, according to the phenomenologist, still effects their common, everyday perception. The difference between the approaches is that whereas the thing-in-itself is an elaboration of the categorical, phenomenology resolutely stands with “the World.” Therefore, it may generally be stated that transcendental phenomenology is a simultaneous study of the involvement of subjectivity in the constitution of the object and attempt to grasp the object in its truest, non-subjective form.

#### Sartre: Against the Transcendental Ego

Jean-Paul Sartre’s first sustained intervention in phenomenology, *The Transcendence of the Ego (TOE)*, is an attempt to reduce the role of the transcendental in the experience of consciousness. For Sartre, consciousness is defined by its very activity and translucent relationship with the world, rather than the categorical: “consciousness is no longer a set of logical conditions. It is a fact which is absolute” (Sartre 35). The primary object of criticism in

this endeavor is the transcendental ego. Sartre argues that while Husserl and phenomenology had originally eradicated the need for a primordial transcendental ego, to which our experiences belong and which is necessary for their construction, Husserl eventually reverted to using the transcendental ego as an explanatory device. Sartre agrees that consciousness plays a part in the constitution of the subjective world: “For our part, we readily acknowledge the existence of a constituting consciousness” (36). He stops there, however, arguing that it does not follow that a transcendental ego operates within that constitution: “But we raise the following question: is not the psychic and psycho-physical *me* enough? Need one double it with a transcendental *I*, a structure of absolute consciousness” (36). With the transcendental ego as his focus of critique, Sartre attempts to illustrate not only that the *I* is not encountered in experience, but that it would in fact necessarily pose a limitation to consciousness.

Sartre considers that “the existence of the transcendental *I* may be justified by the need that consciousness has for unity and individuality. It is because all my perceptions and all my thoughts refer themselves back to this permanent seat that my consciousness is unified” (Sartre 37). Consciousness would thus be an emanation from a personal, ordering center, a center “whose rays (*Ichstrahlen*) would light upon each phenomenon presenting itself in the field of intention” (37). However, Sartre argues that the nature of consciousness is impersonal, perhaps even pre-personal; the interiority of consciousness is not personal because of any separate property but simply *is*: “the individuality of consciousness evidently stems from the nature of consciousness” (36-37, 39). Rather than an *I* producing the inward unity of consciousness, consciousness is unified by transcending itself in its intention of objects: “the object is transcendent to the consciousnesses which grasp it, and it is in the object that the unity of consciousness is found” (38).<sup>10</sup> Therefore, “the *I* can evidently be only an *expression* (rather than



a condition) of this...inwardness of consciousness” (39-40). Sartre’s definitive judgment on the relationship between consciousness and the transcendental *I* is thus an inversion of the very formula of causality he critiques: “It is consciousness, on the contrary, which makes possible the unity and the personality of my *I*. The transcendental *I*, therefore, has no *raison d’être*” (40).

One of the reasons Sartre defines as inherent to consciousness all those attributes once credited to the transcendental ego is what David Detmer describes as Sartre’s strict application to consciousness of the phenomenological reduction, or the process through which one suspends one’s “natural attitude” towards the world and confronts an object as directly as possible. “If we investigate the phenomena with sufficient care and patience, [Sartre] suggests, we will find that they are usually adequate to meet our explanatory needs, leaving us with no legitimate reason for extravagant extra-experiential posits” (Detmer 18). Sartre is not satisfied with hitherto theories of consciousness, and believes that it is by *reducing* explanations and concepts to those intrinsic to consciousness itself that we may best understand consciousness as in-the-world.

The important point here is that the positing of prior structures of consciousness not only limits philosophical knowledge of consciousness, but consciousness itself. As Sartre starkly puts it: “The transcendental *I* is the death of consciousness” (Sartre 40). What this dramatic proclamation means is that if one posits the *I* as an absolute structure of consciousness, “if one introduces this opacity into consciousness,” the active, creative, and free nature of consciousness is destroyed:

[...] one congeals consciousness, one darkens it. Consciousness is then no longer a spontaneity; it bears within itself the germ of opaqueness...consciousness has lost that character which rendered it the absolute existent *by virtue of non-existence*. It is heavy and *ponderable*. All the results of phenomenology begin to crumble if the *I* is not, by the same title as the world, a relative existent: that is to say, an object *for* consciousness. (40-42)

What Sartre means by the “non-existence” of consciousness is that consciousness *is action*, as opposed to an emanation from an *I*. “It remains therefore a ‘phenomenon’ in the very special sense in which ‘to be’ and ‘to appear’ are one” (42). Sartre therefore privileges a consciousness that is active, engaged in the world, and pre-personal.

The similarity between Sartre and Baudry thus begins to take shape in the form of the threat of *loss* with a resultant negative *gain*: for Sartre, if the notion of a transcendental ego as prior to and constituting of experience is maintained, the spontaneity and freedom of consciousness is lost and experience becomes thoroughly personal; for Baudry, if the relations between the technological components of the cinema are suppressed, knowledge cannot be constituted and an ideological structure of representation is imposed and maintained. In both cases, the transcendental, whether as “ego” or “subject,” is that which is responsible for the *loss* of either spontaneity or knowledge and the *gain* of erroneously personal experience and ideological value.

#### THE TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT AS THE MATERIAL EMBODIMENT OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL *I*

The transcendental subject is therefore a mobile transcendental consciousness, operating according to the laws of the transcendental *I* as portrayed by Sartre. It is a central location from which consciousness departs and to which consciousness returns. Baudry writes, “if the eye which moves is no longer fettered by a body, by the laws of matter and time, if there are no more assignable limits to its displacement...the world will not only be constituted by this eye but for it” (Baudry 43). The camera as transcendental subject thus operates through two precise functions: (a) the camera constitutes the world as a cinematic object according to the coordinates of the eye-subject as objectified in the mechanical base, and (b) the apparatus returns that world

as *for the subject*, that is, as an image outside of the material objectivity of the cinematic image itself. Like the transcendental ego, the “experience” of the camera as transcendental subject is one in which all its representations belong to it as a constituting, personal consciousness. Whether in shooting or projection, the “world” refers back to the eye-subject and the ideological *dispositif* it maintains. The material objectivity of the cinematic images, those images that exist prior to the effacement of their differences, are constituted by the ideology of the eye-subject in the interest of maintaining that subject’s legitimacy as an ordering principle of the world. Representation becomes, in Sartrean terms, “thoroughly personal.”

#### Intentionality

Baudry justifies this point by invoking the phenomenological concept of intentionality, which means simply that consciousness must always be consciousness *of something* (Baudry 43). For Baudry, in the cinema this *of something* must be meaning: “For [the cinematic image] to be an image of something, it has to constitute this something as meaning” (43). This emphasis on meaning and its relation to the transcendental subject is crucial to understanding Baudry’s use of phenomenology as an explanatory device for his theory. Allan Casebier, writing from a Husserlian perspective, states that, in the preceding quote, “[Baudry] must be contending that the image has the power to constitute a property of an object or give meaning to an object while at the same time being constituted itself by the operation of the cinematic apparatus...the image thereby has extraordinary powers” (Casebier 75). His refutation rests on the fact that “Husserl wants intentionality to work just the other way around;” that is, Husserl intends for “representation to guide our perception to its independently existing object” (75). This criticism is incorrect, however, for Baudry does not contend that the cinematic image inherently, or non-

arbitrarily, “has the power” to change an object or its meaning, but that the transcendental subject does not allow the cinematic image to operate in any other way.

### Unreflected, Reflecting, and Reflected Consciousness

How then does the transcendental subject allow the cinematic image to operate? For the answer we must again turn to Sartre. Against the transcendental ego, Sartre introduces and theorizes his privileged consciousness, “consciousness in the first degree, or *unreflected consciousness*” (Sartre 41). Unreflected consciousness is first of all self-aware: “the existence of consciousness is an absolute because consciousness is consciousness of itself” (40). This reflexivity is not the consequence of a transcendental *I*, but rather the very activity of consciousness: “consciousness is aware of itself *in so far as it is consciousness of a transcendent object*...this is the law of its existence” (41). Unreflected consciousness is not itself an object, as “the object is transcendent to the consciousnesses which grasp it, and it is in the object that the unity of consciousness is found” (38). Sartre therefore draws a duality between consciousness and the world of objects, in which consciousness is translucent and self-aware and the object is opaque and “ponderable.” Furthermore, while consciousness is aware of itself as-consciousness and through acts of consciousness, this self-consciousness is not *positional*—consciousness never posits itself as an object, for “its object is by nature outside of it” (42). A specific act of consciousness cannot leave itself in order to know itself, for its nature is to find its unity through those objects outside of itself.

However, while unreflected consciousness never posits itself as an object, it can take as its object another previous act of consciousness. Sartre demonstrates this hierarchy of consciousnesses through his close reading of the *Cogitio* and the Kantian “I think.” He begins with an admission: “It is undeniable that the *Cogito* is personal. In the *I think* there is an *I* who

thinks” (Sartre 43). Does it then follow that the *I* is present in all acts of consciousness? After all, “the *I think* is a condition of possibility” precisely because one is always able to perform a reflective act of consciousness in which an object is recollected “in the personal mode,” or with regards to a stabilizing *I* (43-44). However, Sartre points out that those philosophers who have written on the *Cogito* “have dealt with it as a reflective operation, that is to say, as an operation of the second degree” (44). In other words, they have always ascertained the certainty of consciousness and its experiences through recourse to a secondary act of consciousness.

This “secondary act” is itself another level of consciousness: reflecting consciousness. “Such a *Cogito*,” Sartre continues, “is performed by a consciousness *directed upon consciousness*, a consciousness which takes consciousness as an object” (Sartre 44). Reflecting consciousness takes a consciousness as its object; itself an unreflected consciousness, reflecting consciousness posits another consciousness as an object and turns the latter into a *reflected* consciousness. Thus the *I think* is not the affirmation of a singular consciousness at its temporal point of action, but rather “a synthesis of two consciousnesses, one of which is consciousness *of* the other” (44). This leads to Sartre’s provocation that “the consciousness which says *I Think* is precisely not the consciousness which thinks” (45).

It is through the reflecting consciousness that the *I* appears, since, for Sartre, unreflected consciousness is pre-personal, and its spontaneity ensures that no *I* is present in unreflected acts. To illustrate his point, Sartre uses the example of remembering “the circumstances of my reading” (Sartre 46). In order to recount the *particular conscious act of reading*, one must attempt to remember the act on the terms of the unreflected consciousness of the book, its words, and the conditions of their reading, “since the objects could have only been perceived *by* that consciousness and since they remain relative to it” (46). It is not a question of “James Driscoll

read these words,” but rather “there were words, there was reading, etc.” Other actions too involve no *I*: “When I run after a streetcar, when I look at the time, when I am absorbed in contemplating a portrait, there is no *I*. There is consciousness *of the streetcar-having-to-be-overtaken*, etc., and non-positional consciousness of consciousness” (49). Once viewed from the standpoint of a condensed personality, the actual reading, the actual chasing of the streetcar, as they existed as acts of consciousness, disappear. The crucial thing to remember, however, is that reflecting consciousness, since it is itself unreflected, retains the properties of “consciousness in the first degree:” spontaneity, non-opaqueness, translucency, and so on. Thus the posited, reflected consciousness of my reading, when taken by the reflecting consciousness, is structurally given as objective and *certain*.

The levels of consciousness can thus be summarized:

*Unreflected consciousness*: Consciousness of the first degree; primordial. Unreflected consciousness is non-positional; while self-aware, it does not take itself for an object. Transcends itself to objects and finds its unity in them. Spontaneous.

*Reflecting Consciousness*: An unreflected consciousness which takes as its object a prior consciousness. The prior consciousness taken as an object was itself unreflected and becomes *reflected* through the reflective consciousness.

*Reflected Consciousness*: An object for-consciousness. A reflected consciousness is a formerly unreflected consciousness which is taken as an object by a reflective consciousness.

And, to reiterate their basic interactions as concerns our purposes:

A *reflecting* consciousness, or a consciousness which takes as its object a previous *unreflected* consciousness, creates therefore a *reflected* consciousness, or a consciousness that is

thus objectified and made opaque. This objectification is responsible for the appearance of states, qualities, emotions, and so on.

This play between a translucent spontaneity and a static, posited objectivity is clearly operative in the transcendental subject. Applying these levels of consciousness to the apparatus, we see that the transcendental subject operates as a controlled reflecting consciousness. It depicts cinematic images that have already been pondered, considered, objectified, and then gives itself as intuiting them in the spontaneous, unreflected mode. Put in Baudry's vocabulary, the constituted image gives itself as constituting the very eye-subject through which it is ordered; in Sartrean terms, unreflected consciousness finds its unity in objects that have already been reflected before experience. The *I*, constituted by reflection, accompanies every representation.

