

Kafka, which must be explored further. The reader is left asking for more, and this little book could work as stimulus for new research. On the other hand, Kouba and Pivoda's volume is a missed occasion because it keeps its ambitions too low: certainly, it defines itself as a collection of 'reports', which besides originate (though this is not specified anywhere in the book) from a punctual and limited experience, the 2010 summer school in Prague. However, even within the limits of this 'modesty', there were the premises for a stronger contribution to both the Kafka and the Deleuze and Guattari scholarship.

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The history of science is populated with magical entities: phlogiston, the ether and animal spirits, as well as borderline beings that migrate from magic to legitimate consecration. The God particle, atoms, planets, the gay gene and perhaps the brain are undecidably poised between fanciful fictions that might close down inquiry by operating as a black box, or that might be genuinely 'real' insofar as their posited existence allows for more explanation and richer worldly engagement than other possible objects. What happens when an entity is poised between philosophical creation and scientific function? One might say that atoms are at once philosophical concepts, allowing us to imagine life *as if* it were composed of basic irreducible units, at the same time that atoms are also functions,

allowing for the creation of new forms of energy, destruction and physical prediction.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who provide the theoretical ballast for Patricia Pisters's magisterial work on the neuro-image, offered one of the most practical and *impractical* ways of distinguishing concepts from functions. Concepts are created by philosophy, are intensive and open new orientations that reconfigure the plane of thought upon which they are composed. Concepts do not label what is already there, but bring new modes of inquiry and being into existence. The brain is, therefore, strictly speaking a concept. If we employ much of the work that Pisters draws upon—theories of a mind that is extended, enactive, embodied, embedded and affective—then the brain is not simply a thing within the world (something that has extension), but is genuinely conceptual insofar as it reconfigures the problems we pose about almost anything. The brain is not an organ housed within the body that then enables cognition, processing and judgement of the world. To create a *concept* of the brain is to look at how relations among forces are altered, creating new speeds, responses, desires and new worlds. Just as every painting alters the history of painting, so the formation of a philosophical concept transforms the very possibility of philosophy. It makes sense—if we think of the brain as a dynamic and plastic network that becomes what it is always in relation to encounters that are at once felt in the body, but also extend beyond the skin to the light, sound and smell of the world—that philosophy would no longer be concerned solely with judgement, analysis, universal foundations or even truth in general. It would also make sense that philosophy might need to confront cinema: not because cinema tells stories or offers examples about which we philosophise, but because cinema as the composition and variation of images might also be akin to the brain, akin to a new style of philosophy. If the brain is not an organic but a dynamic and plastic and interactive network, then it makes sense not only to extend the mind beyond the body, but also to extend the neural paradigm to the non-human and not necessarily organic relays of images that make up the world. The brain would be a dynamic creative network composed of images, where the image includes sensations and affects that go beyond visual perception. Similarly, the cinema would not be realistic or representational but an exploration and reconfiguration of thinking—where thinking is now understood *not* solely as logical, theoretical or assertoric, but emotional, sensational and affective.

Key to Pisters's argument is a reconfiguration of film theory that goes back to a lost moment in cinema studies when it may have

been legitimate to consider the screen in relation to perceiving and feeling bodies. For Pisters this potential for considering the screen in its dynamic relation with the human body as a sensory-motor apparatus was quashed by an ideological resistance to seeing film as anything other than a text that might be analysed rigorously and semiotically. If, however, we consider recent work in neuroscience—both theories of schizophrenia that indicate a dominance of affective rather than bounded or logical thought, and theories of the extended mind—then the screen and cinema become philosophical scenes in which the very composition and synthesis of the world come into view:

The way neural activity here is embedded in a sensorymotor dynamic is an example of a 4EA position compatible with a Deleuzian framework. [...] If externalism means [...] that neurological processes are fundamentally connected to the brain, incorporate bodily and external processes, and thus maintain a relation between the inside and the outside, then the ‘strange encounter’ between Deleuze and cognitivism becomes quite plausible. Their meeting is in fact an exploration of the implications of the brain as screen, halfway between the external world and internal brain processes. (77)

Pisters begins her journey, however, less concerned with the brain as a philosophical concept than as the other possibility articulated by Deleuze and Guattari: the functions of science. The brain is also something that can be the object of a theory that would explain the world’s states of affairs. The brain, here, is less of a paradigm shift in the posing of problems than it is the opening of a new terrain of inquiry: fMRI images and new diagnostics allow for the new ways of approaching clinical problems such as schizophrenia and delirium. Pisters ties Deleuze and Guattari’s seemingly vague and figural accounts of schizophrenia to specific findings and case studies: ‘Recalling Jill Bolte Taylor’s story, we could argue that Deleuze and Guattari’s concern for schizophrenia relates to a similar desire to create more awareness for the “world of the right hemisphere” in a dominantly left hemisphere culture’ (46). It is this side of the brain—the brain as a function of science, as a way of considering the ways in which the mind perceives and composes its world—that Pisters explores in an early chapter on cinema and delirium. Here, the book is less concerned with the brain as a concept—the creation of a new orientation for thinking—and more with the brain as an object that, studied in its pathology, allows us to think of cognitive and neural processes more generally. So the states of delirium, fragmentation and disorder explored in films such as *The Butterfly Effect* (2004) are for Pisters ways of opening out onto broader

problems of the socio-political field. She even cites a study that concludes that mental disorders among Moroccan immigrants to The Netherlands are higher than among Dutch natives, indicating that, 'Environmental factors thus seem to be important as potential triggers of schizophrenia, which is confirmed by recent neuroscientific findings. [...] In sum, modern neuroscientific findings consider schizophrenia a brain disorder that can be related to abnormal synaptic connections and plasticity' (43).

