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REPRESENTATION AND PRESENTATION
the deleuzian image

> ... images can never be anything but things,
> and thought is a movement.
> *Bergson*, Matter *125*

"it's done i've done the image" I

A few works have now been dedicated to Deleuze's cinema books and have discussed the relation between Bergson and Deleuze.[2] While there are inevitably points of overlap, this is a complex problem, and my point of focus differs from studies that have appeared so far. That is, nothing has yet been written concerning the pairing of the concepts of representation and presentation in relation to the image in Deleuze, yet this is crucial to my argument here. The purpose of this essay is to look at the role of the image, from a cognitive perspective, as an interaction between notions of "presentation" and "representation," and to use this distinction in order to begin to develop an understanding of how the image might work in art.

In *The Logic of Affect*, Paul Redding traces points of correspondence between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German idealism and contemporary theories of cognition. Redding underlines how a key distinction, or point of contention, in both nineteenth- and twentieth-century debates about the nature of cognition concerned the problem of whether sensations should be considered "presentations" or "representations." "Direct Realists" consider that sensations are impressed upon us (in the manner of the famous metaphor of the signet ring in wax) and directly perceived by the nervous system. Such presentations are understood to have being in their own right (and therefore one looks to ontology when considering their nature). Others, including idealists such as Fichte and Schelling, argue that what occurs in our experience of the world is the production of "representations." That is, they contend that the immediate process of sensation is always lost and out of reach, and that what remains is the interpretation of the sensation and such interpretations or *re*presentations involve or produce knowledge (and so one looks to epistemology when considering their nature) (Redding 90–123).

bergson's image and deleuze's images

In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze, while acknowledging his debt to Bergson in developing the concept of the movement-image, criticises him for misunderstanding cinema. Bergson, he argues, applies the wrong criteria of the image to cinema, under-

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standing it as a succession of frozen states rather than as providing a continuous image of movement (*Cinema 1* 1–2).[3] While it is not possible to fully understand Deleuze's concept of the image, or more specifically the image as sign, through a straightforward comparison with Bergson, certain points of convergence and divergence between them are instructive.

Bergson, as Deleuze points out, is dismissive of cinema. *Matter and Memory*, however, draws heavily upon the concept of the "image," a term which already had a long history in philosophy tying it to inadequate modes of understanding.[4] Yet rather than the "image" being a secondary category, linked to the inferior kinds of understanding derived from the testimony of the senses, the image, in Bergson's system, is given a much more prominent place.

> Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of "images." And by "image" we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealists call a representation, but less than that which the realist calls a thing – an existence placed halfway between the "thing" and the "representation." (*Matter* 9)

What Bergson proposes is neither, on the one hand, using the image as a means of displacing terms with a much more aristocratic genealogy such as the "idea" or "thought" – terms which were often set up against the image as superior mental processes and which are both implicit in the term "representation" – nor, on the other hand, as a means of dissolving the reality of "things" external to one who perceives. Rather, he is proposing understanding the "image" as a bridge between those objectively existing things and our thoughts. It is a bridge because the image exists both in the thing which has or projects an image consistent with the nature of its own being, and in our minds which receive the projected images in the manner of a screen. "This is as much to say that there is for images merely a difference of degree, and not of kind, between being and being consciously perceived" (*Matter* 37).

For Bergson, my body too is an image, though different from all others in that it is one that I perceive not only externally through perceptions but internally through my affections (*Matter* 17). The body is an image that acts like all other images, receiving movement and giving back movement, "with, perhaps, this difference only, that my body appears to choose, within certain limits, the manner in which it shall restore what it receives" (*Matter* 19). That is:

> if ... all images are posited at the outset, my body will necessarily end by standing out in the midst of them as a distinct thing, since they change unceasingly, and it does not vary. The distinction between the inside and the outside will then be only a distinction between the part and the whole. There is, first of all, the aggregate of images; and, then, in this aggregate, there are "centers of action," from which the interesting images appear to be reflected: thus perceptions are born and actions made ready. (*Matter* 47)

So the brain is more than a screen that passively receives a projection from outside: it is a screen which in turn acts, and acts in two ways. It both analyses the images projected upon it, and itself selects the movements it executes within its body: "the brain appears to us to be an instrument of analysis in regard to the movement received and an instrument of selection with regard to the movement executed" (*Matter* 30). The brain does not produce representations in the manner understood by idealism (bringing the world into being); rather, it receives and acts upon images (*Matter* 19–22, 74).