This is what Baudry means when he says “the image seems to reflect the world but solely in the naïve inversion of a founding hierarchy,” this hierarchy expressed for Baudry in his quotation of Husserl: ““The domain of natural existence thus has only an authority of the second order, and always presupposes the domain of the transcendental”” (Baudry 43). While Casebier argues that Husserl intends this passage to separate a consciousness “adopting the natural standpoint” from the act of consciousness, Baudry's usage and interpretation of the quote are consistent with his own argument (Casebier 76). What Baudry means is this: the cinematic image presupposes the domain of “natural existence”—social, ideological life—as itself transcendental, as constitutive of that which imparts meaning in the cinema. The transcendental subject is relegated to a second order, despite the fact that it creates the conditions for any “natural” existence to be represented. Consequently the image is never allowed its own existence: the image must be *of something* before it *is something*, it must be reflected before it can be experienced in the unreflected mode—this is the naïveté of the apparatus image. It must refer to a

world outside of itself in order to be an image, in order to cohere as meaning; the ideological world always comes first.

Baudry argues further that by constituting the transcendental subject as a reflecting consciousness, the cinematic world is not one of unreflected spontaneity but one loaded with meaning to be elucidated by the ideal vision of the frame:

The world is no longer only an “open and unbounded horizon.” Limited by the framing, lined up, put at the proper distance, the world offers up an object endowed with meaning, an intentional object, implied by and implying the action of “the subject” which sights it. At the same time that the world’s transfer as image seems to accomplish this phenomenological reduction, this putting into parentheses of its real existence (a suspension necessary, we will see, to formation of the impression of reality) provides a basis for the apodicticity of the ego. (Baudry 43-44)

Casebier rejects this argument, emphasizing that by framing an object in the reduction, the object remains unchanged. This is of course a phenomenologically sound argument: “The object remains the same throughout the reduction: When we bracket, we put aside our natural standpoint assumptions and become aware of the manner of codetermination of the noema by subject and object” (Casebier 76). This leads Casebier to the conclusion that “it will not do for Baudry to try and make it look as if Husserl can justify putting aside the referent in analyzing cinematic representation” (76). Casebier contends that Baudry is confused over the term “real” in “this putting into parentheses of its real existence,” noting that Husserl simply means that during reduction we set aside our natural attitude towards the object and become aware of the role played by both subject and object in its psychic construction. For Casebier, it is unacceptable to argue that the “reality” of the world is altered by its framing in the cinema.

Keeping in mind that Baudry is not merely using phenomenology but challenging its apparent innocence, it must be insisted that Baudry references Husserl to arrive at an understanding of the *ideological subjectivity* of the eye-subject in its cinematic manifestation. He



is creating a conceptual subjectivity that he believes plays a structural role in the cinema; he is not attempting to contribute to the Husserlian philosophy of representation. This subjectivity is one in which the natural standpoint, or the associative world of ideology, is given as transcendental, as an effect of the erosion of the differences between individual images and the restored continuity of movement and narrative:

The search for such narrative continuity...can only be explained by an essential ideological stake projected in this point: it is a question of preserving at any cost the synthetic unity of the locus where meaning originates [the subject]—the constituting transcendental function to which narrative continuity points back as its natural secretion. (Baudry 44)

“Synthetic” possesses two meanings here: first, that of the artificial, the arbitrary, the *created*, and second, the synthesis of various elements. The “ideological stake” to which Baudry refers, then, is the preservation of a structural subjectivity, “the subject,” which gives itself as both prior to and constituted by the meaning it produces. Specific ideological meanings that are pinned to cinematic images arise from the demand of the apparatus that those images refer to the world ordered by the eye-subject and the arbitrary ordering principle it exercises on the non-representational world. The subject-as-camera shows a world which it constructs in its very operation but which is purported as merely the world’s reflection. While Casebier’s argument that “the objects represented by art exist independently of the intentional act of apprehending them” may be true according to his realist obligations, this argument ignores both the way in which those objects are relationally presented and the materiality of filmic images (Casebier 75). Concerning narrative cinema, the question is not whether the object depicted in the cinematic representation is changed by the image, an argument Casebier attributes to Baudry, but rather whether or not the cinematic image is an object *in its own right*.

## Two Identifications

After providing a comparison between the film screen and the mirror, Baudry writes that “the ‘reality’ mimed by the cinema is thus first of all that of a ‘self.’ But, because the reflected image is not that of the body itself but that of a world already given as meaning, one can distinguish two levels of identification” (Baudry 45). The first level is that of the content of the narrative film, “the character portrayed as center of secondary identifications, carrying an identity which constantly must be seized and reestablished” (45).<sup>11</sup> The second level, which “permits the appearance of the first and places it ‘in action’...is the transcendental subject whose place is taken by the camera which constitutes and rules the objects in this ‘world’” (45). This leads Baudry to the conclusion that

the spectator identifies less with what is represented, the spectacle itself, than with what stages the spectacle, makes it seen, obliging him to see what it sees...just as the mirror assembles the fragmented body in a sort of imaginary integration of the self, the transcendental self unites the discontinuous fragments of phenomena, of lived experience, into unifying meaning. (46)

Let us first examine the notion that the cinema “mimes” a reality that is “first of all as that of a self.” Because Baudry utilizes Lacan’s mirror phase in this final section of the text, this notion of a “self” is problematic in that phenomenological and psychoanalytic selves are juxtaposed without a clear purpose. What is this self? Joan Copjec points out that in apparatus theory there is a certain ambiguity to the notion of the screen projecting a “self:” “it can refer either to an image *of* the subject or an image *belonging to* a subject” (Copjec, *RD* 21). Copjec then notes that “both references are intended by film theory” and, reiterating a common indictment of apparatus theory, argues that it matters not “whether that which is represented is specularized as an image of the subject's own body or as the subject's image of someone or something else;” it is overall a question of mastery and satisfaction: “it is this aspect that allows

the subject to see in any representation not only a reflection of itself but a reflection of itself as master of all it surveys;” “the subject is satisfied that it has been adequately reflected on the screen” (21-22).

Copjec’s Lacanian obligations commit her to the idea of the split subject; her reference to, and critique of the “masterful self” is rooted in Lacan’s split between the eye and the gaze, a split which deprives the subject of visual mastery over desire. Her issue with apparatus theory therefore is that the apparatus always succeeds; despite the fact that the spectator, the subject, is split, ideological cohesion tautologically reproduces itself by simply representing the theoretical apparatus-spectator with a cohesive vision of a “self” with which to identify. This is at odds with the Lacanian necessity that subject is in fact the very site of failure in all registers, whether they be of language or imaginary identification. This objection finds agreement in the practice of Structuralist/Materialist film, in which the failure of meaning is advocated and sought after, and we will expand up that practice below. However, we must reiterate that we are departing here from Sartre, not Lacan; the apparatus is not a concept at odds with the split subject, but rather a structural reproduction aimed at limiting the authentic, spontaneous, and creative consciousness of the phenomenological subject. Immersion is real despite the existence of the psychoanalytic subject. If filmic sense founds the subject apparatus, as Copjec argues, it is filmic sense that *does not have to be this way but is*.

#### First Level of Identification: the I

The first level of identification, that of characters, situations, ideas, *meaning*, is, in Sartrean terms, that of the transcendental ego. It is the *I*, constituted by the reflecting acts of the transcendental subject, to which cinematic representations adhere. Sartre notes that “the ego is the unity of states and actions...it is *a transcendent pole of synthetic unity*, like the object-pole of

unreflected attitude, except that this pole appears solely in the world of reflection” (Sartre 61, emphasis mine). While I do not intend a play on the word “reflection,” which is a key term for Baudry’s conception of “the screen mirror,” I do intend to show that what plays out on the screen in Baudry’s apparatus is entirely on the realm of reflection *in the Sartrean sense*. Just as Baudry emphasizes the synthetic nature of representation as created by the transcendental subject, where disparate images are cohered to create meaning outside themselves as-images, so does Sartre emphasize the ego as a synthetic unity of disparate consciousnesses in relation to transcendent objects outside themselves as-consciousnesses.

One of these objects is the *state*, or a static entity that seemingly colors psychic experience from the pre-experiential location of the transcendental ego. States are apprehended *through* a reflecting consciousness—an unreflected consciousness which takes as its object another unreflected consciousness—and are themselves transcendent objects (Sartre 61).<sup>12</sup> The example Sartre uses to explain the state is hatred. Sartre imagines that he feels a “profound convulsion of repugnance and anger” when faced with another person (62). “The convulsion is consciousness,” Sartre maintains; “I cannot be mistaken when I say: I feel at this moment a violent repugnance for Peter” (62). However, for Sartre, this experience itself is not *hatred*, for this hatred of Peter has existed before this spontaneous experience and, so Sartre thinks, will exist in the future: “An instantaneous consciousness of repugnance could not, then, be my hatred” (62). In fact, Sartre goes so far as to say that if restricted to the absolute instantaneity of the feeling, he would only be allowed to say “I feel a repugnance for Peter at the moment,” from which, by virtue of setting aside either past or future encounters, it follows that “I would cease to hate” (62).

Hatred ceases in this manner because “hatred is a *state*,” as opposed to both the consciousness experiencing the repugnance for Peter, and the reflecting consciousness which takes that consciousness as its object, hatred is given as “affirming its permanence” (Sartre 66, 63). Whereas for Sartre consciousness is by nature both *to be* and *to appear*, hatred is pure being, “since it gives itself as continuing *to be* even when I am absorbed in other occupations and no consciousness reveals it” (63). This leads Sartre to posit that “hatred, then, is a transcendent object” (63). States are therefore inert, passive, and transcendent objects which are not *of* consciousness but rather apprehended *in* or *through* consciousness: “Hatred is credit for an infinity of angry or repulsed consciousnesses in the past and in the future” (63). It is therefore an error to impute to any unreflected consciousness the character of hatred.

States receive the most attention from Sartre in *TOE* and are of most importance to our purposes. However, states exist in regards to their unity with actions and at times qualities, a unity found, again, in the ego. Regarding actions, Sartre makes no distinction as to the transcendent quality of either physical or psychological actions (Sartre 68-69). An action is the reflected “unity of the active consciousnesses” which comprise it (69). The quality, on the other hand, is “optional,” and “can exist [as] an intermediary between actions and states” (70). The quality, like the state and the action, is transcendent, and “represents a substratum of the states” (70). Qualities are a set of potentials which find expression, or “actuality,” through the state. Whereas the state of hatred continues to exist “in the absence of any feeling of hatred,” a certain nuance to the state of hatred, such as spite, “remains a potentiality” (71). And while “potentiality is not mere possibility” and “presents itself as something which really exists,” it only ever exists in full, or in “potency” (71). Sartre concludes that on the subject of qualities, “the influence of preconceived ideas and of social factors is here preponderant” (71).

While the relation between these aspects of the ego, as well as the ego's construction, will be examined in the next chapter concerning the more-than-real, it does now to say that the ego is the site in which the personal meaning of spontaneous acts is formed and pondered. Keeping in mind that the transcendental subject is a reflecting consciousness, and that it is through reflecting consciousness that we have access to states, actions, and qualities, the first level of identification, that of representational meaning, is itself concerned with the relation between states, actions, and qualities. It is both their inter-relations and their unified relation with the transcendental subject that forms the site upon which ideological meaning is inscribed.

Sartre concedes that “we readily acknowledge that the relation of the hatred to the particular *Erlebnis* of repugnance is not logical. It is a magical bond, assuredly. But we have aimed only at describing” (Sartre 68). However, we will see that, in the apparatus, the illogical relations between the state, the consciousness through which the state is glimpsed, and the reflecting consciousness which posits the former consciousness as its object, are structural. The first level of identification in the apparatus is thus comprised of tensions inherent to the constitution of the Sartrean ego, in which states, actions, and qualities are all unified and given as *meaning*, or what we shall later call a *state-of-meaning*. This is possible, “permitted,” by the second, primordial level of identification: the conflation of unreflected, reflected, and reflecting consciousness.

#### Second Level of Identification: Reflecting, Reflection, Unreflected

We begin to elaborate this constitution by returning to the following quote: “Just as the mirror assembles the fragmented body in a sort of imaginary integration of the self, the transcendental self unites the discontinuous fragments of phenomena, of lived experience, into unifying meaning” (Baudry 46). While this is of course a comparison between Lacan's mirror

stage and the constituting action of the transcendental subject, we may apply Sartrean philosophy to the second half of this sentence without any loss of argumentative coherence. Allow “the discontinuous fragments of phenomena, of lived experience” to be unreflected consciousnesses, or consciousnesses unified by the objects which they grasp. Since unreflected consciousness is by nature spontaneous, “lived experience” is thus the pre-personal transcendental field in which these “discontinuous fragments” appear. As Sartre shows, states find expression through these unreflected consciousnesses *but are not* these unreflected consciousnesses; they are rather the unity of any number of unreflected consciousnesses, which only appears at the *reflective level*. Thus my feeling of disgust when near Peter is a spontaneous consciousness which I cannot doubt: it is “lived experience;” it is only when I, on the reflective level, posit the previous consciousness as an object to be *explained*, that I produce the unity of the consciousness of disgust as emanating from some being called *hatred*. This is the “unifying meaning” I attribute to a consciousness that in the last instance is spontaneous and without any meaning outside of its temporal existence.

