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Postcolonial Theory
and the
Faciality Machine

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Abstract

Postcolonial Theory and the Faciality Machine

This thesis examines theories of colonial stereotypes and spectatorship as they circulate in postcolonial film and media theory. Conventional approaches to the repetitive and easily reproduced characteristics of the colonial stereotype measure and evaluate the image according to a prior ideal colonial subject. The thesis argues that this method replicates the dialectical divide between the image (as representation) and the empirical “real” that the stereotype fails to encompass and that it subsequently neglects the discursive nature of colonial identity. It is precisely this gap between the image (as representation) and the empirical “real” (that the stereotype fails to encompass) that constitutes a leap from the particular to the general. In these accounts, the concept of cultural difference (including racial and sexual differences) remains static, ahistorical and formed in dialectical opposition to a normative paradigm of subjectivity derived from colonialist discourse. This thesis approaches the colonial stereotype from another direction. It examines how particular expressions of the racial and sexual stereotype that emerge in canonical and contemporary cinema, and in cultural spaces beyond cinema, transform the ideal and general concepts of spectatorship and cultural difference. Drawing upon Gilles Deleuze’s work on cinema and his theory of the relationship between difference and repetition, the thesis discusses the paradoxical force of colonial stereotypes that express the repetitive logic of habitual recognition and the differential forces of time. The thesis develops Deleuze’s writings on the cinematic close-up and his work with Felix Guattari to deploy the conceptual framework of Faciality which describes the simultaneous forces of difference and repetition expressed in the colonial stereotype.

Faciality is treated as both a synecdochical concept and a partial object in order to trace the paradoxical force of the stereotype. As a synecdochical concept, Faciality expresses the representational powers of the human face as a communication device par excellence, and as the most highly coded and semiotically dense part of the human body. This treatment abstracts the singularity of the close-up and places it in automatic relation to the film as a totality, or to a prior ideal. Chapter One traces the dominance of this automatic reflex, or habitual form of recognition through the camera obscura model of perception that dominates postcolonial theories of the racial and sexual stereotype. Chapter Two re-reads two
canonical film texts (*The Birth of a Nation* and *Touch of Evil*) in light of postcolonial theories of hybridity and Jonathan Crary’s counter-narrative of cinema spectatorship. Chapter Three discusses Gilles Deleuze’s writings on the deterritorialising powers of the cinematic close-up in relation to two contemporary repetitions of images of Oriental femininity from *Double Happiness* and *Irma Vep*. Throughout this thesis, the concept of Faciality develops a theory of spectatorship that examines the simultaneous process of inscription and reterritorialisation that occurs in the repetition of the stereotype, as well as describing the potential deterritorialising effects of these repetitions that affirm the differential and future-oriented forces of time. Chapter Four develops these dual forces as a cultural politics of Faciality that examines how the bicultural model of politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand can be approached as an immanent form of cultural difference. The chapter examines this bicultural-becoming through a discussion of the figure of the Dusky Maiden stereotype in the mock documentary *Velvet Dreams*. The thesis concludes that by approaching the colonial stereotype as a paradoxical force of difference and repetition and by apprehending cinema as a logic of relations the act of spectatorship becomes a productive assemblage which presents the possibility of thinking from the viewpoint of immanent difference.
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# Table of Contents

Abstract  ii  
Acknowledgements  iv  
Table of Contents  v  
Abbreviations  vi  
Introduction  1  

Chapter One: The Double Bind of Postcolonial Media Theory  11  
1.1 The Legacy of Colonial Discourse in Cinema  12  
1.2 Postcolonial Critiques of Western Models of Vision  21  
1.3 The Major/minor Dyad and Minoritarian-becomings  36  
1.4 The Politics of Theoretical Production  40  

Chapter Two: What is a Hybrid Mode of Perception?  46  
2.1 A Counter-narrative of Cinema Spectatorship  47  
2.2 Colonial Desire and Machinic Assemblages  55  
2.3 Hybridity and Triangulation  59  
2.4 Faciality and the Binary Machines of Hybridity  64  
2.5 The Reterritorialising Powers of the Close-Up  68  
2.6 Ruptures in the Flow of the White Man Face  72  
2.7 Hybridity in Touch of Evil  75  

Chapter Three: The Critical Dimensions of Faciality  90  
3.1 The "new dimension" of Physiognomy  91  
3.2 Interpretation and Translation  95  
3.3 The Affection-Image  100  
3.4 The Event in Double Happiness  107  
3.5 The Time-Image  111  
3.6 The Virtual Observer  115  
3.7 Cultural Encounters as Relations of Immanence  120  

Chapter Four: A Cultural Politics of Faciality  123  
4.1 Neocolonialism and Immanent Relations of Power  129  
4.2 The Dusky Maiden's Eternal Return  134  
4.3 Repetition and Difference  138  
4.4 Dusky Maiden-becomings  141  
4.5 The Two Faces of Neocolonial Aotearoa/New Zealand  144  

Conclusions  149  
Works Cited  154  
Filmography  167
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td><em>Cinema 1: The Movement-Image</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td><em>Cinema 2: The Time-Image</em></td>
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<td><em>Difference and Repetition</em></td>
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<td><em>Negotiations</em></td>
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### Works by Deleuze

- **C1** *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*
- **C2** *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*
- **DR** *Difference and Repetition*
- **N** *Negotiations*

### Works by Deleuze and Guattari

- **AO** *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*
- **ATP** *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*
- **K** *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*
Introduction

In ideality alone, there is no repetition, for the idea is and remains the same and as such cannot be repeated. When ideality and reality touch each other, then repetition occurs. When, for example, I see something in the moment, ideality enters in and will explain that it is a repetition. Here is a contradiction, for that which is is in another mode. (Søren Kierkegaard 1983, p. 275)

This thesis examines theories of colonial stereotypes and spectatorship as they circulate in postcolonial film and media theory. The thesis argues that conventional spectatorship theory presumes a general and transcendent idea of spectatorship that is subsequently realised in a media event. Recent research in film and media theory addresses this movement from the ideal to the empirical experience of spectating, as a process of abstraction that collapses under the differential pressures of film audience responses. This thesis contributes to the revisioning of spectatorship theory by asking, what does a concept of spectatorship that proceeds from the particular to the general, look like? This question is developed in relation to the concept of the colonial stereotyped image as it is critiqued in postcolonial media theory. Postcolonial theorists address the repetitive and easily reproduced characteristics of the stereotype image as a paradoxical force that simultaneously reiterates and destabilises colonial and imperialist authority. However, the structure of this double bind draws upon a generalised and abstracted concept of spectatorship that, this thesis argues, maintains a dialectical divide between those represented by the stereotype and those who voyeuristically consume it. It is precisely this gap between the image (as representation) and the empirical “real” (that the stereotype fails to encompass) that constitutes a leap from the particular to the general. In these accounts, the concept of cultural difference (including racial and sexual differences) remains static, ahistorical and formed in dialectical opposition to a normative paradigm of subjectivity derived from colonialist discourse. This thesis examines the nature of the paradoxical force of the colonial stereotype using an alternate model of spectatorship developed from the work of Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze’s theory of immanent difference acts as an antidote to the dialectical structuring of difference derived from the camera obscura model of perception that exhausts the terms one can use to engage with issues of racial and sexual difference. By posing an alternative model of spectatorship that moves from the particular to the general the thesis argues that the banal, habitual and repetitive characteristics of the colonial stereotype transform the dialectical understanding of cultural identity itself.

As Kierkegaard’s quotation at the beginning of this introduction notes, the relationship between the ideal (in this case, the idea of spectatorship) and reality (the act
of spectating) is always a process of repetition that entails a radical otherness and difference. We cannot have the real without presupposing an ideal concept that hovers over and legislates its meaning. Steve Neale argues that early scholarship on the stereotype in film and media studies compared, measured and evaluated the stereotypical character in opposition to an equally false concept of empirical reality (Neale, 1979). According to Neale, many critics of racial stereotyping presuppose an empirical "real" that is fundamentally ideal and exists in advance of representation and that this ideal concept can subsequently serve as the model against which the stereotype is measured. Yet, this "real" is in fact another discursive production equally as "false" as the stereotype. Subsequently, any reliance upon an unexamined concept of empirical reality as a legislative ideal effectively reduces the debates around film and media images to questions of good images and bad images and to the subsequent limitations of identity-based representational politics. Neale poses a solution that attempts to move from the particular to the general when he argues that attention must be paid to the relational play of difference constituting the stereotype rather than its repetitive characteristics. Rather than focus on stereotyped characters and the content of an image, Neale analyses the way a film, as a whole, textually marks sexual and racial differences. While Neale restricts his approach to the formal characteristics of the film as text, his interest in the discursive production of the real and the positive and productive nature of difference itself redefines the concept of the stereotype as a serial as opposed to a static and endlessly reproduced concept. This has intriguing implications for the concept of spectatorship, as it is not so much what the racial stereotype represents or how this image is measured against a prior "real", as it is a question concerning serial reproduction. This thesis will ask, what series or flow does colonial stereotype enter into? What does the image do? How do the textual and extra-textual elements of a film event enter into series and flows? What do these maps suggest about the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters? The thesis argues that by addressing the colonial stereotype as a series or flow occurring between the cinematic image and the image, the spectator constitutes a process of becoming in spectatorship theory.

The idea of becoming as opposed to being is central to this discussion in that it presupposes a distinction between knowledge and thought. If, as this thesis argues, postcolonial media theory privileges a representational and identity-based politics of intervention and transformation, the struggle revolves around the question of epistemology - what can one see and say (and subsequently, know) about cultural difference. What positions, postures and rhetorical devices can one take up in defense of, or against, the cultural inscription of difference as a legislative, regulatory or emancipatory force? Inherent within these debates is a self-reflexive gesture that
presupposes that such emancipatory or resistant possibilities exist and that one knows, *in advance* of the event, what freedom and self-determination means. This work argues that such self-reflexive gestures reiterate a posture, ground, and consciousness that remains tied to the question of epistemology and thus to the modes of knowing constituted in colonial discourse. It is not so much the case that one can escape these discursive regimes and structures. One must make two *simultaneous* gestures when approaching the problem given in the stereotype image by mobilising both knowledge and thought. Thought is primarily an experimentation in contact with the real from which it arises. The ideal does not exist as such, but must be constantly actualised in an endless engagement with ideality and reality through the infinite process of repetition and differenciation. This process of engagement privileges the function of thought that is different in nature from that of knowledge.

Where knowledge is static, representational and concerned with the concept of *being*, thought follows the movements of concepts as they encounter the differential forces of the real and the ideal and enter into *becomings*. The thesis argues that a representational politics of colonial discourse must be transformed into a *cultural* politics that combines the experimental and creative powers of thought as well as knowledge. Thought is that which grasps the ideal in a state of becoming and the empirical experiences given in film spectatorship (which involves experimentation in contact with the real), give rise to these new becomings.

Just as self-reflexivity constitutes a double bind for postcolonial theorists and perpetuates the process of repetition and difference, so too does the language of freedom. For instance, contemporary indigenous nationalist movements harness the democratic ideals of self-determination derived from the colonial and imperialising mission of the nineteenth-century. Such a consciousness of resistance is always already determined by the very regulatory episteme that is the object of resistance. Yet, one cannot throw out the language of political transformation in the hope of producing a new language, just as one cannot escape the representational tyranny presented by the colonial stereotype. The struggle becomes a matter of affirming the differential elements of the image (or ideal) that perpetually risks returning as a tyrannical and regulatory force of similitude. This is the fundamental difference between the *being* of an idea (as static and constant ideal) and its *becoming* in relation to its actualisation in reality. When one moves from the particular to the ideal, the process of repetition either consolidates the ideal or the ideal is transformed by the empirical moment of difference. What is of the utmost importance is this movement from the particular to the ideal and *not* the reverse because it is the particular *event* or *encounter* that highlights the mutual becomings involving each party. This is not to say that one “starts from scratch” when
encountering difference, but that one enters into a volatile flux of elements that have the potential to implode destructively or scatter to become more productive arrangements.

To take a pragmatic example given in the thesis, what would a bicultural society look like if it were expressed as a mutual becoming of Maori and Pakeha rather than a dialectical clash of opposites? This question addresses the wider social context of the bicultural society of New Zealand from which this thesis emerges. Where some Maori nationalists affirm cultural differences from Pakeha in their claims for recognition of sovereignty given in the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, some Pakeha argue for the equally historical claim of liberal humanist democracy, and attempt to erase Maori claims for cultural distinctiveness. These contestations over difference and sameness reiterate the endless and vicious circle of identity politics and fail to affirm how Maori and Pakeha are involved in the entanglements of a shared history and a possible future yet to be actualised. There is an urgent need to produce a vocabulary that expresses how these mutual becomings are actualised in the mediated public sphere of postcolonial New Zealand and in the colonial stereotype in particular. The thesis argues that the dual process of repetition as the return of the same and as the affirmation of difference is the paradoxical force of the colonial stereotype that can also be found in postcolonial cultural spheres other than New Zealand.

By examining the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters as they are expressed in films from France, Canada and the United States of America, the thesis traces the singularities of each stereotype's particular emergence. As postcolonial and feminist theorists have demonstrated, site-specific approaches to the question of cultural difference are of the utmost importance in any theory of cultural difference. However, the thesis makes the case that each singular emergence of difference is tied to the more general concept of repetition and that the question of locatedness in relation to the body/image encounter in spectatorship involves both powers of repetition and difference. In this thesis these powers are directed towards the idea of cultural difference and spectatorship and the work maps the transformations that these concepts undergo when placed in relation to canonical film texts and contemporary cinematic expressions of the colonial stereotype. The thesis discusses African-American and Euro-American representations in The Birth of a Nation as well as the mask of Mexican-ness worn by Charlton Heston and white femininity in Touch of Evil. It examines Chinese and Orientalist images in Double Happiness as well as considering the celebrity status of Hong Kong star Maggie Cheung in Irma Vep. Each stereotype and each face embodies the forces of repetition and difference that challenge conventional theoretical approaches to the colonial stereotype that privileges dialectical differences. Ultimately, the thesis argues that these faces contextualise the more global
milieu out of which the final discussion of the South Pacific stereotype of the Dusky Maiden emerges and that these images provoke a radically open-ended theory of spectatorship that highlights cinema as an art of encounter involving radical otherness. Accordingly, the film discussions move from particular instances of cross-cultural encounters in film to consider what these events express about the concept of cross-cultural encounters beyond cinema.

The thesis compares and contrasts the camera obscura model of spectatorship in film theory and in postcolonial theory that is premised upon recognition and representation with Gilles Deleuze's concept of cinema as a social machine which produces multiple modes of perception. This counter-narrative of spectatorship also draws upon Jonathan Crary's work on the embodied observer of pre-cinematic visual culture and the thesis argues that the privileging of the role of the body in acts of perception has a particular urgency for those bodies figured as culturally different. Crary's work on pre-cinematic technologies such as the stereoscope, elaborates upon the agitated and embodied nature of European masculine visual pleasure in the nineteenth-century. His work offers a valuable rethinking of modes of perception of Western modernity as socially and historically constructed and while his work focuses on the Western observer, this thesis considers the encounter between Crary's agitated and embodied Western spectator and habitually repeated images of the colonial stereotype. The following argument maps the movements of the colonial stereotype through various historical and contemporary media events to examine how these forces of repetition and difference transform the concept of spectatorship. In addition, following the political incentives grounding the development of spectatorship theory in film studies, the thesis examines how a transformation in the concept of spectatorship can contribute to the elaboration of a cultural politics of cross-cultural encounter. Politics, in this sense, reiterates the double bind of the colonial stereotype in that it is at once a concept that aims to effect change (differentiation) while simultaneously maintaining an established order from which change might eventuate (repetition).

To map these dual processes, the thesis develops a conceptual framework for spectatorship using the concept of Faciality. The human face is a communication device par excellence, and is the most highly coded and semiotically dense part of the human body. The cinematic close-up takes full advantage of these qualities when relaying narrative information and emotional effect, and the close-up and the human face express to the fullest degree the representational powers of cinema. The face and the close-up invite the spectator to identify with the film image and to interpret the subtext of the image. These representational aspects are referred to as constituting the anthropomorphic substratum of the Faciality machine (where the face of man is seen in
all things). In psychoanalytic terms, the cinematic close-up becomes the face of the mother in the first moment of identification and initiation into subjectivity. However, the problem with this narrative of subject constitution is that psychoanalysis interprets the face as part of a whole rather than as solely a partial object. Again, the particular (a face in close-up) is abstracted when placed in automatic relation with the more transcendent idea (of subjectivity in general). However, as audience responses to D.W. Griffith's experimentation with the close-up reminds us, the close-up also has a disruptive function in that it appears to decapitate its human subjects. Therefore, the face in close-up also appears as a part object that connects to other part objects to form anti-anthropomorphic assemblages. The face as a partial object calls attention to the body as something more than an organic whole, and the face as more than a site expressing interior and individuated experiences. The face, as an anti-anthropomorphic assemblage, is primarily an indexical marker that points outwards, constituting limits and boundary lines with forces from the outside. These new assemblages present the possibility of thinking subjectivity, identity and political agency as radically multiple and differentiated concepts. Faciality develops in this work as both a synecdochical concept and a partial object in order to trace the paradoxical force of the stereotype and its reterritorialising and deterritorialising functions.

Chapter One, “The Double Bind of Postcolonial Media Theory”, outlines postcolonial and feminist responses to various media events and literary artworks involving cultural minorities. The chapter argues that these critical responses assume a generalised and transcendent approach to spectatorship and colonial power that blocks the flow of critiques seeking to address how cultural and sexual difference is rendered and valued. The representational and identity based politics of postcolonial and feminist media theory presuppose a concept of the spectator who adheres to a “real” that is already past. Theorists such as Gayatri Spivak, Rey Chow, Homi K. Bhabha and Edward Said explore and elaborate upon the double bind inherited from colonialist and patriarchal discourses. These theorists deconstruct a particular model of subjectivity (most often figured as white, masculinist and middle-classed) using the camera obscura model of apparatus theory in film studies. This chapter argues that it is precisely this model of perception that reiterates the norms against which these theorists struggle. The camera obscura model privileges a centred, transcendent and all-knowing spectator who is dialectically structured in opposition to the image that constitutes an uncanny otherness. While postcolonial theorists destabilise the autonomy and centrality of the spectator, Homi K. Bhabha’s work in particular, the chapter argues that this model privileges a representational logic that nonetheless abstracts and reduces the differential powers of the cinematic encounter. To be more precise, if the question concerning these
theorists is the question of difference itself (racial, sexual, class and otherwise) these concepts are given in advance of the media event with the media text acting as a mere illustration of a prior ideal. This section examines how this approach to difference privileges identity, similitude and recognition and perpetuates the double bind of colonial discourse. The chapter ends by asking how one might proceed from an immanent form of difference that affirms the differential experiences of cinematic encounters.

Chapter Two, “What is a Hybrid Mode of Perception”, re-reads two canonical film texts in light of postcolonial theories of hybridity and Jonathan Crary’s counter-narrative of cinema spectatorship. Crary addresses the spectator (Crary uses the term observer) as a matrix of force relations on which a wide range of socio-cultural techniques and procedures operate (Crary, 1992). Where the camera obscura model of spectatorship develops out of psychoanalytic and apparatus theories in film studies of the nineteen eighties, Crary’s work exemplifies current film scholarship’s return to the pre-history of cinema that situates the developments of film in relation to the wider cultural practices of nineteenth-century metropolitan Europe. The chapter argues that this return to the pre-history of cinema has vital implications for understanding the dynamics of cross-cultural encounter as a process of mutual contamination and collective transmission.

Crary’s theory of an embodied and agitated observer exposed to the differential forces of the moving image treats the body as a matrix of relations that connect to human and non-human elements to form particular and specific social assemblages. Crary replaces the anthropomorphic spectator of the camera obscura model with a machinic observer who is simultaneously torn apart and reconstituted by the repetitive, incessant and productive characteristics of the body/image encounter. Deleuze’s and Guattari’s terms “deterritorialisation” and “reterritorialisation” are used in this thesis to denote the dual processes experienced by Crary’s machinic observer. The chapter argues that this anti-anthropomorphic model figures the identity of that observer as the effect of the differential forces of cultural, technological, and social techniques. This account of a networked process of subjectivation expands the question of colonial power beyond issues of identity, subjectivity and dialectical differences. Indeed, the chapter argues that colonial desire works to disguise these wider networks by converting all dilemmas of the social realm into problems of the individual and questions of personal and cultural identity. Colonial desire operates precisely through this restriction, reduction and reterritorialisation of difference upon a foundational premise of identity derived from colonial discourse. This foundational premise is
termed the *anthropomorphic substratum* upon which the Faciality machine of colonial desire decodes and recodes difference.

Chapter Two focuses on the reterritorialising powers of cinema (in particular the cinematic technique of the close-up and the anthropomorphic powers of the human face) as they work upon this anthropomorphic substratum to produce the racial and sexual stereotype of the Hybrid. The chapter develops postcolonial theories of hybridity in relation to the concept of Faciality to argue that while hybridity offers up a concept of cultural difference as a process of contamination that unsettles the dialectical structuring of cultural difference, a second move must also be made. The concept of Faciality best describes this necessary second movement because the Face is characterised by the play of surfaces in contact with an outside while hybridity still remains tied to the past, the language of eugenics and metaphoric analogy. The concept of Faciality emphasises series, connections and flows and this logic is expressed in the stereotypes discussed in this chapter. The figure of the mulatto in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) demonstrates the connection between the political economy of slavery and the libidinal economy of miscegenation while *Touch of Evil* (1958) constructs a cinematic space that marks the sexual and racial trafficking of identities across the Texas-Mexico borderlands. In both films, the human face and the close-up technique demarcate and regulate the series, flows, and interpret the borders between cultural identities, demonstrating the decoding and recoding of space that constitutes a geopolitics of colonial desire.

Chapter Three “The Critical Dimension of Faciality” discusses the deterritorialising powers of the cinematic close-up in relation to two contemporary repetitions of images of Oriental femininity from *Double Happiness* (1995) and *Irma Vep* (1996). As Crary’s work demonstrates, there are two simultaneous effects of the cinematic encounter, one which involves reterritorialisation and reinscription (embodied in the act of interpretation or knowledge), and the other that involves deterritorialisation and dismemberment (the unthought of thought itself). The third chapter examines this latter effect to argue that the repetitive forces of the faces of Asian femininity in these films produce a new ontological gravity to the question of cultural difference and spectatorship. If the concept of a representational politics as it is applied to cinema always presumes a particular spectator *in advance* of the cinematic event, the critical gesture becomes one of measurement, prescription, evaluation and interpretation. In this approach, the spectator as such, is always already a generalised and abstract concept who perishes in the face of the pragmatic moment of cinematic experience. However, this is only one aspect of the body/image encounter (a reterritorialising action) which neglects the potential deterritorialising effects of cinema. Faciality, as a deterritorialising
partial object, moves the direction of thought from the particular to the general by asking; Who does the film think we are? Who or what does the film itself call forth? What and who is the virtual spectator of a particular film? How does a film produce or invoke a new form of subjectivity?

The chapter argues that Double Happiness and Irma Vep invoke a virtual spectator through an open-ended mode of address. The films reproduce serialised Oriental stereotypes which enter into machinic assemblages with an implied spectator who is neither Eastern nor Western but a temporal constellation circulating between each pole. If, as the last chapter argues, the Faciality machine entails a radical recoding and decoding process, the material the machine works upon is the immanent plane of difference that expresses itself as a temporal force. The repetition and reproduction of the Orientalist image in Double Happiness expresses this temporal force and subsequently generates a new ontological gravity to the question of the East/West cultural dyad. Irma Vep traffics in transnational images of femininity that actualise a particular style of Western voyeurism whose demonic forces turn against the anthropomorphic substratum from which dialectical difference derives. The force of repetition embodied in the stereotype in Irma Vep bursts through the plane of representation and reveals an immanent form of difference that characterises the dynamics of cultural identities within a postcolonial milieu. Chapter Four discusses the implications of this rupture for a cultural politics of spectatorship.

Throughout this thesis, the concept of Faciality develops a theory of spectatorship that examines the simultaneous process of inscription and reterritorialisation that occurs in the repetition of the stereotype, as well as describing the potential deterritorialising effects of these repetitions and how they invoke a spectator to come. The Faciality machine constantly codes difference as a return of the Same (where the stereotype is placed upon the anthropomorphic substratum) and this return reinforces the Liberal Humanist model of agency, voice, and resistance that forms the basis of a neocolonial democratic and representational politics. The last chapter “A Cultural Politics of Faciality” conducts a cultural politics of Faciality that examines how the bicultural model of politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand endlessly repeats a return to Enlightenment values and echoes the paralysis found within critiques of the colonial stereotype. The paradoxical force of the stereotype simultaneously straddles the tyranny of being and the potential of becoming and it is the task of the postcolonial critic to affirm the differential elements of the image (or ideal) that perpetually risk returning as a tyrannical and regulatory force of similitude.