Representations do occur, but they are not the result of our brain *adding* something to perceptions of images; rather, conscious perception, for Bergson, involves the process of realising representations by *subtracting* what does not interest us from an image (that is, the way in which it is linked to all other images, which comprises its real action) and concentrating on those aspects of it with which we might potentially interact (the virtual action) (*Matter* 35–36). Such a subtraction, focusing only on those elements of the image on which we might act or which might act on us, relates (and Deleuze underlines this point) to the sensori-motor circuit of perceiving and acting. That is, there is a stimulus, and then there is an action or reaction. This involves a selective causal chain, one based on a logic through which the effects one perceives are understood to be first causes.[5] In turn, we isolate

these causes in considering what will act on us and what we might act on. This process in turn provides the structure on which narrative (which develops through tracing selected causal chains) is built. The brain, then, is a screen in two senses: in one sense it is the repository for the images of things which it reflects in the manner of a cinema screen; in another it filters or sifts, screening out what is not able to be understood in terms of sensori-motor interest.

> Our [brains, which are] "zones of indetermination" play in some sort the part of the screen. They add nothing to what is there; they effect merely this: that the real action passes through, the virtual action remains. (*Matter* 39)

We begin to see, from what we have selected here, how Bergson's theories should have an effect on notions of representation, and it is worth attempting to trace this effect in Deleuze's work in order to better understand the nature of the "image."

the world and cinema

Deleuze develops the concept of the "image of thought" in *Proust and Signs*, in *Difference and Repetition* and, with Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, to describe those non-philosophical presuppositions which underlie a thinker's work and allow them to begin creating their system (Deleuze, *Negotiations* 147–49). Using Bergson's presupposition that understanding involves a process of reconstruction, or of attempting step by step to do over again the problem described (*Matter* 116), we might begin by asking what problems might be involved in translating Bergson's concepts, which concern perception per se, perception of the "real world," to processes of perception and affection related to the fabricated worlds of cinema.

The first thing to note is that this apparent difficulty is never noted in Deleuze's cinema books.[6] Nothing is said about it because it does not relate to the action that interests Deleuze in these books; its shadow passes through, however, just as Bergson's real actions (those images of pure perception) pass through us, while the virtual actions (those representations selected from perception) remain and are absorbed.

What is the effect of this silence? The brain is a screen and the world is a mass of images projected onto that screen. In a sense stronger than merely metaphorical, then, the world is a cinema, though, as we have already seen in the brief overview above, the screen of the brain is not merely a passive instrument of reflection: it not only reflects but selects, analyses, acts, and absorbs action. This stronger than metaphorical link allows Deleuze to make connections, though they are not necessarily those connections we might have come to expect.

The world is a cinema, in which there is cinema, but this does not lead in to a *mise en abîme*; indeed, it is noteworthy that Deleuze avoids this gesture, so common among his French contemporaries. Looking at an image of a reflection (placing a mirror up against a mirror) does not lead to an endless abyss of reflections for Deleuze; rather, when the mirror is brought into play we are given "the crystal-image" where the virtual and real become indistinguishable, crystallising into a new state (*Cinema 2* 68–97). That is, rather than falling into an abyss, we are suspended by a transformative process of crystallisation that offers a strange parity between the real and the virtual: the world is a cinema – the cinema is a world (*Cinema 2* 68–70).

If we assume a critical reading of all this we must retrace these steps. If the world projects onto the screen of the brain, does the film-maker select or screen the real to re-project an already represented world onto the screen of the cinema (which in turn is re-projected onto the brain of the viewer (who in turn screens or filters it further))? If so, how would this process not involve a dissolution or degradation of the image, when Bergson tells us that the representation already involves the subtraction from the image of what does not interest us?