We see, then, that the apparatus *utilizes* this operation of reflection and *implements* it: as opposed to Sartre’s structural necessity that the *I*, the ego, is never actually present in unreflected experience, the constitution of the ego of the apparatus occurs in the opposite way: in the apparatus, the ego is *always* present in unreflected experience. The “unifying meaning” is always given at the same instance as the unreflected act (reflecting consciousness is itself unreflected) of the transcendental subject. This is why the transcendental subject confusedly appears as constituting and constituted by the apparatus; it is both at once. The transcendental subject is a reflecting consciousness which necessarily produces a reflected consciousness; all acts of

consciousness are already imbued with meaning as concerns a central location of identity: its very ideological charge is that such reflecting consciousnesses are also given as unreflected.

### Definition

The secondary, anterior level of identification, then, is with a structural consciousness, embodied by the camera, which permits such an ever-presence of the ego (pre-determined unity of meaning) in representation. We may thus at this point define the transcendental subject as such: the transcendental subject is the formal imposition of an unreflected and reflecting consciousness which always constitutes an ego through its representations. The confusion surrounding the eye-subject, that it is both constituting and constituted, is produced by the second level of identification: the subject and object are produced simultaneously by a central locale.

We must throughout all this keep in mind that Sartre, unlike Baudry, is not describing what he views as a nefarious ideological process, and even concedes a possible necessity to the ego:

Perhaps, in reality, the essential function of the ego is not so much theoretical but practical....perhaps the essential role of the ego is to mask from consciousness its very spontaneity. A phenomenological description of spontaneity would show, indeed, that spontaneity renders impossible any distinction between action and passion, or any conception of an autonomy of the will. *These notions have meaning only on a level where all activity is given as emanating from a passivity which it transcends; in short, on a level at which man considers himself as at once subject and object.* (Sartre 100-101, emphasis mine)

Therefore the explanatory potential of spontaneous consciousnesses is only found through the ego, or the unity produced by reflective acts which consider consciousnesses as objects. The problem, again, is whether or not the ego is *constitutive* of experience: in Sartre, it is not; in the apparatus, it is. Therefore while the ego may be “practical” for Sartre, Baudry argues that, in the



apparatus, “everything happens as if, the subject himself being unable—and for a reason—to account for his own situation, it was necessary to substitute secondary organs, grafted on to replace his own defective ones, instruments or ideological formations capable of fulfilling his role as subject” (Baudry 46). Therefore the institution of the ego as constitutive of cinematic representation is only practical if by practical we mean ideological—it is *implemented* by the technological simulation of an unreflected, reflecting consciousness, not by a reflecting consciousness of the life-world. Sartre’s philosophical deliberation on the ego and its relation to the experience and meaning of consciousness is actualized as ideological conflict in Baudry’s theory of the transcendental subject.

While we here begin to approach the spectator, we shall relegate any sustained deliberation on the matter to the next chapter. However, as we have defined the transcendental subject in strict Sartrean terms, one final interpretation of Baudry’s words will help further clarify the stakes. Baudry argues that “disturbing cinematic elements,” or those elements which seem to arise from areas elsewhere than the narrative (the foregrounding of “the cinematic,” in technological/materialist terms), produce a jarring effect: “Both specular tranquility and the assurance of one’s own identity collapse simultaneously with the revealing of the mechanism, that is of the inscription of the film-work” (Baudry 46).

In “The Legacy of Brechtianism” (included in *Post-Theory*), Murray Smith compares the work of Baudry to Brecht (the latter being a common invocation of “post-structuralist” film theory, especially British “*Screen theory*”) for a “further index of the incompatibility of Brecht and Post-Structuralism” (Smith 146). Invoking the above argument by Baudry that when (a) the film-work is repressed, ideological surplus value is created and (b) when the film-work is exposed, the identity of the spectator “collapses,” Smith argues that Baudry’s conclusions are at

odds with the Brechtian collapse of the Fourth Wall: “For Brecht, revealing this work can result in a more critical spectator; for Baudry, the spectator’s identity ‘collapses.’ Of course, it is far from clear what the nature of this collapse is; but it seems very distant from Brecht’s confident, cigar-smoking, rational spectator” (147).

A reply to Murray’s charge of the “far from clear nature” of this collapsing identity serves as a convenient transition to the more-than-real and its relation to the spectator. By exposing the imposed reflection of the apparatus, the support of the apparatus ego, the collapses. The “identity” that collapses is first the ego of the apparatus and, consequently and potentially, the spectator’s ego, who is faced with himself as an unreflected consciousness in a world of objects, or cinematic images which are simply as they are, rather than being *of something* in an already meaningful sense. One of the main arguments of Structuralist/Materialist film is that narrative cinema, in all its forms, necessarily reproduces visual relations which reify not only ideological norms in visual culture but those held by the spectator him- or herself. The purpose of radical filmmaking, then, is to both produce and dismantle these identities and identifications within the temporal projection time of the film. Baudry is up to something similar here, and the comparison is clearly lost on Smith. It is not that the apparatus and its construction can simply be ameliorated, or elided, through exposure of the film-ness of a film; it is simply that in such exposure, a dialectic is enacted. Through this dialectic the relation of the spectator to the transcendental subject is not eradicated, but *problematized*.

## CHAPTER 2: THE MORE-THAN-REAL

One of the major difficulties of connecting Baudry's work across his two most influential essays, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" ("IE") and "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema" ("The Apparatus"), is the difference in their source material and methodology. If a certain commitment remains the same—the exposure of the ideological nature of *both* cinema technology/spectatorship and the philosophical tradition from which they emanate—the aim and content of each article nevertheless differ in key ways. "IE," with its investigation into the philosophical and ideological consequences of film technology, is still very much concerned with the phenomenology of classical Bazinian film theory and criticism. Its interest in psychoanalysis is brief, rudimentary, and, consequently, largely compatible with Sartrean duality. Furthermore, while the essay is prescriptive in certain sections, it still maintains a somewhat descriptive feel; the essay is rhetorically intended as the nascent, humble notes of an ongoing study.

"The Apparatus," on the other hand, attempts two ambitious goals. First, the essay is a much more explicit attempt at a psychoanalytic explanation of cinematic reality and its relation to spectatorship. Baudry applies psychoanalytic theories of dream to the experience of film spectatorship, crafting a theory of cinematic reality that culminates in a complicated schema involving the preconscious, conscious, and unconscious systems (Baudry 122).<sup>1</sup> Secondly, and perhaps more cavalier, Baudry argues for a representational teleology historically operative throughout Platonic philosophy, the psychology of dream, and cinema. Considering Plato's cave allegory from an analytic perspective stressing desire and wish fulfillment,<sup>2</sup> Baudry writes that "we can thus propose that the allegory of the cave is the text of a signifier of desire which haunts

the invention of cinema and the history of its invention” (112). In other words, along with a metapsychological study of the impression of reality, Baudry wants to expose a related but independent narrative inherent to cinema: the culmination of a certain human desire as expressed through philosophy, dream, and technology.

## THE “INHIBITION ANALOGY:” PLATO, DREAM, AND THE MORE-THAN-REAL

### The Cave

The origins of this desire dwell firstly within Plato’s cave, where prisoners are chained to a wall and given to contemplate representations produced by unseen manipulators of light and shadow. “In Plato,” writes Baudry, “something haunts the subject; something belabours him and determines his condition;” this “something” is representational deception: “Plato’s prisoner is the victim of an illusion of reality, that is, precisely what is known as an hallucination, if one is awake, as a dream, if asleep; he is the prey of an impression, of an impression of reality” (Baudry 107). Such disparity between truth and illusion is common to Plato and the idealist tradition; proximity, transparency, and their relation to truth are of central concern to idealism. That the subject in Plato is haunted by an interference with the immediacy of reality is not surprising. What is surprising to Baudry is that, in order to make his point, Plato constructs an allegory that “quite precisely describes in its mode of operation the cinematographic apparatus and the spectator’s place in relation to it” (107).

One of these modes of operation is the way in which the “forced immobility” of the prisoners influences their belief in the reality of the representations. Obviously their enforced inertia prevents them from investigating the apparatus producing the forms before them; they are literally incapable of looking behind them, towards the light source and the operator of the apparatus, and consequently remain unaware of the illusion to which they are prey. What is

crucial for Baudry, however, is Plato's argument that even if the prisoners were to learn of the outside world and implored to free themselves of both immobility and illusion, "they would prefer to stay where they are and to perpetuate this immobility rather than leave" (Baudry 108). For Baudry, "the prisoner's shackles correspond to an actual reality in the individual's evolution;" their desire to remain seated where they are, in relation to the illusion moving before them, therefore represents a benchmark in the historical relationship between the subject and representation (108). That relationship has apparently evolved into a modern cinematic manifestation, as Baudry notes that "the spectator's immobility is characteristic of the filmic apparatus as a whole," and concludes that immobility could therefore be thought of as "a necessary if not sufficient condition" for the prisoners' belief in the impression of reality of the cave and, in the present, the spectator's belief in cinematic reality (108).

A film example that nicely illustrates the relationship between forced immobility and the impression of reality is the administration of the Ludivico technique to Alexander DeLarge (Malcolm McDowell) in *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). To begin with, Alex is straight-jacketed in his theater chair and his eyes are held open by clamps. Behind him sit Dr. Brodsky (Carl Duering), Dr. Branom (Madge Ryan), and other various physicians; they are, like those unseen operators of Plato's apparatus, the guardians of representation and its potential for conditioning. That Alex sits in a large cinema theater, and not a clearly denoted hospital operating theater, is of note here: the didactic intent of the technique is foregrounded as directly related to the cinematic situation in itself. Plumes of light and smoke emanate from behind the doctors, imparting a mystical connotation to both the apparatus and the representations it produces; the success of the Ludivico technique, the relationship between the representations and their production, remains *hidden by its very presentation as a technique*—one thinks here of the Minister's (Anthony

Sharp) proclamation, “The point is that it works!” Finally, as the dream-like representations unfold before Alex’s imprisoned eye (which is denoted as the eye-subject of the technique), Alex muses with fascination that “it’s funny how the colors of the world only seem really real when you viddy them on the screen.”

It is this last sentiment, this notion of a “really real,” that is the focus of this chapter. The comparison between Plato and cinema is the first component of what Noël Carroll calls Baudry’s “inhibition analogy;” the cinemagoer is, like Plato’s prisoners, inert in his or her seat, and therefore prey to illusion. As we have seen, this analogy finds itself aptly expressed by *A Clockwork Orange*, in that representation possesses the power to shape the human subject’s relationship with reality, provided there exist sufficient conditions of bodily immobility. However, in terms of my overall project, the first analogy can only be so relevant; since we are concerned with questions of consciousness and the philosophical and representational definitions of reality, the literal inhibition of the corporeal body is of considerably reduced concern. Therefore, we shall now turn our focus to the second “inhibition analogy,” or the relation between the dreamer and the spectator. It is my argument that Alex’s revelation that cinema imparts reality with its real-ness, that cinema is “really real,” does not require a mystical forced immobility for its validity.

### Psychoanalysis and Dream

In *The Language of Psycho-analysis*, J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis define “the reality principle” as “one of the two principles which for Freud govern mental functioning” (Laplanche and Pontalis 379). They continue:

As a regulatory principle of mental functioning, the reality principle emerges secondarily, modifying the pleasure principle which has been dominant up to this point; its establishment goes hand in hand with a whole series of adaptations which the psychical apparatus has to undergo: the development of conscious functions—attention, judgment,

memory; the replacement of motor discharge by an action aimed an appropriate transformation of reality; the beginnings of thought... (380).

The reality principle is thus a system of psychic organization that produces human subjects assimilable to civilized society, which concomitantly produces the compartmentalization of satisfaction, phantasmatic relations, the unconscious, and so on. The reality principle is then governed by the reality test, or the “process postulated by Freud which allows the subject to distinguish stimuli originating in the outside world from internal ones” in the interest of preventing a subject from taking hallucinatory reality (personal, subjective, phantasmatic) as external reality (societal, subjective relation to objectivity) (382). Dream, one could say, is the desire to experience the hallucination foreclosed by the reality principle, in the form of mental representation, as though that experience had actually passed the scrutiny of the reality test.

The second component of the inhibition analogy is the comparison made by Baudry between this psychoanalytic account of dream and cinema. Following Freud, Baudry maintains that dream is a regressive confusion of perception—that is, registered action or communication understood as external to one’s being—and unconscious representation, for the sake of fulfilling a certain desire: “Dream is ‘an hallucinatory psychosis of desire’—i.e. a state in which mental perceptions are taken for perceptions of reality” (Baudry 115). The difference between these “mental perceptions,” or dream-representations, and reality, is, again, held in place by the reality test, which is dependent on motoricity and the perception of an action, and therefore an agency, external to oneself (115). The elimination of motoricity in sleep therefore provides conditions for regression, in which representational fantasies (“mental perception”) are not impeded by the reality test and possess the charge of existential reality (“perceptions of reality” as regulated by the reality test) (115). In dream, the “content of thought” in the waking life-world undergoes a hallucinatory transformation into “a phantasy of desire” which is then manifested “as a sensory

perception” (115). Such regression provides “a kind of satisfaction which we knew at the beginning of our psychical life,” when the separation between perception and representation, with its consequent establishment of presence and absence, had not yet been enforced (115). The primordial desire of dream, put succinctly, is the elimination of the reality test in order to return to a certain state of satisfaction mythologized in infancy.