This is the site of battle within the neocolonial context of Aotearoa/New Zealand where the differences between Maori and Pakeha are coded as absolute and dialectical
differences determined by the problem of being. This final chapter examines how the cross-cultural differences between these two groups (as illustrated in a public debate between Pakeha Liberal Democrat Chris Trotter and Maori Nationalist Moana Jackson) can be addressed as a process of mutual becoming. Samoan filmmaker Sima Urale gives a potential image for thinking about this new cultural assemblage in her mock documentary *Velvet Dreams* (1999) where she reproduces the South Pacific stereotype of the Dusky Maiden to the point of infinite regress. In this mock documentary the duplicitous and false powers of the audio-visual image are affirmed, as are the relations of mutual contamination and transmission that exist between the white male painters of Dusky Maidens and the Pacific Island women who live with this visual archive. The logic of repetition mobilised in this film expresses a becoming-other in spectatorship that suggests an ethical political practice of, (in the words of Sam Weber) “remaining open to the trace of the other in repetition even while confronting the same” (Weber 2000, p. 10). This is the challenge presented by the colonial stereotype as it is repeated and reproduced in the contemporary audio-visual environment, to affirm the differential powers of the stereotype by becoming-other in spectatorship.
Chapter One

The Double Bind of Postcolonial Media Theory

In 1994 the New Zealand company Communicado Films produced its first feature film *Once Were Warriors*, an urban melodrama dealing with issues of domestic abuse within a Maori family. Based on a best-selling novel by Maori writer Alan Duff, and directed by Lee Tamahori, the film is set in the lower socio-economic milieu of south Auckland where Beth and Jake Heke live with four of their five children in a State-owned house. When Jake (played by local television soap star Temuera Morrison) loses his latest job the economic and emotional pressures are felt by his wife Beth (played by Rena Owens) and the children who must bear the brunt of Jake's disaffection. Jake's abuse of alcohol, his indifference to his children and the subsequent violence with which he treats his wife are the catalyst for the narrative. His eldest son seeks comfort in the pseudo-family structure of a gang, his other son finds support from a Maori social worker who impresses upon him the importance of his cultural heritage. Jake's best friend rapes his eldest daughter and her death by suicide ultimately results in Beth leaving her husband and returning to her tribal lands. In the final scene of *Once Were Warriors* Jake sits in a gutter outside a public house where he has just attacked his daughter's rapist. The sound of police sirens can be heard in the background as Beth and the children leave.

In the novel the reader accesses the thoughts of both Beth and Jake through the stream of consciousness narrative structure, although primary narrative emphasis is upon the character of Jake. In the screen version (written by Maori playwright Riwia Brown) the narrative is focused on the effects of Jake's actions on Beth and the children. For example, the scenes of domestic violence are only alluded to in the novel and produce a certain amount of distance between the actions of Jake and the reader's empathy for him. However, in the film version the scenes of violence between Jake and Beth are so graphic and brutal that the audience is compelled to witness the devastating effects of domestic abuse. Some commentators on the film suggest that this "witness" effect fulfils a political and sociological function by conveying the horror of violence and representing a phenomenon rarely talked about (Tamahori 1994, Goldson 1994). Other critics suggest that the specifically Maori cultural milieu of *Once Were Warriors* effaces the wider historical and social effects of European colonialisation and perpetuates the colonial legacy of racial stereotyping (Matahaere-Atariki 1999, Turner 1999, Smith 1999, Pihama 1994). The extreme popularity of the film (which exceeded *Jurassic Park* at the New Zealand box office in its year of release) justifies its status as
an indexical marker pointing to the neocolonial complexities of the socio-cultural milieu of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The film also received international recognition at various film festivals and has enabled Tamahori to continue his filmmaking career in Hollywood. This chapter argues that the critical reception of the film demonstrates the limits of what is possible to see and say about representations of racial difference within Aotearoa/New Zealand as well as in the international arena. It argues that a particular model of perception, which privileges a centred and transcendent spectator, restricts this critical vocabulary. While postcolonial media theorists address the epistemic violence inherited from a history of European colonialisation, the chapter argues that postcolonial media theory must also address those very models of perception and spectatorship that are also a legacy of European imperialism. Pacific historian Nicholas Thomas argues that European historians share a preoccupation with “rendering every past, every event, every society visible – and a lack of interest in particular ways of seeing” (1990, p. 144). This thesis makes an equivalent claim about the particular and peculiar interests of film scholars in the representational content of cinema as opposed to the articulation of alternative models for “seeing” film. This thesis follows the latter approach and continues the work of scholars such as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam who dedicate themselves to the task of “unthinking eurocentrism” (1994) by devising methods and tactics for “seeing” from the viewpoint of cultural difference.

1.1 The Legacy of Colonial Discourse in Cinema

To trace the characteristics of this colonial legacy it is necessary to address the issue of the racial stereotype and how it has emerged in cinema. In their article “Colonialism, Racism, and Representation: An Introduction”, (1983) Robert Stam and Louise Spence suggest that cinema continues the work of colonial self-image making begun in European literatures such as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902) and Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). They argue that cinema provides a “magic carpet” function to Western citizens who can be transported to “Third World” countries that provide objects of spectacle and pleasurable difference. Stam and Spence trace this self-imaging activity to a particular model of perspective when they write:

The same renaissance humanism which gave birth to the code of perspective – subsequently incorporated, as Baudry points out, into the camera itself – also gave birth to the ‘rights of man’. Europe constructed its self-image on the backs of its equally constructed Other – the ‘savage’, the ‘cannibal’ – much as phallocentrism sees its self-flattering image in the mirror of woman defined as
lack. And just as the camera might therefore be said to inscribe certain features of bourgeois humanism, so the cinematic and televisual apparatuses, taken in their most inclusive sense, might be said to inscribe certain features of European colonisation. (p. 636)

In this quotation Stam and Spence continue the long tradition within apparatus film theory of addressing the development of cinema as a more refined version of the camera obscura that emerged in the 1500s. The camera obscura has a metaphoric resonance for cross-cultural spectatorship in its production of an inverted image via the piercing light that passes through a small hole into a dark and enclosed interior. This model of vision allows Stam and Spence to clearly delineate the ideological effects of imperialism and colonialism that are revealed in cinematic images of the Third World. By utilising Jean-Louis Baudry’s analysis of the ideological effects of the cinema, Stam and Spence can examine how the “rights of man” become naturalised and supportive of a particular kind of man (white and masculinist) through the repetition of racial and sexual stereotypes. The camera obscura model of vision also allows Stam and Spence to explore the kind of oppositional consciousness that imperialist ideology imposes. This approach continues the work done by Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978).

In *Orientalism* Said examines how British, French and American writers have produced a body of texts about the Orient (encompassing primarily China, Japan and India) whose contrasting images, ideas and experiences serve to consolidate Euro-American cultural and intellectual superiority (1978, p. 2). Said argues that the character of the Orient can be summed up in the figure of Gustave Flaubert’s encounter with an Egyptian courtesan who “never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history. He spoke for and represented her” (p. 6). Said thus characterises the Orient as a silent, feminised and inscrutable object in contrast to Flaubert who stands in for the generic European subject figured as active and articulate. The Orient thus becomes a mythic and eternal concept of an Eastern culture whose static, timeless and unchanging nature works in productive contrast to a rational, dynamic, and ever expanding Western culture. Tropes of savagery, cannibalism, excessive sexuality and degeneracy figure greatly in Orientalist works. Said argues that these works construct a discursive field where “the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined” and where the Orient seems to be “not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe” (p. 63). It is this production of knowledge about the Orient that serves to naturalise Western cultural norms. Said argues that under the facade of scholarly disinterest European scientists, entrepreneurs, and philosophers produced books, manuscripts and
illustrations that described the mysterious East in such a persuasive and convincing manner that a non-Western form of epistemology is now impossible:

So impressive have the descriptions and textual successes of Orientalism been that entire periods of the Orient’s cultural, political, and social history are considered mere responses to the West. The West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge and jury, of every facet of Oriental behavior. (p. 109)

Thus, any form of representation produced by the non-Western subject would reiterate and repeat the mode of knowledge that has always already defined him/her as an inscrutable (yet paradoxically already known) object. Such is the case for some critics who consider Lee Tamahori’s representation of Maori as reiterating characteristics of the racial stereotypes found in certain forms of Orientalism (Matahaere-Atariki 1999). Said’s discussion of Orientalism does not encompass the Pacific cultural context of New Zealand. However, the oppositional structuring of coloniser/colonised included in Said’s work does apply to the former British colony of New Zealand.

While some critics argue that the topic of domestic abuse represented in Once Were Warriors transcends issues of race, Leonie Pihama argues that the complexities of the film’s critical reception are increased owing to the substantial Maori involvement in its production (1994, p. 21). She states that the fact that Tamahori, Brown and most of the film crew are of Maori descent cannot be subtracted from an analysis of the national success of Once Were Warriors. What is at stake for Pihama is the issue of indigenous identity politics in a postcolonial nation-state whose modes of representation have been inherited from imperialist ideology. As Nicholas Thomas notes in reference to the writing of history, “the colonialist encounter thus cannot be immediately ‘decolonised’ but must rather deal with the persistence of colonialism and the consolidation of quasi-colonial relationships” within post-settler societies (1990, p. 156). Given these messy discursive entanglements, Pihama locates a fundamental contradiction within the film that simultaneously expresses matauranga Maori (Maori knowledge forms) as well as reiterating negative stereotypes of Maori as alcohol abusers, as inherently violent and as culturally flawed as evidenced in the slave narrative included in Jake’s characterisation (p. 21). Owing to this contradiction in the film, Pihama suggests that the promotion and reception of the film includes a dominant discourse of protection and she gives the following examples:

My focus for discussion here is some of the dominant discourses that have emerged related to the film, in particular the promotion of the film, for example: “We can’t continue to brush things under the carpet. It’s about time this came out into the open”; “Maori people need to see both the good and the bad in
ourselves”; “This is a universal problem. It’s not about Maori but is something everybody knows.” These discourses are then contextualised in expressions such as “this movie is about reality and so is not ‘politically correct’,” which then promotes barriers to any form of critical analysis of the film. (p. 21)

Pihama is not specific as to where these statements circulate, however, presumably they are statements made by both Maori and Pakeha that illustrate how Once Were Warriors fulfills a cathartic function for some, over the issue of domestic violence.

There is also a certain discourse of “the real” in these statements inflected with an earnest morality that functions to prohibit, Pihama contends, any critique of how Maori might be represented. For example, when Beth returns to her marae at the end of the film, or when younger son Boogie finds emotional and spiritual support through matauranga Maori, the Orientalist stereotype of a timeless and unchanging indigenous cultures appears (Pihama 1994, Matahaere-Atariki, 1999). The stereotype of a primitive and erotically alluring Native body is also present in the exotic representations of tattooed and muscular Maori men. When African-American feminist Cheryl Johnson is asked by Annie Goldson to comment on how Once Were Warriors might be received in America, Johnson writes:

Some Black male critics might say that the movie is another instance of Black male bashing, and they would possibly argue that not enough attention is given to the ways racism contributed to the construction of the husband’s character. Indeed, his flaws are presented as his own deficiency – the old savage primitive thing. Indeed, his size, muscles and virility, all those traits which signify his masculinity, and even his tears at the end of the movie, signal a non-thinking animal who cannot be saved. (Goldson 1994, p.18)

Donna Matahaere-Atariki makes a similar claim in her essay “A Context for Writing Masculinities” where she argues that the figure of Jake comes to embody atavistic and essential racial traits that serve to naturalise the scenes of domestic abuse (1999, p. 112). Citing the example of the film poster image that appears on the paperback version of Duff’s novel, Matahaere-Atariki argues that the use of an unidentifiable Maori male face (complete with suitably exotic full-face moko) reinforces the racial stereotyping of native men as displaying a dangerous and threatening difference. Yet Pihama’s article suggests that these stereotypes can be overlooked in favour of the more “universal” issue of domestic violence precisely because of the involvement of Maori in the film’s production. The fact that Tamahor is a Maori director, and Riwia Brown a Maori woman script writer, gives a form of credibility to the film that aids the “reality effects” of the discourse of protection that Pihama argues accompanies the film. Tamahor’s
press statements and discussions of his creative method and the reasons why he made the film also compound this drive towards realism.

While *Once Were Warriors* is a fast-paced urban melodrama, interviews with Tamahori stress his interest in making “social realist cinema” and his fondness for the films of Ken Loach (*Cineaste*, 1994, *Midwest*, 1994). Not interested in the portrayal of positive images of Maori, Tamahori’s expressed motivation for the style and content of *Once Were Warriors* comes from his desire to produce images that examine “every facet of [a culture], whether it be good or bad” (*Cineaste*, p. 27). This is social realist cinema “with style”, a style that comes from Tamahori’s experiences as a director of television commercials, most notably the Femleaf family soap opera drama (*Ad/Media*, 1994). Laurence Simmons argues that Tamahori’s hybrid mix of social realism and Hollywood style produces a “productive friction” that allows the film to explore the social reality of class at the same time as attracting a commercial audience (1994, p. 19). According to Simmons, this style results in a film product that remains open to multiple interpretations, some of which might satisfy “redneck” racists as much as street youth of South Auckland who might use the “designer gangs” of *Once Were Warriors* as points of identification (p. 19). Yet it is not only in the film style that a certain form of “realism” is produced, but in the accompanying language that Tamahori uses in interviews when he refers to personal testimony as a means to support the film and the way that one particular media professional takes up this testimony.

In an interview with *Ad/Media* in May 1994, after the press preview of *Once Were Warriors*, Tamahori describes himself as “the perfect hybrid” (1994, p. 18). Tamahori grew up within a suburban Pakeha environment. In this interview he describes personal revelations about his cultural and gendered identity and how his perception of domestic abuse has changed since the making of the film. He describes his own experience of having been raised in the “classic, white, middle-class suburb” of Tawa and his experience with the pub culture depicted in his film. He makes implicit reference to the history of European colonisation by describing the sense of loss he feels for not having learnt Maori language and culture. He also outlines a basic tenet of what it means to be Maori when he explains why he changed Alan Duff’s initial storyline to emphasise the importance of belonging to a community:

> The book lacked a solid understanding of the need for a sense of belonging; that it’s critical for everyone on the whole planet to have an identity. You seem to need a sense of family and a sense of where you come from and who you are. If you are a good Maori, that is huge; it dictates your whole life. (p. 18)

According to this quotation, *Once Were Warriors* as a creative enterprise is treated by Tamahori as a personal form of cultural revitalisation that also fulfils a function for
those members of the audience that feel similarly disenfranchised or culturally “weakened” by the processes of colonisation. This comment “weakened” is not in fact the actual words of Tamahori but rather those of the reporter who interprets Tamahori’s childhood experiences of living between two different cultures as having “weakened his roots” (1994, p. 18). The language of the media professional is disturbingly similar to the language of eugenics put forth in nineteenth-century discourses of scientific racism. The implication that Tamahori has lost his “deep cultural roots” presents an image of cultural identity as eternal, unchanging and authentic: the same terms used in Orientalist discourse to describe the non-Western subject. There is also an implied sense of a normative paradigm of native subjectivity in Tamahori’s suggestion that there exists an idea of a “good” Maori whose authenticity as a Native will be conveyed through his/her natural longing for community. What this language suggests is not that there do not exist very real material social, cultural and economic consequences of being a colonised people, but that the language one has at one’s disposal to describe these experiences is always already the language of the coloniser. There is a double bind in this situation that is also well known in feminist film theory through the work of Laura Mulvey. In her 1975 essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” she examines the impossibility of representing women outside of phallocentric discourse (a work that Stam and Spence allude to in their earlier comments on the self-imaging tactics of colonialism). At the same time as Once Were Warriors repeats the same old story of Maori as violent, savage and inherently dysfunctional it is also a film that “[e]very Maori in the country is going to see” as Tamahori states in a Cineaste interview with American film scholar Robert Sklar (1995, p. 27). Leonie Pihama notes that the film “is lauded not merely as a quality New Zealand production but is also viewed by many Maori people as yet another expression of the skill and knowledge that is a part of Maori film-making” (1994, p. 21). Accordingly, Once Were Warriors’ popularity among Maori undermines the assumed oppositional consciousness that Stam and Spence argue is so endemic to the racial stereotype in cinema.

Stam’s and Spence’s position would suggest that the willingness of Maori to watch Once Were Warriors is a form of “aberrant reading” that goes against the grain of the dominant discourse of racial stereotyping. They suggest that an audience’s knowledge or experience can “generate a counter-pressure” that effectively re-writes the ideological message of imperialism (1983, p. 646). This aberrant reading strategy undermines the “magic carpet” function of the imperialist cinematic machinery where the Western spectator voyeuristically consumes the Other as an object and spectacle. In this formulation, the Native has the power to pose a counter-form of knowledge that
contests the hegemony of Western forms of representation, a contestation that Edward Said's analysis of colonial power does not allow. This is the critique that James Clifford makes of Orientalism when he claims that Said posits the West as an absolute totality whose dominance is never questioned (1988, p. 256). Clifford begins his critique of Said by citing the work of Martinique poet Aimé Césaire whose poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939) first coined the term *négritude* and contributed to a literary movement that critiqued French colonial rule. With this beginning, Clifford alludes to a history of anti-imperialist counter-narratives that exist alongside the Orientalist discourses that Said excavates. For Clifford, the concept of "the West" as a discrete entity capable of producing forms of knowledge that assert a hegemony over the entire "East" is questionable given that:

Since 1950 Asians, Africans, Arab orientals, Pacific islanders, and Native Americans have in a variety of ways asserted their independence from Western cultural and political hegemony and established a new multivocal field of intercultural discourse. What will be the long-term consequences of such a situation – if it endures? How has it already altered what one can know about others, the ways that such knowledge may be formulated? It is still early to judge the depth and extent of the epistemological changes that may be under way. (1988, p. 256)

Said's political agenda is to raise awareness of how the non-West has performed the role of "alter-ego" to a supreme sovereign Euro-American Subject. However James Clifford contends that this critique comes at the cost of abstracting the differences between West and East along crude dichotomous lines. As Clifford notes, the extent to which the intercultural discourse of the formerly colonised contributes to epistemological changes in Western modes of knowing is still to be registered. Given this insight, it is particularly interesting to note how a Western mode of perception still dominates in the field of spectatorship theory even when cross-cultural difference is at issue.

While Stam and Spence allow for aberrant forms of readership for those spectators considered "minority" (including the non-white, non-Western, formerly colonised and female spectator) the model of spectatorship they use borrows from the conventional narrative of a continuous and overarching Western visual tradition. Edward Said also borrows from this tradition in his posing of the image of the Orient as "a theatrical stage affixed to Europe" where "the West is the spectator, the judge and jury" (1978, p. 109). This is the tradition of the camera obscura model of perception established between 1500 and 1700 in Europe. According to Jonathan Crary, the conventional narrative of Western vision holds the camera obscura as the more primitive predecessor to increasingly sophisticated visual technologies that

Following the Italian Renaissance conception of space, the camera obscura conditions the construction of a fixed and centred perspective that, for some critics, continued the Renaissance drive towards verisimilitude in representation (p. 26). The camera obscura is also linked to the history of European scientific observation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the mapping and measuring of the physical world was at its greatest height. This measuring and mapping was not limited to foreign lands but, as Sander Gilman so tellingly demonstrates in his analysis of medical iconography in France in the eighteen hundreds, it also included the measuring and quantifying of foreign peoples (Gilman, 1986). In her essay “Those Who Squat and Those Who Sit” (1992), Fatimah Toby Roning observes how scientific observation often merged with the more spectacular concerns of popular culture in the display of foreign bodies in the protocinematic work of Félix-Louis Regnault. According to Toby Roning, Regnault used chronophotography (Etienne-Jules Marey’s invention) to conduct detailed observations of African subjects borrowed from the fairground exhibits of Paris. Although Noël Burch has argued that Marey’s invention disrupts the drive towards natural vision endemic to the camera obscura (Life to Those Shadows, 1990), in the hands of Regnault stop-motion photography became a tool to naturalise and justify a model of subjectivity descended from Renaissance humanism. As Toby Roning writes:

Each race, [Regnault] believed, has a predominant and particular posture when at rest and when in motion: he could thus “see” race in art. In his evolutionary study of the development of body posture, a study he would later call anthropographie or physiologie ethniques comparées, he traced mankind from the Savage, who squats, kneels, carries loads, and climbs trees in specific ways, to the Civilized who sits in chairs. Everywhere, he saw visual clues to race and evolutionary development. For Regnault, the Savage not only squats as children do, he represents the “childhood” of Civilized man’s “adulthood”. (1992, p. 267)

According to Toby Roning, Regnault transferred the spectacle of difference established at the Parisian World Fair to the more “objective” realm of the newly emergent discipline of anthropology. Regnault’s use of chronophotography to meticulously detail the physiological differences of his African subjects sanctioned and authorised this transference from popular culture to scientific discourse through the promised objectivity and rationalism inherited from the camera obscura model.

As a model of the relationship between observer and physical world, the camera obscura became a metaphor for a transcendent form of subjectivity. Jonathan Crary
describes the characteristics of this subject as it emerged in the late fifteen hundreds as one who is enclosed in a dark space and thus individuated, autonomous and free from “the manifold content of the now ‘exterior’ world” (1992, p. 39). The visual technology of the camera obscura guaranteed the truth content of observations about the world through its objective mechanical characteristics that reduced visual stimuli to mathematical formula. This technological intervention between subject and world provided an analogy for a distance and disembodiment subject who privileged intellect and rationality over the inconsistent and subjective fluxes of the human body. The camera obscura fulfilled the function of a philosophical metaphor for rationality and empiricism for scholars such as Leibniz, Descartes and Locke, giving rise, as Stam and Spence note, to the birth of “the rights of man” (1983, p. 636). John Locke’s *Essay on Human Understanding* (1690) is particularly central to the establishment of a politico-philosophic discourse based upon a model of an interiorised and fixed identity as defined by the camera obscura. However, in the nineteenth-century this metaphoric function changes in the scholarship of Marx, Bergson and Freud, as Crary argues, to become “a model for procedures and forces that conceal, invert, and mystify truth” (p. 29). It is this model of the camera obscura as producing an ideological false consciousness that becomes orthodox knowledge in film theory by the late 1970s through the work of Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz, and Laura Mulvey. The paradigm of a unitary and fixed spectator has been challenged in the work of such feminist scholars as Teresa de Lauretis (1987), Miriam Hansen (1991) and Anne Friedberg (1993) in relation to the question of gender. In a collection of essays entitled *Viewing Positions* (1995) Linda Williams highlights the importance of making a distinction between the spectator inscribed by the filmic text and the actual social viewer:

The variable experiences of actual viewers, who are in possession of many more “ways of seeing” than [John] Berger, Metz, Mulvey, or Baudry could have imagined, have recently challenged a more monolithic account of the “gaze.” The aforementioned motionless, bodiless, vacant gaze cited by Metz has come to seem both oversimplified and ahistorical. Although that gaze once taught us much about the workings of power and pleasure in images that would never again seem so innocently natural, it has become, as Hansen puts it in her contribution to this collection, as outmoded as bell-bottom jeans. (1995, p. 3)

Examining the dynamics of sexual difference in spectatorship theory entails a similar difficulty as that of racial difference in that both concepts of difference derive from the liberal humanist model of bourgeois subjectivity, and indeed, it is this shared concern that postcolonial feminists have struggled with in their articulation of alternative epistemological regimes.
1.2 Postcolonial Critiques of Western Models of Vision

Rey Chow examines this dilemma in her essay “Where Have All the Natives Gone” (1993) where she examines the alternative ways of addressing the Native body as an image derived from a Eurocentric colonial consciousness. The camera obscura model of a distinct opposition between subject and object, perceiver and perceived becomes the normative paradigm of vision when Chow proceeds from Fredric Jameson’s argument that the visual is essentially pornographic to suggest that:

This straightforward definition of the visual image sums up many of the problems that we encounter in cultural criticism today, whether or not the topic in question is film. The activity of watching is linked by projection to physical nakedness. Watching is theoretically defined as the primary agency of violence, an act that pierces the other, who inhabits the place of the passive victim on display. The image, then, is an aggressive sight that reveals itself in the other; it is the site of the aggressed. Moreover, the image is what has been devastated, left bare, and left behind by aggression – hence Jameson’s view that it is naked and pornographic. (p. 29)

Chow’s aim is to examine the way that Western critical scholarship frames the object of its attention (the Native) and how that object continually slips out of the frame of Western epistemology in the context of postcolonial modernity. Using Jameson’s model of perception that develops from a Althusserian-Lacanian psychoanalytic paradigm, Chow suggests that Modernity’s structuring relationship between Western scholarship and the Native as Other is of a voyeuristic and essentially violent character. She argues that theoretical discussions of the Native follow an Oedipal structure where the Native is the “symptom” that gives White Man his ontological consistency (p. 30). Thus, the Native is only ever figured in terms of lack or loss and it is this determining structure that restricts anti-imperialist scholarship to “a certain inevitable subjectivizing” that reiterates the symptomatic method of approach to non-white peoples (p. 31). Chow cites Frantz Fanon’s work as one example of how the Native continues to be theorised in terms of a presumed lack. According to Chow, Fanon’s revision of Freud’s dictum “What does a woman want?” into “What does a black man want?” reduces the native to the role of an angry son who wants to dispossess the white man (as father figure) of his ontological security.