It is worth emphasising this point, which is crucial to my argument. The term "representation" is understood here in the cognitive sense discussed above. For Bergson, as we have seen, the interpretation or cognitive appraisal involved in developing a representation

does not involve adding something but, rather, examining what is presented and filtering it, concentrating only on those elements of the presentation which interest us. Conscious perception, then, for Bergson, is a process of selection and this selection is already implicated in processes of interpretation. I see a tiger charging towards me and perceive it by focusing on it, isolating it from the mass of less important information being offered to my senses at that moment. This process is related to the sensori-motor circuit described above: you sense danger, for example, by quickly recognising what you can act upon or what can act upon you, and then you immediately react. In turn, this process can be related to art if the term "representation" is always understood in this sense and not confused with the many other senses it has developed in being used to describe works of art. I understand representation in art, as in cognition, here, to involve this process of selection or screening (in its dual sense), a selection of what is of interest, which already involves interpretation. With cognition this interpretation is single, as the perceiving individual creates a representation from a presentation. In creative forms, when they involve representations, there can be a double process. Some works are representations that already carry clear interpretations with them (which can only be accepted or rejected by an audience). Some are representations of representations (drawing their form and content from previous works of representation rather than offering something new). In each of these cases the interpretations available to an audience will be impoverished.

As I will argue below, however, art (and specifically in this instance film) does not have to represent something that has already been represented or interpret its images to the degree that their meaning is already abundantly clear to an audience. Rather, it can create, and in creating it offers the audience, a new image that they must interpret (with an effort of thought) rather than a pre-interpreted image.

The bad film is one that offers pre-interpreted, pre-digested images, so that the viewer is not called upon to interpret. For Deleuze, however, at least in certain films, films that are not mediocre, the world is created, not represented. There is no imitation involved in such created images. Such created images do not send us back to the world in order to be authenticated; rather, they immediately form part of our world as we set the screen of our brain against the cinema screen. As Deleuze states:

> 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. This characteristic can be manifested either positively or negatively. The screen, that is to say ourselves, can be the deficient brain of an idiot as easily as a creative brain ... Bad cinema always travels through circuits created by the lower brain: violence and sexuality in what is represented – a mix of gratuitous cruelty and organized ineptitude. Real cinema achieves another violence, another sexuality, molecular rather than localized. ("The Brain" 366–67)

representation and presentation

Further light might be shed on this problem if we turn to one of the few passages in which Deleuze specifically mentions "representation" in the cinema books. Here we have an example of a submerged system, as Deleuze never seeks to appeal to the concept of representation in order to buttress the concepts related to the image; yet, in looking back to Bergson and in examining one of the few occasions when Deleuze does use the term representation, it becomes clear that there is a distinction between a selected representation (a degraded interpretation of a real image) and the presentation of an image in its fullness (such as is possible in the crystal-image but, perhaps, not only here), which strikes us with its power.

In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze states that the movement-image provides a *representation* of time while the time-image provides a *presentation* of time:

> By raising themselves to the indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary, the signs of the crystal go beyond all psychology of the recollection or dream, and all physics of action. What we see in the crystal is no longer the empirical progression of time as succession of

> presents, nor its indirect representation as interval or as whole; it is its direct presentation, its constitutive dividing in two into a present which is passing and a past which is preserved, the strict contemporaneity of the present with the past that it will be, of the past with the present that it has been ... the time-image has arisen through direct or transcendental presentation, as a new element in post-war cinema ... (274–75)

We need to keep in mind how Bergson has defined representation as involving subtraction, as involving a selection from the image rather than the whole image, as being something less than the image. The movement-image *represents* time in that we arrive at an understanding of time not by being shown time directly but by being shown a line of action which necessarily involves the passage of time in its unfolding (an empirical progression). Following Bergson, this is a representation because it involves a process of subtraction from the image. We would be shown a man at the bottom of a staircase, for example, and then, through the techniques of continuity editing, we would be shown the man at the top of the staircase, the passage of time taken to mount the staircase being represented through the subtractions involved in the codes of continuity editing. The time-image, on the other hand, presents the flow of time (which is not simply monodirectional from past to present but involves flux). The cinema of the time-image is the cinema of the seer not the actor. Whereas the movement-image and the narrative form attached to it relate to sensori-motor links (such as those described by Bergson which result from selective perception: that is, the editing out of material from the images received, the subtraction involved in forming representations of the real which in turn allow us to act), the time-image emerges in response to situations "to which one can no longer react" (*Cinema 2* 272).