Baudry connects this regressive desire and cinema by appealing to analyst Bertram D. Lewin’s theory of the “dream screen,” which explains both why and how the representations of dream are formally displayed within a regressive apparatus. During infancy, the child cannot discern itself as separate from its immediate surroundings, namely its mother’s breast. Consciousness, being, and representation have not yet been separated by external intervention. Their enforced separation via the reality principle prompts the desire to return to this state, since only through the absence of its unity does the infant notice its presence.<sup>3</sup> This separation is prior to, and more fundamental than, the misrecognition of the mirror phase; if the latter involves the foundation of the spectral ego, the former is a primordial, requisite division (Baudry 117). The dream wish is therefore a yearning to return to a state devoid of a differentiated consciousness, ego, or subject.

Such a fathomed presence, however, can never be experienced in full; consequently, this wish is sentenced to repetitive failure, enabling hallucination as a partial satisfaction (Baudry 115). The breast therefore becomes the hallucinated screen upon which dreams are projected, since it is the cathected site of the loss of pre-principled fullness.<sup>4</sup> Resultantly, dream offers the subject a regressive state characterized by a “lack of distinction between representation and perception...which makes for our belief in the reality of the dream” (117). Divisions inherent to waking subjectivity vanish, and the dream, with its confused distinctions, produces a “specific



reality that reality does not impart, but which is provoked by hallucination: a more-than-real that dream precisely considered as an apparatus and as repetition of a particular state... would be able to bring ” (118). Therefore, the more-than-real in dream is a representational density in which the difference between waking perception (the life-world) and unconscious representation dissolves, affording representation the felt status of an external, temporally irreversible reality without the impediment of a differentiated subject.<sup>5</sup>

### The Cinema as Dream

The impression of reality of cinema also involves a series of seemingly unmediated (the “screen” of the dream or the cinema is effaced, repressed, in the dream-work or cinema-work) representations taken for perceptions in a seamless relay. As Baudry puts it, “there is no doubt that in dealing with images, and the unfolding of images, the rhythm of vision and movement, are imposed on him in the same way as images in dream and hallucination” (Baudry 120). Just as dream requires certain conditions for its own impression of reality, such as lack of motoricity, a self-effacing screen, and a desire for a certain (non)subjectivity, so too does cinema replicate such conditions. For Baudry, “the darkness of the movie theater, the relative passivity of the situation, the forced immobility of the cine-subject” all work to foster precisely the kind of simulation chamber needed to “bring about a state of artificial regression” (119). Emphasizing “the partial elimination of the reality test,” Baudry insists that the cinema spectator, like Freud and Lacan’s dreamer, is one who is *shown*, one lacking the ability for intervention: “no more than in dream does he have means to act in any way upon the object of his perception, change his viewpoint as he would like” (120).

## Carroll's Objections

Carroll objects to the "inhibition analogy" on pragmatic grounds: Baudry's spectator could, at any moment, get up and leave the theater for a cigarette; he or she could stand up in the back row and pace, perhaps due to the suspense of the narrative or a cramp caused by sitting; conversation between two spectators as to the repugnancy of a certain character is not only possible but common; and *all this occurs without any loss of narrative immersion* (Carroll, *MM* 22-23). The representations of cinema are seen by conscious, wakeful subjects capable of spontaneous movement. As Carroll rightly points out, "a key reason [for Baudry to compare spectatorship to infancy and dream] is that in those cases the lack of mobility, for different reasons, is involuntary. However, no matter how sedentary our film viewing is, we are not involuntary prisoners in our seats" (22). The spectator is neither a sleeper trapped within a REM cycle nor an infant acclimating to the reality principle while feeding. After conceding that the inhibition analogy is intended as metaphorical, Carroll asks "why should a correlation between [Baudry's] metaphorical description of the film viewer and the literal motor inhibition of the sleeper count as anything more than an entertaining but fanciful piece of equivocation" (23-24). In other words, why should an article based on an easily repudiated analogy be a point of departure for a theory of cinematic reality?

Such criticism isolates a stake of this antagonism between Baudry and Carroll: does the very viewing of film retain any sort of structurally altered relation with non-cinematic reality regardless of the refutation of Baudry's analogies and metaphors? Attempting a logical negation, Carroll argues that "Baudry connects the putative impression of reality imparted by film to inhibited motoricity. Given this, one would predict that that impression would not occur if the spectator watched while also moving voluntarily" (Carroll, *MM* 23). This argument is sound;

given the emphasis Baudry places on motoricity and its absence as the corporeal facilitation of dream, the truth of the spectator's viewing situation (he or she literally can move, literally is reflexively aware) could ostensibly negate his theory of the more-than-real. However, from a psychoanalytic perspective, reality-testing can still be eliminated in the life-world. According to Laplace and Pontalis,

Once a hallucinatory state or dream-state holds sway there is no 'test' that can counter it. So even in cases where reality-testing should theoretically be equipped to play a discriminatory role it is apparently ineffectual in practice from the start (*hence the uselessness of recourse to motor action by the hallucinating subject as a way of distinguishing between subjective and objective*). (Laplace and Pontalis 384, emphasis mine)

Therefore the literal ability of the spectator to move does not negate Baudry's comparison between dream and cinema; the phantasmatic blurring between subject and object may continue to subsist in movement. If one takes (and one easily could) Baudry's "artificial regression" as the imposing "sway" of hallucination, Carroll's argument, in its seeming obviousness, becomes simply narrow. What Laplanche's and Pontalis' remarks help make clear is that this blurring between subjective and objective, as produced specifically by the apparatus, satisfies the desire that "consists in obtaining from reality a position, a condition in which what is perceived would no longer distinguished from representations" (Baudry 121).

## RETURN TO THE TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT

### Reality Testing

It is the question of such a position, a position from which can be achieved and in which can be experienced the more-than-real, that returns us to the transcendental subject. Baudry states plainly that "the impression of reality is dependent first of all on a subject-effect," and that "in order to explain the cinema-effect," one must consider what sort of subject both requires and is required by the apparatus (Baudry 119). This is my precise point of departure concerning the

impression of reality and the more-than-real: I do not believe that the more-than-real is required, for its continued theorization, to constantly answer to the question of “actual spectators,” as though it were an innocently impenetrable objection to both the “inhibition analogy” and the work built upon that analogy. Carroll’s *a fortiori* reasoning is not the end of apparatus theory. The continual work on the theory of the apparatus, both in terms of subject and reality-effect, is not a denial of the existence of human spectators at the behest of analogy, but an attempt to understand the structural continuities inherent to a specific theory of cinematic experience.

Those continuities exist in the relations between the transcendental subject, with its unreflected and reflected levels of consciousness, and the more-than-real, with its conceptual separation between perception and representation. The reality test, whether non-operative in dream or partially operative in cinema is, for our purposes, a matter of the controlled interaction between different levels of consciousness and representation. Carroll notes that while “Baudry also connects lack of reality testing with the inhibition of movement,” what Baudry really refers to is not literal reality testing but the notion that “the viewer lacks the ability to test reality within the world of the film” (Carroll, *MM* 24). What Carroll seems to mean by this is that Baudry makes a judgment on the inability of the viewer to interact with the pro-filmic, or the world as it exists prior to its filmic inscription. Because the viewing subject cannot perceive the external reality of the pro-filmic, the more-than-real intervenes, preventing some type of true engagement. Carroll points to specific instances in which in fact “there are... means to test the veracity of our experience of films,” concluding that “it seems to me inappropriate to describe the film viewer as lacking the means for testing reality” (25).

Carroll’s literalism fails to account for the complexity of cinematic reality testing, a complexity that in fact has been noted by post-structuralist theory and criticism. Pascal Bonitzer,

a prominent critic and theorist during *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s most political and theoretical period (and who thus, while a critic of Baudry's work, nevertheless exists within the same theoretical trajectory), explains the way in which film spectatorship involves a dialectic of avowal and disavowal of both the reality of the pro-filmic and its resultant representation. Bonitzer states that "we never succumb absolutely, hypnotically, to the 'reality' of cinema," and discusses how film spectatorship involves a reflexive awareness and forgetting of the filmic-ness of the film, which produces bouts of belief and disbelief in the truth and falsity of the cinematic image (Bonitzer 291-293). Even in the critical, theoretical viewing of cinema is involved an awareness of its cinema-ness *as well as* an acceding to the very "fictive depth" involved in viewing: "the critical viewing of cinema emerges as a dissociation from the filmic object; it analyzes while continuing to 'live' the fiction—a cleavage of the subject. Thus we often find ourselves trying to work out how a trick effect was achieved while at the same time being taken in by it" (291).

"Automatic Ideological Action," Back to Sartre

All this is to say that whereas Carroll in his objections focuses on the *content* of the film, or the pro-filmic and its representation, Baudry and apparatus theory are concerned with the *form or structure* through which any such content may be intended. It is not that the pro-filmic is foreclosed by the film-work, but that the apparatus is the suspension of reality within reality. As Baudry asks, "And is it not rather the apparatus, the cinematographic *process* itself than the content of images—that is, the film—which is under scrutiny here" (Baudry 106, my emphasis). Again, what apparatus theory is most fundamentally concerned with is consciousness. It is the theorization of a *formal process of interaction* between both a subject and its replication. The following remark by Bonitzer helps further orient things:

The automatic ideological action which inaugurates our viewing of a film, our experience of the projection, is to invest the *surface* of the screen with a fictive *depth*. This depth

denotes the reality within the fiction, the reality of the fiction. This ideological engagement is more imperative in the cinema than in any other signifying operation. It is what we call “the impression of reality.” (Bonitzer 291)

It is this “automatic ideological action,” or the structural “ideological engagement” of the transcendental subject with cinematic reality—or more specifically, the more-than-real—that is at stake here. To speak of an “automatic ideological action which inaugurates our viewing of a film” is to speak of a process that requires both a subject and an object working in tandem. If the impression of reality is “automatic,” if the impression of reality is, as Baudry says, dependent on a subject-effect, then the impression of reality must be theorized in terms of a subject that both *requires* and *is required by* that impression.

#### THE MORE-THAN-REAL

What follows is a structural schema that explains the production of the more-than-real as it occurs through the action of the transcendental subject. It is my aim to illustrate that the simultaneous interaction between the levels of consciousness comprising the Sartrean subject—unreflected, reflecting, and reflected consciousness—is a complement to Baudry’s interactive conflation of perceptions and representations in dream and cinema. It is by conflating these levels of consciousness that the apparatus is able to produce an impression of reality that reality itself does not impart. An introductory summary of this schema looks like this: on the unreflected level of the transcendental subject, the impression of reality gives itself as an irreversible representation of the unreflected “world of objects.” On the reflective level, these representations find themselves immediately emanating from a static, stable ideological base that immediately imparts those representations, spontaneous as they are, with ideological/epistemological value. This ideological base is the Sartrean ego, or the “opaque object” which is wrongly credited for the imparting of states onto the objects intended at the unreflected level. The Sartrean ego is, in a

sense, behind the cinema screen. Finally, it is the unreflected consciousness of the *spectator*, in front of the screen, that completes the “automatic ideological action” of the more-than-real.

### The Constitution of the Ego

Returning to the “partial elimination of the reality test,” let us recall Baudry’s comment that “the subject has always the choice to close his eyes, to withdraw from the spectacle, but no more than in dream does he have means to act in any way upon the object of his perception, change his viewpoint as he would like” (Baudry 120). Since we are dealing with an *impression* of reality, it is crucial to insist that this partial elimination produces a *semblance*, a *seeming* inability to act on the representations. Again, Carroll concedes metaphor in Baudry’s descriptions; his objections are not completely borne of literalism. His issue, rather, is whether or not Baudry adequately describes a structure that definitively produces this prohibitive semblance. From the perspective of Sartrean terminology, Baudry’s assertion is sound: that the spectator cannot effect the object that is the film is to denote the film as an opaque in-itself, to which the spectator can only transcend to and intend on its own objective terms. The film and its ideological constitution remain unchanged. The drama of Baudry’s argument, then, is that the “unfolding of images,” and their ideological connotations, appear as irreversible and inevitable (120). Apparatus cinema requires a subject that (a) intuits cinematic reality as a stream of spontaneous objects in a way similar to the life-world but (b) cannot change that which it experiences as a representational object imbued with sedimented meaning. While this obviously calls to mind the distinction between perception and representation inherent to the reality test, Baudry also raises the problem of spontaneity and inertia in relation to consciousness.