This Oedipal structuring of racial difference not only elides the question of sexual difference, it maintains a form of Euro-American liberal humanism that reduces all questions of cultural difference to the processes of image-identification. According to Chow, even when Western scholars seek to raise the Native to a status beyond that of
symptom or object, the navel-gazing tendencies of liberal humanism return all questions of difference to a question of **Western** subjectivity. Chow argues that this is precisely the charge that Gayatri Spivak makes in relation to French feminist theorist Julia Kristeva and Chow discusses an extract from Kristeva's text *About Chinese Women* (1977) to demonstrate Spivak's point. According to Spivak, Kristeva describes a large crowd of Chinese women as “wordless” or “perfectly still” with “[c]alm eyes, not even curious, but slightly amused or anxious: in any case, piercing, and certain of belonging to a community with which we will never have anything to do” (Chow, p. 31). While Kristeva attempts to assign a form of agency to this anonymous mass by positing silence and stillness as an effective threat to the encroaching Western scholar, Spivak claims that these women stare back at Kristeva with “qualified envy” (Chow, p. 32). Spivak accuses Kristeva of being more interested in her own identity rather than those of the women she studies, however Chow suggests that Spivak herself utilises a problematic subjectivising model when she speaks of “envy” in a manner that invokes the Freudian concept of penis envy. Thus, both feminist theorists reiterate the problem of cultural difference in terms of Western discourses of subjectivity.

Kristeva’s submission to the “unknowability” of the culturally different is also a move repeatedly enacted in Western philosophy and critical writing. Chow argues that a certain *confessional* mode is utilised when “the other” confronts Western scholars. This is evident from the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* of 1762 to the work of Alexandre Kojève in 1959 and Roland Barthes a decade later (p. 33). Chow suggests that both Kojève and Barthes posit Japan in terms of an empty and speechless totality engaged as “an utterly incomprehensible, terrifying, and fascinating spectacle” (p. 33). This is the sense in which Chow understands the Western scholar’s gaze as “pornographic” in that such scholarship presumes to uncover or reveal a foreign “body” of knowledge and yet brushes up against its own limits, turning the drive for knowledge into a narcissistic gesture. Issues of cross-cultural difference are therefore limited to questions of resemblance to and repetition of Western modes of knowledge that reduce the complexities of difference itself. Chow wants to ask other questions:

> Whether positive or negative, the construction of the native remains at the level of image-identification, a process in which “our” own identity is measured in terms of the degrees to which we resemble her and to which she resembles us. Is there a way of conceiving of the native beyond imagistic resemblance? (p. 34)

In her critique of Kristeva and Spivak, Chow suggests that any form of anti-imperialist scholarship will always be constrained by the Oedipal structure they use to theorise cross-cultural differences. There is a “will to know” to this mode of discourse that
assumes that if one can devise a new form of subjectivity (Native as silent object or envying subject) then one can change the nature of the image. In a later essay Spivak herself deconstructs this “will to know” in her theoretical framing of the question “Can the Subaltern Speak” where the authenticity of the Native is always already destroyed as soon as she/he enters the representational structures of Western epistemology (1988).

The issue for Chow then, is not to pursue a project of excavation in the manner of new historicism, nor to celebrate, preserve and empower subordinated cultures in the manner of some Cultural Studies scholarship. This form of knowledge production perpetuates the boundaries of identity determined by colonial discourse and only serves to feed the protean capitalist systems that depend on pseudo-differentiated products. Instead of striving for more realistic Native representations, Chow’s article suggests that the constant reproduction of the Native as pure image and surface has produced simulacral powers that revisit the coloniser within a postcolonial context in troubling and disturbing ways. Here Chow draws on the work of Homi K. Bhabha who theorises the colonial stereotype as a fetish figure of colonial consciousness that unsettles the presumed sovereignty of White subjectivity (“The Other Question” 1992). Chow understands these repetitive powers in terms of a witness-function where the recorded image of the Native stares back at the coloniser as mute testimony to the coloniser’s own psychic investments:

Where the colonizer undresses her, the native’s nakedness stares back at him both as the defiled image of his creation and as the indifferent gaze that says, “there was nothing – no secret – to be unveiled underneath my clothes. That secret is your phantasm.” (p. 52)

This mute-witness function seems suspiciously similar to the reverence Kristeva claims for the crowd of Chinese Women. There is also an implicit presupposition that the coloniser can attain a form of reflexive self-consciousness through this witness function. This self-consciousness is a means of unraveling the Self/Other dichotomy that informs the Western scholarship that Chow critiques, so that the coloniser (or scholar) becomes aware of the otherness of his/her own subjectivity and the limits of his/her own knowledge.

Yet what are the conditions necessary for this coming into being of self-consciousness? Is this not a reiteration of a Western mode of subjectivity that can presume to know its own limits? Chow argues that this is not the case and she calls upon Slavoj Zizek’s discussion of deception as an antidote to this implicit self-reflexivity. Following Lacan’s theory of the three dimensions of subjectivity (the Symbolic order, Imaginary order and the Real that precedes and/or exceeds these two)
Zizek argues that one deceives by telling the truth. The paradox of deception is such that one is deceived by the truth because one essentially believes that a deeper truth lies behind the initial statement. For Chow, the deeper truth that structures some forms of Western scholarship is the belief “that under the mask of civilization we are ‘savages’: the savage/primitive/native is then the ‘truth’ that is outside/under the symbolic order. The cultural critic who holds onto such a notion of the native is, by analogy, a psychotic subject” (p. 53). The anti-imperialist cultural critic who searches for a deeper and more authentic truth about Native and non-Western subjects effectively searches for a space outside his own “fake” experiences and this search expresses a desire to contain and control the illusionary qualities of the symbolic orders produced by imperialism, colonialism and capitalism. However, Chow argues, that this approach treats these symbolic orders as consistent and thus easily identifiable sites of manipulation and that this treatment negates the possible expressions of resistance open to the Native as image. This approach also reiterates the cultural critic’s illusion of self-reflexivity through his anti-imperialist critical position. Chow wants to “invent a dimension” of critique that goes beyond “the deadlock between native and colonizer in which the native can only be the colonizer’s defiled image and the anti-imperialist critic can only be psychotic” (p. 53). This use of the word “dimension” holds intriguing possibilities as to what kind of time/space configuration might enable and condition the production of such critical work. Chow’s work suggests that the Oedipal structuring of cultural difference restricts and constrains how this “dimension” might be conceptualised. However, her “witness function” solution ultimately reiterates the navel-gazing tendencies of the anti-imperialist discourses she critiques (where cultural critics must presumably follow a paranoid regime of self-analysis to “root out” the deep-seated belief in primitivism). Chow convincingly deconstructs the concept of an authentic Native identity as well as demonstrates the “will to truth” that occurs in anti-imperialist scholarship. However, her unexamined acceptance of Fredric Jameson’s model of visual perception as essentially voyeuristic, maintains the orthodox camera obscura model of perception and subjectivity.

It is this return to an essentialised bourgeois humanism that is the kernel of the problem for postcolonial critics. James Clifford identifies this same tendency to articulate the characteristics of colonial power in psychologised and humanised terms in the work of Edward Said. While Said cites his methodological approach as a discursive analysis of Orientalist scholarship in the manner of Michel Foucault, Clifford charges Said with “misusing” Foucault’s concept of discourse by confusing the distinction between personal statements and discursive articulations (1988, p. 269). Said himself makes the distinction between his approach and the work of Foucault when he writes:
Yet unlike Foucault, to whose work I am greatly indebted, I do believe in the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism [...] Foucault believes that in general the individual text or author counts for very little; empirically, in the case of Orientalism (and perhaps nowhere else) I find this not to be so. (1978, p. 23)

In this quotation Said privileges the determining imprint of an Occidental consciousness as an inherent and pre-discursive force structuring the production of Oriental discourse. Much has been made of Said’s homogenising treatment of “the West” as a dichotomous opposition to “the East” he seeks to contextualise. For example, Michael Fischer and George Marcus argue that Said “acknowledges no motives of the West other than domination, no internal debates among Westerners about alternative modes of representation ... Most tellingly he acknowledges no political or cultural divisions among the subject people he is allegedly defending” (1986, p. 2). These homogenising effects derive most certainly from the camera obscura model of perception that Said uses to structure the differences between the East and the West and the privileging of a prediscursive form of consciousness is the defining mark of this model. Said’s resolute defense of “the determining imprint of individual writers” enacts a similar search for the “truth” behind the deceptive powers of imperialist discourse that Chow’s work refutes. Where Said poses dichotomous oppositions between East and West, Chow attempts to highlight the interconnections between these monolithic categories and how these categories have a history entrenched in Western epistemology. Chow’s work critiques the fetishistic treatment of an images content and highlights the particular “ways of seeing” that content and in this approach she shifts discussions of cultural difference that focus on the Native and towards discussions of the differences determining the anti-imperialist cultural critic. The question for Chow becomes one of not seeing “as” a certain kind of subject, but seeing from a point of difference that can highlight the act of knowledge production. This shift from difference as dichotomous and as between Native and critic to the differences within the cultural critic is also a feature of the postcolonial feminist theorist Sneja Gunew. The following discussion examines Gunew’s concept of “subjects-in-process” as an antidote to the fixed and monolithic subject of the camera obscura model.

In “Authenticity and the Writing Cure: Reading Some Migrant Women’s Writing” Gunew echoes the question posed by Foucault in his essay “What is an Author?” when she asks “when does one start, or stop, writing as a migrant (an immigrant to Australia from a non-Anglo-Celtic culture), or ‘as’ anything?” (1989, p.
In this essay, Gunew proceeds from Derrida’s and Foucault’s argument for a discursive understanding of subjectivity, to examine the political implications of a decentred concept of identity for feminist and migrant subjects. She describes this political dilemma in the following passage:

If one subscribes to the project of deconstructing those binary oppositions which continue to trap us as ‘women’ in the service of the male humanist subject as origin of meaning and truth, then how can one at the same time endorse feminist enterprises which assert truths located in women’s empirical experience, especially when we have been at such pains to tease out the ways in which ‘experience’ has always consolidated the imaginary relations of ideology? (p. 116)

While Gunew restricts herself to the issues of a feminist gender politics, the question she raises can also be applied to minority racial politics. The issue remains one of how to sustain a sense of political agency based on identity and representation that does not reiterate or affirm the stereotypical (and hence ideological) features of that representation. Gunew draws upon Louis Althusser’s theory of interpellation to argue that migrant literature illustrates a model of subjectivity that disrupts the hegemony of an Anglo-Celtic cultural paradigm in Australian literature precisely because of the history of overcoding that the migrant stereotype embodies. In effect, Gunew attempts to harness the powers of the migrant’s “proper name” to pursue a feminist politics within the constraints of a liberal humanist project.

Gunew argues that the literary and educational institutions of Australia condition the reception of migrant texts so that their meaning is determined by the identity of the migrant author. Where the Author as a Proper Name in Foucault’s terms suggests an individuated and interiorised Subject, the migrant Author is always already a collective and representational figure who “speaks” for her people. Thus, the Author of the migrant text is always already subordinated to Anglo-Celtic norms that refuse the migrant an individuated identity. The migrant is thus misrecognised by the Anglo-Celtic reader as an undifferentiated Other whose characteristics are based upon naturalised categories and discursive positions:

For example, migrant women are interpellated within Anglo-Celtic Australian culture as signifying sexuality (they breed); food (they overfeed their families); factory fodder (they supplement family incomes by part-time and below award work); silence (they never learn English because they don’t mix with the public community). (1989, p. 117)

For Gunew, the assumed naturalness of what constitutes a migrant subject exemplifies the workings of a bourgeois, male and European ideology that assumes a binary model
of racial and gendered difference, that is, the legacy of colonial discourse. While the literary institutions adopted policies of inclusivity that expressed a more multicultural identity for Australia, this very inclusivity did nothing to transform the terms of engagement in relation to cultural difference. Again, a system of pseudo-differentiation occurs in this policy of inclusivity that manages to pluralise the identity of Australia while maintaining Anglo-Celtic culture as the defining norm. Werner Hamacher (1997) and Joan W. Scott (1992) make a similar critique of multiculturalism in America when they argue that the concept of multiculturalism pluralises the notion of cultural identity while nonetheless still operating under a unified concept of what constitutes these identity. Therefore it is not so much the possibility of inclusivity that the minor subject must struggle with as the transformation of the terms of that inclusivity. Yet how may this occur?

Gunew finds the theory of interpellation useful because it emphasises the institutional forces at work in producing subjects. She suggests that migrant women's writing clearly reveal the ideological encodings at work because the writings of migrant subjects carry the traces of former institutional interpellation such as ideological hailing from countries of origin. These texts provide a disturbing mosaic of former interpellations, of "dead or repressed subjects" who carry the traces of former inscriptions. These writings express a centred form subjectivity that defies the dyadic logic of the dominant model of interpellation (p. 118). In a 1990 article entitled "PostModern Tensions: Reading for (Multi)Cultural Difference" Gunew explores the disruptive potential of migrant authors in more detail.

In this essay Gunew examines the link between literary production and the manufacturing of a national culture (post-1988) to argue that multicultural writings in Australia have disrupted previously held assumptions about what constitutes Australian culture. Borrowing from Edward Said's thesis on the role played by literature in the continuation of imperialism, Gunew argues that the category of "Australian culture" legitimates Anglo-Celtic identity as the dominant paradigm against which all other differences are negatively valued (1990, p. 24-25). Gunew notes how the rural and pastoral traditions of Australian historical representations have now been superseded by the emergence of migrant writers who denaturalise widely held assumptions of what constitutes 'Australianness'. For example, the commonly held meanings of the words "Home", "Mother" or "Land" understood by Anglo-Celtic readers of literature differ radically from those images and meanings drawn upon by migrant writers. Where the image of "Home" for an Anglo-Celtic citizen might suggest a coastal Australian city on the edge of a desert, for the migrant writer this term might conjure memories of a war-torn and land-locked east European city. These juxtaposing images
and memories increasingly place under pressure the received understanding of the term “culture” itself and for Gunew this pressure is a productive and disruptive force.

Following this logic, the uneasy fit between migrant experiences and the social norms of Anglo-Celtic culture generates a different understanding of cultural value. Indeed, the transformation of the category of “race” to that of “ethnicity” in migrant discourse is one such example of the competing claims to meaning and value in Australian society. Rather than the homogenous category of race (handed down from colonial discourses) “ethnicity” more closely describes the often-contradictory experiences of minority subjects while alleviating the biological and deterministic tendencies of race categories. The concept of “ethnicity” also defuses the hegemonic powers of the word “Culture” by highlighting the socially constituted and contested nature of cultural identity. For the migrant, “ethnicity” is a mutable and responsive understanding of culture and cultural identity where the play of difference experienced by the minority subject (and relayed in multicultural texts) reveals the cultural artifice of ethnicity as an ongoing search for expression rather than any intrinsic essence. Understanding cultural identity in terms of ethnicity expresses the contested and contradictory experiences of social existence and leads Gunew to write:

So ethnicity constantly searches for voices, not for a definitive stance. It seeks mutual illuminations in reading juxtaposed dialogic texts or utterances that swerve away from the binary structures that have traditionally been the model on which the ground of 'culture' is established. (p. 25)

Gunew suggests that such juxtapositions be utilised as a strategy for reading migrant and multicultural texts. Using Australian Studies as an example, Gunew traces the initial habit of constructing an Australian literary canon as different from English Studies and in its homogenisation of multicultural writing by reading this literature through the lens of an Anglo-Celtic mind-set. That 'Australia' is always understood in relation to somewhere else (most usually England or Ireland) is an idea that Gunew puts to strategic use. Migrant writers who speak of “Home”, render uncanny the conventional Anglo-Celtic referent and provide new allegories and images to express a multicultural Australia. Gunew wonders, “what does ‘Australia’ look like when other motherlands and languages are acknowledged as constitutive repositories for these allegories?” (p. 29). This is no doubt an 'Australia' of proliferating difference that becomes a constantly contested national signifier no longer controlled by one privileged group. Gunew contends that such a juxtaposition of difference would provide a mutual illumination and what Craig Owens terms an 'allegorical palimpsest where texts are read through each other and none is particularly privileged' (p. 30). Ultimately Gunew is suggesting a model of readership that has been unmoored from a centralised notion of
culture by disjunctive migrant ethnic imagery. To take this alternate repository of images into account when reading Australian literature is to begin to read from a point of cultural difference.

Gunew’s model of subjectivity, as that which is always in process, offers an alternative strategy to the camera obscura metaphor of subjectivity. She argues that the former interpellations (which intersect and criss-cross the migrant text) can subvert the naturalised presumption of an Anglo-Celtic norm. To continue the camera obscura analogy, the viewing subject would observe not a fixed or clear image but perhaps a blurred or fuzzy image that would break the dominance of the gaze and the clarity of meaning. This becomes a strategy of resistance against the dominant social system that seeks to efface all contradictions, for ideology derives its greatest efficiency from apparent naturalness and normality, or in the case of the camera obscura, through a promised realistic reflection. Resistance comes in the form of a subject-in-process; a fragmented and stuttering subject who refuses to relay a transparent and easily consumable “message” to the waiting majority populace. Accordingly, the spectres of these former interpellations might provoke a reading strategy that is partial and localised due to the impossibility of any clear and direct way of seeing or knowing. For Gunew, contradiction is a place to start subversive action, and she argues for a reading strategy alert to the productive site of contradiction that can unsettle dominant modes of understanding the world. However, while this strategy privileges the possibility of a destabilised observer, Gunew bases this instability on a process of recognition that maintains a certain equilibrium that returns the observer to a stable and centred position. This problem is alluded to in “Authenticity and the Writing Cure” when she discusses the difference between migrant and mainstream texts:

The question is always: for whom? If one asks how these texts differ from other kinds of non-realist or experimental writing in Australia, an answer is: only in so far as they foreground historical, cultural and sociological questions concerning pronouns and positionality: who, from where, when and to whom? The reminder, to those who have eyes to see, is that the enunciating positions are partial and outside (or overlapping with manifestations of other cultural codes). Where the ‘I’ is used, it is more often than not parodic of the first-person confessional, or rendered uncanny. (my emphasis 1989, p. 120)

Here Gunew’s strategies appear to depend on parody, irony and a special privileged and self-reflexive subject who “has eyes to see” the differences between a migrant and a mainstream text and this approach reiterates the limitations found in Rey Chow’s critical tactics. Accordingly, one must ask, what are the conditions necessary to approach a cultural object from the point of view of difference?
Gunew's articles suggest strategies for reading from a point of difference the ways in which socio-cultural forces interpellate specific subjects. Migrant and multicultural writers experience multiple and contradictory social and economic forces that act on their bodies and their bodies of work. For Gunew, these contradictions denaturalise Anglo-Celtic readings and are a strategy for recognising and resisting cultural and gender categories based on ideological interpellations. Instead of the unified subject suitable to the perpetuation of dominant ideology, Gunew uses the notion of 'subjects-in-process', a term that attempts to capture the fragmented and partial subject effects produced by mobile and competing social and historical forces. Making partial and provisional readings of subjects-in-process accentuates the context of a text, however, Gunew's theory of subjects-in-process requires that one still relies on ideals passed on by dominant ideology because recognition is itself an ideological consequence. The question remains as to how the cultural critic can take up a position that allows them to see from a point of difference without already presupposing what that difference might actually look like and where that position might be. If one is to read cultural differences partially and from a sense of locatedness in relation to the object under examination, how can that location be determined in advance of the encounter with otherness?

Here we return to the exhausted dyadic logic of the camera obscura model where the process of misrecognition reiterates a timeless and ahistorical interiorised subject. Gunew suggests that migrant texts disrupt this process of misrecognition by making overt the idealised nature of social roles and categories. The well-oiled machinery of ideological encoding fails when confronted by the contradictions presented by migrant texts. Yet these very contradictions depend upon norms governed by ideology because, to be able to recognise difference, a reader must have some idea of what is normal. For example, the migrant text fails to convey conventional Anglo-Celtic meaning and this failure produces contradictions and a semantic dissonance that throws into question any ideal of a stable and universal referent. Yet this play of difference still depends on a norm determined by Anglo-Celtic culture of what constitutes Australian literature. The differences presented by the subject-in-process, or the migrant text, are dependent upon a mutually productive binary system that Gunew derives from Lacan's Imaginary in which difference is structured through opposite and external relations. The subject-in-process exists in relation to an idealised and unified subject; the contradictions produced by migrant texts only exist in relation to prevailing literary norms. Therefore contradiction perpetuates dominant ideology and subjects-in-process maintain the same oppositional consciousness that Gunew's reading strategies attempt to disrupt. According to this logic, to read and recognise partiality one must rely on an
already constructed image of the author’s migrant identity. One must have some idea of the cultural milieu that produces this text, and be aware of the historical context and the subject positions and discourses available to the author at the time of production. Yet all of these sources of knowledge come from what Althusser refers to as ideological state apparatus (1971, p. 123), therefore to recognise the disruptive and subversive potentials of a migrant text one must first negotiate these elaborate systems of knowledge that will produce this denaturalised state. This gives cause to wonder at the subversive potential of a reading strategy that takes its stage directions from the very power system it seeks to resist and that also requires the cultivation of a consciousness subsequently open to denaturalisation.

Gunew acknowledges that Althusser’s theory of ideology has its limitations but is useful for her purpose of emphasising the institutional processes that work on migrant and multicultural writings (1989, p. 116). Her reading strategies are a pragmatic response to social and material imperatives, however this very pragmatism circumvents the potential conceptual shift that Gunew’s argument promises. Gunew commits herself to a politics of representation because that is the assumed ground to contest social power and the assumed site where ideology manipulates and mystifies social subjects. Indeed, this approach appears reasonable given that dominant cultural regimes can easily co-opt representations of otherness for purposes other than revolution. Yet Gunew’s own work is susceptible to co-option because she remains wedded to the field of representational politics where her alternate reading strategy can just as easily be used to mainstream migrant literary productions. For example, in 'Postmodern Tensions' Gunew suggests that migrant textual images provide a rich repository for new allegories that are indigenous to the multicultural context of Australia. However, this suggestion seems surprisingly similar to the appropriating actions with which she charges Australia’s history-making machinery in 'Authenticity and the Writing Cure' where the inclusiveness of oral narratives becomes a form of pseudo product differentiation of the Australian culture industry. To imagine the richer repositories and image set provided by migrant texts also gives the illusion of inclusiveness by seemingly constructing a more democratic and indigenous representation of Australian literature and consequently, Australian national identity. This sense of adding to a repository of images ultimately posits social change as a process of expanding the terms of communication. Gunew begins by valorising the subversive potential of confusion and mistranslation, however the strategy she ends with still relies on the necessity of self-reflexivity. The continued dyadic exchange between migrant and Anglo-Celtic subjects remains a tautological activity, with the norms of the presumed majority dictating the definitions of minorities. Ultimately the
camera obscura model still haunts the literary production of Gunew’s “subversive” migrant texts as the organising principle of the uncanny return of a repressed and interiorised subject. This contradicts the point that Gunew’s argument hinges upon: that the migrant text is always and immediately a collective text that exceeds the bounds of Anglo-Celtic models of subjectivity.