> These are pure optical and sound situations, in which the character does not know how to respond ... But he has gained in an ability to see what he has lost in action or reaction: he SEES so that the viewer's problem becomes "What is there to see in the image?" (and not now "What are we going to see in the next image?") ... This is no longer a sensory-motor situation, but a purely optical and sound situation, where the seer has replaced the agent ... (Ibid.)

We are given an image that requires us to see with the protagonist, which makes us look and directly experience time. The time-image, then, requires the movement of the viewer into the image in order that that viewer might directly experience seeing and the time involved in seeing. This is described as a "presentation" because there is no process of subtraction involved.

cliché

If the time-image involves the creation of presentations where a real experience of time merges with a virtual experience, what hope is there for the movement-image? We need to remember that the representations we experience in perceiving the real are closely related to the narratives constructed in the cinema of the movement-image. There appears to be a danger in this, which is the danger of habit, the danger of cliché. If there were to be a cinema of the movement-image that would correspond to what Deleuze might term true cinema, it would somehow need to avoid cliché. Our experience of acting, the sensori-motor circuit, is already an understanding through continuity editing: we subtract (or suppress) those perceptions that are not crucial to the action being performed, and link together those perceptions which are crucial to that action in order to better perform that action, just as the narrative film-maker subtracts material extraneous to the action and links those materials considered crucial to the action.

Such an experience of acting includes perceiving, acting, and the experience of emotions related to these perceptions and actions. We can see how this sensori-motor circuit is clearly related to the images of narrative cinema, which Deleuze calls movement-images. He breaks these images into three categories: the perception-image (often associated with the long shot in which an object is seen) is related to real perception, the action-image (often associated with the medium shot in which figures engage in action)

is related to real action, and the affection-image (often associated with the close-up in which we register emotion expressed by the face) is related to emotion (see *Cinema 1*). While it might be argued that each of these images involves the selection of items to be shown from an indefinite set of possibilities related to the "real world," and that they therefore correspond to Bergson's definition of representation, following Deleuze's suggestion that, in good films, these images are created rather than subtracted from the real, in a non-clichéd narrative film each might be understood as potentially complete in itself. Such non-clichéd narrative films (these certainly occur prior to the crisis of the action-image Deleuze describes, but the possibility of their re-emergence is never completely closed down) would involve the creation of representations that stand over for, rather than mimic, the representations we create ourselves in the real. In this way, one might speak of such non-clichéd narrative films as being primary representations, working at one remove from or merging with our immediate perceptions, whereas cliché involves the representation of representations, the showing again of the already familiar.

The bad film, then, partakes of cliché. Falling into cliché, for Deleuze, marks the crisis of action-image that is only fully overcome with the emergence of the time-image. With the cliché, that action which occurs is not only an expected action but an action carried by images that complacently refer to earlier images and seek to rely on those images for their (reflected) power. In one sense it is simply a problem of representation within cinema history: the cliché is not a representation of the real; rather, it is a representation of other (cinematic) images. It refers to – in shorthand – and necessarily subtracts from the store of images that has come to make up cinema history. Such a point explains why genres have a life and then pass away or into new forms: the western, the gangster film, the musical ... all these forms have changed markedly over time, and of necessity, as without change the images congeal into cliché. Part of the burden of tradition is the problem of how to escape from cliché, how to avoid the danger of showing again what has been shown too often and has therefore lost its power to affect or even entertain. The representation of the representation is related to habit, while the image (presentation or non-clichéd representation) eludes habit in forcing the viewer to participate in its understanding (see *Matter* 44–45, 84).

Yet the problem becomes even more pronounced when one considers how cliché emerges not simply through the repetition of images within cinema history but through the imitation of elements of "the real" that have themselves become clichéd. It is as if bad cinema has invaded life so that we sometimes (developing our real-life representations with processes of selection already contaminated by common expectations or cliché) play out hackneyed scenarios that are in turn re-represented by bad cinema. The crisis stems from the hardening of the image into a representation, and the hardening of our own perceptions (which, following Bergson, already involve representations) into cliché or habit. One suspects it is not impossible for cinema partaking of the movement-image to avoid this double trap of cliché.[7] The problem now becomes (or becomes again, as it was in literature for Flaubert, Shklovsky, Proust and Beckett among others): how does one overcome cliché in art, how does one overcome habit in life? Deleuze asks:

