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The Spiritual Dimension of the Brain as Screen Zigzagging from Cosmos to Earth (and Back)

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By connecting neurobiological findings to cinema and to Gilles Deleuze's philosophical claim that 'the brain is the screen', this chapter will look at the spiritual dimension of the brain. Considering a movie like a programme that is run on a processor, which is the mind, it will be argued that movies can modify our subjectivities such that the brain and mind are one. By focussing on the non-material qualities of the so-called cinematic 'time-image', the ways in which a spiritual dimension can manifest itself within the image and the brain will be looked at. Spirituality is thereby not defined as something ungraspable and transcendent but it is related to the domain of a 'cold choice'. Analyses of the films, 'Tierra' (1996) and 'Signs' (2002) will make these points clear.

In *The Abecedaire of Gilles Deleuze* as the last letter of the alphabet, Claire Parnet proposes the word 'zigzag'¹. Deleuze loves ending with this word. 'There is no word after zigzag', Deleuze says, 'Zed is a great letter that establishes a return to A'. Zed as movement of the fly, as movement of lightening, is perhaps the elementary movement that presides at the creation of the world. Deleuze even proposes to replace the Big Bang by 'le zigzag'. For the creation of a universe, for any universe, for everything there is, he argues that the most elementary question is: How can a connection between two singular points, between two different fields of forces be created? One can imagine a chaos of potentials, so how to bring these into relation?

According to Deleuze, everything consists of connection, and these connections are rarely made in a linear or predictable fashion. Each connection is however prepared by a 'sombre precursor'. The trajectory of the sombre precursor is barely noticed, but brings about a reaction between two points/forces. And then we have the lightening, 'le zigzag', that creates an insight ('l'éclair qui fait voir'). This light

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ening (seen as a metaphor, but also literally as strikes of lightening and geometric patterns) can be brought about by philosophy, art and science. And what's more, philosophy, art and science need each other for comprehension². In this chapter I hope to establish a few zigzagging movements and connections between philosophical, artistic and scientific thoughts associated with Deleuze's famous expression that 'the brain is the screen'³. Wondering about the spiritual potential of the brain as screen, the 'flashes of insight' are sparked off by a few Deleuzian concepts, some observations in neurobiology and Julio Medem's film *Tierra* (1996). At eye level, through the brain and the

movements of its thoughts, this will take us on a travel from the enormity of the cosmos to the micro organization of the earth.

Flash One: *Tierra* — From Cosmos to Earth

Lightening is literally the most important feature and sign in *Tierra*. It is also a sign of the various zigzagging connections that will be made during the film. At the beginning of the film, Angel (Carmelo Gómez) arrives at an island where he is supposed to fumigate woodlice from the soil. The landscape he drives through is struck by lightening: the trees, a few sheep and their herd are all electrocuted. During the title sequence, just before Angel's arrival, the camera has moved from a cosmic space to the island and into the soil:

Camera moves through a cosmic night. Angel's voice-over:

Death is nothing but if you were completely dead you wouldn't hear me. So you're here Angel, in the middle of the widest, most unknown ocean you can imagine. Existence is accompanied by an inevitable background noise called anguish, which we can only half bear. But don't despair, you live in the only known light in the universe.

Camera descends and moves through the clouds to the earth seen from above:

A tiny island which is at your eye-level, but riddled with holes of mystery.

Extreme close-ups from woodlice in the soil:

A mystery: the woodlice, less than an inch, with twelve legs, it is what gives the wines of this area their earthy flavour.

Back to the cosmos again:

Another mystery — me. I am the part of you that died and I speak from the cosmos. You have transcended in life like the woodlice in wine. But you're the one who's here for something.

Angel driving in his car saying:

Come on! I'm half man, half angel, half alive, half dead. I'm the voice that speaks from your mind, uncontrollably.

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Right from the beginning of the film, earthly qualities are mixed with celestial powers: the connection between the woodlice and the Angel; Angel declaring himself half man, half angel; half alive, half dead. Within the film, a logical explanation is given for this: Angel has been a psychiatric patient with a very big imagination and a split personality. He is almost cured and — perhaps as a sort of therapy — he has been given the assignment to fumigate the woodlice from the soil of the island. Here he will meet two women, Angela (Emma Suárez) and Mari (Silke). He feels attracted to both of them (his Angel side loves Angela, his man side prefers Mari) and a beautiful strange love story unfolds in which reality and surreality perfectly blend.