While there are limits to Gunew’s concept of “subjects-in-process” as an antidote to the camera obscura model of perception, she contributes to the elaboration of a critical “dimension” (in Chow’s words) that highlights the mobile and mutable movements of social forces. Through her discussion of multiply interpellated migrant subjects, Gunew demonstrates how the migrant presence interrupts the symbolic flows of imperialist and Eurocentric vision. A minority author’s use of words (or images) can disrupt conventional understandings and this denaturalisation opens up the encounter between text and reader as a permeable interface where the textual engagement has the potential to alter or transform the reader in some way. How this transformation might occur (and to what effects) cannot be predicted. This is Gunew’s primary mistake in that she conceives of the indeterminate and confusing powers of migrant mistranslations in ways that are predictable and within the realm of the possible (I will return to this bounded concept of transformation in the discussions of Pierre Levy’s work in chapter 3). At this point Gunew truncates the potential of the interaction by returning the text and reader to a politics of identity and by assuming that power moves in predictable and easily seen ways. Although arguing for site-specific readings, Gunew implements theories of subjectivity and ideology that abstract away from the discursive character of the textual encounter and the material consequences of migrant textual disruptions.

Gunew argues that the migrant text constitutes a gap between imaginary relations and real conditions and that this gap, lack or failure is the productive site for analysing the workings of institutional and social processes that exercise power over individuals and groups. Gunew replaces the myth of a unified subject (and consequently the promised transparency of literature accompanying this model of subjectivity) with a fragmented and process-oriented subjectivity whose literary expressions (migrant writing) reflect the ideological workings of the world. However, in Gunew’s method the text still reflects some kind of prior “real” which reiterates the use made of Orientalist texts by Edward Said where a pre-discursive consciousness left its imprint on the text (1978, p. 23). Gunew’s emphasis on the “gap” between imaginary relations and real conditions might also be refuted using Rey Chow’s argument that this “real” is only a false illusion, a fake idea governing the knowledge produced by anti-imperialist cultural critics.
However, Rey Chow’s own discussion of images of “the Native” as performing a witness-function for the Western critic also resurrects an interiorised Western Subject based on a fundamental error of self-deception. Chow relies on a form of Lacanian symptomology that approaches the Native image as an externalised symptom constituting the ontological consistency of the Western subject (1993, p. 30). Each formulation of the dynamics of cross-cultural difference reinforces the interdependence and unifying principles of the one and the other (be it colonised/coloniser, migrant/host, East/West). Each formulation addresses the double bind constraining and determining how one may know or “see” the other and each formulation strikes at the heart of the camera obscura model in its reliance upon a particularly privileged concept of the Subject whose determining gaze constructs the Other as inferior. While Gunew attempts to de-centre this Subject and accentuate the processes constituting and constructing multiple subject-positions, Chow remains focused on the anti-imperialist Subject and the Native as Image whose intersecting gazes produce an unknown critical “dimension” beyond the dichotomous structure of imperialist discourse. This critical dimension is perhaps similar to the “third” space that Homi K. Bhabha locates in the ambivalence at the heart of the camera obscura model of vision. This ambivalence effects both coloniser and colonised and is dramatised most effectively in Bhabha’s discussion of the repetitive images of the Other produced through colonial discourse that has resulted in the colonial stereotype.

In “The Other Question: the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse” Bhabha engages in and extends Said’s analysis of colonial discourse, emphasising the interconnectedness of the colonial subject and the colonised other. Yet where Said’s posing of the differences between coloniser/colonised remains monolithic and static, Bhabha attempts to accentuate the repetitive and constantly changing nature of these differences. For Bhabha, the colonial stereotype expresses this logic most clearly as “a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always in place, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated” (1992, p. 18). In this essay Bhabha attempts to combine a Foucauldian analysis of colonial discourse with a Lacanian approach to identity and subject formation, and as I argue below, this contradictory framework ultimately reasserts the primacy of the camera obscura model of perception that Bhabha initially seeks to undermine. However, the ambivalence Bhabha identifies at the heart of the camera obscura model opens up the terms through which one can understand that “third” dimension between self and other or coloniser/colonised, a dimension where critical thought can grapple with the problem of cultural difference itself.
Bhabha uses Foucault's theory of the strategic articulation of 'coordinates of knowledge' to examine the workings of colonial discourse. According to Bhabha, the multiple and contradictory types of knowledge about the raced colonial stereotype support and are supported by, the myth of historical origination and "racial purity" and "cultural priority" developed in colonial literature, art and culture (p. 320). For Bhabha (following the work of Frantz Fanon) the frenzied articulation, representation and observation of racial difference in the colonial era functions through "fixations of racial topology, the analytics of blood, ideologies of racial and cultural dominance or degeneration" (p. 321). This rendering visible of racial difference conjures up the Foucauldian image of the Panoptican where the White colonial subject occupies centre-stage. However, Bhabha ends his essay with an image of the Panoptican that has been severely destabilised by the anxious and ambivalent "visualising" of racial difference that performs "a productive splitting in its constitution of knowledge and exercise of power" (p. 328) in that this frenzy of the visible served to cover over a more pressing need.

Foucault stresses that the relations of knowledge and power within the apparatus are always a strategic response to an urgent need at a given historical moment - much as I suggested at the outset - that the force of colonial discourse as a theoretical and political intervention, was the need, in our contemporary moment, to contest singularities of difference and to articulate modes of differentiation. (p. 319)

Bhabha thus identifies a troubling excess at the heart of colonial discourse that ultimately undoes its own drive to fix racial and cultural difference as a homogenous and stable unity. Following the logic of destabilisation that Bhabha puts forth in this essay, one can see why he maintains a Lacanian paradigm of subject constitution as his modus operandi. Freud’s theory of the unconscious emerged in a similar historical and cultural milieu to that of colonial discourse and this paradigm of subjectivity is implicitly critiqued by Bhabha as the model that justifies the colonial enterprise. However, if Bhabha were to pursue Foucault’s method of discursive analysis to its limits, the very model of subjectivity he takes as the grounding norm of colonial discourse also needs to be examined. Bhabha reduces the complexities of the discursive production of cultural difference to "an urgent need" that is traced back to the anxious repetition of the "myth of historical origination" (p. 320). This tactic again resurrects the abstract and transcendent psychoanalytic concept of subjectivity whose dominance is questionable. For the question remains: why is the camera obscura model of subjectivity the unexamined paradigm utilised in postcolonial discourse? In Bhabha’s work, Lacan’s treatment of subjectivity contradicts Foucault’s anti-humanist
approach to produce a critique of colonial discourse that returns all questions of difference to interiorised and subjectivised differences. This fundamentally contradicts Foucault’s contention that discourse functions in relation to an Outside. In the essay “What is an Author?” Foucault argues that an author’s writing is not the expression of an interiorised subject but it is a nonpersonal mode of articulation. This alternative image of the relation between subjectivity and text refuses the anthropomorphic and interiorised image of Man that haunts postcolonial theory:

First of all, we can say that today’s writing has freed itself from the theme of expression. Referring only to itself, but without being restricted to the confines of its interiority, writing is identified with its own unfolded exteriority. This means that it is an interplay of signs arranged less according to its signified content than according to the very nature of the signifier. Writing unfolds like a game [jeu] that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits. In writing, the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears. (1998, p. 206)

Foucault’s examination of the nonpersonal forces that produce relations to an Outside (understood as the interplay of signs) is refused in Edward Said’s and Homi K. Bhabha’s work due to the perceived political necessity of maintaining a model of identity that can express political agency.

Some postcolonial theorists charge Foucault (and Gilles Deleuze) with perpetuating a Eurocentric methodology that erases the role of the intellectual in the act of knowledge production as well as the conditions necessary for the staging of political resistance (for example, Gayatri Spivak’s critique of Foucault and Deleuze is discussed further on). However, what Gunew’s work demonstrates is the difficult task of “locating” the role of the reader vis-à-vis the author without recourse to a static and essentialised concept of identity. While Gunew’s argument ultimately returns to a model of communication based on the camera obscura, her emphasis on the collective nature of the migrant stereotype follows the logic of Foucault and makes redundant the one-to-one model of cross-cultural engagement. Foucault’s image of a text as a working of relations of force to an outside suggests an alternative relation between text and subject that is also taken up in the work of Deleuze and Guattari in their discussion of major and minor literature. All three theorists emphasise the break between content and expression and the role that the outside plays in cultural production. Accordingly they offer alternative models for articulating the dynamic power relations between dominant and subordinate social identities.
1.3 The Major/minor Dyad and Minoritarian Becomings

Deleuze and Guattari offer up a different approach to subjectivity and the role or function of literature in the work *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986) and in their image of the rhizome discussed in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). For Deleuze and Guattari, Franz Kafka epitomises the status of a minority subject as a German-speaking and Jewish resident of Prague. Canonical readings of Kafka describe him as channeling his most personal inhibitions, anxieties and fantasies into highly imaginative stories and novels. In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1983) Deleuze and Guattari argue that such an “egoistic” conception of the work of art (the imposition of an “Oedipal form”) reduces literature to a commodity object subject to the demands of the market place. They suggest an alternate form of critique that is not so much interpretation as diagnosis. Instead of the name of the author functioning to prescribe the meaning of the text (the proper name of Kafka as a unified humanist subject) they consider “Kafka” in a more impersonal mode. His name becomes a term designating a system of signs or concepts in much the same manner as a doctor’s name is used to designate a disease. In his introduction to Deleuze’s *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Daniel W. Smith terms this treatment of an author a “nonpersonal mode of individuation” where the proper name given to an illness (say, Parkinson’s disease) is linked to a group of symptoms or signs that reflect a certain state of forces (1997, p. xvi-xvii). Deleuze brings this Nietzschean approach to his collaborative work with Guattari where they both conduct a symptomology of literature and art in general which transforms the relationship between author and text as assumed by Said, Chow, Gunew and Bhabha. These latter writers ultimately resort to a Lacanian form of symptomology where the image or text is the sign of a deeper, absent presence and where the question of identity and origin acts as the point of departure for critique. However, the grounding narrative of identity formation shares the same soil as the narratives of first contact between coloniser and colonised that dominate colonial literature, arts and sciences. The relationship between author and text, image and spectator, coloniser and colonised must be rethought in terms that are other than representational if one is to shift the terrain and terms used to discuss cultural difference. Deleuze and Guattari contribute to this project in their approach to books, texts and images as a working of matter rather than as metaphorical, symbolic and representational texts.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that a book is not the expression of an intentional and pre-existent subject. A book or text is simply that which expresses semiotic material that is taken up in relation to an outside, which suggests a more diverse and open-ended relationship between text, author and world:
We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge. (1987, p. 4)

The introductory essay to *A Thousand Plateaus* proposes the image of a rhizome in place of the “Tree of Knowledge” image of the book presumed by canonical approaches to literature. The image of the tree, with its unitary root structure, follows the law of reflection and representation in much the same manner as the camera obscura promises a centred and stable point of view. In contrast, the rhizome image posits a more horizontal and transversal relationship between text and author (and consequently world) that transforms the rigid and vertical boundaries between author/text or object/subject. There is no centralised image that the book takes as its point of reference, rather a book is a collection of signs and symptoms expressing the vitality of life itself:

A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations. (p. 3)

This working of matters at various dates and speeds opens up the terrain of critical engagement beyond the Oedipal narrative of interiority, authenticity and identity politics constrained by representational fetishism. The nonpersonal mode of individuation suggested by the author’s name conceives of the author as a kind of threshold figure that links up forces of language with other elements from the socius. The author is considered as a schizoid figure that enters into relations that are radically exterior, extensive and intensive. In the previous discussion of migrant writing, the Oedipalised author’s creative forces are connected to a limited field of relations. The proper name of “Migrant” and “Woman” limits all creative forces to the realm of sexuality, food, factory fodder, or silence and is a result of what Deleuze and Guattari term a majoritarian use of language. This does not mean to suggest a return to a dialectic opposition of major or minor entities. Indeed, in order to understand Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of difference it is useful at this point to clarify the relationship between major and minor modes.

The dyad of major and minor discussed in *Kafka* can be compared to the relationship between major and minor modes in music. The range of musical notes within a scale allows the possibility of a number of combinations that can be expressed as either major or minor chords. It is not a question of different types of notes, but of
different combinations. The minor mode in music is immanent within a major structure (for example, a major chord is transformed into a minor chord through the modulation of a note by a semi-tone), as is a minor language which can be found only within the major language. For Kafka, writing as a Czechoslovakian Jew in the German language in Prague transposes the major German language into a minor variation that makes the language “stammer” and “wail” (The Deleuze Reader 1993, p. 148). One of the characteristics defining minor literature is that it is written in a major language from a marginalised position. The major mode can be defined as a model to which one conforms and which proceeds by way of axioms and constants. A major language is always a delimited and accountable field of potential while a minoritarian mode has no model but is purely a process that is subsequently nondenumerable.

Deleuze and Guattari make a distinction between the terms “minority” and “minoritarian”. A minority (for example migrant women in Australia) is a denumerable set defined and standardised by the majoritarian regime (the Anglo-Celtic literary institution of Australia). The majoritarian regime overcodes all differences expressed by the minority and affirms a constant standard that is imposed upon its speakers. In the case of “migrant women” this standard includes the delimited field of sexuality, food, factory fodder, and silence, each at certain points overlapping, intersecting or transmuting into variations on these themes. Such a majoritarian use of language proceeds via a logic of axioms that have political consequences as Deleuze and Guattari make clear in A Thousand Plateaus when they “[T]he scientific enterprise of extracting constants and constant relations is always coupled with the political enterprise of imposing them on speakers and transmitting order-words” (1987, p. 146). However, this political effect is not the result of an intentional and privileged subject (in this instance, the Anglo-Celtic subject) but is a more impersonal procedure of systematisation in keeping with Deleuze’s and Guattari’s image of the rhizome.

For example, a minority collective might also harness the powers of standardisation and make themselves a model for political resistance, prosperity and recognition. This is the case for feminist theorist Trinh T Minh-ha who embodies the terms “Third World” and “Woman” for strategic political ends (Woman, Native, Other, 1989). However, this usage still refers to a majoritarian use of language, the term minoritarian has yet to be explained. Accompanying all major uses of language are the nondenumerable processes of the creative forces of becoming-minoritarian that produce this model of identity. The model (for example, the “Third World Woman” identity category) becomes a constant, standardised majoritarian concept but the creative forces of becoming-minoritarian create this category. Deleuze and Guattari explain this mode in A Thousand Plateaus:
There is a universal figure of minoritarian consciousness as the becoming of everybody, and that becoming is creation. One does not attain it by acquiring the majority. The figure to which we are referring is continuous variation, as an amplitude that continually oversteps the representative threshold of the majoritarian standard, by excess or default. (p. 106)

Gunew conceives of the subversive powers of the migrant writer as dependent upon the model of identity it has acquired rather than the creative forces that have gone into the model. Her reliance on an existential identity (the subject-in-process) consequently returns her critical enterprise to the exhausted dyadic logic of colonial discourse and the Oedipal narrative that overcodes this terrain. The dyad of major and minor in Deleuze's and Guattari's writings includes the triadic component of becoming-minoritarian which focuses critical attention not on the fields of consistency or existential territories (prior models of identity, subjectivity and the realm of the Proper Name) but on the movements between these fields. A minor mode is a process, a becoming; a line of variation that accompanies all major uses of language. While a major mode might designate and organise a field, strata or territory, these territories are simultaneously disorganised, traversed and populated by minoritarian becomings that introduce and perpetuate constant variations.

Gunew's subject-in-process suggests a capacity for this line of variation when she argues that migrant texts are precluded from being received as individualistic expressions. Deleuze and Guattari also affirm the loss of the traditional author-function when they argue that in minor literature all individual utterances are given a collective value that links immediately to political concerns. In major literatures the social milieu serves as a mere backdrop to the individual concerns expressed in the text, however minor literature takes on a collective value that is immediately political. Deleuze and Guattari make this point in relation to Kafka's writing:

In major literatures, in contrast, the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as a mere environment or a background [...] Minor literature is completely different; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it. In this way the familial triangle connects to other triangles - commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical - that determine its values. (1986, p. 17)

The migrant text is therefore a rhizomatic configuration that is inextricable from the socius and exceeds personal interior expressions. It is an anti-humanist form of expression in that it stammers, stutters and bifurcates beyond mere concerns of identity and representation. It is a form of expression that blotches the clean dyadic lines
between subject and object characteristic of the camera obscura model of subjectivity. Accordingly, the minor mode becomes more a question of style than content in much the same manner as the different musical variations on a standard tune express the peculiar style of a performer. Rather than priority given to content over form (where content is always a presupposed category) a minor mode “begins by expressing itself and doesn’t conceptualize until afterwards” (1986, p. 28). Yet it is precisely this claim regarding expression that postcolonial theorists respond to with such vigour.

For example, Gunew approaches the distinction that Deleuze and Guattari make between majority and minority literatures by questioning the following excerpt from *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*:

A major or established literature follows a vector which goes from context to expression ... What is clear in the mind is then spoken ... But a minor revolutionary literature begins by speaking and only sees and conceives afterwards ... The expression must shatter the forms, marking the breaking points and the new tributaries. Once a form is shattered, the contents, which will necessarily have broken with the order of things, must be reconstructed. Sweeping along the material, getting ahead of it. (qtd. in “Authenticity and the Writing Cure” p. 115)

Gunew argues that the cultural milieu conditioning the reception of migrant women’s texts has emphasised the representational content of the text and that accordingly, the form (the context) demarcating literature or expression is *not* shattered. Hence, Gunew emphasises the reader and the possibilities of alternative reading strategies that can challenge the meaning of the text. Yet, where Gunew privileges context over expression, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise the expressive powers of the minor text, an emphasis which, Caren Kaplan argues, suggests a return to modernist tropes of textual experimentation and language games that evacuate the political content of their theoretical production (*Questions of Travel*, 1996, p. 86). Yet it is precisely through the concept of expression and production that Deleuze and Guattari respond to the limits of a representational politics favoured by Kaplan, Gunew and Gayatri Spivak.

### 1.3 The Politics of Theoretical Production

Caren Kaplan’s study of the trope of travel in postmodern discourse, *Questions of Travel* (1996), includes a chapter dedicated to the image of the Nomad in Deleuze and Guattari’s oeuvre. Where Deleuze and Guattari describe their style of writing as *literally* a nomadic movement of thought, Kaplan argues that the Nomad is a metaphor that belongs to the colonialist imaginary. According to Kaplan, the use of the Nomad
figure by enthusiastic proponents of Deleuze’s and Guattari’s work, de-historicises and romanticises an actual marginalised people and this tactic reiterates the Orientalist traditions of earlier Western forms of scholarship (1996, 66). Indeed, this metaphor suggests that the Western intellectual is, once again, a privileged figure who “can track a path through a seemingly illogical space without succumbing to nation-state and/or bourgeois organization and mastery” (p. 66). With this freedom of movement comes the risk of erasing the located-ness of the Western intellectual who subsequently mimics the margins. Kaplan is particularly concerned with the Deleuzian-Guattarian concept of “becoming-minor” which suggests that everyone is indiscriminately capable of attaining this state:

Becoming minor, a utopian process of letting go of privileged identities and practices, requires emulating the ways and modes of modernity’s “others.” Yet, like all imperialist discourses, these spaces and identities are produced through their imagining; that is, the production of sites of escape or decolonization for the colonizer signals a kind of theoretical tourism. (p. 86)

The emphasis placed upon the marginal figure of the Nomad also reiterates the centre-margin dichotomy of colonial discourse which, according to Kaplan, negates the complex transnational geopolitics of postmodernity. Thus, Deleuze’s and Guattari’s use of the Nomad trope erases the differences between the metropolitan French intellectual and the peripheral nomadic subject through a generalised (and modernist) poetics of displacement. Kaplan also notes how emulators of Deleuze’s and Guattari’s work often emphasise the utopic potential of deterritorialisation without address the process of reterritorialisation which accompanies the former concept (p. 94). Kaplan notes how Gayatri Spivak makes a similar critique when she argues that Deleuze and Guattari ignore questions of ideology at their own peril and that this approach erases the necessary conditions (that is, difference) for political resistance and perpetuates a utopic logic founded upon a Western privilege (p. 97).

Spivak’s work constantly addresses the role of the intellectual in the construction and perpetuation of imperialist subject-production and in 1988 she wrote “Can the Subaltern Speak?” addressing an interview between Foucault and Deleuze published in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice (1977). In this article Spivak argues that Foucault and Deleuze posit “two monolithic and anonymous subjects-in-revolution” (“Maoist” and “the worker’s struggle”) that presupposes a sovereign subjectivity for the Western intellectual while the minority subject is undifferentiated (1988, p. 272). Accordingly, this contemporary form of Orientalism evacuates the question of ideology and the role of Western intellectuals in the production of knowledge. In particular, Spivak argues that Deleuze’s and Guattari’s concept of desire
as a machine fails to “consider the relations between desire, power, and subjectivity” which “renders them incapable of articulating a theory of interests” (p. 273).

Striking directly at the indifference that Deleuze, Guattari (and Foucault) have for concerns of ideology, Spivak declares that these intellectuals reintroduce the concept of the undivided Subject free of contradiction or deception. For Spivak, one cannot articulate a “theory of interests” without the concept of ideology, because a “developed theory of ideology recognizes its own material production in institutionality, as well as in the ‘effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge’” (p. 274). Thus, Spivak reiterates the postcolonial feminist argument that the location and situation of the critic is crucial to the politics of theoretical production. The Western intellectual must address his or her own implication in intellectual and economic history and declare a “theory of interests” that will ultimately lead to the “unlearning” of Western intellectual privilege (p. 296).

While this strategy itself appears remarkably utopic, Spivak charges Deleuze with romanticising the “concrete experience of the oppressed” as the basis for a political appeal (p. 275). What Spivak refers to as Deleuze’s “positivist empiricism” is in fact the point of departure dividing Spivak’s deconstructionist strategies from Deleuze’s emphasis on theory as the production of concepts. This can be summed up by the method of questioning that the two theorists adopt. Where Spivak asks “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Deleuze asks “What is a Minor Literature?”. The first question presumes in advance of the event the parameters of speech and representation that the minority utterance can be measured by. The second question does not presume to know in advance, what the parameters are that will discern the sense of a minor text. This is what Deleuze suggests when he states that “a revolutionary literature begins by speaking and only sees and conceives afterwards” (qtd. in “Authenticity and the Writing Cure” p. 115). We can approach the difference between the two questions through a discussion of the relation between words and things.

Where Foucault and Deleuze presume that dominated and exploited groups are able to speak for themselves as subjects, Spivak contends that the “subaltern” cannot speak. As soon as an exploited group “speaks” or represents itself in a political manner the utterance or discourse transforms the group from a marginal to an imperialist subject. Nor can the intellectual represent this figure without effecting a form of “epistemic violence” (1988, p. 283). Foucault and Deleuze also suggest that the intellectual cannot represent the people. However, Spivak takes issue with their subsequent valorisation of the oppressed in the following manner:

Foucault articulates another corollary of the disavowal of the role of ideology in reproducing the social relations of production: an unquestioned valorization of
the oppressed as subject, the “object being,” as Deleuze admiringly remarks, “to establish conditions where the prisoners themselves would be able to speak.” Foucault adds that “the masses know perfectly well, clearly” – once again the thematics of being undeceived – “they know far better than [the intellectual] and they certainly say it very well” (p. 206-207).

While it appears that Deleuze and Foucault are suggesting that clear, direct and transparent speech is possible, and that the deceptive (and hence ideologically coded) gap between signifier and signified is non-existent, the reverse is actually the case. For Deleuze in particular, the basic function of language operates indirectly as acts of social power (ATP, p. 97). While Spivak continually emphasises the ideological nature of the link between signifier and signified (an approach that focuses on textual meaning and the prior imposition of the “real” to which the signified is compared), Deleuze replaces the signifier/signified dyad with the couplet of expression and content. This allows Deleuze to focus not so much on the representational status of the text but upon how meanings are linked together through associations and how words produce “incorporeal transformations” that become the real (ATP, p. 103).