> if images have become clichés, internally as well as externally, how can an Image be extracted from all these clichés, "just an image", an autonomous mental image? An image *must* emerge from the set of clichés ... With what politics and what consequences? What is an image which would not be a cliché? Where does the cliché end and the image begin? (*Cinema 1* 215)

Deleuze seems to offer an answer that involves two kinds of image. In the cinema, both are kinds of crystal-image, a mutation rather than the completion of the old cinema, which moves from representation to presentation. Firstly, Deleuze describes an "autonomous mental image" which "had not to be content with weaving a set of relations, but had to form a new substance" (ibid. 215). Moving away from the cinema, one might seek to understand this kind of

image with reference to Deleuze's essay on Francis Bacon, where he speaks of the process of creating an image through extraction, rather than abstraction, from the real (*Francis Bacon* 9). Such an image is cut from the set of relations commonly offered and presented as an autonomous substance, a pure affect. Secondly, we have seen how Deleuze speaks in the second cinema book of the time-image as presentation. That is, rather than showing us an image which has already passed through the screening process of perception, the time-image offers us an image which makes us see but does not allow us to act, an image in all its fullness. Again moving away from cinema one might mention Proust (who himself knew and drew upon Bergson) and the logic of the madeleine and involuntary memory which casts one back into a previous time, a time which is replete with the image of the memory in all its fullness, prior to the impoverishment brought about through the selections of perception.[8] Such an image is a direct presentation, a non-represented image, a plenitude.

It is apparent, however, that the representation and the presentation can co-exist in a work, just as the image might emerge from cliché. Asked in what sense he means that the cinematic image (the time-image) is not "in the present" Deleuze states:

> it seems obvious to me that the image is not in the present. What the image "represents" is in the present, but not the image itself. The image itself is an ensemble of time relations from the present which merely flows, either as a common multiple, or as the smallest divisor. Relations of time are never seen in ordinary perception, but they are in the image, as long as it is a creative one. ("The Brain" 371)

The presentation can emerge out of the representation in the case of art. On the other hand, there is the representation of the representation alone in the case of non-art. There is, therefore, a need to talk of the actualisation of the virtual in good films or art, that is, the process of drawing out or entering into an image (which always carries with it a set of unrealised or not yet realised possibilities) which is in part undertaken by the viewer.

We find here, then, two interrelated elements towards a general definition of the image in the cinema books. Firstly, the image involves the avoidance of or the escape from clichés, as the creation of the new. Secondly, the image often involves presentation that might be understood as the necessary involvement of the viewer in its interpretation rather than the referral of the viewer to ready-made or habitual responses. Further, the image as presentation has at least two possible forms: (a) the extracted image, the autonomous mental image (in the manner of Francis Bacon) and (b) the direct presentation, the non-represented image (in the manner of Proust). While both of these occur in cinema, one might argue that they are also transportable to other media: indeed, in outlining their nature here we have moved to literature and the visual arts.

In an attempt to clarify these processes further one might, using the terminology of Bergson and Deleuze, represent the processes described above diagrammatically (see Fig. 1).

The order shown in Fig. 1 is determined by Bergson's contention that we always move from the idea to the perception, and not the other way around, in the process of recognition (*Matter* 130–31). The sign, or the idea, then, comes between pure perception and perception, screening the former to produce the latter.

peirce, deleuze, bergson

The reading of Bergson in Deleuze has taken us in a certain direction and we are beginning to see the importance of the interaction between perception and representation. The process is not complete, however. I feel that more light can be shed on the problem and a clearer understanding might be uncovered by linking Bergson with Charles Sanders Peirce.