So at the level of the film's story, we see through Angel's eyes and Angel's schizophrenic brain tells us what to see and understand. But at another level, a meta-theoretical reading of the film that goes beyond the idea of a disturbed mind is also possible. At the end of the film, Angel refers to the brain explicitly. At the breakfast table with Angela, Mari and Alberto (Mari's brother, played by Nancho Novo) he asks: "Did you know that our brain contains a universe of 10,000 million neurons and 1,000 billion circuits? It only occupies 1,500 cubic centimetres. And it hides a black ocean that's unknown. There is no light.

But it generates disorder. Its laws obey chance, so it makes a lot of mistakes. And it's a machine that makes noise, although you don't hear mental noise. Like cosmic dust, which I've never seen, have you?" This and other remarks by Angel, which will be addressed later in this chapter, allow investigating further into the film's philosophical idea of 'the brain as screen' and its relations to the cosmic and spiritual forces of life.

Flash Two: Deleuze — The Brain is the Screen

In the eighties Deleuze argued that the (then) current ways of studying cinema through models of linguistics and psychoanalysis, are not the most productive ways of understanding what cinema does. Deleuze sees a profound parallel to the way in which philosophy brings movement to thought and cinema brings movement to image: 'I went straight from philosophy to cinema and from cinema to philosophy'⁴. If there is a model, he says, we should look at the biology of the brain:

The brain is unity. The brain is the screen. I don't believe that linguistics and psychoanalysis offer a great deal to the cinema. On the contrary, the biology of the brain — molecular biology — does. Thought is molecular. Molecular speeds make up the slow beings that we are. (...) The circuits and

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linkages of the brain don't pre-exist the stimuli, corpuscles, and particles that trace them. (...) Cinema, precisely because it puts the image in motion, or rather endows the image with self-motion, never stops tracing the circuits of the brain (Flaxman 2000).

What Deleuze prefers in the biology of the brain is that it doesn't have the drawback of the other two disciplines of applying ready-made concepts: "We can consider the brain as a relatively undifferentiated mass and ask what circuits, the movement-image or time-image trace out, or invent, because the circuits aren't there to begin with" (Deleuze 1995: 60). In the conclusion of *What is Philosophy?*; entitled 'From Chaos to the Brain', Deleuze and Guattari argue that the brain is central to not only philosophy, but also art and science. Together they are the three aspects under which a brain becomes subject, 'thought-brain' (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 210). It is the brain that thinks in the 'I conceive' of philosophy, the 'I feel or perceive' of art and the 'I know or I function' of science. In all three domains the brain confronts chaos. Chaos should be seen at the level of both the vastness of the universe and the microscopic (and smaller) level of the atoms. It's all a matter-flow of images that Deleuze calls the plane of immanence. In *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, he says; "It is rather a gaseous state. Me, my body, are rather a set of molecules and atoms which are constantly renewed. Can I even speak of atoms? They are not distinct from worlds, from interatomic influences. It is a state too hot for one to be able to distinguish solid bodies in it. It is a world of universal variation, of universal undulation, universal rippling" (1986: 58). By creating thoughts; philosophy, art and science refer back to chaos rendered consistent, like a mental 'chaosmos'.

Chaos however, is not the biggest struggle that philosophy, art and science need to fight. A much worse enemy is opinion. The misfortune

of people comes from opinion, Deleuze and Guattari argue. It is quite understandable why opinions are so attractive: they seem to protect us from chaos like an umbrella. As Deleuze and Guattari explain; “We constantly loose our ideas. That’s why we want to hang on to fixed opinions so much” (1994: 204). Philosophy, art and science however, want us to tear open the umbrella and plunge into chaos, “to let in a bit of free and windy chaos and to frame in a sudden light a vision that appears through the rent” (1994: 203). And the brain is the junction (not the unity) of the three planes. So this is not to say that these disciplines are all the same, or that they have to reflect on each other. Deleuze argues that the encounter between different disciplines starts when one discipline realizes that it has to resolve, for

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itself and by its own means, a problem similar to the one confronted by the other (1986: 367). So let us then look at some of the problems that film philosophy and sciences of the brain have in common.