As we have shown in Chapter One, Sartre’s early work is also explicitly concerned with the relations between the spontaneous and the static as regards consciousness. Let us at once

reintroduce the levels of consciousness defined by Sartre in *TOE*. The first level of consciousness is *unreflected consciousness*. This consciousness is the primordial consciousness of the life-world. It is first of all defined by its spontaneity; unreflected consciousness is that consciousness which intuits the irreversible temporality of life, as it unfolds as a series of objects through which unreflected consciousness finds its unity. Secondly, unreflected consciousness cannot be made objective by itself; to know itself as unreflected is a property of its existence, rendering objectification on this level unnecessary and impossible. When an unreflected consciousness is taken as an object, is done so by a *reflecting consciousness*. Reflecting consciousness is itself unreflected, spontaneous, but has the added property of taking for its object a previously unreflected consciousness. That now-objectified unreflected consciousness then becomes a *reflected consciousness*.

Again, the example of hatred helps clear up the interactions between these levels of consciousness. For Sartre, in any given interaction with an object, those states and qualities which help to color that object are somehow given as automatic; the states that inhere during these interactions, such as hatred, are expressed through the object, and the relation between the two seem resolute, opaque, and beyond change. However, according to Sartre, spontaneous disgust for something or someone is simply a temporal act of unreflected consciousness. It is upon *reflection* that hatred is prescribed as the *cause* of the previous feeling of distaste. So whereas one's unreflected feeling of disgust seems to emanate from hatred, and the spontaneous feeling of disgust is therefore coupled to the state of hatred, the opposite is true: it is only through an act of reflecting consciousness that hatred appears as a state. During reflection, hatred is found to be something that exists regardless of time *x* or time *y* during which disgust was felt. Hatred is therefore a synthetic unity of any number of unreflected consciousness of disgust, and



is consequently an object, existing outside any specific act of consciousness. Therefore, the moment of disgust for the hated object, whether a thing or another person, is not hatred but an unreflected consciousness. The explanatory state of hatred, as well as states in general, are not, therefore, synonymous with unreflected consciousness, since states are both a product and producer of the ego.

Throughout his description of the ego, Sartre underlines its elusive nature, emphasizing “the profound irrationality of the notion of an ego” (Sartre 81). This irrationality stems from the fact that the ego is at once creative, like consciousness, and passive, like an object. For example, Sartre remarks that “the ego is the spontaneous, transcendent unity of our states and our actions,” and that, like consciousness, “this mode of creation is indeed a creation *ex nihilo*” (76-77). However, Sartre goes on to comment that “this spontaneity must not be confused with the spontaneity of consciousness. Indeed, the ego, being an object, is *passive*” (79). Although states and actions seem immediately coupled, and therefore attributable, to the spontaneity of the ego, the latter maintains a sort of passivity in which those states and actions, by virtue of finding expression *through* the ego, impress themselves upon and change the ego in the process. In order for states to be expressed spontaneously, there must be a certain separation between the ego and the states, as well as a creative component to the ego; in order for things to be attributed to the creativity of the ego, there must be the availability for the ego to be marked by the expression of the states. This leads Sartre to conclude that “the ego is opaque like an object” and that “the linkage of the ego to the states remains, therefore, an unintelligible spontaneity” (78, 80).

Despite its unintelligibility, Sartre provides the method of production and reception of the ego as an opaque object:

the ego is an object apprehended, but also an object *constituted*, by reflective consciousness. The ego is a virtual locus of unity, and consciousness constitutes it in a

*direction contrary* to that actually by the production: *really*, consciousnesses are first; through these are constituted states; and then, through the latter, the ego is constituted. But, as the order is reversed by a consciousness which imprisons itself in the world in order to flee from itself, consciousnesses are given as emanating from states, and states as produced by the ego. (81)

Therefore, by objectifying consciousness, reflective consciousness creates an object imbued with explanatory potential for past acts of consciousness that seemingly cannot be refuted or reversed.

### Separation and Simulation

It is here that we may draw a definitive comparison between the productions of the ego and the more-than-real, which requires that we guide our ensuing schema with the dual operations of *separation* and *simulation*. Baudry states that “actually, cinema is a simulation apparatus;” in order to explain the way in which structures inherent to reality, whether consciousness, ego, or dream, are in cinema made formal and inert, we must look at what the apparatus accomplishes through simulation (Baudry 118). The more-than-real involves more than the propagation of the artistic convention of the eye-subject: the more-than-real, both in dream and cinema, also involves the extraction of *elements of lived reality* in order to produce a reality-effect that reality itself cannot offer.

Following from separation and simulation, we are then dealing with the questions of hypostatization and consequential alteration. Not only do Sartre and Baudry see the objects of their studies as possessing qualities of that which they modify, they credit that possession with the resultant modification. In Sartre, for example, the “unintelligible spontaneity” of the ego is an objectifying condensation of the spontaneity of consciousness that compromises that very spontaneity: “this spontaneity [of the ego], *represented* and *hypostatized* in an object, becomes a degraded and bastardized spontaneity, which magically preserves its creative power even while becoming passive” (Sartre 81). Concerned with the preservation of spontaneous consciousness,

Sartre argues that the ego separates from consciousness a part of its structure—spontaneity—and simulates it, thus resulting in an alteration to spontaneity. The ego behaves like consciousness, but due to its simulation of the properties of consciousness, it becomes something else.

Baudry, on the other hand, focuses on the way in which cinema separates and simulates elements of the dream situation in order to produce a waking reality-effect that the merely existential is incapable of rendering. He reminds us that it is simulation which separates dreams and cinema, arguing that “one cannot hesitate to insist on the artificial nature of the cine-subject. It is precisely this artificiality which differentiates it from dream or hallucinations” (Baudry 122). Dream itself separates components of waking reality in order to lend its representations a real charge; this separation and implementation in the dream results in the more-than-real of the dream. Cinema in turn further separates aspects both structurally of and conducive to dream, and operates by “transforming a perception into a quasi-hallucination endowed with real-effect which cannot be compared to that which results from ordinary perception” (122). The point for Baudry is that while dream is a response to a desire for a pre-subjective wholeness, “a vestige of the subject’s phylogenetic past,” cinema is the simulation of that vestige (121). Therefore “whereas dream, according to Freud, is merely a ‘normal hallucinatory psychosis,’” the simulation of that psychosis results in a situation in which *conscious* subjects accede to a reality-effect not found in reality (121). The more-than-real is a process that is cut off from the life-world, is more real than the life-world, but takes place within the life-world.

Both these simulations find unity in the following theoretical difficulty: “in dream and hallucination, representations are taken as reality in the absence of perception; in cinema, images are taken for reality but require the mediation of perception” (Baudry 123). That is, wakeful subjects, whose perception is *not* identical to that of dream, perceive the simulation of a dream

state and still acquiesce to its reality-effect. Apparatus cinema only works if real, temporal perception halts itself within the non-dialectic time of the more-than-real. To put things back into Sartrean terms, the transcendental subject simulates and conflates unreflected and reflecting consciousness, consequently creating an ideological ego which informs and coheres the representations intuited by the unreflected consciousness of the spectator. This achieves a reality-effect in which *spontaneous* representational experience provides the assurance of coherent ideological meaning.

### Schemas of the More-Than-Real

We will now finally schematize the process by which the transcendental subject produces the ego of the apparatus as well its involvement in the production of the more-than-real. This will occur over two separate schemas: the first schema will demonstrate the construction of the cinematic ego; the second will then describe the emergence of the more-than-real as a consequence of that construction. The goal of the first schematization is to define the ego as a simulation created by the apparatus as the unperceived source of ideological representational meaning,<sup>6</sup> the second sets out to illustrate how the interaction between the transcendental subject and the unreflected consciousness of the spectator produces the more-than-real.

*A note on methodology:* throughout this project, I have repeatedly referred to “the transcendental subject” both specifically and generally. This is because the concept itself is something both exact and broad: in one sense, it is specifically enacted and embodied by the camera, while in another sense that embodiment creates a general subject-effect. In what follows, “the transcendental subject” refers specifically to an effect produced by the behavior of the camera in projection, in the general projection situation assumed by apparatus theory, as according to the different levels of consciousness outlined by Sartre’s philosophy. The ego of the

apparatus, or the subject-effect, is consequently created by this behavior and its constitution will be described as such.

#### Schema of the Ego as Constituted By the Transcendental Subject

1. *The camera is a permanently reflecting consciousness.* Reflecting consciousness is itself unreflected. It is spontaneous in its temporality. The difference between reflecting consciousness and unreflected consciousness is that reflecting consciousness takes a former unreflected consciousness as its object. The transcendental subject as-act-of-consciousness is reflecting: it is unreflected as an *ex nihilo* “unfolding of images” (the temporal reality of the projection), but is also reflecting in that it posits a subject of filmic representation *to which these images belong*.

2. *The objects posited by this reflecting consciousness—filmic representations—are themselves spontaneously intended objects.* Their effacement as differentiated objects (the pre-movement stills of Baudry’s “denial of difference” in “IE,” or image-objects) coheres, in the first place, in their restoration as movement-images. The transcendental subject as a reflecting consciousness is responsible for this primary cohesion.

2a. *This reflecting consciousness, while embodied by the camera, is not simply synonymous with the camera, either as “site of inscription” or metaphorical interlocutor.* The transcendental subject is not synonymous with all camera-work, projection, or cinematic representation. The unreflected nature of the unfolding image-objects *can* ostensibly be foregrounded and even intuited as such; this is the goal of materialist film (to which we return below).

2b. *The transcendental subject therefore effaces the unreflected nature of these image-objects, their objectivity, in order to constitute representation “in a direction contrary” to its*

*materiality*. Whereas a film practice emphasizing the unreflected aspect of the image-object would result in the alternating, dialectical cohesion and incoherence of meaning, the transcendental subject, by its act of reflection, achieves the primary cohesion above and the attribution of the representation to a *state*. This results in the *reflected-image*.

2c. *In Sartre, the state is the objective unity of any number of unreflected consciousnesses, and is given as inert and existent outside any specific unreflected consciousness; in Baudry, the image of reflected representation is the unity of disparate image-objects, and is given as the expression of a state-of-meaning inert and existent outside any certain (a) reflected-image or (b) film in which reflected-images appear.*

2d. *This “state-of-meaning” exists as non-dialectical and is ideologically static; no matter what permutations may appear to effect it, infuse it with nuance, the state remains the unifying principle of meaning according to the reflecting act of the transcendental subject.*

Speaking on identification in “dominant cinema,” Peter Gidal writes that “capitalist consumption reifies not only the structures of the economic base but also the constructs of abstraction.

Concepts, then, do not produce concepts; they become, instead, ensconced as static ‘ideas’ which function to maintain the ideological class war and its invisibility, the state apparatus in all its fields” (Gidal, “TSM,” [luxonline.org.uk](http://luxonline.org.uk)). These “static ideas” can be conceived of as Sartrean *states*, belonging to overall *state-of-meaning*, which color the reflected-image (the image comprised of image-objects, the image held into a representation) with various shades of meaning inherent to the property system.

3. *The space from which these states are produced is therefore the ideological ego of the property system; the property system is present at the moment of the reflected-image’s cohesion as the expression of the state-of-meaning.* Sartre states that “the ego is to psychical objects”—

and by psychical objects Sartre means unities produced by reflection—“what the World is to things” (Sartre 75). What this means is that the ego is the totality of all states, qualities, and actions insofar as they are both potential and actualized in thought and by consciousness, just as the World is “conceived of as the infinite synthetic totality of all things” (74-75). The difference between the World and the ego, however, is that whereas the World does not often give itself as-horizon, “the ego, on the contrary, always appears at the horizon of states. Each state, each action is given as incapable of being separated from the ego without abstraction” (75). Extrapolating this incapability to the apparatus, we say: with every reflected-image as created by the transcendental subject comes an *ideological ego* to which each reflected-image points back as its source of sense and meaning.

To be clear, we here immediately approach the problematic of a *spatial* conception of the ego and of ideology. Such a thesis seems untenable: as Stephen Heath notes, ideology cannot simply be conceived as a *place* where representations reside, awaiting their deployment by whatever mystifying enterprise requires their service. Nor can it be depicted as outside reality, whether mental or otherwise: “this imaginary relation in ideology is itself real, which means not simply that the individuals live it as such (the mode of illusion, the inverted image [in Marx]) but that is effectively, practically, the reality of their concrete existence, the term of their subject positions, the basis of their activity, in a given social order” (Heath 5). We do not aim to solve this issue at this moment, nor do we intend to merely explain away this problematic by comparing the relation between ego and ideology as “magical,” as Sartre characterizes the relation between ego and consciousness. However, we must make clear that by “ideology” we mean a relatively autonomous structure of representational density in which static configurations of the life-world find expression through institutions and subjects.

What absolves the cinematic apparatus from the critique of ideology-as-autonomous space, is that, again, cinema *is* a space—a space of simulation. It is a formalized, systemic space, with both physical and mental components; it could therefore very well be a formalization of certain ideological conditions. We immediately reiterate: cinema is a formalized institution, comprised of mental and physical structures, within the dialectical life-world; it is not the dialectical life-world. Therefore the sedimentation of certain dynamic structures and processes in an apparatus of representation is available for theoretical scrutiny. Put another way, in the apparatus the transcendental subject endlessly (re)produces of the Sartrean ego, whereas in the non-cinematic life-world *there is respite from the ego, just as in the waking life-world there is respite from the dream*. The transcendental subject is the formal imposition of the Sartrean ego in cinema, created in order to produce a precise ideological effect: the more-than-real. If ideology is not spatial or wholly formal, its reproduction and subsistence in the apparatus *is*.