In developing his theory of the cinematic image in *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, Deleuze turns not only to Bergson but to the founder of semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce. Deleuze is careful to differentiate between semiotics (the study of signs) and what he calls "semiology" (the study of language-based sign systems). Deleuze consid-

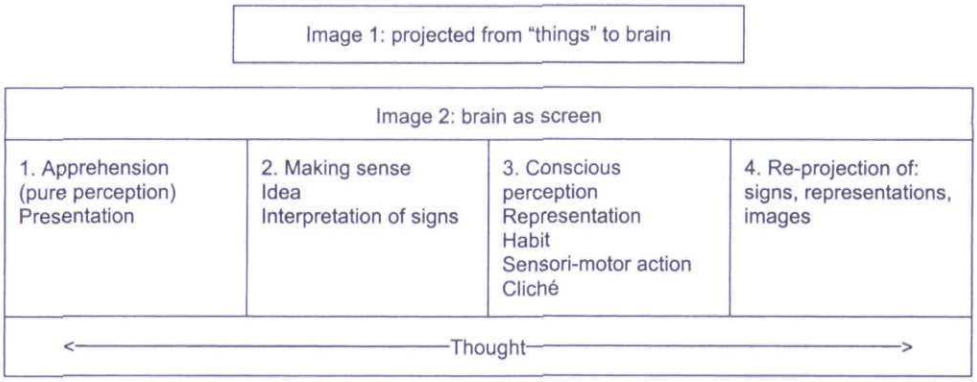

Fig. 1.

ers that the semiologists (those theorists, highly influential in the twentieth-century French intellectual tradition, who built upon theories developed by Saussure) are wrong to use language as the privileged model for all semiotic systems, because this model is limited and unable to do justice to thought which might work through images (or some other means) just as readily as through human language. He prefers Peirce because Peirce does not privilege language, indeed Peirce does not even privilege humans systems of communication; rather, Peirce considers, in effect, that everything is a kind of sign: "[A Sign is] Anything which determines something else (its *interpretant*) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its *object*) in the same way, the interpretant becoming in turn a sign, and so on *ad infinitum*" (Peirce 239). For Peirce this is true of the world as a whole. The human brain is not a prerequisite for thought or for the existence and interaction of semiotic systems:

> Thought is not necessarily connected with a brain. It appears in the work of bees, of crystals, and throughout the purely physical world; and one can no more deny that it is really there, than that the colors, the shapes, etc., of objects are really there. Consistently adhere to that unwarrantable denial, and you will be driven to some form of idealistic nominalism akin to Fichte's. Not only is thought in the organic world, but it develops there. But as there cannot be a General without Instances embodying it, so there cannot be thought without Signs. We must here give "Sign" a very wide sense, no doubt, but not too wide a sense to come within our definition. (Peirce 252)

We should note that Deleuze criticises Peirce for asserting rather than deducing the nature of the sign (that it does not depend on language). This use of unargued assertion is dangerous, in Deleuze's view, because he considers that it does not provide the sufficiently strong impetus that would allow Peirce's system to resist the gravitational pull of linguistic systems. This is because, for Deleuze, Peirce still tends, from time to time, to privilege "knowledge" or the *interpretation* of signs,[9] which in turn causes Peirce to fall too heavily under the influence of linguistic models of communication. As Deleuze states:

> ... the sign's function must be said to "make relations efficient": not that relations and laws lack actuality *qua* images, but they still lack that efficiency which makes them act "when necessary", and that only knowledge gives them. But, on this basis, Peirce can sometimes find himself as much a linguist as the semiologists. For, if the sign elements still imply no privilege for language, this is no longer the case with the sign, and linguistic signs are perhaps the only ones to constitute a pure knowledge, that is, to absorb and reabsorb the whole content of the image as consciousness or appearance. They do not let any material that cannot be reduced to an utterance survive, and hence reintroduce a subordination of semiotics to a language system. (*Cinema 2* 31)

Deleuze goes on to claim that his own theory of the image in cinema avoids this pitfall because

he deduces the three types of images[10] rather than claiming them "as fact" (ibid.).

In order to better understand the nature of the image, it is worth unpacking something of what is at stake here. Peirce develops three categories, the First, Second and Third:

> The First is that whose being is simply in itself, not referring to anything nor lying behind anything. The Second is that which is what it is by force of something to which it is second. The Third is that which is what it is owing to things between which it mediates and which it brings into relation to each other. (188–89)

Although Peirce relates notions of First-, Second- and Thirdness to kinds of signs, the sign, in principle, is an expression of the Third: that is, "A sign is an object [1] which stands for another [2] to some mind [or interpretant, 3]" (Peirce 141) and for Peirce, as we have seen, everything is a sign, and the universe itself is a semiotic system.