Flash Three: Transdisciplinary Encounters — Neurobiology⁶

In *The Reality of Illusion*, Joseph Anderson gives an ecological approach to cognitive film theory, looking at the biological organisation of the brain and the modulations and changes that take place into the brain in perception and cognition of perception. One of the central problems in film theory addresses the question of reality or illusory characteristics of the film image. Usually there are two opposite schools of thought. On the one hand film is seen as the ultimate realistic form of art (Bazin, Kracauer), on the other hand is film considered to be the perfect illusory or artificial form of art (Metz, Eisenstein). Anderson now looks for instance at the Necker cube to see whether this can shed a new light on the problem. The Necker cube is a visual illusion: When you stare at the wire frame model of a cube for a while, the cube seems to flip its orientation between two possible interpretations of the picture. He then relates this to film viewing, stating that:

It is not a matter of being in a semihypnotic state in a darkened theatre. It is not a matter of suspending disbelief. It is not a matter of being ‘positioned’ as a spectator or ‘sutured’ into a text, and it has nothing to do with dreaming. It is instead our perceptual system alternating between two incompatible sets of information (a three dimensional world or a flat screen with shadows on it) (1997: 48).

Luckily our brain has more areas and the neo-cortex can then process this visual information and generate thought, focus attention at will, and learn. Information is processed simultaneously through several modules of the brain in order to react on visual input and it does so at a high reaction speed. The visual system sees, the cortex interprets. And there is always the possibility of illusion, in which “the system follows its own internal structures, but arrives at a percept that is in error if compared to physical reality” (Anderson 1997: 20). Film viewing is such an illusion, but nevertheless one that triggers the

activation of information within the neo-cortex, which allows us not only to see, but also to understand, learn from and interpret visual information. The workings of perception of reality and illusory perception of reality (like cinema) are quite similar.

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Another phenomenon from the biology of the brain that demonstrates the similarity between the perception of reality and the perception of film is the so-called 'mirror-neuron'. Mirror-neurons are fired when we actually do something, but the same neurons are also fired when we see (or hear) somebody doing something⁷. And for the brain there is no difference between seeing someone in reality or seeing someone on film. Something we see literally touches areas in the brain that imitate the perceived actions or feelings. This means that images should not be considered as re-presentations of an objective reality, but that images have an internal power that creates certain effects in the brain. As Antonio Damasio argues in his book *Looking for Spinoza*, neural patterns and corresponding mental projections of objects and events outside the brain are creations of the brain that are related to the reality that causes these creations, but not a passive reflection of this reality⁸. Mirror-neurons and the way in which the brain is affected by images can give insights into the implications of Deleuze's 'the brain is the screen' for film theory, which still very often takes representation (albeit not only as a reflection of reality) as a starting point for thinking about the image.

Flash Four: Medem — Deleuze — Time-Image

Moving now from a meta-theoretical level to a theoretical level, the phenomenon of mirror-neurons, also shows how this is compatible with Deleuze's own classifications of images in his cinema books. In *The Movement-Image*, Deleuze classifies image categories such as the action-image, the affection-image, the impulse-image, the relation-image: they cause action, affection, impulses or thoughts in the brain. They touch the brain directly and as such they also modify our subjectivities; they are, what Deleuze calls 'material aspects' of our subjectivity in which the brain and the mind are one. In the time-image Deleuze also distinguishes non-material aspects of subjectivity:

We have seen that subjectivity already emerged in the movement-image; it appears as soon as there is a gap between a perceived and an executed movement, an action and a reaction, a stimulation and a response, a perception-image and an action-image. And if affection itself is also a dimension of this first subjectivity, it is because it belongs to the gap, it constitutes its 'insides', it in a sense occupies it, but without fulfilling it. Now, on the contrary, the recollection-image comes to fill the gap and really does fulfil it (...) Subjectivity then, takes on a new sense, which is no longer motor or material, but temporal and spiritual (1989: 47).