Deleuze takes the concept of incorporeal transformations from the Stoic philosophers who divided the world into bodies and incorporeals. Words and things are treated as bodies that also have incorporeal dimensions. The incorporeal dimension of a word is sense and meaning, and sense is that which mediates between a word and a thing. Language is the vehicle through which an incorporeal attribute is assigned to a thing and language effects the incorporeal transformation of a thing itself. Deleuze and Guattari give the example of a criminal court case where the utterance of the verdict transforms the accused into the guilty through the enunciation of words taken from a regime of signs that are social in origin (ATP, 103). Words do not represent things, they intervene in things. This approach to language allows Deleuze to say “There is no more representation; there’s nothing but action” to which Spivak responds with the charge of cavalier Eurocentrism (1988, p. 275). In effect, Spivak and Deleuze are both concerned with the power of language to enact material and social transformations. However, where Spivak’s method is to trace the disappearance of the subaltern as she enters the representational terrain of the dominant elite culture, Deleuze’s critical task (if applied to the question of the subaltern) would map the conditions that enable the subaltern’s transformation from one state to the next. The difference between the two approaches has to do with the nature of the question asked. Spivak’s question presupposes, in advance of the event of enunciation, the effect, reason and criteria against which the speech-act is measured. Deleuze’s question “What is a Minor Literature?” is a self-problematising question that not only enfolds upon the intellectual as a producer of concepts (the concept of minor literature) but also opens up to an
Outside that embraces the role of chance. If one were to adopt a Deleuzian approach to the question of the subaltern one might ask “What does subaltern speech sound like?”

To posit self-problematising questions is to practice a Deleuzian set of ethics dedicated to the task of the creation of concepts. A minor text is thus, not the expression of a pre-defined and essential Other, it is the expression of concepts that are actualised in the encounter between text and world. Yet this brings us back to the charge made by Caren Kaplan that Deleuze and Guattari are guilty of high-modernist tactics of textual and linguistic experimentation that evacuates political critique. Just as Spivak demonstrates, the slogans that Deleuze proclaims through his oeuvre, (or his use of the Nomad trope or the concept of becoming-minor) when taken out of context and placed within a deconstructionist and representational regime, do appear Orientalist and Eurocentric. What of Deleuze’s own interests as a French, masculinist intellectual?

It is true that the Proper Name of Deleuze is an elusive and imperceptible entity and his own socio-cultural milieu is never overtly declared in his philosophical writings. Yet, such a declaration of interest is already redundant because language is an indirect discourse that effects multiple incorporeal transformations depending on the context of reception. The focus of Deleuze’s critique is on the event of the textual or spoken utterance: how the text connects to the world, to the regime of signs that enfolds it. Where Spivak focuses on a theory of interests that would reveal the historical role of the intellectual (which paradoxically reasserts the primacy of a sovereign subject), Deleuze’s attention is to the diverse and differentiated processes of reception itself. Deleuze and Guattari create historical contexts as conceptual milieus that draw momentary links between things. If, as art theorist Norman Bryson notes “context [is] the contextuality of the present” and the historical archive as such is constantly rearranged with the unfolding of time, how one “locates” oneself vis-à-vis the knowledge one produces is also open to the vicissitude of time’s passing (“Art in Context”, 1994, p. 78). The intellectual as writer constructs a territory that deterritorialises the given archive and is him/herself reterritorialised in the act of writing and in the subsequent act of reading. Thus, any pretence toward self-reflexivity is a reterritorialisation that provokes a new set of questions. This is the nomadic nature of the intellectual in Deleuze and Guattari’s oeuvre, nomadism as a conceptual logic as opposed to metaphorical allusion.

Accordingly, Deleuze and Guattari are not historians, they are nomads immersed in the present and writing about the past, and the role of memory and imagination plays a part in the reception of their work. As Brian Massumi observes, to read Deleuze is to be “contaminated” and “supersaturated” by the concepts that vie for the reader’s attention. Or as Massumi writes:
The reader’s learned responses and habits of thought are interrupted, her/his situation is misplaced. Any attempt to choose from a familiar position of strength, aided by a return to comforting criteria, founders in confusion, or disappointment in the result, only a shadow of a thought. A painful “crack” opens in the framing of the situation, and through it wafts the reader’s potential. (“Deleuze”, 1998, p. 562)

Deleuze’s anti-historicism is thus not the evacuation of a politics, but the elaboration of an ethics that invites the reader/spectator/consumer to stage an encounter with a work (Deleuze’s, a migrant’s, another philosopher’s) that functions as an incorporeal transformation. The task of the intellectual is not to self-consciously confess his/her interests and obsessions (again, this resurrects the navel-gazing tendencies of Western theory) but to create the conditions that would enable incorporeal transformations of a new kind.

If Deleuze and Guattari are “guilty” of a charge of utopianism, it is not because they suggest that one can escape the realm of representation to an outside that is free of social power. The potentially utopic nature of their writing comes from their contention that one is capable of thinking differently and that there is always another way of approaching a problem which is more an affirmation of difference than an erasure of it. In addition, Deleuze’s and Guattari’s nomadic practice does not evade the question of socio-cultural concerns by adopting a position that is distanced or omnipresent and which complicates the charges of high modernism that their seemingly merely textual experimentation attracts. Their nomadology follows the logic of incorporeal transformations where words and things slide from one state to another. They are intellectuals as mediators, in the midst of words and things, following the logic of the flow itself. Where Spivak’s question regarding the subaltern presumes a fixed viewing position that awaits the arrival of her subject, Deleuze and Guattari follow the utterance of the minor text to see what connections are possible, what links are selected, and by whom and where? Indeed, it is this fixed viewing position (the camera obscura model of subjectivity) that functions to constrain critical examination of postcolonial cultural politics and the possibilities of minoritarian agency. As Spivak herself is at pains to point out, the international division of labour scrambles the colonialis logic of a centre/margin dyad, and subsequently poses a challenge to the agential powers of the oppressed. The question is how does one respond to this challenge? One possible answer is to construct conceptual frameworks that can address the more rhizomatic movements between the centre/margin and coloniser/colonised dyad established in the camera obscura model of subjectivity. This is precisely the focus of chapter two.
Chapter Two

What is a Hybrid Mode of Perception?

Where postcolonial feminisms emphasise the role of the intellectual in the production of knowledge, developing what is terms a “politics of location”, Deleuze and Guattari highlight nomadology, the analysis of the movements between words and things that create actions in the world (ATP, p. 103). Deleuze and Guattari affirm the possibility that any given problem is the result of actual constraints which give rise to new problematics. The function of the nomadic theorist is to examine those conditions that make conceptual transformation possible. Such is the aim of this chapter, which addresses a revisionist theory of spectatorship that challenges the camera obscura model of perception that has dominated film and postcolonial studies. The first chapter outlined the field of colonial discourse analysis and argued that the dominance of the camera obscura model of perception limited the vocabulary for discussing the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters. This chapter discusses the work of Jonathan Crary who has deterritorialised the archive of apparatus spectatorship theory to produce a machinic concept of the early nineteenth-century observer that has critical implications for colonial discourse analysis. Where the camera obscura model of perception sees the face of Man in all things, Crary’s agitated and embodied observer is simultaneously inscribed and torn apart by the powers of the moving image. These dual powers are also active within the colonial stereotype and this chapter develops the reterritorialising powers of cinema in relation to the stereotype of the Hybrid and the concept of Faciality. By focusing on the stereotype of the Hybrid in D.W Griffith’s The Birth of a Nation (1915) and Orson Welles’ Touch of Evil (1958) and the cinematic technique of the close-up, the chapter develops a conceptual framework for considering how cultural difference involves a decoding and recoding process. Building upon the concept of hybridity developed by Homi K. Bhabha to destabilise the dialectical opposition between coloniser and colonised, this chapter considers the logic of hybridity in relation to the camera obscura model of perception. The work done by Jonathan Crary and Gilles Deleuze on cinema offers an opportunity to revise this model of perception through a surface-oriented approach to perception that counteracts the depth-trick of the camera obscura model which directs all questions of difference to the primal scene of identity and representation. The previous chapter mapped the approaches to cultural difference given in postcolonial theory by using a
model of perception derived from film scholarship, and this next chapter does the reverse. It takes a concept given in postcolonial theory (the concept of hybridity) and relates it to the question of cinema spectatorship through the close analysis of two canonical film texts so as to measure the limit point of each discipline as it relates to the concept of cultural difference.

2.1 A Counter-narrative of Cinema Spectatorship

The writings of Frantz Fanon remind us that the analytics of "blood, hair and bone" underpin the violent and destructive powers of colonial imperialism. In *Black Skins, White Masks* (1967) Fanon recounts an incident of his coming into being as a raced subject via the look of a white boy who identifies him as a Negro. In this moment Fanon himself becomes an image, a transformation which he describes as a process of excision or amputation (p. 114). Fanon's work demonstrates how racialised scientific discourses of the nineteenth century posited an absolute difference between Euro-American whites and African-Americans. Indeed, Fanon would argue that the scientised language of race is the most compelling demonstration of the productive nature of language as an *intervention* into reality and not a representation *of* the real. The brute force of order-words upon social bodies and collectives is not restricted to mere written texts but it also expressed in images, utterances and gestures. How raced bodies are organised is of central concern to postcolonial theorists who historicise the dialectical alignment of black and white subjects on a sliding scale of humanity that subsequently valorises the White Euro-American subject. While the camera obscura model of perception demonstrates this dialectical organisation, it produces a distanced and detached Western observer free of the analytics of blood, hair and bone that grounds the raced body. In *Techniques of the Observer* (1992) Jonathan Crary traces an alternate model of perception in the nineteenth-century which suggests that the dyad of black and white is a more complex matrix of relations. Crary’s analysis combines the Foucauldian method of discourse analysis with Deleuze’s and Guattari’s concept of machinic assemblages to historicise the changing status of the Western observer. No longer a detached and distant observer, for Crary the Western subject becomes a body among other bodies, contaminated by the forces of the outside, and capable of multiple connections. Crary’s Foucauldian influences emphasise a fully conscious relation of regulation and control that act as a counterpoint to the abstract and interiorised subject of the camera obscura, and this attention to forces of the outside makes Crary’s observer an intriguing model for considering cross-cultural spectatorship. For the
epidermal schema and the facial traits of the colonial stereotype are the most heavily encoded aspects of the image.

In the beginning of *Kafka* Deleuze and Guattari invoke a facial schema when they make note of two body postures that express the different forces at work in critique: the bent head and the straightened head (*K*, 1986, p. 5). The bent head expresses a sense of interiority that is blind to surrounding elements and this posture is illustrated in Jonathan Crary’s citation of the Dutch painter Vermeer’s work *The Astronomer* (1668) in reference to the camera obscura model of subjectivity. In this painting the astronomer focuses his gaze upon a three dimensional representation of the world (a globe) while the window beyond his gaze shines into the dark interior (1992, p. 46). The astronomer’s posture expresses a blindness to the world outside. His bent head expresses sad reactive forces that rely on the powers of a consciousness separate from the external world (an expression of egoistic tendencies) and operating within a limited array of potential. These reactive forces seek recognition of the same whereas the second body posture accentuates exterior relations and the possibility of new relations and combinations. The second body posture is the straightened head which faces out in anticipation, with a willingness to make connections with the forces on hand. It is this body posture that Deleuze and Guattari invoke in their critical approach to writing, cinema and other arts and their image of the rhizome as a textual method that connects the world and text in a serial relation suggests an alternative approach to cinema spectatorship. One such alternative occurs in the writings of Jonathan Crary whose work Linda Williams describes as having “profound implications for the conventional notion that a continuous tradition of classical mimetic representation leads from the camera obscura through Renaissance perspective to cinema” (Williams 1995, p. 7).

Crary disputes the common understanding that cinema continues the perspectival model of vision established in the Renaissance period. Crary poses a counter-narrative to this orthodoxy when he argues that this “evolutionary logic of a technological determinism” is ruptured in the early 1800s through the development of the science of physiology (Crary 1992, p. 79). Synonymous with the colonial enterprise of mapping new continents, the early nineteenth century also included an exhaustive inventory of the human body which divided the physical subject into specific mechanical systems that had profound effects on the relation between the observer and the “truth” of vision. Crary argues that these experiments explored the role of the body as the active producer of an optical experience and that this embodied experience of vision blurs the Cartesian division between mind and body.
Among various other examples, Crary discusses the medical scientist Johannes Müller whose experiments on nerve energies (Handbuch der Physiologie des Menschen beginning in 1833) explores the way that electricity, when applied to the optical nerves, can produce the experience of light. These empirical experiences of light occur without any connection to real light from an external source and thus collapse the distinction between interior and exterior optical process. Crary suggests that this "epistemological scandal" presents a fundamental challenge to the concept of a unitary subject who can gain a dependable knowledge of the known world, and contests the conventional philosophical distinction between bodies and images (p. 90). The ray of light that pierces an enclosed and darkened interior of the camera obscura is now defunct and is replaced with a sensory experience that occurs on "an immanent plane". Crary explains the new image of the subject derived from these experiments in stimulation and sensation in the following terms:

Müller presents not a unitary subject but a composite structure on which a wide range of techniques and forces could produce or simulate manifold experiences that are all equally "reality". Thus the idea of subjective vision here has less to do with a post-Kantian subject who is "the organizer of the spectacle in which he appears," than it does with a process of subjectivization in which the subject is simultaneously the object of knowledge and the object of procedures of control and normalization. (p. 92)

Crary argues that Müller's work not only demonstrates the defective and inconsistent processes of the body that produce the empirically-known world, it also raises the possibility of how new forms of knowledge are generated by the body. The electrical stimulation of nerves generates an experience of light, and renders obsolete the role of an actual referent. Müller's discovery thus figures the body of the observer as an entity that is open to exterior relations of force that produce experiences which do not depend on any stable or external point of reference. The possibility of making an unquestioned distinction between that which is "the real" and that, which is illusion, comes increasingly under pressure by the investigations of Müller and those scientists who developed his work.

In 1863 Hermann von Helmholtz conducted experiments in the electrical cross-connecting of nerve endings to enable "the eye to see sounds and the ear to hear colors" (p. 93). Müller's theory of the separation of the senses suggests that nerves have specialised functions. However, Helmholtz's work accentuates the body's capacity for multiple connections with "other agencies and machines" where the observer becomes "a neutral conduit" that allow a relay activity among disparate elements from "commodities" to "energy, capital, images or information" (p. 94). Crary argues that these experiments contributed to the autonomisation of vision in the
nineteenth-century and the remapping of a body opened to the industrial, technological and socio-cultural procedures of Western civilisation. This subject, who is also simultaneously an object, poses a counter-narrative to the specular vision of the Western subject in relation to its colonised Other in that observer becomes a matrix of relations capable of multiple connections outside of the dialectical space between subject and object. This two-way transformation in the act of perception not only involves space, but also the dimension of time as exemplified in the scientific experimentation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

In his 1840 volume *Theory of Color* Johann Wolfgang von Goethe proposed a theory of subjective vision that treated the optical illusion of visual sensation in the absence of an external referent as in fact optical truth (p. 98). Noting how colours change in quality as the afterimage fades away, Goethe introduces the question of temporality into the exploration of acts of vision. While the camera obscura model presupposes an instantaneous communication between subject and object, in Goethe's investigations the concept of duration becomes key. As Crary notes:

> [A]s observation is increasingly tied to the body in the nineteenth century, temporality and vision become inseparable. The shifting processes of one's own subjectivity experienced in time became synonymous with the act of seeing, dissolving the Cartesian ideal of an observer completely focused on an object. (p. 98)

Goethe's investigations into the temporal aspects of vision, combined with the body's indifference to external referents as discovered in the work of Müller and Helmholtz, presents a corporeal and embodied perceiver at odds with the psychologised, interiorised spectator of psychoanalytic theory. These experiments act as precursors to an alternate history of the cinema that questions the orthodox model of the camera obscura. Experiments in afterimages gave rise to the theory of "the persistence of vision" of Belgian scientist Joseph Plateau in the late 1820s. Plateau later constructed the *phenakistiscope*, (translated as "deceptive viewing") which found commercial success as a popular form of entertainment (p. 109). However, Crary's intentions in discussing these inventions and experiments are not to trace the pre-cinematic roots of a technological development that culminates in cinema as we know it today. Instead, Crary explores the changing status of the observer as a body that enters into relationship with other bodies figured as technological, economic, scientific and cultural, and in this approach Crary develops a primarily anti-anthropomorphic image of the body: a body mobilised, agitated, autonomised and stimulated by a vast array of discourses.
It is this discursive analysis of vision in the nineteenth century that fundamentally questions the primacy of the camera obscura model of vision of postcolonial theory. An examination of the specificities of colonial discourse and acts of vision is already present in Fatimah Toby Roning’s discussion of the protocinematic work of Félix-Louis Regnault. Toby Roning posits a disturbance in the camera obscura model of a distanced and supreme European spectator when she discusses the 1895 World’s Fair in Paris where human displays of “native villages” were popular and highly attended. One exhibit included a brasserie where visitors could mix freely with the native performers:

Just as the boundaries of science and popular culture seem to have been permeable at the fair, boundaries between the observer and the observed, that is, the exposition performer, were also blurred [...] The inclusion of the brasserie suggests that the voyeurism of the exposition was imperfect: spectators could be made aware that the performers had eyes and voices too. (1992, p. 272)

The dynamics between spectator and exhibitor were in no way merely a one-way process, although there did indeed exist an imbalance in the relations of economic and cultural currency. However, Toby Roning suggests an alternate history of visualising difference, one that destabilises the presumed hegemony of Western modes of vision based on the camera obscura. Crary’s and Toby Roning’s work demonstrates the urgent need to trace the specific conditions and circumstances that attend the emergence of technologies of vision and the emergent bodies implicated in these developments.

One such technology is the stereoscope used at the European World Fairs to give the illusion of depth when looking at photographs of Native subjects. Experiments in the late 1820s confirmed that an observer perceives a different image with each eye, and that “the angle of the axis of each eye differed when focused on the same point” (Crary, p. 119). The binocular structure of the stereoscope fostered the production of a realistic sense of depth by manipulating the optical axis of each eye. Thus, the perception of space and the production of verisimilitude depended on a physiological disparity between separate eyes that converged at a particular axis to produce the effect of depth. Accordingly, the reality-effects of the stereoscope are based on the presupposition of perceptual differences where the “relation of the observer to the object are not one of identity but an experience of disjunct or divergent images” (p. 120). Crary argues that the stereoscope literally produces obscene representations in that it “shatters the scenic relationship” of the camera obscura’s stage metaphor and he notes how this visual apparatus also featured in nineteenth-century erotica and pornography. Not only did the stereoscope shatter the theatrical stage of the camera obscura model; it contested the conventional teleological development of visual
technologies as constantly striving for verisimilitude. Crary argues that such technologies demand "a reconsideration of what 'realism' means in the nineteenth century" (p. 9). This challenge echoes the arguments made by Trinh T. Minh-ha in her critique of ethnographic objectivity and documentary truth where (as Catherine Russell states):

Trinh’s most cogent critique of ethnographic film is the way it implies a division of the world into those “out there” (the subjects of ethnography) and those “in here” (in the theatre, looking at them). She argues that the assumptions of documentary truth and veracity perpetuate a Cartesian duality between mind and matter in which the Other is objectified and the filmmaker and his or her audience are the subjects of perception. A more fluid concept of reality is required to transcend this paradigm, one in which meaning is not "closed" but escapes and evades representation. (Russell 1999, p. 4)

It is precisely the concept of “the real” that regulates theoretical approaches to cinema by emphasising cinema’s representational attributes which presumably stand in for the thing itself. The concept of “the real” thus serves as a static substratum against which cinematic images are measured. As experiments in subjective vision demonstrate, the components of movement, time and deception are cinema’s greatest qualities, however these are the attributes most ignored in the camera obscura model of vision.

Admittedly, the static substratum of “the real” which cinema presumably represents is destabilised in Homi K. Bhabha’s work on the stereotype as colonial fetish where he suggests a two-way transformation that occurs between colonial subject and the stereotype as object. As discussed in Chapter One, Bhabha approaches colonial discourse as that which produces a visible subjugated subject whose return as a fetish undermines colonial power. Yet the dynamic exchanges that occur between coloniser and colonised repeat an ever-constant return to a common and similar myth of historical origin, a constancy between body and world that is severely questioned in Müller’s and Helmholtz’s experiments of the eighteen hundreds. Bhabha’s reliance on the Lacanian paradigm of subjectivity also suggests a teleological ordering of time that is questionable in the light of Goethe’s retinal afterimage experiments. In contrast to Bhabha, Crary’s work suggests an alternate trajectory of cinematic development that privileges the role the body plays in vision and which expands the possible relations between coloniser and colonised.

An emphasis on the productive role that the body and time play in acts of perception suggests a transformation in the way that cross-cultural spectatorship is theorised. When primacy is given to the agitated and mobilised body of the observer, as opposed to the observer’s detached and disembodied “gaze”, the possibilities of exploring the relations between bodies, images and the world are more indeterminate
and diffuse. This approach is expressed by Steven Shaviro in his book *The Cinematic Body* where he writes:

> In the cinematic apparatus, vision is uprooted from the idealised paradigms of representation and perspective, and dislodged from interiority. It is grounded instead in the rhythms and delays of an ungraspable temporality, and in the materiality of the agitated flesh. (1993, p. 45)

This image of an “agitated flesh” in contact with a cinematic image suggests a process of mutual contamination that is productive for thinking the messy entanglements between coloniser and colonised in a postcolonial context. This body/image encounter suggests that there is no inside/outside or clearly defined dialectical relation between body and image but a relation of immanence where difference becomes a matter of difference (the minor mode) and repetition (the majoritarian mode). It is this approach to cultural difference as *immanent* difference that can traverse the striated domain of conventional spectatorship theory.

Crary’s work demonstrates how subjective vision favours the role of the body and its powers of deception, confusion, resonance and augmentation. These subjective powers of resonance and disruption suggest a corporeal form of logic that are the result of exterior relations; the result of the flux of the world relayed through the volatile flesh of the body. A conceptual grasp of these events occurs as the result of a majoritarian procedure (the mapping of the proper name, the rendering of consistency) and yet corporeal processes express a becoming-minoritarian that impinges upon thought as a force of potential. This is the case with a film such as *Once Were Warriors* in that the indeterminacy that characterises the film’s critical reception suggests a line of variation beyond the grasp of our conceptual capacities. The intensity of the scenes of violence certainly suggests that embodiment plays an important role in the function of the film as its initial popular reception involved people declaring themselves nauseated or emotionally battered after seeing the film. Yet the critical reception of *Once Were Warriors* has overlooked these corporeal qualities in favour of a more politically expedient debate over representation. Tamahori’s statement about his cinematic style suggests such a return to the body in his “cinema of attractions” model:

> I decided to do social realism but with cinematic flair on top. It’s designed to be aggressive and confrontational and never let up. It never becomes dreamy, with shots that last for two minutes where nothing happens and people gaze into the landscape. I wanted to hold people in the theatre at all costs, so that they would stay the distance. (*Midwest*, p. 16)
The filmic flair of *Once Were Warriors* certainly does "strap" one into a theatre seat due in large part to the television advertising editing style and visceral close-up shots of faces, fists and tattooed bodies. The film highlights and utilises the power of the spectator's body to produce affects and intensities in relation to the perceptual attractions seen on scene. However, the bodies of Maori men and women within the film are also "strapped" into this regime of body and bodily politics through the history of encoding the raced body as closer to nature; atavistic and animalistic. Film stills of Temeura Morrison as a wild-eyed and muscular urban Maori warrior recall a nostalgic past when once all were warriors and these stills function to celebrate the virility of such Native masculinity (and I would suggest, masculinity in general).

The content of the film (the images, speeches, narrative structure) and the filmic style attempt to induce a high level of complicity between the images and the film viewer, and this is perhaps why the film has generated so much debate. The film impinges on the audience in a manner that exceeds the bounds of language and recalls Tom Gunning's discussion of contemporary cinema as an affect-driven "cinema of attractions" (1983). Yet because of the "attractions" style editing and framing *Once Were Warriors* dries up these visceral powers with a didactic intellection that remains on the plane of identity. The film ultimately expresses sad, reactive forces in its reduction to a familial drama, and its posturings as a film with a social message: a message that promises clear and direct communication and which ultimately ends by imposing order-words in the form of the proper name "Maori". This is not to say that the struggle on the level of representation is without importance. The debates that *Once Were Warriors* has sparked in fact indicate how difficult it is to express the social experiences of Maori in New Zealand and the relationship between Maori and Pakeha.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that contestation at the level of axioms is the most determining struggle "at the most diverse levels" (*ATP*, p. 477) yet this struggle is nonetheless accompanied by signs of another "coexistent combat". While the critical reception of *Once Were Warriors* navigates between questions of good or bad representations and the dialectical differences between the two, a micropolitics of the border occurs in-between these larger, more abstract concerns.