The key manoeuvre occurs when Pisters does not allow this functional dimension to dominate the book's trajectory and instead makes two decisive methodological shifts. First, the supposed pathology of schizophrenia indicates something about mind in general, so that 'abnormal synaptic connections' might perhaps be better thought of as counter-normative synaptic connections, and would then include the cinematic creation of new image machines as well as the philosophical creation of aberrant syntheses: what if we imagined an image's or thing's power to think? Second, she shifts from considering delirium as depicted in film, to film itself as a mode of delirium, delusion or power of the false. Ostensibly examining films about magic, such as *The Prestige* and *The Illusionist* (both from 2006), Pisters develops a notion of film, perception (and then imagining more broadly) as illusion, *which cannot be placed as secondary to or distinct from cognition*:

Visual illusions (such as the Necker cube, and the spectacle on a film screen) demonstrate that perception in itself can be ambiguous, alternating between different interpretations of illusions that are both real on our brain-screen. Film viewing is such an illusion, which nevertheless triggers the activation of information within the neocortex, allowing us not only to see but also to understand, learn from, and interpret visual information. The workings of perception of reality and illusory perceptions of reality (like cinema) are quite similar. (82)

Here, Pisters's text and ongoing method is poised between two possibilities. The brain may be considered as a function—as a thing within the world that composes and recomposes images, and that in turn allows us to theorise other phenomena, such as the cinema and the mind and a general approach towards perception. On such a reading art can be studied for what it discloses about human organisms as sensory-motor apparatuses. Like certain pathologies, the illusions and delusions of cinema give us an intensified version of what occurs in thinking and cognition more generally. On the other hand, if cinema and the brain are screens that similarly compose and recompose images, then neither can be seen as like or explicative of the other; instead, one might think

of the world—beyond cinema and the brain—as a plane of interacting and mutually recreating images. The first approach, where the brain is a function, places art and the image within explanation, and allows us to perhaps form a Deleuzian rapprochement between cinema and science. We could refer to this as the neural or cognitive paradigm, where what we now know about the brain allows us to think differently about cinema and television. On the other hand, it may be that the science of the brain requires new philosophical concepts, and this is where Pisters takes her analysis with her notion of the ‘neuro-image’. If, for Deleuze, there is the movement-image, where cinema confronts the world’s composition through the interplay of movements, and the time-image, where cinema can fold different layers of time *not connected by a common space or movement*, then there should also be a neuro-image. Here, Pisters opens the neural beyond perception and synthesis of the world, to the cinematic power to present the history, politics, intensity and ethnicity of the world via the conjunction of images. If the brain is plastic, and *not* housed in the human organism, then it makes sense to consider our increasingly cinematic and televised milieu as an extended and intense domain of images that are at once thoroughly global and neural. This is not so much a neural paradigm, where the brain explains other entities, as it is a neuro-imaginary, where the thought of the political field as a war of images shifts the very mode of analysis and critique. The War on Terror is a war of images, a ‘new regime of images’:

it was not until the second historical moment [after 1989 and the fall of the Berlin wall], 9/11—the attack on the twin towers and their dramatic collapse in 2001, caught on countless professional and amateur cameras and distributed in a dense global network across different media—that the conditions of the large-scale emergence of the neuro-image were amplified, its qualities having already been signaled in the preceding decade. This crisis marked the end of (relative) post-Cold War euphoria, during which time even war had seemed to become ‘nonwar’ in a disappeared or faded political present. The violent attack by Islamic fundamentalists definitively transitioned US power toward the era of the War on Terror, with the war(s) in Iraq and Afghanistan as its most visible and dire consequences. With every attack, or seemingly apparent threat, increased measures of control and surveillance became more severe and invasive—ranging from the proliferation of CCTV cameras to full-body scans at airports and hyperinvasive and expanded data-mining by governments and companies. (301)

Like all books worth reading, Pisters’s work on the neuro-image raises more questions than it answers. How do we understand the very

notion of the 'neuro'? Is the brain and its neuro-paradigm a scientific lever for thinking critically about the politics of images, such that it becomes increasingly important (by way of science) to recognise the brain as plastic and tied to illusion? If this were so, then there would be some privilege attached to the science of the brain that would help to explain the functioning of images in philosophy and art. In part, such a use of scientific functions to make a claim about cinema is precisely the method that Pisters pursues. One might then criticise her project for its convergence of science with art, creating an equivocal relation whereby science is of a higher order of being and reality in its capacity to explain art. But to do so might require remaining unfaithfully faithful to Deleuze: for is not the claim of the cinema books that an event outside of philosophy requires a new mode of philosophy and not just the incorporation of new themes or objects? If that is so, then the 'neural' (like cinema) might signal a way of thinking the neural *outside the brain*, such that the notions of plasticity might not be borrowed from neuroscience to apply to other domains but might require a rethinking of the very notion of domains, and even of sites or modes of thinking. Just as Pisters refers to the ways in which surveillance culture has off-loaded the tasks of imaging and the politics of imaging to a zone that no longer has the form of a polity, perhaps we also need to think of the neural as a form of plastic, decentred but also fractal and explosive mode of relations that takes place outside what has come to be thought of as life.

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Jeffrey A. Bell (2009) *Deleuze's Hume: Philosophy, Culture and the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Two questions guide Deleuze's reading of Hume's philosophy in *Empiricism and Subjectivity*: first, 'how does the multiplicity of ideas in the imagination become a system?' and second, 'how can a subject transcending the given be constituted in the given?' Jeffrey A. Bell shows how, with these questions, Deleuze extends Hume's empiricism to develop his own transcendental empiricism. Although a great deal has been written on Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, surprisingly little has been written on his relationship to Hume, and Bell's *Deleuze's Hume* is the first book-length study of this relationship published in the English language.