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Elsewhere I have given more precise analyses of how on the level of filmic texts these different image-types can function as aspects of subjectivity⁹. Here it is important to notice that in Medem's work

subjectivity is mainly formed in a temporal and spiritual way. Of course there is matter everywhere; perceptions, actions and affections, but they are filled with a non-material, temporal and spiritual sense. Or rather, the spiritual and the material are two distinct yet indiscernible sides of the same fold (Bryden 2001: 241). In this section I will develop the temporal aspects of Medem's time-images. In the next, I will develop the spiritual aspects of his films. In the time-image the actual (as present that passes) and the virtual (as past that conserves itself) are both real and sometimes become indistinguishable, as if crystals of time come together. Especially in relation Angela, Angel's virtual side literally enters the picture. Three scenes in *Tierra* particularly illustrate this. In the first scene, Angel talks to Angela on the phone. Like at the beginning of the film, this scene starts with the camera moving from the cosmos to earth, while on the soundtrack we hear the voices of Angel and Angela in conversation. When the camera has entered Angela's house, we see her on the phone. When Angel (invisible on the other side of the phone line) tells her that he wants to imagine her, his virtual double suddenly moves from the left side of the screen into the image and kisses her face. Angela does not see him, although he does touch her with his voice and words. The second scene in which the virtual and the actual are both present, is again a scene in Angela's house, right after her father tries to kill himself because he cannot get over the loss of his wife. Angel saves him and he wants to console Angela. He stands behind her, while she is sitting at the kitchen table. He stares at her back and we hear his thoughts, expressing his profound love for her¹⁰. The camera movements suggest he is touching her with his look and thoughts, and just before he actually embraces her, his virtual self detaches from his body and puts his arms around her shoulders. The last scene takes place at the local bar, where Angel's virtual side seduces Angela, and Angela is again touched by Angel's angel-side, this time through his looks. But his man-side chooses to go and visit Mari. He leaves his virtual double angrily behind at the bar.

All these scenes show a doubling of the virtual and the actual, but they could still be considered as imaginations in Angel's head. The end of the film, however, clearly puts these moments in a very clear temporal perspective as well. In the one-but-last scene, Angel is in hospital after he has been hit by a stone on his head. He has just left

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both Angela and Mari. Nevertheless Mari comes to visit him and promises to leave the island with him. Then the camera moves into Angel's head. We see Angel walking behind Angela and her daughter while his virtual side says:

Listen to me for the last time. I'm not going with you. If you ever need me, you'll find me here, beside Angela, under these skies we like so much. Never forget this island. Even if it's just a memory lost in the vastness like the woodlouse under the earth, like the earth in the midst of the cosmos, like a tiny particle in the depth of your imagination. I'll live here if you don't forget me.

Then the scene changes, the colours change from the dark red of the earth to the deep blue of the sea. Angel and Mari are driving along the coast, leaving the island. In these last scenes it becomes evident that we can see the split personality of Angel not just as a projection of his schizophrenic mind, but it could also be seen in a philosophical way, as a recollection-image, in which time is split up between a present that passes (Mari) and a past that preserves itself (Angela). Perhaps Angela died and Angel keeps her alive as a memory (like a tiny particle); or perhaps Angel did die from the blow on his head, and Angela still keeps him alive in her memory while Angel now meets Mari in heaven (the colour changes could indicate this). Or perhaps Angel and Mari do leave, and Angela will feel Angel's presence forever, like she did before. The point is, of course, that all these alternatives are possible, like the real illusions in the Necker cube. The alternatives between the actual and the virtual are distinct but have become inseparable, making the distinction between fiction and reality blurred and unimportant for the brain/mind.