The minor mode is a multiplicity that is different in nature from the major mode. The becoming-minor inserts "and" in-between questions of good or bad, Maori or Pakeha, coloniser or colonised. In an interview with *Cahiers du Cinéma* Deleuze clarifies the nature of this multiplicity:

AND is neither one thing nor the other, it's always in between, between two things; it's the borderline, there's always a border, a line of flight or flow, only we don't see it, because it's the least perceptible of things. And yet it's along
this line of flight that things come to pass, becomings evolve, revolutions take shape. (*Negotiations* 1995, p. 45)

It is this zone of indetermination that adds "and ... and ... and" to the question of race relations in New Zealand. Beyond the dyad of biculturalism, *Once Were Warriors* expresses the troubling excess of a postcolonial nation-state imbricated in the regime of majoritarian representation. Yet its corporeal logic introduces a third term into this dyadic exchange in the form of "and" which connects the film as rhizome to diverse and varied concerns. The power of the raced body in *Once Were Warriors* is simultaneously a despotic representational power and the expression of an excess that undermines this determination and the continuation of the spectacle of an erotics of difference in its advertising aesthetic and ... a cinematic force to which we have not yet posed a question proper to its complexities. It is finally the film's capacity for continuing discussion and provoking thought that makes *Once Were Warriors* the event that it is. The film signifies "to" its many spectators, but it does not necessarily signify "what". This is the creative function of the minor text in that it expresses a virtual world that has not yet been actualised, it speaks for a people yet to come (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 1989, p. 216). This concept of the virtual gives a more fluid account of "the real" and the role played by the body in producing experience and accordingly, expands the potential for political action beyond the confines of the bourgeois humanist subject of colonial discourse.

### 2.2 Colonial Desire and Machinic Assemblages

At this point, we need to clarify the distinction implicitly informing our discussion of colonial discourse and the concept of postcoloniality. Colonial discourse can be characterised as an older form of capital distribution emanating from the metropolitan centres of Europe and America to the colonies at the edges of these Empires and operating via a centralised concept of nation-state identity. For postcolonial theorists such as Arjun Appadurai, the term *postcoloniality* describes a shift in economic, technological and social terms, from the binaries of the centre versus the margin (or West versus East, tradition versus modernity) embedded in the rhetoric of Empire (*Modernity At Large* 1996, p. 32). Appadurai argues that the global characteristics of late capitalism not only confuse the boundaries between political and private needs and interests, postcolonial capitalist flows also disorganise the traditional modernist relationship between centre and periphery established by imperialist forms of capital. With challenges to the sovereignty of nation–states increasing, as well as
increased migration and international divisions of labour, the logic of postcolonial capitalism is characterised by its de-centred, disjunctive relations between economics, culture and politics (p. 33). Thus, Appadurai is concerned with the transition from centralised capital exchange of the colonial period to the global exchanges of capital in a postcolonial period defined by the demise of the nation-state.

Appadurai’s work explores the double-bind of postcolonial subjectivity that simultaneously “knows” itself only through the web of discursive formations passed on by the legacy of colonialism. Indeed, Homi K. Bhabha makes much of this double-bind when he argues that colonial discourse is a mutual production between coloniser and colonised which disrupts the presumed hegemony of Western imperialism. Similarly, Crary disrupts the conventional apparatus theory of the Western observer as a centralised and distant spectator and his work points to the necessity of constructing alternate models of spectatorship that examine cinema as a technological, cultural and subjectivating machine. Consequently, Crary’s work also complicates the model of colonial power figured by theorists such as Appadurai, as originally centralised and hegemonic. If the Western observer is constituted as a body among other bodies in a technological and social assemblage, what of the movements of colonial capital itself? Has it always been a centralised exchange form operating between the dialectics of margin and centre or is colonial desire itself a machinic force? Robert Young takes up Deleuze’s and Guattari’s concept of machinic assemblages to answer precisely this question.

In Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race, Young dedicates his final chapter to the desiring machine of colonialism in which he examines Deleuze’s and Guattari’s theory of capitalism put forth in Anti-Oedipus (1995). Young argues that a certain form of idealism is implicit in the work of colonial discourse analysts such as Said, Bhabha and Spivak who, according to Young, attempt to deal with the totality of discourses “of and about colonialism” (p. 164). Acknowledging the “conflictual structures” of colonial discourse that prevent us from objectifying such an entity, Young nonetheless asks:

Can we assume that colonial discourse operates identically not only across all space but also throughout time? In short, can there be a general theoretical matrix that is able to provide an all-encompassing framework for the analysis of each singular colonial instance? (p. 164-165)

Young’s quotation points to the difficult task of maintaining a relation between the general and the particular that characterises theoretical production, as well as the redundancy of pursuing causal reasoning. Using Deleuze’s and Guattari’s theory of machinic desire, Young identifies a specific mediating assemblage that produces the
relationship between capitalism (what he defines as the general "determining motor" of colonisation) and the singular and material violence involved in the colonial project (p. 167).

Following Deleuze's and Guattari's thesis in *Anti-Oedipus*, Young argues that relations between the general and the singular (or the social and the subjective) are mediated by "the analytic imperialism of the Oedipus Complex" (p. 171). According to Deleuze and Guattari, when Freud poses the Oedipus complex as a normative model of human development based on the idea of a fundamental repression he effectively converts the dilemmas given in the social realm into problems of the individual. The organisation of social process around the Subject and the separation of social and psychical elements is effectively "colonization pursued by other means" and the unconscious "our most intimate colonial education" (*AO*, p. xx). In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari refuse to demarcate an absolute difference between social and psychical elements which only appear as differences in degree, posed as they are upon a plane of representation organised by the Oedipal Complex and through a logic that privileges repression as the primary mode of organisation. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari pose an impersonal concept of the unconscious based upon the pure force of repetition.

Understanding colonial discourse as the repression of difference negates the machinic characteristics of colonial desire as that which *repeats* difference. Converting the Freudian emphasis on repression into a structure of repetition, Deleuze and Guattari formulate desire as a productive and not a repressive force that is individual and collective, psychical and social. As Deleuze contends in *Difference and Repetition*, "I do not repeat because I repress. I repress because I repeat, I forget because I repeat" (1994, p. 18). In this short sentence Deleuze converts the primacy of repression in Freud's writings, into an effect of repetition. If Deleuze were to have a theory of the unconscious as such it would privilege the impersonal force of repetition and the productive function of desire as the primary mode of social organisation. For Deleuze, a form of false thinking occurs when one poses a desiring Subject as the entry point into any theory of social relations. Deleuze's (and Guattari's) concept of desire is immediately social, directed outwards and productive not personal, interiorised and that which should be sublimated. The pure and impersonal force of repetition (as an unmotivated and accidental force) is linked to the Deleuzian concept of desire to refute the emphasis on interiority that Freudian repression presupposes. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari argue (and Young draws out this contention in particular relation to the work of Frantz Fanon) that the Oedipal Complex in Freud's formulation *masquerades* as the primary mode of social development that channels desire into repressive social structures such as the family, the law or the nation (p. 171).
The territorialising movements of the Oedipal complex operates by a familial triadic logic where a given problem is "solved" by the fundamental question of "who am I?", or as Deleuze and Guattari have it, the triadic tyranny of "Mummy, Daddy, me" (ATP, p. 240). As Young states, the Oedipus Complex is the spatial model of colonial deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation that describes the processes of global capitalism as a form of "writing geography" (p. 170). Making explicit the links between the channeling of social desire into the Oedipal theatre of representation and the territorialising practices of settlement and colonial invasion, Young writes:

This description of the operations of capitalism as a territorial writing machine seems not only especially suited to the historical development of industrialization, but also describes rather exactly the violent physical and ideological procedures of colonization, deculturation and acculturation, by which the territory and cultural space of an indigenous society must be disrupted, dissolved and then reinscribed according to the needs of the apparatus of the occupying power. (p. 170)

By emphasising the concept of capital as a mode of social production, Young decentres colonial analysis away from the question of the Other, the margins, or the peripheries, and focuses critical attention on how global capital decodes and recodes territories and spaces through a more anarchic and repetitive process. These flows and codifications function as a kind of "writing geography" which effectively codifies all elements within a particular assemblage through a process of repetition and variation that produces any kind of difference as a difference in degree. This approach to colonial desire does not privilege a homogeneous and monolithic model of colonial power, it treats power as a differential force that operates by categorising and classifying difference. Citing the "taxonomic fervour" of nineteenth-century science that codified racial difference, Young's work traces this differential force and characterises the colonial project as a process of miscegenation where sex and race are the base elements constituting its "writing geography" and territorialising processes. (p. 174).

Young combines the nineteenth-century Western fixation on sexual activities with scientific theories of race to suggest that the subjects produced by the machines of colonial desire are mere residuum effects of a larger process of capitalist territorialisation. Following Deleuze's and Guattari's method that expands colonial discourse into the wider concerns of global capitalism, Young suggests that colonial desire annexed territories, consciousness and psychical-material elements through a cartographic process of Oedipalisation that connected machines of desire (sexuality machines or race machines) to the flows of global capital (p. 171-172). The history of this annexation is inscribed in contemporary racial categories such as "Black British, British Asian, Kenyan Asian, Anglo-Indian, Indo-Anglian, Indo-Caribbean, African-
Caribbean, African-American, Chinese-American” (p. 174). Young argues that these categories speak a history of flows, assemblages and connections between human and non-human elements while simultaneously expressing the workings of colonial desire as a coding process of Oedipal triangulation. This process reduces the Hybrid to a devalued third term between the naturalised couplet of black/white or coloniser/colonised. It is to this history of the hybrid that we now turn.

2.3 Hybridity and Triangulation

Young’s expression of colonial desire as “a territorial writing machine” provocatively resonates with Jonathan Crary’s work on the observer of the nineteenth-century who is mobilised, agitated, autonomised and stimulated by a vast array of discourses. Both express the encounter between two discrete elements (centre and margin in the case of Young, and body and image in the writing of Crary), as a network of relations mobilised by dynamic and divergent forces. Both writers decentre the presumed dominance of a centralised and interiorised Subject, and both attempt to think through the mechanisms of social power as a process of radical recoding and decoding. In Crary’s later work Suspensions of Perception (1999) the writer continues his exploration of the embodied nature of vision and the perceptual shifts engendered by industrialised Western society, however this time his key focus is the concept of attention. In this volume Crary describes the logic of capital in the nineteenth century as “dynamic” and the operations of modernisation as “delirious” (both terms suitably describing the vicious circle of difference and repetition favoured in Young’s Deleuzian account of colonial desire), due to the intensification of attention and distraction in the culture of everyday life (1999, p. 13). This work examines the shifts in modes of perception from the period of 1880 to 1905 and speculates on the implications of these shifts for twentieth-century Western culture. Commenting on the increased circulation and access to information, communicative technologies and visual spectacles accompanying industrialised society, Crary writes:

The operation of vision itself, with all its physiological idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies, was not sufficiently lawlike to function reliability without the “juridical” intervention of attention to hold together sensory data. (p. 16)

In Suspensions of Perception Crary identifies attention as the key element in the functioning of economic and disciplinary institutions as well as the means by which a subject can transcend those limitations and constraints (p. 5). In Crary’s work, attention
is approached as the machinic mechanism by which institutions and individuals organised the social field as a filtering process in direct relation to exterior forces. Crary provides a particularly interesting case study of the rationalisation of modes of perception in his discussion of technological innovator Thomas Edison and the invention of the Kinetoscope (p. 32). This pre-cinematic device required its single user/subject to bend his/her body and gaze into an aperture through which could be seen a recurring loop of film. According to Crary, this technological apparatus produced an individualised space of consumption that could be easily quantified and rationalised in economic terms. As Crary writes:

Edison saw the marketplace in terms of how images, sounds, energy, or information could be reshaped into measurable and distributed commodities and how a social field of individual subjects could be arranged into increasingly separate and specialised units of consumption (p. 31).

Edison’s invention is emblematic of how the reshaping of subjectivity and technology is mutually productive and invested in a logic of capital. Given this focus, Crary’s attention to attention compliments Young’s commitment to an understanding of colonial desire as a “territorial writing machine” dedicated to capitalist expansion. Both produce concepts (Young’s use of “colonial desire” and Crary’s concept of “attention”) that consider human and non-human elements as mutually connected and machinic. A useful meeting point between the two writers exists in Crary’s focus on the regulatory perceptual regimes that discipline the Western subject in the nineteenth-century and in Young’s interest in how the “taxonomic fervour” of nineteenth-century Western science codified racial difference (1995, p. 174). The category of the Hybrid in scientific discourse of this period is a useful heuristic device for considering the machinic processes of racialised discourse and the how twentieth-century cinematic perception contributed to this discourse.

While Crary’s work draws attention to the disciplined and simultaneously disaffected, and erratic experiences of nineteenth-century Western subject, Young reminds us of a simultaneous discursive practice in Western science to categorise and classify (that is, to direct attention to) racial variation. Cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiadis takes up the issue of a racialised discourse of Western science in his book *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalisation, Deterritorialisation and Hybridity* (2000). In the chapter “Tracing Hybridity in Theory” Papastergiadis locates the origins of the concept of hybridity and traces its articulation in relation to concepts of racial identity (p. 168-195). According to Papastergiadis, the word “hybrid” is a biological term that refers to the grafting of two distinct species. This concept is closely tied to the idea of pollution and degeneration and finds its origins in nineteenth-century
European scientific discourse and racialised theories of human genesis that considered interracial procreation as a weakening of the human species. For instance, science in the era of American slavery reinforced the rationale that African’s were of a lower human order and thus could be used as slave labour. As Nikos Papastergiadis explains:

Scientific claims about the distinctness of the races reinforced the proslavery ideology and gave grounds for the belief that the hybrid was either a monstrous or a debased offspring, and would inevitably be weaker and less fertile than either parent. The popularized naming of hybrids as mulattos was based not only on the difference in species between the horse and the donkey, but also the sterility of the mule. (1999, 171)

On the sliding scale of humanity popular in European scientific discourse of the nineteenth-century, African subjects occupied the lowest position possible, whereas the racial Hybrid, while still likened to beasts of burden, were the objects of a more specialised codification. As a triangulated third term occupying the space between the supposedly stable and discrete categories of African and Euro-American, through scientific discourse the Hybrid became a sign of degeneracy and visible proof of the corruptive results of mixing blood between races. At a time when, as Crary argues, the nineteenth-century Western subject experienced the dynamic and delirious effects of industrialised society and the “juridical’ intervention of attention” (1999, p.16) a similar regulatory regime operated in scientific discourses dedicated to policing the boundaries of raced categories. The figure of the Hybrid demonstrates this recoding and decoding practice and reference to the logic of nineteenth-century Hybrid discourse can be found in that master text (in Manthia Diawara’s terms) of the twentieth-century, D.W. Griffith’s Birth of a Nation (1915). In Black American Cinema, Diawara makes the provocative claim that:

*The Birth of a Nation* constitutes the grammar book for Hollywood’s representation of Black manhood and womanhood, its obsession with miscegenation, and its fixing of Black people within certain spaces, such as kitchens, and into certain supporting roles, such as criminals, on the screen. White people must occupy the center, leaving Black people with only one choice – to exist in relation to Whiteness. *The Birth of a Nation* is the master text that suppressed the real contours of Black history and culture on movie screens, screens monopolized by the major motion picture companies of America. (1993, p. 3)

Griffith’s text occurs after the demise of the slavery system in America, yet his film is widely recognised as reinscribing the romantic myths of an antebellum South, and the attendant racist ideology of the nineteenth-century (Cripps 1977, Bogle 1991). As Diawara’s comments suggest, the impact of this major cinematic achievement goes
beyond the contemporaneous time of its release. The film repeats nineteenth-century discourses of racial difference within a thoroughly twentieth-century medium (the film and its filmmaker is treated by scholars as a canonical text in the development of cinematic language) and provided a catalyst for the development of a new genre of film (the race film) produced exclusively for Black audiences (Diawara, p.3). What is of note in Diawara’s quotation above, is the process he identifies as operating in Griffith’s film, which fixes Black people within certain spaces, roles and characterizations, a process that could be termed territorialisation. What is of most interest in The Birth of a Nation (and something that Diawara fails to address) is how the figure of the hybrid contributes to this practice of racial territorialisation.

The myth of the hybrid as an enfeebled and weak-minded offspring of two distinct races appears in the figure of the tragic mulatto in The Birth of a Nation. This film portrays two prominent mulatto characters, Austin Stoneman’s mistress and his protégé Silas Lynch, as particularly lascivious and corruptive influences and this portrayal expresses a particular cultural logic operating at the time of the film’s production. As Janet Staiger notes, the Thomas Dixon play (The Clansman, 1905) that The Birth of a Nation is an adaptation of, dramatised the contemporary belief that racial hybrids “were suicidal for the American” (1992, p. 141). Within this historical milieu hybrids, as the material proof of unsanctioned sexual congress, posed a threat to American values.

The Birth of a Nation potently illustrates the sexual nature of this threat in a scene involving Parliamentary leader Austin Stoneman and his mulatto housemaid who is also his mistress. Stoneman is a pivotal character in the film because of his support for anti-slavery legislation and the rights of African Americans. However, the film suggests that the sexual congress that Stoneman shares with his servant contaminates and corrupts this ideological and political position. In one scene, the film shows his mistress occupying the edges of the frame, rubbing her hands together in a gesture of delight as Stoneman receives word that President Lincoln has been assassinated. Although literally only a marginal character, the mulatto mistress clings to his side and caresses Stoneman’s arm as a subtitle dedicated to her speech appears with the words “You are now the greatest power in America”. This scene demonstrates the destructive forces of female mulatto sexuality that seemingly influence Stoneman’s liberal attitude to slavery and his carpetbagger ideology. Sexual desire, class differences and miscegenation combine to produce an unruly mix that is subsequently opposed to the purity and familial pleasantries of the Southern Cameron family. Indeed, while the parallel editing of Griffith’s cinematic style is a particular signature of his artistry, there is an equal parallel structure between black and white characters in this film that is
mediated by the figure of the hybrid. While the feminine wiles of the mulatto housemaid constitutes a more covert contaminating force, the figure of the male mulatto in *The Birth of a Nation* constitute a more direct threat.

As a product of two distinct species (according to nineteenth-century Western science), Silas Lynch occupies the no-man’s land between black and white. Owing to his white ancestry, Lynch has the intelligence and the cunning to advance in the white man’s world and Stoneman grooms him as a leader. Yet, owing to his mixed heritage he lacks the moral fortitude of the white man and has inherited the base characteristics of his African ancestors. As a half-breed he poses a more serious threat than a pure blooded Negro in that he aspires to a position beyond that of the Negro and dares to demand the hand of Stoneman’s daughter in matrimony. While the general depiction of Africans in *The Birth of a Nation* rigorously defines blacks and whites as worlds apart, the figure of the mulatto is given particular negative attention in order to regulate and naturalise the dichotomous boundaries of race. In *The Birth of a Nation* hybrids are the diseased and unnatural offspring of two distinct species who are the main agents of Anglo-American society’s moral decline.

As Robert Young might argue, the hybrid characters in this film (with their attributes of disease, weakness and contamination) are thematically organised within the domain of sexuality, national identity and racial purity, a subjective territory or space that effectively redirects attention from the political, ideological and ethical differences between the two now naturalised races. Once again, the Oedipal complex reigns supreme, and Griffith’s cinematic style directs attention to these domains. The thematic and narrative structure of the film does this most dramatically in the final sequence when the image of Christ is superimposed over a shot of a crowd who symbolise the new nation state. His arms outstretched, embracing the multitudes that teem beneath his feet, Christ is the figure who unifies the differential forces of a collectivity built upon the violence of slavery. As the familial scenario of a “birth” of a nation suggests, the Oedipal machine of colonial desire has overcoded the differences presented by the mulatto figure as an errant and transgressive difference that is ultimately rehabilitated by the “comforting” embrace of God and the family of man.

As a reinscription of nineteenth-century racialised scientific discourse through a twentieth-century medium, *The Birth of a Nation* dramatises the geopolitics of slavery (an adjunct to colonialism and imperialism) that operates at the intersection of difference. The flows of sexuality and race potently demonstrated in this film, represent the trafficking (economic, sexual, psychical and material) between bodies that occurred within the system of slavery. This system functioned by policing these boundaries and combining the attributes and events of “things” (sexual congress, labour, and goods)
with the order words of a regime of signs that could ensure their literal transformation into signs of degeneracy, contamination and corruption. Hybridity is thus, not the residue of two prior differently inscribed cultures (black or white), it is the breakage in the flow of racial and sexual machines which signals the conditions of colonialism's continuity as the flow of pure production itself. The geopolitics of colonialism is such that it requires that this "in-between" space be worked upon and re-coded at each point of rupture so that the forces of production continue. Thus the space between two apparently monolithic cultural identities (black/white) requires a particular process of interpretation to ensure the incorporeal transformation of words and things. This in-between space is occupied by corporeal elements that must be "translated" into meaningful semiotic flows placed upon a grid of signification and subjectification that can organise these "bit" parts into more social assemblages. The Face itself occupies the zone between the corporeal and incorporeal. The Face is the most overt expression of epidermal and physiognomic racial difference, and is of paramount importance in the production of cultural difference and the messy entanglements of sexuality and race that produce the analytics of blood, hair and bone underpinning colonial desire.

2.4 Faciality and the Binary Machines of Hybridity

In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the Face is an organising principle that transmits or communicates certain forms of subjectivity and gives these forms social significance. In a chapter entitled "On Several Regimes of Signs" the writers note the relay function that the face fulfils:

The face is what gives the signifier substance; it is what fuels interpretation, and it is what changes, changes traits, when interpretation reimparts signifier to its substance. (*ATP*, p. 115)

In "Year Zero: Faciality" Deleuze and Guattari develop the function of Faciality in more detail. More than an anthropomorphic term referring to actual faces, Deleuze's and Guattari's concept of Faciality is a cartographical principle that organises diverse semiotic materials (such as bodies, gestures, and language) into communicational and representational systems. The use of the term "Faciality" suggests a return to the science of physiognomy developed most notably by Giovan Battista Della Porta's 1610 work *On the Physiognomy of Man*. In Della Porta's work, facial features were treated as a kind of "graphism or writing" that came to be understood as expressing the psychological attributes of an entire people (Schiesari, 1994, p.57). Schiesari argues
that the science of physiognomy functioned as an interpretive grid that ultimately provided the basis of defining race and gender differences so that “[a]natomical difference thus became the pretext for prejudicial moral judgements, e.g. dark-skinned people are lazy, slant-eyed people are duplicitous, and so forth” (p. 57). In this understanding of physiognomy, the Face is the actual sign of difference that conflates the sign with its meaning. Deleuze and Guattari would argue that it is not the face itself which is Faciality, but the particular discursive presuppositions that operate to conflate the sign with its meaning. Thus, Deleuze’s and Guattari’s provocative use of the term “Faciality” differentiates between the Face and the systems of subjectification and signifiance that give the Face its meaning.

Faciality is a machine that produces connections between various heterogeneous elements of the social field. Deleuze and Guattari develop the term machine to highlight the pre-personal and radically exterior characteristics of social forces. As the discussion of Robert Young’s work has already noted, desiring-machines feature in *Anti-Oedipus* to denote the concept of desire as a pure force of connection and movement, not an interiorised and psychological concept of desire. Accordingly, Faciality does not refer to an actual face in representational terms, but the practical production of territories that perform face functions. These functions may include, but are not limited to, signification or communication.

Deleuze and Guattari locate the Faciality machine between the two abstract signifying regimes of signifiance and subjectification (*ATP*, p. 167). Signifiance and subjectification are two binary regimes of surface and depth that constantly shift in relation to one another according to the calibrations of the Faciality machine that intersects them. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari discuss signifiance as a white wall which acts as a grid or table to distinguish and differentiate the black hole of subjectification which contains the dominant lexicon of all possible subject positions (*ATP*, p. 178). The Face is primarily a subjectivating machine: an organising principle that runs the material body across the grid of the white wall/black hole system until the errant fluxes of the body have been organised into recognisable social identities based on class, race or gender. Facialisation is thus a process of subjectification and capture: it is a sticky surface that snare semiotic materials and arranges them according to a pre-established order. All possible deviation from the norm defined by the Faciality machine is still subjected to this capture which suggests that Faciality does not operate through exclusionary practices but through a process of relentless inclusion.