How, then, could this be made to fit with the ideas of Bergson? This question is not posed directly by Deleuze, but its outlines can be traced in what we have laid out above. For Bergson, we will remember, an image is "a certain existence which is more than that which the idealists call a representation, but less than that which the realist calls a thing – an existence placed halfway between the 'thing' and the 'representation'" (*Matter* 9). To a certain extent, it is possible to roughly line up these coordinates again with Peirce. The "thing" of the realists would correspond with the First (see Peirce 189), while the "representation" of the idealists would be replaced by Peirce (who breaks definitively with idealist models) with the sign that is the Third. Halfway between the First and the Third is the Second, and I would argue that, at least to an extent, at least on some occasions, the image can correspond with the Second.

That is, moving here in some senses between Peirce and Bergson and in some senses outside their systems, the image can appear in an uninterpreted state. In such a state, it is an image that confronts another (and we are all images for Bergson). As a mind, I may move to understand the image which appears to the image that is my brain, and, in so far as I succeed in understanding that image, I might be said to interpret it as a representation and convert it into, or recognise it as, a sign. This might occur with some ease or with some difficulty. In so far as the image is already integrated into a semiotic system with which I am familiar, the process will be easy, and the image might immediately be understood as a sign. It is a sign because it stands for *something to me.*[11] If, however, the image is not easily understood, one of two things will happen. I will either pass over the image as something on which I cannot act, screening it out as being without relevance. Or I will struggle to understand the image (and perhaps fail). The power of the image, then, in part rests in the fact that it is that which I must move towards, that I must actively interpret. Certain signs are understood passively: they belong to systems that have become familiar and to which one can respond through a kind of reflex or habit (*Matter* 44–45, 84). In art, these image-signs can become clichés. The images that are not clichés, then, are those that require the interpretant to actively interpret, to move towards the unfamiliar. These images are not yet signs, but they have already been recognised as significant, and it is the ungrasped significance that gives them their power. They are presentations that we are seeking to grasp as representations. One might bend Peirce's terms here and argue that this involves a movement between Secondness and Thirdness (and even on occasion, where the image is infinite, potentially back to Firstness, which is the apprehension of all being, the presentation in its pure form).

> The First must ... be present and immediate, so as not to be second to a representation ... What the world was to Adam on the day he opened his eyes to it, before he had drawn any distinctions, or had become conscious of his own existence, – that is first, present, immediate, fresh, new, initiative, original, spontaneous, free, vivid, conscious, and evanescent. Only, remember that every description of it must be false to it. (Peirce 189)

Of course, not all images can aspire to dragging us back to this unfallen state (though I

would suggest that on certain occasions, such as Proust's endeavour to express spontaneous memory, this is, at least, attempted). In effect, the image, as understood here, largely concerns a Secondness, or the recognition of meaningfulness and the imperative to understand: the recognition of the need to interpret which is not yet complete and possibly impossible to complete.

Such interpretation, in effect, involves an effort to bridge the gap between the Second and the Third (or the First, Second and Third); between presentation and representation. It involves, then, genuine thinking, an active struggle that might even be overwhelming on occasion. It is, I would argue, one way in which one might begin to understand the difference between the affect of art and the affects of kinds of representation. Simple representation does not produce or require thought. Art, in whatever medium it might exist, stimulates thought in the interpretant, and one way in which it does this is by producing images that are on their way to being signs but are not yet or are no longer signs.

bergson and intuition 12

In *Matter and Memory* Bergson states: "images can never be anything but things, and thought is a movement" (125). In developing a description of "intuition" in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* Bergson urges us to develop a kind of thinking that does justice to movement (43–45). There are two kinds of knowledge, he claims. Firstly, there is relative knowledge, which is outside the object it seeks to describe. Such knowledge is relative because I, say, view an object, but I view it from a given position. Another will view it from a different perspective and so the truth of the observations will be relative to the given position from which one observes (the car moves towards me but away from you: "to" is true relative to me, whereas "from" is true relative to you (*Introduction* 43–45)).

The second kind of knowledge, however, is absolute, and it is absolute because the observer is no longer outside the object; rather, the observer is within the object. The understanding of movement, in such a case, is no longer relative; it is, in respect to the object itself, absolute. Such absolute knowledge is achieved through intuition that involves a being within a given object. In this way I have, at least potentially, in so far as I am able to achieve intuition, an absolute knowledge of my self, as the self is what I inhabit.