Flash Five: Sensation and Spirituality as a Cold Choice

In his article, 'The Scattering of Time Crystals' Michael Goddard points to the relationship between (virtual) time and spirituality: "Like an iceberg, the majority of which remains submerged beneath the surface of the ocean, mystical experience gives rise to a form of temporality that crystallises powerful virtual forces, beyond the power of an individual body or discourse to actualise: the body plunges into the virtual or spiritual depths which exceed it, rather than containing the spiritual as a personal property" (2001: 226). Another scene in *Tierra* seems to address literally this kind of spirituality related to

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time. After Angela's father has tried to commit suicide, Angel asks him to look for his deceased wife in the following way:

You're separated by an enormous distance. Your wife is 20 million years from here. That's how old the universe is. And as she has ceased to exist she's had to go back all that time.

They watch the sky. The camera sees them from a low angle at the back.

It's an enormous loss.

They turn to each other and look each other in the eye, framing still from below.

We live at our own eye level mid-way between the stars and the atoms. We can only move with our thoughts.

Angel looks at Angela who feels she's being watched.

Tomás, imagine a woodlouse. Do you see it? If your mind can reach the smallest thing it can reach the biggest. Then you can see the edge of the universe. You must do that with your wife. Ask her to come close.

Angel asks Tomás to travel in his mind and embrace the enormous vastness of time and cosmic spirituality. Spirituality is related to movement of the mind.

Throughout the whole film we see how cinema can become a spiritual tool, capable of facilitating "an experience of ecstatic subjectivation in which spectators experience cinema as a pure optical and

sound situation, a vision and a voice, a scattering of time crystals that lead them beyond the boundaries of their static selves and into profound contact with the outside” (Goddard 2001: 249). Now, what is particularly important for cinema (and art in general) is that it operates through sensations. So what is sensation in the brain and in which ways does this relate to spirituality? In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari discuss how sensation in art (cinema) responds to chaos by contracting ‘the vibrations of the stimulant on a nervous surface or in a cerebral volume’:

Sensation itself vibrates because it contracts vibrations. It preserves itself because it preserves vibrations. Sensation is the contracted vibration that has become quality, variety. That is why the brain-subject is here called *soul* or *force*, since only the soul preserves by contracting that which matter dissipates, or radiates, furthers, reflects, refracts, or converts (1994: 211).

A sensation is therefore a contraction, a contemplation of elements of matter that preserves the before in the after. And Deleuze and Guattari relate this aspect of sensation not just to humans but to all kinds of organisms. Plants and rocks do not possess a nervous system, but they seem to share chemical affinities and physical causalities that

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constitute ‘microbrains’ or an ‘inorganic life of things’, as they put it (1994: 213).

In this vitalistic conception of spirituality, when speaking of the soul, or force of life that art can make us feel, it is interesting to inquire a little further into the nature of this force of life, that is so fundamental to the sensations that cinema can bring about. According to Deleuze, spirituality has nothing to do with dreams or fantasy, but it is rather ‘the domain of cold decision, of absolute obstinacy, of the choice of existence’ (Flaxman 2000: 366). The cold choice seems to contradict the sensations that go with it, but in fact it is completely logical from a vitalistic perspective that sees the universe full of microbrains that are constantly moving, acting and reacting, but in sensations find a moment of pause, where all options are still open, and a decision has to be made.

When in *The Movement-Image* Deleuze discusses the affectionimage, the image category that creates sensations par excellence, he explains this idea of spiritual choice further: the alternatives are not between terms (such as ‘good’ or ‘bad’) but between modes of existence of the one who chooses (1986: 114). The true spiritual choice is choosing choice (choosing that you have a choice) or choosing that you have no choice. For instance choosing between the mode of existence where you choose to believe in God, or the mode of existence where you choose not to believe in God. Deleuze analyses all the different ways in which choice can manifest itself in the films of Bresson, Dreyer and Rohmer. Another more contemporary movie also presents us with this kind of spiritual choice, albeit not in the form of a time-image but rather in a Hollywood movement-image in which in the end the narrative leaves no ambiguities between crystals of time. *Signs* tells the story of a priest, Graham Hess (Mel Gibson), who

loses his faith after his wife dies in a terrible coincidental accident, and finds it back after he and his family survive an invasion of aliens and through which all the previous events of his life make sense. The main question the film raises, however, is certainly a spiritual one because it is a question of choosing between modes of existence. In one scene, Graham and his brother Merrill (Joaquin Phoenix) have just been watching television where unexplained signs and lights are reported as a possible alien invasion. Graham says that there are two groups of people: those who believe co-incidence does not exist, that everything is a sign of miracles and evidence of some higher power (be it cosmic or divine); or those who believe they're on their own. He asks Merrill to which group he belongs. Relating to a rather silly