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that Faciality is a very specific assemblage of power originating in the year zero of Christ’s birth. As such, the first deviance to be captured by the Face machine is that of racial difference:
If the face is in fact Christ, in other words, your average ordinary White Man, then the first deviances, the first divergence-types, are racial: yellow man, black man, men in the second or third category [...] Racism operates by the determination of degrees of deviance in relation to the White-Man face, which endeavors to integrate nonconforming traits into increasingly eccentric and backward waves, sometimes tolerating them at given places under given conditions, in a given ghetto, sometimes erasing them from the wall, which never abides alterity ... (p. 178)

While Deleuze and Guattari posit a time of Year Zero, the linking of Faciality with the body of Christ also occurs in the history of Western painting between the medieval and Renaissance period. As Richard Dyer has argued, the specification of flesh colour did not appear until the Renaissance period when nativity and crucifixion paintings rendered the body of Christ as pale and white in contrast to other figures in the painting (White 1997, p. 66). Dyer cites the example of Giovanni Bellini’s painting *Madonna and Child with John the Baptist and Ste. Elizabeth* (c. 1490-5) where the whiteness of Christ and Mary suggests a spiritual superiority that is in contrast to the Jewishness of John and Elizabeth. According to Deleuze and Guattari, this White-Man face is the surface against which all deviating bodies are calibrated in a process of variation that allows for a great degree of deviation. If not a White body, then a Black body, a Yellow body, or a Brown body. If a face is almost the same “but not quite White” (1994, p. 89) in Homi K. Bhabha’s terms, then that face is calibrated as Hybrid, which is an acceptable triangulation of the dominant terms that serves as reinforcement of the Faciality machine. Bhabha’s emphasis on the ambivalent relationship of liminality that structures the relationship of coloniser to colonised (and vice versa) is a suitably mobile concept that connects with the grid-like structure of the Faciality machine.

Bhabha’s image of the Hybrid exemplifies the *difference in degree* that the Faciality machine of White-Man produces because the Hybrid body is placed on a plane organised by the binary units of Black and White subject positions. The Hybrid body (such as that of Silas Lynch in *The Birth of a Nation*) is assigned a subject position that presumes these two extremes while the significance attributed to his gestures and expressions are judged via varying degrees of acceptability set by the standards of the White-Man face. Is Silas too educated or too stupid? Is he Noble Savage or Primitive? Is he Good or Evil? If neither of the two extremes, then he is coded as the half-breed whose degree of difference can be justified by the same subjectivating and signifying regime. Instead of presenting a difference in nature, (Silas as another body altogether, as a body without a face) Silas is the mulatto whose contaminated blood is the reason for his mental and moral degeneracy.
The Face is a communication device and it has an intimate relation to communication technologies. Deleuze argues that the face has three primary functions: to individuate, to manifest a social role and to communicate (Cinema I, 1986, p. 99). The Face is not a head, nor does it need a body (although a body without a Face is very hard to achieve) indeed, the Face is that which detaches the head from its original relation to the body so that the head becomes a megaphone and a transmitter. The Face becomes that which overcodes all aspects of the body, detaching the head from one stratum and placing it on a plane of signification. From skin colour to face shape and the physiognomic features of bone, the processes of Faciality territorialise bodies (both individual and collective) to produce transformations between words and things that adhere to the dominant regime of signs. Faciality is a process of direction, organisation, illumination, and it is dramatised quite literally in the cinematic practice of the close-up that is a Faciality machine par excellence. The representational attributes of Faciality (as a machine of capture and de/re-coding) and the dynamics of identifying with onscreen characters are a dominant feature of discussions of cross-cultural spectatorship. In Franz Fanon’s 1967 work Black Skin, White Masks the writer considers the range of identificatory positions engendered by the screening of a Tarzan film in the Antilles and in Europe. Laura Mulvey’s seminal article “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975) provoked a series of discussions on the gendered nature of identification in film theory that continues in E. Ann Kaplan’s text Looking For the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze (1995) where she considers the concept of a racialised identificatory process. Such emphasis on the representational power of cinematic images can be traced to the nascent theory of identification put forth by Hungarian poet, screenwriter, playwright, film critic, director, Béla Balázs. Balázs’s writings on film are interesting in that he proposes two trajectories for thinking the dynamics of film spectatorship theory. The first trajectory follows the reterritorialising powers of the cinema to represent an organic and anthropomorphic subject while the second line of thought intersects with Crary’s counter-narrative of the observer and Deleuze’s discussion of the deterritorialising powers of the close-up. Chapter Three of this thesis explores the latter approach while the following section demonstrates how hybridity can be read in relation to film spectatorship if one privileges the mobile and repetitive nature of the concept instead of the camera obscura model.
2.5 The Reterritorialising Powers of the Close-up

The representational capacities of cinema are its most pervasive and immediate powers. Writing in the early days of film, Béla Balázs developed a theory of cinematic identification that developed the concept of microphysiognomics which involved examining the singular and intimate display of objects enabled by the cinematic technique of the close-up (Theory of the Film, 1952). Balázs argued that through the technique of the close-up, cinema had the potential to show humankind the face of man, a revelation that would transform and extend human interactions. While Balázs himself ultimately returns to the generalised and transcendent concept of humanism to discuss the transformations effected by the close-up, his attention to the singular qualities of the close-up is a provocative idea that Deleuze takes up in Cinema 1. The discussion below outlines Balázs’s theory of identification and the lines of flight that Deleuze finds in Balázs’s work.

Writing about the psychological effects that the development of cinema had on society from the early days of cinema to the time of his last writings Béla Balázs observes:

We know that when Griffith first showed a big close-up in a Hollywood cinema and a huge ‘severed’ head smiled at the public for the first time, there was a panic in the cinema. We ourselves no longer know by what intricate evolution of our consciousness we have learnt our visual association of ideas. What we have learnt is to integrate single disjointed pictures into a coherent scene, without even becoming conscious of the complicated psychological processes involved. (Balázs 1972, p. 35)

Balázs’s project in Theory of the Film (a collection of writings dating from 1923 to 1952) is to “study the laws governing the evolution of an art in the making” (p. 11). Some of Balázs’s essays pay particular attention to the development of the close-up as a cinematic technique that had the power to “widen” human consciousness. Balázs’s work demonstrates the conventional view that the face is the window to the soul. His exploration of the psychological dimension of the close-up ultimately frames the cinematic encounter as a process of anthropomorphic identification and Richard Dyer suggests that Balázs does not give enough attention to the filmic, artistic and cultural conventions that produce the meaning of facial expressions (Stars 1979, p. 17). However, Balázs’s contention that the close-up could “give [man] a new face” is intriguing (p. 40).

This comment comes from Balázs’s argument, made in 1923, that the close-up in silent film returns a social and collective dimension to human consciousness that had
been destroyed with the advent of print culture. According to Victor Hugo to whom Balázs makes reference to, the printing press “tore the one spirit, embodied in the cathedral, into thousands of opinions” (p. 39). Balázs argues that the printed book replaced the expressive language of painting and sculpture with a “legible spirit” and a “culture of concepts” which destroyed mankind’s ability to read the faces of their fellow men (p. 40).

The expressive surface of our body was thus reduced to the face alone and this not merely because the rest of the body was hidden by clothes. For the poor remnants of bodily expression that remained to us the little surface of the face sufficed, sticking up like a clumsy semaphore of the soul and signaling as best it could. Sometimes a gesture of the hand added, recalling the melancholy of a mutilated torso. In the epoch of word culture the soul learnt to speak but had grown almost invisible. Such was the effect of the printing press. (p. 41)

Balázs suggests that the close-up in silent films restores this visual and expressive dimension to society of the 1920s in such a way as to expand human subjective faculties. For Balázs, the gestures, expressions and human features framed by the cinematic close-up could again convey the inter-human spiritual exchanges performed by the art of the Cathedral. Balázs gives greater emphasis to the powers of body gestures and visual culture than he does to the printed word. Indeed, he makes a great distinction between linguistics and the expressive and gestural attributes of the body. He suggests that the original purpose of the mouth, lips and tongue is not to make sounds, or words, but to move the tongue and lips in “the same spontaneous gesturing as every other expressive movement of the body” (p. 41). Accordingly, the silent film served as an archive of body poses where man could go to re-learn and expand upon the corporeal power of facial expression. For Balázs, the cinema held the potential not only to restore the communicational and spiritual capacities of the human body lost by the “legible spirit” of the printed word: the silent film could now join with the “more rational art of the word” to transform the nature of society:

Here again the evolution of the human spirit is a dialectical process. Its development increases its means of expression and the increase of means of expression in its turn facilitates and accelerates its development. Thus if then the film increases the possibilities of expression, it will also widen the spirit it can express. (p. 43)

Balázs couches this transformation in terms of a spiritual and humanistic dimension, and his nascent theory of identification suggests that films are no more than anthropomorphic objects that reveal the human shape in every frame. His concept of identification suggests that every object in a film is a composite of two forms of
physiognomy: the outlines of the object itself and the shape of the object that is determined by the psychological processes of the spectator. In the close-up, the two forms of physiognomy merge so that each loses their singularity (p. 91). Michael Romm’s film *The Thirteen* demonstrates this visual anthropomorphism.

*Theory of the Film* describes one scene from Romm’s film where a solitary soldier journeys across the vast and empty desert terrain to find help for his stranded colleagues. In this scene the camera does not show us the soldier on horseback, the soldier on foot, or the exhaustion and fatigue of his face. Instead, Romm gives us close-ups of the trail as it changes shape and takes on a physiognomy of its own, from hoof prints to footprints that increasingly become zigzagged and erratic, through to the army equipment that is discarded to ease the soldier’s journey. These objects are framed in such a way that they take on the qualities and intensities of the journeying soldier-body until they express a corporeal force of their own. Thus, the once inanimate object becomes visually anthropomorphised by the intimate framing of the close-up. Balázs applies his concept of *microphysiognomics* to the close-up in *The Thirteen* where the film viewer experiences the intensity of a journey through the emphasis on the smallest and most singular detail, or in Balázs’ss terms “the cell-life of the vital issues” (p. 55) given in the close-up. So while the close-up conveys human traits to inanimate objects, the camera also brings the film viewer into new relations with life around them.

In Balázs’s concept of *microphysiognomics* the close-up brings objects closer in space to the film viewer who can study the involuntary and unconscious elements of human expression as well the intricate details of everyday objects. Balázs contends that only the technological development of the close-up conveys the “polyphonic play” of facial features in the work of such silent screen stars as Asta Nielsen and Lillian Gish, facial dynamics that evolve in relation to the new techniques of film. Silent film has its own gestural language where camera framing captures the nuances of the body. Yet, rather than speculating on what new powers of expression might arise from such close-up techniques, Balázs attributes a fundamental truth-function to the “microscope” abilities of the close-up that reveal the involuntary and unconscious eruptions of the body that speech acts can control. He gives an example of these expressive powers from Eisenstein’s film *The General Line* (1929) in which the figure of a Priest is framed in medium shot:

> His noble features, his inspired eyes are made even more radiant by a glorious voice. He is like the sublime image of a saint. But then the camera gives an isolated big close-up of one eye; and a cunningly watchful furtive glance slinks out from under his beautiful silky eyelashes like an ugly caterpillar out of a delicate flower. Then the handsome priest turns his head and a close-up shows
Balázs suggests that initial framing relays the objective anatomy of the Priest figure who appears noble of spirit. The subsequent close-up shots of an eye, the back of a head, and the lobe of an ear reveal a baseness of character so that “when the noble face reappears, it is like a deceptive screen concealing a dangerous enemy” (p. 75). Here Balázs attributes an interesting function to the close-up that allows insight into the nature of the character, an insight that is then placed in relation to the revelation of another aspect of the character as it is revealed through editing. The microphysiognomics of the close-up can show how general traits (the nobleness generally attributed to a Priest) merge with individual traits (the Priest’s base nature). It is as if the framing of those details of baseness and brutality has superimposed a “translucent mask” on the noble Face (p. 83). Balázs suggests that there is a second “face power” to the close-up whose function of revealing the collective and the individual character of a face can also be applied to racial differences:

In the mingling of the individual and racial character two expressions are superimposed on each other like translucent masks. For instance, we often see a degenerate specimen of an ancient, long-civilised, refined race. The anatomy of an English aristocrat’s face may bear a noble, handsome expression, the physiognomy of an ancient racial culture. But the close-up may show concealed beneath it the coarse and depraved expression of a base individual. (p. 83)

Thus, the close-up can reveal those aspects of physiognomy that are beyond the control of language, bearing and posture. According to Balázs, cinema offers the opportunity of bringing an object closer in space so that one may grasp the singularities of the image. In effect, the close-up objectifies the face so that the spectator experiences a spatial shift in perception that deterritorialises the humanistic and subjective qualities of the face. Yet, Balázs destroys this deterritorialising potential by connecting the singularities of the face on the screen to a generalised and transcendent argument concerning the status of mankind. While the second “face power” of the close-up involves the spectator in what Rachel O. Moore calls “a pleasure-filled game of knowing and not knowing, of belief and doubt in the face” (2000, p. 70), the impulse to interpret the meaning and significance of the face still drives this pleasure. Balázs argues that the face expresses the most subjective of human experience that, even when rendered as an object, still shows the face of man (p. 60). This insistence on a transcendent human spirit subsequently “Facialises” the close-up through an adherence to a paradigm of human subjectivity that is easily “legible” and this anthropomorphic approach to the cinema maintains the legible spirit of the printing press.
Faciality is thus a process of defining an object, event or experience via a pre-established grid or regime of signs which subsequently produces a *difference in degree* between word and thing that masquerades as a fundamental difference in kind. Consequently, the difference in spatial perception produced in Balázs’s theory of the close-up is a false difference as it still maintains the primary presupposition that cinema is a form of language that represents a pre-existing content or reality. Balázs’s contention that cinema has the potential to expand human subjective faculties is an expansion across the grid of an anthropomorphic substratum that is based upon the White Man Face. Such a presupposition does not bode well for a theory of spectatorship that can address the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters, yet in a very literal sense the close-up function of cinema breaks the continuity of the Face machine. A return to *The Birth of a Nation* reveals how it is not only space but also time that is disrupted by the close-up function of film.

### 2.6 Ruptures in the Flow of the White Man Face

Faces in cinema are machines of movement and capture, that create singular cartographies from which new concepts for thinking the specificities of cultural identity arise. The representational powers of cinema are the most seductive forces of the moving image and yet these forces can be diverted in other directions. At times, it is the urgency to represent “the real” that simultaneously invents an alternate reality which challenges the prevailing logic of identity and sameness. Such is the case in D.W Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* where cinematic discourse takes great pains to represent an absolute difference between the brutish Afro-American, the degenerate half-breed mulattoes, and the morally superior Southern White man. This brute force of differentiation expresses itself in the critical reception of the film and as it travels in time in its subsequent screenings under contemporaneous conditions. *The Birth of a Nation* exaggerates the differences between blacks and whites through recourse to the black-face tradition where white men ape the perceived attributes of slaves. The postures and acts of buffoonery that occur in the “historical facsimile” of the post-Reconstruction Negro State House of Representatives scene (where the only bill passed requires that all members wear shoes and that whites must salute Negro officers) literally align the Negro race with the ape species. *The Birth of a Nation* consolidates the foundational premise of distinct and separate races by using the black-face tradition to demonstrate that a sliding scale of humanity can calibrate racial differences so that the white race is at the pinnacle of the scale. Yet the exaggerated naturalness of the
racial ideology put forth in the film returns to haunt *The Birth of a Nation* in contemporaneous screenings when the director’s signature close-ups accidentally reveal the burnt cork of the blackened white actors; a revelation that opens a gap between historical and contemporaneous cultural and social milieus.

The figure of Gus encapsulates the exaggerated blackness of the Negro race at the same time as revealing the false powers of the white face. Gus is the renegade Negro soldier responsible for the death of Flora Cameron who falls from a cliff to escape his sexual advances. While mulatto Silas Lynch desires to have a white woman through marriage (demonstrating his partial civilised nature due to his half-bred whiteness) Gus professes a desire to get married to Flora but pursues her in a brute and animalistic manner which, as Manthia Diawara argues, “supports a Manichaean worldview of race in which Gus represents absolute evil” (*Black American Cinema* 1993, p. 213).

Where Lynch’s encounter with Elsie occurs in the drawing room of Stoneman’s house, Gus’s pursuit of Flora occurs outdoors. An extreme close-up of Gus’s face, off-centred and enclosed by trees and bushes highlights the relation that exists between this dark face and the natural wilderness to which he belongs. After the fateful fall, Gus clambers off the rocks in a manner suggesting the movements of an animal in flight. The calibration of the sliding scale of humanity is signaled in the different skin hue of the mulatto and the African-American. Where white actors play both characters, Gus wears the darker make up and his lips appear in sharp contrast to the hue of his cheeks that produces an apish effect. Silas Lynch has more refined features and his skin tone is far lighter than that of Gus, and yet not as white as Stoneman’s. Gus’s extreme colour distinction is most prominent in the Ginmill scene where he hides to escape the white men who want to lynch him. When Gus is discovered by a white blacksmith, his blackened features appear in stark contrast to the whiteness of the blacksmith through the juxtaposition of close-up shots of Gus’ face and the medium shots of the blacksmith’s body.

Dressed in a clean white shirt that reveals his upper torso, the body of the blacksmith is almost luminous as he enters the Ginmill and encounters the Afro-American owner of the establishment (played by a Euro-American actor). The Ginmill owner is dressed in rags and adorned with black face make-up from the neck upwards but his barrel chested physique competes with the masculine attributes of the blacksmith and this physique and body posture contradicts the mottled-colour schema of his face and neck. While the blacksmith ultimately dies, shot by Gus, his presence in this scene serves to highlight the evil depravity that Gus embodies by showing the contrast in colour. Yet the actor who plays the Ginmill owner and the actor who plays
Gus both have prominent Roman noses and the physiognomy of Gus’s face reveals his Caucasian heritage.

These facial features, coupled with the Ginmill owner’s partly coloured body, make the black-face tactics obvious. While the conditions of reception pertaining to the minstrelsy tradition have changed with time, the literalness of the performance of blackness reveals the falsity of the concept of “white” as a foundational premise. In the use of the black-face tradition in *The Birth of a Nation* the face of the white man literally acts as the grounds for the performance of racial difference that denaturalises the dichotomous structuring of racial difference as a distinctive difference. The Roman nose that protrudes from the epidermal schema of Negritude highlights the fact that racial difference is a difference based on the calibration of degrees with the face of White Man the machine that overcodes all differences. *The Birth of a Nation* literally enacts the machine of capture that is the White Man face. As the final frames of the film impose the body of Christ as a fitting denouement to the “birth” of a new national identity, Christ is the figure who acts as the ultimate interpreter that intervenes in the production of the real that constitutes the productive machine of colonial desire. However, this White Man Face not only utilises the traits of whiteness and masculinity, this Face (which acts as a substratum to the colonial machines of production), also works through machines of sexuality and femininity. Homi K. Bhabha touches on the sexual aspect of hybridity when he discusses the colonial stereotype and the film *Touch of Evil* in “The Other Question” (1992).

In this essay Bhabha makes some enigmatic remarks regarding racism and sexism as a “mixed economy” of the Mexico/USA border depicted in *Touch of Evil*. This “mixed economy” refers to Bhabha’s concept of hybridity as that ambivalent force at the heart of colonial discourse that performs a “productive splitting in its constitution of knowledge and the exercise of power” which unravels colonialism’s supposed hegemony (1992, p. 328). His comments on *Touch of Evil* are motivated by the earlier work of Stephen Heath (“Film and System, Terms of Analysis” 1975) whose critique of cultural difference emphasised the contradictory system of signs (not symbols or stereotype) in circulation in *Touch of Evil*. Bhabha argues that through the paradigm of psychoanalysis, Law and desire, Heath emphasises sexual difference at some cost to “the play of ‘nationalities’” evident in the film (p. 314). The following discussion of *Touch of Evil* charts the flow of sexuality and nationality as they intersect as binary machines of American imperialist desire. Rather than hybridity as a productive splitting, the following discussion of *Touch of Evil* considers hybridity as a machinic assemblage that uses a particular interpretive tool, the human face, as a mode
of production linking words and things. In *Touch of Evil*, that face becomes the despotic face of White Femininity that extends the powers of capture further.

2.7 Hybridity in *Touch of Evil*

When Charlton Heston plays Miguel Vargas in Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil* (1958) the character's Mexican identity is conveyed by various means. Vargas intermittently lapses into the Mexican language at certain points in the narrative and he makes constant reference to his homeland when talking to his American wife. The mise-en-scène also plays a central role in transmitting Heston's racial identity. Dark make-up covers Heston's face with the appropriate racial signifier and camera framing and lighting accentuate his skin pigment. However, the star persona of Charlton Heston, fresh from his role as Moses in *The Ten Commandments* (1956), lingers below the make-up that attempts to signify Mexican Otherness. Indeed, his American counter-part Detective Hank Quinlan (played by Orson Welles) comments twice on the fact that Vargas does not appear to be a typical Mexican. The first comment is a direct reference to Vargas's speech pattern and the other is a more indirect observation that Quinlan makes when he sees Vargas's American wife Suzy (played by Janet Leigh) and notes that "She doesn't look Mexican either". The first time he has cause to make these observations is in his initial encounter with Vargas that occurs in the aftermath of a car bomb explosion on the American side of the American-Mexican border. The camera follows Vargas to the bomb scene where the audience awaits the imminent arrival of Sheriff Quinlan. When Quinlan does appear the camera frames him in a low angled close-up so that his face looms large upon the cinema screen. The insistent presence of the camera in *Touch of Evil* (particularly in the opening shot where mobile framing is taken to its giddy limits) inscribes, on the very body of the film, the signature of Welles as auteur. Welles also stamps his signature on the character of Quinlan whose persona bleeds into that of Welles as director. Welles as Quinlan is also Quinlan as Welles. The rendering of the actual face of the character in close-up includes the excessive and baroque stylistics of Welles as auteur and this stylistic presence characterises the bleeding between textual and extra-textual dimensions that occurs throughout *Touch of Evil*.

While the first shot of the encounter between Quinlan and Vargas begins with the close-up of Quinlan emerging from a police car, the reverse-shot features Vargas entering a black frame with his face registered in ghostly outline. He looks off-screen to the space implicitly occupied by Quinlan, just as the next shot answers this glance
with Quinlan’s return gaze. In the Vargas shot, the close-up reveals the physiognomy of a recognisable star (the cheek bones, the strong jaw and nose being a significant part of Heston’s persona) which serves to disrupt the effect of Mexican-ness that the make-up on his face attempts to generate. In order to pre-empt this effect Welles places an actual sign in the background of the shot. The sign is a billboard that reads “Welcome Stranger!” so that one may literally read the meaning of the face of Vargas as an outsider who does not belong on the American side of the border. The billboard fixes the sign of racial difference that the Face of Heston as Vargas fails to solidify, a slippage that Quinlan observes when he says, “You don’t talk like one – a Mexican I mean”. Throughout *Touch of Evil* the Heston-Vargas assemblage constantly moves between the two poles of Vargas-Mexican-ness (defined in relation to his hot-blooded passion for wife Suzy in a car scene) and Heston-American-ness (as suitably exemplified in the bar scene where Heston beats up on a gang of Mexicans). Vargas’s significance as a character constantly slips between racial, sexual, economic and nationalist coordinates. The spectator reads these changing coordinates through the facial expressions of the Vargas-Heston assemblage.

Another Face that is prominent in *Touch of Evil* is that of Marlene Dietrich who plays the role of a European Gypsy. Dietrich the actress is a crossover star from Germany made famous through her work with Josef von Sternberg and subsequent Hollywood productions. Her enigmatic presence in the narrative and her particular mix of foreign-ness and exotic allure perhaps best exemplifies the characteristic space of the Mexican/USA border town of Los Robles where the action takes place. Dietrich has a face that appears white, yet her accent adds a racial “colouring” to this image that conjoins with the sexual economy she traffics in as a prostitute to produce a toxic mix. While Dietrich’s character (Tanya) lives on the Mexican side of the border, the border town itself remains indeterminately mapped. Much of the virtuoso camera work of *Touch of Evil* includes crane shots of city streets, hotel rooms and derelict industrial sites, and yet the geographical co-ordinates of Los Robles remain constantly elusive. At times the trafficking between the Mexican and American borders occurs with such speed (and with little sign posting) that the spectator is often disorientated as to which side of the border the action takes place. Consequently, the spectator must rely upon signs emitted from the bodies of the characters who become spaces of transition. The Face, in particular, is a vehicle of translation that negotiates the baroque architecture of Welles’ film.

At one point in *Touch of Evil* Vargas defends his homeland in the wake of his wife’s increasing disenchantment with Los Robles. He appeals to reason and the common knowledge that life on the margins is particularly difficult when he exclaims
“All border towns bring out the worst in a country, you know that.” Between America and Mexico, Los Robles embodies the worst of each culture. Drug addicts, sexual deviants, corrupt lawmen and gangsters traverse the desolate spaces of the town and the surrounding countryside with much of the narrative action occurring nocturnally, and in small, confined, indoor spaces. The chiaroscuro lighting techniques, canted framing and disruptions of the 180 degree continuity editing rule produce a seedy and disconcerting cinematic architecture that is congruent with the character types who inhabit Los Robles - a border town peopled by characters on the margins of society.