With the structure of the transcendental subject and ego in place, we now move into the *process* by which the more-than-real is created and sustained.

#### Schema of the More-Than-Real as Interaction Between Spectator and the Transcendental Subject>Ego Relation

- 1. The consciousness of the apparatus spectator is assumed as unreflected.*
- 2. Before intuiting any reflected-images or the ego from which they emanate, the spectator's unreflected consciousness intuits the transcendental subject.* It is not simply that the spectator takes up the *position* of the transcendental subject, effacing its role in the production of the more-than-real. The transcendental subject is part of the intuition by the spectator precisely because it is simulated and objectified. It is a recognized, partially disavowed, objective interiority.



*2a. The unreflected consciousness of the spectator consequently intuits the transcendental subject as-consciousness; the unreflected consciousness of the spectator is therefore itself a reflective consciousness.*

*2b. This reflective consciousness of the spectator, however, takes as its object not simply a consciousness as-conscious, but also the relation between the transcendental subject and the ego; the object intuited by the spectator is the process of the construction of the ego. Sartre comments that the ego presents itself to reflective consciousness “as interiority closed upon itself. [The ego] is inward for itself, not for consciousness” (Sartre 84). In phenomenology, interiority refers to the reflexivity, or, more simply, the subjectivity, of consciousness, the fact that consciousness is aware of itself as-consciousness. Now, interiority is for Sartre a condition of consciousness; it is a condition of subjectivity and therefore need not, and cannot, be posited by unreflected consciousness. However, in the case of the ego, by virtue of its production by reflection, interiority becomes static and opaque: subjectivity is paradoxically objectified.*

Extrapolating this objectified interiority to the apparatus, we may next state:

*2c. Since both the ego and the production of the ego by the transcendental subject are objectified in the apparatus, and since the consciousness of the spectator is itself reflective, a secondary abstraction occurs in the apparatus situation that results in a doubled “interiority closed upon itself.”*

*2d. This is because the ego must be avowed yet effaced in the intuition of the spectator; it must be both immediate and peripheral; if the ego is to go both noticed and unnoticed, it must therefore be given as imparting unity to a consciousness separate from the spectator. Recall that both the eye-subject and the ego produced by the transcendental subject follow the same “reverse production:” with the eye-subject, the coordinates of perspective produce the representation,*

while the representation seems to produce the coordinates; similarly, although the cinematic ego is present through every reflected-image, is pointed to as the source of meaning, the reflected-image is also given as self-evident.

Concerned as we are with the apparatus *situation*, the apparatus “in reality,” in waking-life, we see that the question then becomes: what is it about this structural relation, this intuition as both producer and production, that (a) presents the spectator with an irrefutable ego, yet (b) keeps the ego hidden within the reflected-image?

This question derives from the Sartrean problematic of whether or not one can ever truly apprehend the ego outside reflection; that is, is there ever a transparent, *unreflected* apprehension of the ego? In Sartrean phenomenology, the answer is no. Sartre notes that “what radically prevents the acquisition of real cognitions of the ego is the very special way in which it is given to reflective consciousness. The ego never appears, in fact, except when one is not looking at it” (Sartre 88). That is, “the reflective gaze” can never jump over the reflected experience, or the state which apparently informs it, in order to directly intuit the ego (88). It must rather go through the unreflected experience and the state, a process which mires the reflected consciousness in a number of *levels*. Hence Sartre’s conclusion that the ego is “never seen except ‘out of the corner of the eye,’” that “in trying to apprehend the ego for itself and as a direct object of my consciousness, I fall back onto the unreflected level, and the ego disappears along with the reflective act” (88-89).

As we are attempting to demonstrate, the apparatus requires that the ego not disappear but *somehow give itself on the unreflected level*. For if the spectator’s perceptual intervention is unreflected, no ego would appear within the reflected-image. The difference between the life-world subject and the unreflected consciousness of the spectator, however, is crucial here: the

spectator confronts the ego both directly, in terms of the *permanent reflection* of the transcendental subject and the ego-process, and indirectly, by virtue of the spectator's own unreflected *and reflective* consciousness. For the unreflected consciousness of the spectator, the primary object of intuition is the continual production of the cinematic ego, which is the result of the reflective transcendental subject. Like Sartre's subject, who cannot attain the ego outside reflective process, the spectator moves through the reflected consciousness, the state-of-meaning in order to arrive at a peripheral ego of ideology. *However, the ego never disappears from the apparatus situation precisely because, per 2a. and 2b., a spontaneous consciousness, via the action of the transcendental subject, irrevocably tied to the explanatory power of the ego, is always spontaneously present in the intuition of the spectator.*

3. *The spectator therefore spontaneously, in the life-world of the apparatus experience, apprehends "the ego as a direct object;" the spectator intuits an "unfolding of images" that is itself spontaneously given as emanating from a position impossible in non-cinematic reality: a temporal unity of unreflected, reflective, and reflected consciousness.*

4. *The interaction between the spectator and the transcendental subject therefore results in Baudry's clearest definition of the more-than-real, the "obtaining from reality a position, a condition in which what is perceived would no longer be distinguished from representations;" unreflected spontaneity and ego, which are themselves separated in pure phenomenological experience, are in the apparatus experience no longer separable; through the reflective intuition of permanent reflection, the reflected-objects give themselves as irreversible depictions of the possible permutations of the state-of-meaning produced by the ego of ideology (Baudry 121).*

5. *The more-than-real is thus an effect of the interaction between the transcendental subject (as unreflected consciousness, as reflective consciousness, as creator of the ego) and the*

*spectator (as unreflected consciousness, as reflecting consciousness) in which the spectator spontaneously occupies the impossible position of “interiority closed upon itself.”*

### Implications

What does it mean that “the spectator occupies the impossible position of interiority closed upon itself”? Let us return to that “position” of which Baudry speaks, desired by his historical subject of representation, where unconscious representation and external perception reside in undifferentiated bliss. “Interiority closed upon itself” is precisely that position.

Apparatus cinema allows one to exist in a paradoxical *exteriorized intimacy*, the same refuge one may take in the ego, of which Sartre says, “quite simply, the ego is an object which appears only to reflection, and which is thereby radically cut off from the World. The ego does not live on the same level” (Sartre 83). The reason for this is that “just as the ego is an irrational synthesis of interiority and passivity, it is a synthesis of interiority and transcendence” (83).

So it is with the more-than-real: in apparatus cinema, the representation, the reflected-image, is both objective and subjective, inside and outside, of the world and outside its reach. The more-than-real is ideological relations experienced as though they were happenstance intervention within a stable reality principle. It is the experience of mass subjectivity as though it were an actual, personalized subjectivity. It is the *I* of ideology. In the apparatus situation, taken as a whole, reality is separated off from reality and then given back to the spectator in reality. “The red red vino on tap” seen by Alex is not *not-real-blood* but rather simulated blood given to a simulation of the consciousness that would encounter real blood in the life-world. This is precisely what makes the blood on the screen “seem really real:” when the consciousness that intuits reality is separated from reality and then given back in reality, reality is no longer real, but “really real,” or more-than-real.

It in this manner that we must understand Ellis' argument that in apparatus cinema, "reality unfolds itself, addressed implicitly to a voyeur whose presence is acknowledged by the film's pretence that it is not overlooked" (Ellis 60). The empty unreflected consciousness towards which the transcendental subject addresses its reflected-image is this very implicit "voyeur," a big Other to whom relates the apparatus spectator much like Lacan's visitors to Doges' Palace (Lacan 113).<sup>7</sup> Carroll objects that "the very notion sounds peculiar, even mystical," glibly asking, "what is involved in 'reality narrating itself,' over and above the illusion of reality? A close encounter of the third kind with a Hegelian zeitgeist" (Carroll, *MM* 121-122). The answer is plain: "reality unfolding itself" is the result of a simulation apparatus that fuses a disavowed, structurally reproduced unreflected consciousness and a static horizon of meaning in order to make the reproduction of ideologically-cemented representations, and their connotations, appear in the same manner as spontaneous reality.

The thing to keep in mind, when considering the dual separateness and proximity of the more-than-real in terms of "reality unfolding itself," is the cold, objective indifference on the part of the apparatus image. Returning for a moment to psychoanalysis, let us invoke the division made by Lacan between eye and gaze (Lacan 67-119). According to Lacan, the geometrics of the eye as-organ are separate from "the gaze," or the object-cause of desire in the visual field (74, 91-104). The eye and the gaze are thus "split" and in constant play with one another. As it vies for omnipotence, to make itself the owner of representation,<sup>8</sup> the eye instead finds itself at the mercy of the gaze, which piques the former's interest and freezes its function. "Vision," that is, "*seeing*," is therefore first a matter of desiring-to-see; the mobilization of desire in the visual field is a requisite for representation. Therefore despite its function as an ordering organ of light and form, what the eye "sees" is satisfactory on the unconscious level, on a level beyond

biology. Despite the facticity of the central point that is the eye, the gaze is in fact the point of captivation in vision.

Now, imagine Baudry's spectator sitting in a modern movie theater, occupying that position of "interiority enclosed upon itself," or objectified subjectivity. Carroll is right; the spectator may stand up, move from row to row, and retain all narrative cohesion and perhaps even affect. What Carroll misses, however, is the while the *eye* is mobile, *the point of the gaze is not*. In order to partake in the film, in the narrative and its affect, its discourse, whatever, the spectator must still accede his eye in order to achieve that position of unreflected reflection integral to the apparatus. He must still recognize the gaze as the enactment of a desire-to-see in order to enter the apparatus; there is still a "laying down of the gaze" on the part of the spectator (Lacan 114). In addition to all the other structural necessities we have outlined, it is this accession that ensures the persistence of an "artificial regression" in which available motoricity, as noted by Laplace and Pontalis, does not prevent the hallucinatory, phantasmatic blending of subjective and objective positions. Vision elides itself as an organ for "seeing," for perceiving and thus differentiating, and "reality unfolds itself."

The apparatus therefore offers a satisfaction in the form of a sustained, seemingly non-subjective, *bewildered meditation* on the world. It is an apparatus of the spectacle: "apprehended in a *partial* way, reality unfolds in a new generality as a pseudo-world apart, solely as an object of contemplation" (Debord 12). We need not even cling to the above example of the classical spectator for this structural deliberation to retain its present self-evidence. Certainly the apparatus experience described above, the movie theater of Baudry's time, is itself historical and thus is in no way demonstrative of "cinema" in its essence.<sup>9</sup> What of it? Forget the esoteric imagery of the apparatus, the profuse, varicolored aura of meaning washing outward, onto and

into the spectator; accession to narrative rumination, in the form of mobilized viewing, has simply become a quiet antidote to the *banality of empty time* in the capitalist life-world. Bonitzer's "automatic ideological action" reigns today as ubiquitous solace. A young professional enduring a commute by marginally engaging with affective narrative exposes more about the ideological stake of "the apparatus" than any classical spectator hypothetically captivated by the point of the Lacanian gaze. At least the latter involved some level of grandiosity. In its very dual (a) insidiousness within the life-world and (b) exile from academia, the apparatus has become perfunctory, another fueling station en route to the alienated conclusion of dead time spent. We have never understood how one could fail to notice the *profound melancholy* involved in exteriorized intimacy.

This could all of course be another way of saying that the apparatus helps to accomplish, in representation, "the reproduction of the conditions of production" (Althusser 127, 153-54). This in turn leaves us open to the attack of determinism, of which Althusser's theory of "ideology in *general*" has been accused (159). Douglas Kellner, for example, argues that Althusser incorrectly ahistoricizes ideology so as to efface its very history as a concept and install it as a metaphysical psychic and social mechanism invaluable to any working society. Kellner sees in this thesis a crass and pessimistic determinism, in which no one may *ever* escape the Althusserian paradigm (Kellner 56-57). Similarly, Bonitzer criticizes Baudry for his generalized and mystical use of terms such as "cinema," "ideology," "repressive system," and so on, concluding that "the apparatus" is a theoretical monolith that immediately "forecloses" actual film analysis; this foreclosure prevents a proper theorization and realization of a materialist film practice (Bonitzer 298-305). The common thread of accusation between these criticisms is that the structures produced by either theorist are unable to account for any phenomena outside the

restricted range of their concepts, which results in their untenable status as theories capable of explaining everything (everything ideological, everything cinematic, respectively).