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incident in his youth, that he endows with much significance, Merrill says he is a miracle man¹¹. Graham refers to the last words of his dead wife, 'see' and 'swing away', and says that these words were just caused by a coincidental electric wiring of her brain (zigzag) caused by the accident she was involved in, that made her recall a random memory of her brother-in-law who as a baseball player. Her last words seem completely irrelevant and without any sense and therefore Graham does not believe in miracles or higher forces.

Even though it is not said in the exact same words we are here dealing with a spiritual choice between the mode of existence of choosing to believe (in God, in external forces), or choosing the mode of existence of choosing not to believe. When Mel Gibson asks his brother to which group of people he belongs, he actually asks him to which group he chooses to belong — because there is no hard evidence. Merrill chooses to believe; Graham has chosen not to believe.

In the end, the film (and the filmmaker) will make clear that the electric wire of Graham's wife's brain does make sense, and that her words provide clues to fight the aliens¹². As if her brain, in a flash, could see into the future, or, from the far away place in the cosmos that she was already travelling to, she could look back in order to give her loved ones a sign that would become crucial in their future. But in the scene just described, all the options are still open, no evidence is given and a spiritual choice has to be made. Cinema gives us this experience of perpetually renewed spiritual decisions, every time a sensation on the brain gives us a flash of insight.

Flash Six: Spiritual Automaton — Restoring a Belief in the World

Deleuze ends his cinema books by concluding that cinema constitutes a whole psycho-mechanics, a spiritual automaton that can indicate the highest exercise of thought, but can also become possessed of automatization of the masses ('Hitler as filmmaker') (1989: 266). Looking at the technological and social evolution of cinema, Deleuze sees that the spiritual automata are changing with the advent of the electronic and numerical image. Instead of motor action, characters in cinema are no longer psychologically motivated persons that act, but more like 'puppets', cartoon-like characters, mechanical automata that express

speech acts, as if they receive these speech acts from a spiritual, nonpersonal dimension.

With computer animation that becomes increasingly realistic, many questions have been raised about the ontological status of the image.

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Although it no longer seems to be grounded in reality, computer animation becomes increasingly realistic and indistinguishable from analogue images. But, as we have seen, for Deleuze and for biologists of the brain the distinction between 'real' and 'unreal' is not a very important problem in the first place. This is also the reason why already at the beginning of *The Movement-Image* Deleuze argues that animation fully belongs to cinema because the figures are always 'in the process of being formed or dissolving through the movement of lines and points taken at any-instant-whatevers of their course' (1986: 5). Like Eisenstein who was lyrical about Disney, Deleuze argues that because it moves, it's a life and has the potential quality and power to affect the brain.

The difference then between old animated forms and new animated forms is not a degree of realism, but it is a difference in spiritual automaton. This spiritual automaton is not in the first instance dependent on the technological possibilities, but on a will to art (1989: 266). The principles of cinema of the movement-image are defined by a brain and a spiritual automaton that is directed at sensory-motor action. In the time-image (and possibly in the new digital-image)¹³ they are defined by a brain, which has a direct experience of time, in which the virtual and the actual are distinct but sometimes interchangeable or indistinguishable. And this is why the new spiritual automata, characters and films as a whole, become speech acts that create the reality of illusions that express the reality of the virtual.

As is known that Austin speech acts are performances of language that do something: by saying 'yes' at a wedding ceremony you actually change in civil status¹⁴. In a similar way Deleuze refers in *The Time-Image* to the performative quality of images (not only the language, but the whole image as creative storytelling) and to the power these performances have to actually change status since they become part of reality (1989: 268). This is of utmost importance for instance in political cinema that has as its goal fabulation, creative storytelling and performative filming that calls for a people to come into existence. But it is a characteristic of new spiritual automata in general. The question of the spiritual choice is of great importance, says Deleuze, because "choosing to choose is supposed to restore everything to us" (1986: 116). What is regained is a belief in this world, because the modern fact is that the link between man and world is broken. And thus, Deleuze argues:

... this link must become an object of belief: it is the impossible which can only be restored with a faith. (...) Only belief in the world can reconnect

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man to what he sees and hears. The cinema must film, not the world, but belief in this world, our only link. (...) Whether we are Christians or atheists, in our universal schizophrenia, we need reasons to believe in this world.