> A representation taken from a certain point of view, a translation made with certain symbols, will always remain imperfect in comparison with the object of which a view has been taken, or which the symbols seek to express. But the absolute, which is the object and not its representation, the original and not its translation, is perfect, by being perfectly what it is. (*Introduction* 5–6)

In illustrating this point Bergson turns to art, and specifically to the novel. While claiming that art will always fail to capture the absolute, and while describing the nature of this failure, he also posits an ideal art:

> The author may multiply the traits of his hero's character, may make him speak and act as much as he pleases, but all this can never be equivalent to the simple and indivisible feeling which I should experience if I were able for an instant to identify myself with the person of the hero himself. Out of that indivisible feeling, as from a spring, all the words, gestures, and actions of the man would appear to me to flow naturally ... The character would be given to me all at once, in its entirety ... Description, history, and analysis leave me here in the relative. Coincidence with the person himself would alone give me the absolute. (*Introduction* 3–4)

I would argue, however, that from time to time we do at least get a sense, or the impression, of such identification through works of art, and that this is something we recognise as being part of what affects us when we watch a film that really works, a good film. The "absolute" here is another word for the pure, complete presentation that it is no doubt impossible for any art form to achieve fully. It is the First, and "every

description of it must be false to it" (Peirce 189), but, at least, in taking us back to the Second, the image which requires interpretation does bring us as close as possible to this. To cite Bergson one last time:

> Now the image has at least this advantage, that it keeps us in the concrete. No image can replace the intuition of duration, but many diverse images, borrowed from very different orders of things, may, by the convergence of their action, direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to be seized. (*Introduction* 16)

If we are to accept these ideas, we might begin to see how two kinds of understanding differ. In so far as I understand through habit (that is, in so far as I recognise a sign, acknowledge a representation) I am able to achieve only relative understanding. I am external to the object [1] which is a sign of something else [2] to my mind [3]. If, however, the image is recognised as significant but not understood, if it urges me to struggle to understand, I need to move back towards the image in order to understand, and this movement is, at least potentially, one which moves with the image object (that is, it moves towards, while never quite achieving, the absolute). If I ever grasp such an image I will do so through intuition (yet I will fail to represent this understanding when I turn to the kind of critical analysis one must necessarily adopt in discussing an object such as a work of literature).

notes

1 Beckett, *Image* 168.

2 Notably Rodowick (ed.) and Flaxman (ed.).

3 For a discussion of this point see Eric Alliez. On the indivisibility of movement in Bergson (and that there are no instants), see Bergson, *Matter* 188–92.

4 A number of philosophers, however, including Nietzsche, Bergson and Michèle Le Doeuff, have demonstrated how important the image is within philosophical thinking.

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5 This complex process, implied in Bergson's theories, is discussed elsewhere in Deleuze's work in relation to Spinoza; see Deleuze, "On the Difference."

6 For discussions of this identification, see Jean-Clet Martin and François Zourabichvili.

7 Though this seems difficult; see Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 214–15.

8 See Uhlmann, chapter 2, on this point.

9 This is apparent in a much earlier (*c.*1873) definition of the "sign": "A sign is an object which stands for another to some mind" (Peirce 141).

10 The affection-image, the action-image and the relation-image, which correspond to Peirce's categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 31).

11 This process of reflex recognition is related to systems that are socially determined and belong to groups (such as language), developed through experience, or that work directly through stimulus response as true reflex.

12 Peirce spends a good deal of time critiquing *the notion of "intuition" and arguing that it is* impossible. It should be noted that he is not directly confronting Bergson here; rather, he is critiquing a notion of intuition as a direct kind of conceptual knowledge, such as Descartes's "clear and distinct" idea which Peirce sees as being put forth as occurring without any prior interpretation. I would argue that Bergson's intuition is a more complex concept, one which does not give one access to clear concepts; rather, the intuition carries with it the imperative that one seeks to express it, but it can never be contained adequately either by concepts or images (see Bergson, "Philosophical"). From this point of view Peirce's critiques might be said to be directed at a different conception of intuition from that found in Bergson. This is not, by any means, to claim they would have been in complete agreement.

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