#### THE VALUE OF DETERMINISM AND MATERIALIST FILM

Let us focus on Bonitzer's criticism. I argue that it is precisely my recourse to unreflected consciousness that not only legitimatizes the notion of a determinant apparatus but also, by virtue of that very determinism, points to the potential for a non-apparatus cinema. By grounding both of Baudry's essays in a consistent philosophical system, we have illustrated how a more-than-real effect in the cinema is logically produced. Both the transcendental subject and the more-than-real are therefore transfigured into something more than metaphor, and the determinism of the apparatus becomes something concrete and defensible. However, it does not follow that this configuration, this psychical and physical apparatus, is the exhaustive account of all possible cinematic practice, whether in terms of technology or *dispositif*. Unreflected spontaneity, while fastened to the ego in the apparatus, can also manifest as the subversion of such a suture.

The potential for such subversion is most clearly expressed by materialist film, or the film practice which aims to not merely *depict* the materiality of film, both of the film as-technology and as-psychical-work, but to *create* that materiality in time, in the projection situation. Comparing "classical" and "materialist" cinema, Pascal Bonitzer writes

The classical scene is divided, and assumed to be complete in each of its fragments. The 'materialist' scene is divided, and is constructed-destroyed in the articulation and dialectical interaction of its fragments. The 'materialist' scene is *worked out* within an irreducible heterogeneity, where the homogenous classical scene *represents* by abstracting a general volume of contradictions, for which it thus becomes a dead location. (Bonitzer 302)

Materialist cinema thus works on the signifier in its very nominalism, as opposed to preventing its materiality by enforcing cohesion in the reflection-image.



We are best able to connect the determinism of the apparatus to materialist film practice by linking the spontaneity of unreflected consciousness with Gidal's notion of "arbitrariness." Gidal, a Structuralist/Materialist filmmaker and theorist, writes that "the concept of 'arbitrariness' is based on the political demand that nothing be accepted as natural. This is not a denial of meanings but rather a recognition of the imposition of ideologies" (Gidal, *MF* 11). In materialist film, those meanings which inhere in apparatus representation are disallowed their unity by and through the materialist practice of representational denial: "'arbitrariness' in sound and image *each moment* goes against granting a *fullness* to an image moment" (11). To put things in terms of the above schema, it is not that the reflected-image is merely omitted, but that its construction is never allowed to be intuited as anything but construction: "each 'image moment' thus does not mean a moment of 'fullness,' it merely designates *moment*, not static, not essential, not somehow quintessentially ontologically 'filmic,' simply a clinical description of a moment or piece of time" (11). Again, in Sartrean terms: Gidal here stresses the imperative of the construction of image-objects as image-objects in true unreflected cinematic experience, as opposed to image-objects immediately welded to the state-of-meaning and subsequently experienced in the static denial of temporality imposed by the apparatus experience.

Indeed, what separates materialist film from dominant apparatus cinema is that it "attempts," in its arbitrariness, "the constant construction of non-identity," which for Gidal "is a break from infinitude and eternity, which a religiously capitalist patriarchy attempts to designate and reproduce" (Gidal, *MF* 12). Non-identity can in the context of the apparatus be understood as the attempt to produce a cinematic experience that comes as close to the unreflected as possible. This is not undertaken simply to create filmic spontaneity for its own sake as a convention; were this the case, "a phrase such as 'image moment,' even within a description of

the materialist concept 'arbitrariness, could reinveigle itself as a metaphysic of film" (11).

Rather, what is at stake in materialist film is the production of the contradictions between the temporal and the inert, or, for our purposes, to produce the construction and obliteration of the ego.

### CHAPTER 3: THE TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT AND IDEOLOGY

What follows is a brief application of the theory of the transcendental subject to the theory of ideology proffered by Louis Althusser, who argues that ideology is an ahistorical operation that structurally produces subjects. The rationale for this application is the fact that Althusser, whether in letter or a general structuralist spirit, explicitly and implicitly informs the impetus and vocabulary of apparatus theory; the very name “Althusser” governs apparatus theory as its master signifier. While this exercise offers itself as rhetorically, and, according to the conclusions hitherto reached, logically prescriptive, the following account is by no means *exhaustive*. We only aim to respectfully re-examine an inspiration of our main object of study.

In “On Screen, in Frame: Film and Ideology,” Stephen Heath denotes cinema as the site of connection between psychoanalysis and Marxism:

Cinema brings historical materialism and psychoanalysis together in such a way that the consideration of film and ideology begins from and constantly returns us to their conjuncture, in such a way that from the analysis of cinema, of film, we may be able to engage with theoretical issues of a more general scope, issues critical for a materialist analysis of ideological institutions and practices. (Heath 4)

Heath justifies this extension of film theory to historical materialism with a simultaneous appeal to Marx’s notion of the ideological *camera obscura* and Freud’s description of the unconscious as a photographic negative which finds its positivity in consciousness (2). Heath is after not only a theory of film, but also the implications of ideological film theory and criticism for a general theory of capitalist subjectivity, or the subject of ideology.

Heath understands ideology in the Althusserian sense, expressed by the well-worn formula, “ideology is a ‘representation’ of the imaginary relations of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (Althusser 162). Following Althusser’s criticism of the “mechanistic” and “hermeneutic” explanations of ideology, Heath reminds us that ideology is not itself simply

a negative illusion that, once exposed and understood, leaves us with a real: “this imaginary relation in ideology is itself real, which means not simply that the individuals live it as such (the mode of illusion, the inverted image [in Marx]) but that it is effectively, practically, the reality of their concrete existence, the term of their subject positions, the basis of their activity, in a given social order” (Althusser 162-65, Heath 5). Furthermore, “reality—as against ideology, as its truth—is posed only in process in the specific contradictions of a particular socio-historical moment” (Heath 5). Therefore, ideology is not not-reality, and reality is not not-ideology; reality is the “confrontation” between the two. Ideology is therefore “productive within a mode of production...the ideological instance determines the definition, the reproduction, of individuals as agents/subjects for the mode of production, in the positions it assigns them” (5-6).

Despite its emphasis on the material, what makes Althusser’s theory of ideology problematic is its possibly idealist retention of and expansion on the thesis, “ideology has no history” (Althusser 159). Althusser argues that the Marx of *The German Ideology* intended this maxim to denote ideology as “a pure illusion, a pure dream, i.e. as nothingness” (159). Since “history,” during this period of Marx’s work, is understood *only* as “the history of concrete individuals” and their material intervention in class struggle, the “pure dream” that is ideology “has no history *of its own*” (160). Althusser intervenes by distinguishing between “ideologies,” which do in fact “have a history of their own,” and “ideology *in general*,” which itself “*has no history*, not in a negative sense (its history is external to it) but in an absolutely positive sense” (160-161). Therefore “ideology *in general*” is a structural recursion required by ideologies that is both transcendent to them but required for their existences as ideologies (159).

This recursion is the classical notion of the subject; Althusser’s “central thesis” of his theory of ideology *in general* is expressed by his other well-known formula, “*all ideology hails*

*or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*, by the functioning of the category of the subject” (Althusser 173). In fact, Althusser goes so far as to argue that “the category of the subject (which may function under other names: e.g., as the soul in Plato, as God, etc.) is the constitutive category of all ideology, whatever its determination (regional or class) and whatever its historical date—since ideology has no history” (171). This categorical Subject creates subjects out of individuals through “the ideological *recognition* function;” individuals recognize themselves as possessing a beckoned place in the social world, and are immediately interpellated as subjects. Thus follows the conclusion that “individuals are always-already subjects;” as illustrated by Althusser’s examples, such as answering a knock at the door, turning one’s head at hearing “Hey, you there,” or even assimilating to language, one becomes subject through the immediacy of recognition (171-172, 174).

Heath quotes at length Paul Q. Hirst’s take on Althusserian interpellation regarding this fundamental requirement of recognition:

Recognition, the crucial moment of the constitution (activation) of the subject, presupposes a point of cognition prior to the recognition. Something must recognise that which it is to be... The social function of ideology is to constitute concrete individuals (not-yet-subjects) as subjects. The concrete individual is “abstract,” it is not yet the subject it will be. It is, however, already a subject in the sense of the subject which supports the process of recognition. Thus something which is not a subject must already have the faculties necessary to support the recognition which will constitute it as a subject. It must have a cognitive capacity as a prior condition of its place in the process of recognition. Hence the necessity of the distinction in which the faculties of the latter are supposed already in the former (unless of course cognition be considered a “natural” human faculty). (Hirst in Heath 103)

Keeping in mind Heath’s thesis that questions of film bear on questions of ideology, we ask: could not the Althusserian subject of ideology in fact be the transcendental subject, as realized by our revisionary importation of Sartrean phenomenology, which in fact considers unreflected consciousness “a ‘natural’ human faculty”? For to say that ideology has no history of its own,

“not in a negative sense...but in an absolutely positive sense,” can only mean that the subject of ideology has been rendered so negative that whatever it intuits, whatever it sees and recognizes in its unreflected acts, has no choice but to be positive. Althusser’s subject is in fact an *ex nihilo* consciousness which is itself not an existent but *which only produces existence*.

The appeal made by Althusser to “obviousness” helps makes things clearer. Althusser notes that “for you and for me, the category of the subject is a primary ‘obviousness’ (obviousnesses are always primary)...the ‘obviousness’ that you and I are subjects—and that that does not cause any problems—is an ideological effect, the elementary ideological effect” (Althusser 171). Is not the transcendental subject itself responsible for producing a primary “obviousness,” the *state-of-meaning* for-unreflected consciousness, a representational obviousness “which we cannot *fail to recognize*” (172)? Are we not expected, as spectators, to already understand a certain economy of semiotic and psychological association as permitted by both this obviousness and the *state-of-meaning* to which it is coupled? Combining our terms with the phrasing of Hirst, we may say that by simulating unreflected consciousness and welding it permanently to reflection, the transcendental subject produces a situation “in which the faculties of the latter are supposed already in the former.”

Let us thus pronounce resolutely: the subject of ideology behaves in a similar manner to the transcendental subject. Once an experience is reflected, that is, once an experience is attributed to an origin, a condition, etc., we are in reflection, or the *state-of-meaning*; consequently, in an act of mass reflection, an object appears: ideology. Furthermore, because every consciousness is, in the last instance, unreflected, is negative, and is-always-happening, that ideology-object is always taken by unreflected consciousness, and thus is always reproduced and always present. And because the ultimate origin and alibi of the abstract capitalist code must

be that *there is a reality*, ideology, in the last instance, is reality. The two simply cannot be separated out. Therefore, the ideology of Reality, the Reality-object, accompanies an already-real unreflected consciousness; proven, controlled, considered Reality accompanies something which cannot help but be real, in the strict sense we have given above.

That is why, for Althusser, ideology is both a deception (*méconnaissance*) and an unavoidable aspect of the social. It is obvious why the subject of ideology must find its model in an existential structure of consciousness: ideology must be an *I*, for two reasons:

*1. The subject of ideology must be the same transcendent unity for all involved; if it was not, the social, i.e. mass consciousness, could not be bonded together;*

this is because

*2. The subject of ideology must also be an I that allows every participating I to involve its own imaginary ego-unity in the ideological unity.*

Thus the subject of ideology is a doubled *I* that is completely malleable and impossible to rip from consciousness. There is simply no reason why Sartre's proclamation that "the *I* is deceptive from the start" cannot be applied to ideology, an application which in fact shatters theories of illusion and offers us a stark condition, perhaps the only condition: if the *I* is *definitionally* deceptive from the start, then the reflected *I* of the social, the transcendental *I* of ideology, is deceptive as well (Sartre 52). Althusser's indictment of Hegel, that "Hegel is (unknowingly) an admirable 'theoretician' of ideology," could perhaps be extended to Sartre and his early phenomenology (Althusser 181).

Keeping in mind the schematization of the transcendental subject we have produced in the previous chapter, let us hypothesize that the subject of ideology, as defined by Althusser, operates in the following manner:

*1. The subject of ideology simulates unreflected consciousness, which is negative to the point of positivity, real in a non-proven or considered sense, always-happening, and intentional.*

Sartre wonders “if one cannot conceive of absolutely impersonal consciousness” (Sartre 37). This is precisely the simulation achieved by ideology. This impersonal consciousness is the consciousness that exists anterior to the subjects interpellated by ideology.

*2. The subject of ideology takes objects in acts of reflection which color those objects with and through an ego, with and through a mass I, that service the reigning mode of production, or the property system. Things appear to “just happen” when they are in actuality coded. A paradoxical false facticity is established, in which things really do have no choice but to happen, but are still objects of intention coded with meaning according to structural laws.*

*3. Thus, returning to interpellation, the individual who is hailed by ideology is hailed by a structure of simulation and, despite whatever dissonance or assonance occurs from the clash between “real conditions” and “imaginary relationships,” cannot help but heed the paradoxical false facticity of the objects given to a) this simulation and b) the interpellated subject. Most importantly, however, while he may recognize himself in specific instances of this structure (the state/ideological apparatuses), the interpellated subject in the last instance identifies with the simulation of consciousness itself; this identification thus secures the legitimacy and the equivalency (which is integral to capitalist commodity and representation) of all ideologies under the subsuming “ideology in general” advanced by Althusser.*



## AFTERWORD

The above exercise is not intended to impart renewed validity to the Althusserian project. Rather, I have included this application in order to offer some kind of *determined* and *resolute* understanding of “the subject” so often referred to by Althusser; I have attempted to help us arrive at a resolute understanding of the ideological subject *so as to facilitate its supersession*. In *This Is Not a Program*, Tiqqun writes that “those who, as a final reprieve from their passivity, insist on calling for a theory of the subject must understand that in the age of Bloom *a theory of the subject is now only possible as a theory of apparatuses*” (Tiqqun 150). Throughout their call for a “critical metaphysics” of capital, Tiqqun never explicitly define what they mean by “apparatus;” however, it does now to note that “nothing ever happens in an apparatus,” and that it is “the objective of every apparatus...*to run and to govern a certain plane of phenomenality, to ensure that a certain economy of presence persists*” (151, 163).