(1989: 172)

Philosophy, art and science all seem to bring something from the outside, chaos into the world, into our brains. Like Angel who speaks half as a dead man from a virtual place in the cosmos, the philosopher, the scientist, and the artist also seem to return from death, the chaos and vastness of the universe (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 202). But this should not be seen as a cult of death:

Between the two sides of the absolute, between the two deaths — death from the inside or past, death from the outside or future — the internal sheets of memory and the external layers of reality will be mixed up, extended, short-circuited and will form a moving life, which is at once that of the cosmos and of the brain, which sends out flashes from one pole to another (Deleuze 1989: 209).

With these zigzagging movements, thunderbolts and strokes of lightning the last flash of insight is that the 'zed' is also the 'zed' of zombies. Philosophers, artists and scientist are zombies who are halfdead because they are overwhelmed by life¹⁵.

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Notes

1 *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* with Claire Parnet. Dir. Pierre-André Boutang. Video Editions Montparnasse, 1996. See for an english summary of this video <http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/CStivale/D-G/ABC1.html> .

2 See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *What is Philosophy?* Trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson. London and New York: Verso. 1994: 218.

3 Gilles Deleuze. 'The Brain is the Screen. An Interview with Gilles Deleuze'. Trans. Marie Therese Guiris. In Gregory Flaxman (ed.). *The Brain is the Screen. Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press. 2000: 365-373.

4 'The Brain is the Screen', pp: 366.

5 In the same way, by film philosophy or film theory Deleuze does not mean philosophy about cinema, but theorizing the thoughts and concepts that are raised by cinema by its own means.

6 Since this is a first investigation in this transdisciplinary field, the issues here are not systematically mapped but rather meant as a starting point for further reflection. On a general note however, it should be noted that Deleuze's film philosophy could not be understood without contemporary scientific knowledge ranging from knowledge about the smallest molecular and atomic level of life (neurology, DNA, etc.), to the largest matters and measures in astronomy.

7 See Antonio Damasio. *Looking for Spinoza. Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*. Trans. into Dutch by Marjolijn Stoltenkamp. *Het Gelijk van Spinoza. Vreugde, verdriet en het voelende brein*. Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2003, pp. 107-108. And Johan den Boer. *Neurofilosofie. Hersenen, bewustzijn, vrije wil*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2003: 144.

8 *Het Gelijk van Spinoza*: 177.

9 See Pisters, Patricia. 2003. *The Matrix of Visual Culture. Working with Deleuze in Film Theory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
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10 Here it is possible to make another transdisciplinary connection, namely to the work of Rupert Sheldrake. In *The Sense of Being Stared at and Other Aspects of the Extended Mind* (2003), Sheldrake describes many scientific experiments that prove that the human mind can reach out and touch something in the field of vision. See also <http://www.sheldrake.org> .

11 Merrill discusses a moment at a party where he is about to kiss a girl. Because he has a chewing gum in his mouth he just turns around to take it away. When he turns back the girl is throwing up. Without the chewing gum she would have vomited on him instead of on the floor. Merrill sees this as a proof of higher forces.

12 When an alien has captured Graham's son, Graham suddenly *sees* what his wife meant. He tells Merrill to *swing away* with his base ball bat and hit the alien.

13 In his conclusion of the cinema books, besides the new spiritual automaton, Deleuze gives three other characteristics of the new image: its space becomes omnidirectional, it becomes an opaque surface inscribed with data, and sound and vision enter in new complex relationships. *The Time-Image*, p. 265-266.

14 See Austin, J. L. 1962. *How to do Things with Words*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

15 Deleuze also refers to zombies. See *The Time-Image*: 209.