An apparatus is therefore a *machine of obviousness*, an implementation of obviousness intended to prevent the occurrence of any actual event. It is an apparatus which operates through the behavior of subjects, not the other way around: “the only gratification that we can take from this kind of *exercise* is to have performed in the apparatus with some panache. *Virtuosity is the only freedom—a pathetic freedom—gained by submitting to signifying determinisms*” (Tiqqun 191). This manipulation of inert possibilities immediately invites comparison to Baudry: the “apparatus” in Tiqqun’s sense is the *existence of a human being within a phenomenal field as created by a transcendental subject*. In the life-world apparatus, one may only skillfully manipulate the *state-of-meaning* offered by each apparatus situation; in in the cinematic apparatus, the reflected-image may only exist as a permutation of the cinematic *state-of-meaning*. Even the “just happening” of apparatus cinema is experienced in Tiqqun’s apparatus:

“Hence the strikingly absent, lethargic character of existence within apparatuses, *this Bloomesque feeling of being carried away by the comforting flow of phenomena* (198, emphasis mine).

As a consequence of these comparisons, I re-introduce the value of determinism: if the apparatus in cinema ensures a *certain* functioning of film; if the apparatus of the life-world insures a *certain* functioning of phenomenal flow and capitalist life in general; and if the two are in fact *limits* to the potential of both art and life; does not “a theory of apparatuses” require a *determined subject* that one may identify and supersede?<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that “a science of apparatuses” per Tiquun would need to take the form of the structuralist science of Althusser, but rather involve itself in the play between the ossification of apparatus-being, the apparatus as it exists in its non-time, and the *actual bringing-into-being*, through one’s actions, of the apparatus (Tiquun 179-181). Since “one is never initiated into an apparatus, only how it works,” we see that it is a *subject of obviousness* that facilitates the denial of time and being in apparatuses; perhaps *bringing one’s initiation into being* could serve some purpose in the dismantling of apparatuses (175).

Finally, this is all to say the following: if one is concerned with materialist politics, whether in representation or the life-world, one must take seriously the notion of the subject, *not* in order to endlessly debate what/who that subject is, and *certainly not* in order to create a *revolutionary subject*, but to understand what subjectivity is required by the property system as it promulgates itself through the information and communication society. The point is not to reject illusion for the sake of old maxims (the vulgarity of student groups who endlessly ask, “What is the Left?”), nor to revel in representation itself as a potential *semiotic emancipation* (academic cultural studies in general); rather, the point is recognize the *increasing power* of spectacle as it

permeates through apparatuses that so easily blend unreflected experience and pre-reflected orientation of phenomena. As Tiqqun pronounces:

WE WANT NEITHER VULGAR MATERIALISM NOR AN “ENCHANTED MATERIALISM”; WHAT WE ARE DESCRIBING IS A *MATERIALISM OF ENCHANTMENT*. (Tiqqun 174)

Is it is my hope that this project, in addition to providing a stronger, more definitive understanding of the cinematic apparatus, could potentially provide some materials useful to “a materialism of enchantment.”

## NOTES

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### INTRODUCTION: The Resuscitation of a Theory

<sup>1</sup> The editorial note prefacing the original *Film Quarterly* publication of “Ideological Effects” also foregrounds that “this questioning mode of thought turns from what it considers outmoded idealist of phenomenological doctrines toward the type of radical and psychoanalytic thinking done by Lacan and toward an explicit sociopolitical analysis of the film-making and film-viewing process” (Baudry, “IE” 39).

### CHAPTER 1: The Transcendental Subject

<sup>1</sup> This question was posed by Carroll in 1982: in “Address to the Heathen,” an article serving as an elaborate refutation of both Stephen Heath’s *Questions of Cinema* and apparatus theory in general, Carroll plainly states, “I [do not] understand why ideologically motivated film theorists are so preoccupied with attacking the transcendental ego,” and even notes in passing that Sartre’s *TOE* is “an example, though probably an unsuccessful one, of a direct confrontation with the Kantian variety of self-unity” (Carroll, “Address” 103).

<sup>2</sup> In the ensuing discussion, the word “consciousness” appears many times, sometimes several times within one sentence. Each instance will be qualified as to what *kind* of consciousness it is; for Sartre, the idea of consciousness as being-in-the-world implies that consciousness transcends itself to objects; each objective transcendence is a separate act of consciousness and, depending on what the object transcended-to is (in-itself, an object, or for-itself, consciousness), these acts are different types of consciousnesses and produce different kinds of potentialities.

<sup>3</sup> All following citations attributed to Baudry in this chapter refer to “IE” unless otherwise noted in-citation.

<sup>4</sup> We are aware of the fact that the underlying Althusserian position which informs Baudry’s argument exists today largely as the contested and caricatured idea that once a veil is lifted from the eyes of those exploited under capitalism, non-ideological knowledge will be created. Jacques Rancière well expresses this disdain in the following passage:

The sociology of “misrecognition,” the theory of the ‘spectacle’ and the different forms assumed by the critique of consumer and communication societies all share with Althusserianism the idea that the dominated are dominated because they are ignorant of the laws of domination. This simplistic view at first assigns to those who adopt it the exalted task of bringing their science to the blind masses. Eventually, though, this exalted task dissolves into a pure thought of resentment which declares the inability of the masses to take charge of their own destiny. (Rancière xvi)

Versions of this critique are also provided by certain psychoanalytic film theorists, who emphasize the socially productive and discontinuous nature of ideology. See for example Heath (1981), Copjec (1994), and McGowan and Kunkle (2004). While all valid criticisms, we presently extricate ourselves from debate over the conceptual validity of ideological mystification.

<sup>5</sup> For their part, Edward Buscombe, Christine Gledhill, Alan Lovell, and Christopher Williams, in their official explanation for their resignation from the editorial board of *Screen*, question the validity of using “the Renaissance” as the catch-all signifier of the imposition of a representational strategy resulting in a cinematic idealism (Buscombe et. al 108).

<sup>6</sup> This idea is proposed by Baudry in the opening pages of the essay: “...if we are to take account of the imperfections of these instruments, their limitations, by what criteria may these be defined? If, for example, one can speak of a restricted depth of field as a limitation, doesn’t this term itself depend upon a particular conception of reality for which such a limitation would not exist?” (Baudry, “IE” 40).

<sup>7</sup> Peter Wollen has demonstrated the ways in which Bazin believed that the cinema possessed an internal, idealist trajectory that would eventually lead to the eradication of film language and result in a completely self-effacing cinema, which would present consciousness with the world in-itself. See Wollen (1976).

<sup>8</sup> This is a rhetorical device utilized by other writers associated with structuralism such as Jean Baudrillard, who for example argues that reproduction, that is, simulacra, is in fact the teleological impetus of capitalism (Baudrillard 97-98). Terry Eagleton has written that in this way structuralism, as an intellectual movement, was simultaneously radical and conservative; it removed the metaphysical façade from the social structures of capitalism, only to then denote that façade as eternally inherent to capitalism outside of individual or historical activity. Structuralism is thus an approach to capitalism that ends up “endorsing its logic while unmasking its ideals” (Eagleton 131).

<sup>9</sup> Discussing “the Subject” of ideology, Althusser writes that “Hegel is (unknowingly) an admirable ‘theoretician’ of ideology insofar as he is a ‘theoretician’ of Universal Recognition who unfortunately ends up in the ideology of Absolute Knowledge” (Althusser 181).

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<sup>10</sup> Detmer adds, “Sartre suggests that since each consciousness are already embodied, and essentially tied to one body, consciousnesses are already individuated, and no external cause for their individuation is required” (Detmer 25).

<sup>11</sup> This is of course a reference to the well-known (although likely under-comprehended) concept of “suture,” or the psychoanalytic account for the way in which the subject's construction hinges on the continual possibility of its dissolution. For the psychoanalytic theory of suture, see Miller (1977). For its early usage in film theory, see Oudart (1977) and Heath (1977). For two of the most sustained critiques of suture, see Carroll (1982) and Žižek (2012).

<sup>12</sup> By “transcendent object,” Sartre means an object in-the-world, outside of consciousness, through which consciousness is unified. This is consistent with his duality of consciousness-world.

## CHAPTER 2: The More-Than-Real

<sup>1</sup> All following citations attributed to Baudry in this chapter refer to “The Apparatus” unless otherwise noted in citation.

<sup>2</sup> While Baudry acknowledges that “Plato’s *topos* does not and could not possibly correspond exactly to Freud’s,” he nonetheless argues for the validity of applying psychoanalysis to the philosopher and “the other scene” of his thought: “it is still more important to determine what is at work on the idealist philosopher’s discourse unknown to him, the truth which proclaims, very different yet contained within the one he consciously articulates” (Baudry 107).

<sup>3</sup> Put by Freud: “It was only the non-occurrence of the expected satisfaction, the disappointment experienced, that led to the abandonment of this attempt at satisfaction by means of hallucination. Instead of it, the psychical apparatus had to decide to form a conception of the real circumstances in the external world and to endeavor to make a real alteration in them. A new principle of mental functioning was thus introduced; what was presented in the mind was no longer what was agreeable but what was real, even if it happened to be disagreeable” (Freud quoted in Laplanche and Pontalis 380). As we shall see, this very hallucination, abandoned for the sake of satisfaction found in externality, is taken up again in dream.

<sup>4</sup> This calls to mind Lacan’s invocation of the “evil eye” as it relates to the play between eye and gaze in desire enacted in the visual field:

In order to understand what *invidia* is in its function as gaze it must not be confused with jealousy. What the small child, or whoever, *envies* is not at all necessarily what he might want—*avoir envie*, as one improperly puts it. Who can say that the child who looks at his younger brother still needs to be at the breast? Everyone knows that envy is usually aroused by the possession of goods which would be of no use to the person who is envious of them, and about the true nature of which he does not have the least idea. Such is true envy—the *envy that makes the subject pale before the image of a completedness closed upon itself, before the idea that the petit a, the separated a from which he is hanging, may be for another the possession that gives satisfaction...* (Lacan 116, emphasis mine).

<sup>5</sup> It does well to emphasize here Lacan’s understanding of dream as a “showing,” a being-shown, rather than a “seeing:” “...in the final resort, our position in the dream is profoundly that of someone who does not see. The subject does not see where it is leading, he follows. He may even on occasion detach himself, tell himself that it is a dream, but in no case will he be able to apprehend himself in the dream in the way in which, in the Cartesian *cogito*, he apprehends himself as thought. He may say to himself, *It’s only a dream*. But he does not apprehend himself as someone who says to himself—*After all, I am the consciousness of this dream*” (Lacan 75-76).

<sup>6</sup> What we have in mind with this phrasing is what Bonitzer calls “the gestural, phonic (or rather phono-graphic), coloured, etc., signifying network which links the circularity of specular topography with the linearity of bourgeois narration (bourgeois first because it presents individuals on the scene, monads against a background of repressed history, thereby reproducing, even before the question of ‘content’ is raised, bourgeois and petit bourgeois ways of life and thought and automatically giving them an artistic, moral, metaphysical ‘value’, with a spirited volume)” (Bonitzer 302).

<sup>7</sup> It is not that the Absent One is *within* the film; the Absent One is the big Other who *looks at* the film: “Let us go to the great hall of the Doges’ Palace in which are painted all kinds of battles, such as the battle of Lepanto, etc. The social function, which was already emerging at the religious level, is now becoming clear. Who comes here? Those who form what Retz calls ‘*les peuples*,’ the audiences. And what do the audiences see in those vast compositions. They see the gaze of those persons who, when the audience are not there, deliberate in this hall. Behind the picture, it is their gaze that is there” (Lacan 113).

<sup>8</sup> Speaking on the belief that representations “belong” to the phenomenological subject, Lacan notes that “this *belong to me* aspect of representations [is] so reminiscent of property” (Lacan 81).

<sup>9</sup> For an exposition of historical differences in cinematic exhibition and spectatorship, see Kepley, Jr. (1996).

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**AFTERWORD**

<sup>1</sup> Once again we return to the essential notion that phenomenology is not a *critical theory* of consciousness as determined by structuration, but rather a *seemingly innocent description*. In a 2007 interview on the history of theoretical structuralism in France, Yves Duroux explains that “the structured subject is the phenomenological subject...it can be understood as a description of what is structured” (Duroux 191-192). Duroux (along with Althusser and Baudry) sees “phenomenology as description (but not theory), a faithful description because it’s blind...” (192).

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