The architectonics of the cinematic space also demonstrates the trafficking that occurs across the borders of America and Mexico. Where classical Hollywood cinema often registers geographical shifts through changing landscape shots and clues overtly given in the mise-en-scène, Touch of Evil features editing techniques (at times in combination with mobile framing) to weave a peculiarly indeterminate cinematic geography that destabilizes the viewers sense of “place”. For example, the opening of Touch of Evil involves one of the longest takes in the history of cinema and while it ostensibly establishes the geography of the scene (the border between Mexico and the United States), the excessively long take expresses a dizzying play of spatial dimensions that intensifies the complexity of this “place”. Gilles Deleuze identifies these tactics as characteristic of Welles:

[G]reat movements are like a director’s signature [...] Orson Welles often describes two movements which are formed, one of which is like a horizontal linear flight in a kind of elongated, striated cage, lattice-worked, and the other a circular sweep whose vertical axis performs a high or low angle shot from a height. (Cinema 1, 1986, p. 21)

This logic of play between horizontal and vertical spatial dimensions persists throughout the film and often produces a “stuttering” effect at odds to the smooth spaces of conventional continuity edits. For example, the first encounter between Quilan and Vargas involves non-continuity-style editing and a play between close-up and medium shot and canted framing that visually demonstrates the antagonistic relationship between these two protagonists. Cinematic techniques in this sequence express an inorganic link between shots and within shots that produce a lattice-work of disjunctive space/time pockets whose dizzying effects replace the “anchoring” function of continuity-style editing. Such an architectonics consequently privileges the role of bodies and faces within this space to act as indexical markers or mediators that determine the boundaries of this “place”. The dynamics of racial and sexual differences shift the terms of these boundaries to produce a liminal geography of engagement based upon the logic of contamination. Three types of faces trace the
dynamics of these shifts and include the character/star face of Vargas/Heston and Quinlan/Welles, the face of white femininity, and the face of delirium. Tracing the trajectory of the face of white femininity as it transforms into the face of delirium demonstrates the logic of contamination that pervades the hybrid spaces of Touch of Evil.

Neither fully Mexican nor a proper American space, Los Robles where the action in Touch of Evil takes place, is a hybrid town split in two with a border policed by government officials. In the opening scene American guards conduct border checks to maintain order in the town. However, the choreography of the crane shot in this opening undermines all pretence towards control, and its intoxicating movements seemingly foreshadow the chaos that soon erupts when the bomb blast occurs. The ease with which a crime can be committed under the very noses of the official border patrollers suggests that the border town is a site susceptible to contamination, and corruption. The geographical space of Los Robles, as well as the racial stereotype of the emasculated Mexican male expresses anxieties over miscegenation and racial purity in the nineteenth-century that have a particular resonance for Mexican national identity.

According to Octavia Paz, the founding myth of Mexico concerns the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortez who took as his mistress the Indian slave Malinche, who acted as his guide and played a pivotal role in the Spanish success over the Mesoamerican peoples. Nikos Papastergiadis argues that Paz considers present day Mexicans as “children of a primal violation, that of conquest” and thus a nation based upon the weak foundations of hybridity as it is figured in the language of eugenics and nineteenth-century scientific discourse (Papastergiadis, p. 174). This history of conquest contributes to the racial stereotype of the emasculated Mexican male mediated through American film history and the representations of Mexican characters in films such as John Ford’s Stagecoach (1939). The personification of this stereotype reaches its most excessive point in the figure of Uncle Joe Grandi in Touch of Evil and to lesser degrees in the Mexican “boy” Sanchez, Miguel Vargas, and the character referred to as Pancho. These characters embody traits of a weakened and feminised Mexican masculinity when put into relation with the face of white femininity displayed in the character of Suzy.

Suzy (played by Janet Leigh) has married outside her own racial group and her illicit liaison with Miguel is the pivotal point anchoring the theme of contamination in Touch of Evil. The first time the audience sees Suzy encounter a Mexican other than her husband occurs soon after the bomb blast where Vargas has instructed her to wait at their hotel on the Mexican side of the border. A young Mexican man accosts Suzy on the street and hands her a note inviting her to follow him on business concerning her
husband who is chairman of the Pan American Narcotics Commission. Throughout the film, Suzy’s role oscillates between one of action and one of passivity and this scene demonstrates her willingness to take a risk and follow the Mexican stranger who has addressed her. He takes her across the border again to meet Uncle Joe Grandi the leader of the same gangster family that Vargas has recently brought a case against on drug related charges. This initial meeting is part of an elaborate plan by Grandi to implicate Vargas’s wife in a scandal so that Vargas might rethink testifying against the Grandi family. As such, Suzy takes a great risk in following the handsome leather-clad Mexican stranger (Grandi’s nephew) to an unknown destination, a risk she refers to when she says to some bystanders “What have I got to lose? Don’t answer that”. The implicit assumption in this comment is the threat of interracial sexual violation and this possibility haunts the narrative spaces of Touch of Evil, culminating later in the scene at the Mirador hotel room. However, after this initial dialogue Suzy then exclaims “Lead on Pancho” to the young man who has given her the note, and in this relegation of the stranger to a generic stereotype for a Mexican male, imposes a fragile mask of white superiority that might shield her against the possible threat of sexual violence. However, this is indeed a delicate maneuver because the possibility of contaminating that very whiteness produces the rather perverse effect of this scene.

Rape is only alluded to in Suzy’s dialogue (where the loss she risks experiencing is not only loss of life but also the threat of sexual violation) and in the mise-en-scène of the darkened and desolate streets through which “Pancho” escorts her. Before Suzy enters the hotel room to meet Grandi, one of his family members takes a photograph of her and “Pancho” which contributes to the scheme against her. Later, the photograph will imply that she and “Pancho” are involved in an extra-marital affair, and this illicit sexual activity, as well as the framing of Suzy for drug use, forms the basis of Grandi’s plot against Vargas. Following the logic of hybridity that includes fear of miscegenation, Suzy is particularly susceptible to this proposed entrapment given that she has already demonstrated questionable morals by marrying outside of her racial group.

The dynamic of risk and power open to Suzy is not only dramatised by her labeling of the nephew as “Pancho” (an action he draws attention to when he complains to Grandi about the nickname) but also by the somewhat comic figure of Grandi himself. Suzy encounters Uncle Joe in a hotel room putting the finishing touches to his wardrobe by studying himself in a mirror. He is a plump and short man with a pencil thin moustache, who wears a checkered shirt and toupee. Unlike conventional gangster narratives when mise-en-scène and editing anticipate the meeting between a hero and his nemesis, there is no such build up in Touch of Evil. Suzy enters
the room that Pancho has brought her to, and fails to note immediately the presence of Grandi in the room, as he seems to have melted into the curtains in the corner where he stands. The first image of Grandi alone is a low angled shot that accentuates his stomach while seemingly attempting to convey the power he embodies as the head of a gangster family. However, the next shot frames him in relation to Suzy where he is shown to be shorter than her. The lack of impact of his physical presence is also reiterated in the dialogue when Grandi asks Suzy if she knows who he is, to which she responds blankly. When he does reveal his name, Suzy is not overtly impressed. She makes a connection to her husband’s case but also to the name of the hotel that is the same as the Grandi family name. As if registering his failure to inspire fear, Grandi asks for the gun his nephew is carrying, to underscore the threat he poses to Suzy. Suzy responds to the appearance of the gun in a suitably hesitant fashion. However, Grandi undermines his own fear-inspiring potential by preening in front of his mirror and fastidiously adjusting his clothing. Both he and Suzy resort to yelling at each other when Suzy provokes Grandi with a question regarding his business. As her voice drowns out his, a two-shot frames them in medium close-up, as Suzy brushes a cigar poking from the mouth of Grandi aside.

In this two-shot, Suzy’s profile appears in light relief to the darkened face of Grandi in the shadows. Her face glows in the chiaroscuro lighting as she accuses him of seeing too many gangster movies, and warns him against trying to intimidate Vargas even while she, herself may be scared. As Grandi backs down, a shot frames Pancho in medium close-up observing the exchange. The camera frames Pancho against a neutral backdrop and his black leather jacket and youthful features appear in sharp contrast to the effeminate figure of Grandi. Yet, he remains a passive onlooker and only interrupts proceedings to convey a sexual innuendo about Suzy. Where Grandi is the emasculated Mexican male, Pancho poses a sexual threat to Suzy, a threat that the ensuing shot nonetheless dissolves. Grandi translates the sexual innuendo to Suzy who responds by calling him a “silly little pig”. While the threat of Pancho’s masculinity remains real, the translation of that threat via the figure of Grandi modulates its effect and allows Suzy to call Grandi a “ridiculous, old fashioned, jug-eared, lop-sided little Caesar”. Suzy delivers this vitriolic speech to both Grandi and Pancho as they occupy the frame of a two-shot medium close-up. Pancho bristles while Grandi ironically plays on the idea that he has misheard her because of language difference. This is the moment of highest intensity between the three figures, an intensity that Grandi subsequently dispels with a comic shrug of his shoulders. Suzy’s power has prevailed at this point in the exchanges between herself and the seedy underworld gangster. The comic rendering of Grandi through his dress, gesture and characterisation has produced a
sense of an effeminate and depraved Mexican masculinity in contrast to the neat and tidy figure of Janet Leigh who personifies American values, naïveté and devotion to her husband. Lighting techniques also convey this form of moral dichotomy between good and bad as Suzy’s face gleams in opposition to the shadows surrounding Grandi’s face. It is as though Suzy’s moral superiority literally shines through the darkness of the room where the action takes place. Shadows predominately obscure Grandi’s face and when lighting does reveal him, his pudgy sweating features contrast starkly to Suzy’s neat blonde hair, her clear skin and her perfectly symmetrical facial features. However, while Suzy’s moral virtue may have won this exchange through recourse to an attack on Grandi’s physical and feminised appearance, the final shot in this sequence undermines her supposed victory.

In the closing part of the sequence, Suzy asks if she is free to leave. Grandi and Pancho appear again in a two shot close-up, however, this time the low-angle framing is at its most extreme. Grandi responds by saying that no one has held her against her will and that no one has laid a hand on her. Suzy appears increasingly confused and uneasy and backs out of the room, but not before Grandi has had the chance to lasciviously lick his lips as he watches her leave. His final dialogue foreshadows the conspiracy against Vargas and suggests that it is not so much the quality of the exchange that takes place in this hotel room that matters, than it is the fact that Suzy appeared in the hotel room at all. Thus, while white femininity appears to emasculate Mexican masculinity, Grandi’s lip licking actions present a perverse form of masculinity whose powers of contamination will ultimately prevail to distort the face of white femininity. Yet this power of corruption comes at some cost to Mexican masculinity.

The illuminative sheen that accompanies the close-up of Suzy’s face in her encounter with Grandi returns to torment her in a later scene where “Pancho” shines a light into her hotel room. As Vargas returns to the room he has rented for his honeymoon, a torchlight coming from a neighbouring window harasses Suzy as she is getting dressed. Suzy has darkened the room to change because the windows do not have blinds and “Pancho’s” torch acts as a spotlight following her every movement. Suzy’s blond hair, white pearls and pale sweater contrast sharply to the blackened space of the hotel room and the shadow body behind her made by the halo of light. Her whiteness in this sequence is the attribute that distinguishes her from the black anonymous space of the room and the accompanying nocturnal cityscape, presenting her as a vulnerable and susceptible target. Where the pristine gloss of her face in the Grandi/Pancho exchange challenged the dusky shadows of Uncle Joe’s face and grotesque figure, in the spotlight sequence this very gloss, and her attributes of bloneness appear to betray her. This event causes Suzy to seek refuge on the American side
of the border where she will look for “comfort” (in her words) in an American hotel room. Yet she does not achieve the safety in sameness that she desires, as the motel she goes to is the site where Grandi’s scheme comes to fruition. However, before the powers of the face of white femininity mutate into the face of delirium (which has its own diabolic powers of transposition) Suzy’s face effects one last flicker that sends the US/Mexico boundaries racing.

A car sequence displays Suzy’s feminine powers of seduction when she rides with Vargas as he drives to meet Quinlan. Vargas has been reluctant to take Suzy with him, but her will has prevailed. During the car ride Suzy makes advances to her newly-wed husband that cause him to stop the car to embrace her more fully. In this sequence the American aspect of the Vargas-Heston assemblage recedes into the background as the assertive demands of Janet Leigh call out Vargas’s hot-blooded Mexican nature. The sequence begins with the typical Heston-like mannerisms of a patriarchal figure explaining the implications of the car bomb to his seemingly naive wife. However, he then begins to poetically discuss the historical significance of the American-Mexican border, and he observes to Suzy how “corny” he must appear to her. She responds with a sly allusion to wanting to be “corny” if only her husband would “co-operate”. Heston’s reference to his own mawkish sentimentality transposes the patriarchal and American Heston persona into the feminised Mexican entity, Vargas whose “hot blooded” nature is more aligned with uncivilised racial attributes than with the virile attributes of American masculinity.

The Heston-Vargas assemblage moves from the sharp cheek boned physiognomy that signifies American-Heston, to the epidermal schema signifying Mexican-Vargas, which also modify the co-ordinates of Suzy’s face. Initially Suzy’s body is in feminine repose, resting on Heston’s shoulder as he drives while explaining the bomb to her. When Vargas expresses concern about becoming emotional, Suzy raises her eyes and then her head to better scan the surface of his face, which reverses the dominance of gender in favour of race by calling attention to the skin of Heston. Once she delivers her lines “I would love being corny, if only my husband would cooperate” she moves to kiss his ear and wraps her arms around his neck when he exclaims “Hey, Suzy”. As he submits to her embrace, the dynamics of race overcode the previous coordinates of gender as he responds willingly to her advances. While he subsequently enfolds her in his arms, a movement suggesting paternalistic protection, the contrast between his darkened skin in close proximity to her white flesh complicates the conventional dominance of masculine sexuality in relation to female sexuality. Situated as they are, on Vargas’s “terribly historic border” (as Suzy describes it) this embrace demonstrates the messy entanglements of border crossing that occurs when
the virile figure of American masculinity is transformed into a nativistic image of Mexican sexuality by the powers of white femininity. Yet, Vargas’s subsequent abandonment of Suzy to the care of police officer Pete erases the power of this face of white femininity. This is the final scene where the face of white femininity prevails. Suzy will not meet Vargas face to face until Vargas tracks her to a prison cell where she is recovering from the effects of a simulated drug and rape experience which has left her delirious and confused.

The simulated rape occurs at the Mirador motel and these scenes are interspersed with the parallel story lines involving Quinlan’s liaison with Uncle Joe and Vargas’s discovery of Quinlan’s corruption. These parallel narrative threads contribute to the sense of spatial disorientation in *Touch of Evil* that reaches its frenzied level in the Ritz hotel room sequence where Suzy awakens to the body of Grandi collapsed above her. This final climax is the culmination of events that begin in the deserted outskirts of Los Robles on the Mexican side of the border in the Mirador motel room where Suzy is trying to get some sleep. Here, she is exhausted and music from the hotel speakers and from the party of young people next door fray her nerves further. These neighbours are members of the Grandi family who include a shaking boy strung out on drugs, Anglo-Mexican half breeds, Pancho and a leather-clad butch dyke played by Mercedes McCambridge. At one point Mercedes whispers to Suzy through the motel walls to warn her that the boys are trying to get in to her room and that they have drugs with them. Terrorised by the unknown voice, Suzy checks the windows and finds the face of a strange man staring into her room. As her door opens Suzy is paralysed with fear and the horror on her face is alternately revealed and obscured by the shadows and shapes of the men who enter her room. When the character played by Mercedes enters, the camera follows her path which weaves between the various men who stand around Suzy’s bed staring, mesmerised by the frightened woman scantily clad in a white nightgown. Then follows a sequence of shots involving Pancho instructing the butch dyke to leave and the reverse shot of Mercedes from an extreme low angle expressing her desire to stay and watch what happens. An extreme close-up of Suzy’s response occurs and then we see the strange extreme close-up of Pancho licking his lips and addressing the camera directly to deliver the whispered lines “Hold her legs”. A fish eye lens distorts this shot and signals the subsequent drug induced delirium Suzy will experience at the hands of the Grandi gang. Uncle Joe’s intention is to accuse Vargas of corruption by simulating Suzy’s drug abuse and her penchant for dabbling with low lifes. The scene ends with the closing of the motel door as the men hold Suzy by her arms and legs. She will later awaken in the Ritz hotel, barely clad and delirious.
Due to their mutual hatred of Vargas, Quinlan and Grandi have joined forces to frame Vargas by using his wife. Suzy is taken to the Ritz in the centre of Los Robles and here Quinlan disposes of Grandi in a scene that involves a kinesthetic use of mobile framing, intermittent lighting from a flashing sign outside, and extreme camera angles. These techniques convey a frenzied and degenerate atmosphere that expresses the extremities to which the now-drunken Quinlan will go to cover his tracks. The faces of delirium that feature in this sequence include the drugged and restless figure of Suzy in the bed, the extreme close-up shots of Quinlan’s face distorted with booze, and the face of Uncle Joe Grandi delirious with fear. Grandi’s face is not only disfigured by fear as he is herded around the room by the grotesque figure of Quinlan and at one point presses himself against the brass bed frame in order to reach a gun. His facial features distend beyond their usual capacity and Grandi appears as a ragged doll swept up in the destructive force embodied in Quinlan’s sheer bulk. He dies strangled by one of Suzy’s silk stockings and this article of clothing that becomes the instrument of his demise, mixes a toxic brew of intimate depravity between Grandi and Suzy.

This grotesque intimacy continues when Quinlan releases the corpse so that it flops over the brass bed head where Suzy lies tossing and turning in an action that emulates the dizzy cinematography of the murder sequence. The flashing lights from the street continue to animate the death scene with a kinesthetic and yet corruptive intensity, even as Quinlan leaves the room, with a backward glance to the chaos he has perpetuated. As he leaves, a shot shows Suzy awakening from her drug-induced sleep. She is drenched in sweat and her shoulders are bare, implying that she is naked under the sheets. The perverse sense of intimacy that the spectator experiences in this shot contrasts with the violence just witnessed by the strangulation of Grandi. While Suzy has been oblivious to the struggle that has just occurred, she awakes to observe the end results of Quinlan’s excesses and her screams punctuate the city nightlife as she registers the contorted face of Grandi hovering upside down above her head. As the lights flash on and off an extreme close-up reveals his enlarged and wide staring eyes and the upside down paper-thin moustache that lends a cartoonish air to the scene. Like a vision from a nightmare, or from a drug-induced delirium, this corpse-face achieves the very results that Uncle Joe envisaged for Suzy: the contamination and corruption of her American femininity as a means to destroy Vargas. Quinlan’s officers subsequently charge Suzy with Grandi’s murder and drug abuse which leads to Vargas’s use of illegal tactics to clear his wife’s name.

The final sequence in *Touch of Evil* features Vargas following Quinlan and his partner Pete with a tape recorder to receive the transmission of a confession from the concealed microphone that Pete wears. This tactic of subterfuge is morally repugnant to
Vargas and yet he is willing to resort to the same deceitful strategies that Quinlan uses in order to achieve justice. The police discover that Suzy has only been injected with sodium pendathol (a drug that simulates the effects of heroin) and Pete finds Quinlan’s cane at the scene of Grandi’s murder, which effectively destroys the case against her. However, Vargas cannot leave Los Robles without clearing his wife of all trace of contamination. As he explains to Pete “How can I leave here until my wife’s name is clean? Clean!” His recourse to bugging Quinlan is the same dirty tactic that Quinlan uses to justify the hunches he has about who has committed a crime. Indeed, Quinlan’s hunch about Sanchez being responsible for the murder of Rudy Linneker (via the car bomb in the opening sequence) proves to be correct as Sanchez finally confesses his crime. Therefore both Quinlan and Vargas share a similar approach to justice. The methods Quinlan uses to interpret justice are contaminated by grief, cynicism and anger (owing to the death of his wife) just as Vargas is motivated by his own inability to protect his wife from harm. Both men have an instinct for the law and yet both resort to corrupt means to uphold it. Consequently, both men use interpretations of the law that are contaminated and corrupted, not only by personal concerns, but by the logic of the borderland that is Los Robles. Conventional justice does not prevail in this netherworld of marginal existence, and other means are utilised to effect the desired outcomes. While Vargas seeks to “clean” Suzy’s name, he does so using dirty and underhanded tactics that betray the effects of degeneracy characteristic of the hybrid geography of the US/Mexico border.

The taping sequence expresses the culmination of corruptive influences from various sources that have vitiated the Heston attributes of the Heston/Vargas assemblage. The values that the Heston attributes embody (moral superiority, American values, Justice and patriarchal strength) have been eroded by the forces of desire animated by the white face of femininity. From the moment that Vargas enters the Mexican bar in search of his wife (whom he has unwittingly bypassed on his way there) he acts as a husband and not a law enforcer. As the Heston figure smashes Pancho into the jukebox, and single-handedly fends off the Grandi gang, his wrath exceeds the epidermal schema denoting him as Mexican. As the frail and ineffectual bodies of Mexican men crumple before him, Heston is White Man incarnate, fulfilling his duties as the defender of moral order (and perhaps recalling his role as that archetypal Patriarch Moses in *The Ten Commandments*). Yet, this display of wrath takes Heston over the border of moral rectitude and into the more indeterminate realm of nativistic passion which causes him ultimately to resort to illegal means to entrap Quinlan. In the final sequence the processes of degeneration are most overtly screened upon the bloated face of Quinlan as he makes one last attempt to interpret events for his
own ends in an armchair amidst the debris of a polluted river. While Quinlan ends up in the river, floating past the excrescence of the border town, Vargas flings himself into the arms of his wife who embraces him in a comforting fashion. Vargas subsequently composes himself in the last scene in which the couple features as he tells Suzy he is taking her home. Yet again, there has been a slippage between the mask of the Heston/Vargas assemblage in response to the face of white femininity that troubles the concept of home, which is now a liminal space vitiating by the powers of race and sexuality and the decayed borders demarcating the two. One leaves *Touch of Evil* wondering where is this home that Vargas and Suzy flee to? What is the space that Vargas and Suzy leave for? One cannot conceive of this space using a crude dichotomous logic as it is a space of constant translation interrupted by the regulatory forces of border police who act as social interpretants. As *Touch of Evil* so tellingly demonstrates, the face plays a pivotal role in demarcating these borders.

The final scene of *Touch of Evil* belongs to the somewhat minor character (in narrative terms) played by Marlene Dietrich and this ending also supports the primacy given in the film to faces, close-ups and border towns. As Vargas flees with Suzy, and Quinlan floats amongst the rubbish, Tanya (Dietrich’s character) provides a eulogy for Quinlan as she looks wryly at his body lying in the dirty water. She utters the final words of the film “He was some kind of a man. What does it matter what you say about people?... Adios!” and walks into the night, suggesting that it is not so much words that have lasting significance than it is action. The actions of Dietrich as a film star indelibly mark this final sequence. Josef von Sternberg and Marlene Dietrich formed an alliance that produced a film persona of exquisite intensity. Her face and the special consideration given to lighting her cheekbones produced a sensual form of femininity that also exploited her exotic allure as non-American. In *Touch of Evil*, this allure is taking to its extreme as Dietrich portrays a Gypsy who inhabits the liminal space of the border town of Los Robles. Mexican female characters are largely absent throughout the duration of *Touch of Evil*, however Dietrich comes closest to embodying an ethnic category that poses an opposition to the American femininity of Suzy/Janet Leigh. Yet this is a strange kind of opposition which suggests that the hybrid spaces of the city and the film exceed a dialectical logic.

Marlene’s exotic accent and the Gypsy costume she wears continue the logic of contamination initiated by the overt whiteness of Suzy’s white femininity. While Suzy’s face causes the racial attributes of those around her to either advance or retreat in varying degrees of intensity, these elastic qualities of race are immanent to the face of Marlene. While the glow of her face appears white, Marlene’s accent “colours” her racial designation. She is not as “white” as the Suzy/Janet Leigh assemblage.
Accordingly, she demonstrates the qualities of whiteness that Richard Dyer describes when he writes:

In sum, white as a skin colour is just as unstable, unbounded a category as white is a hue, and therein lies its strength. It enables whiteness to be presented as an apparently attainable, flexible, varied category, while setting up an always movable criterion of inclusion, the ascribed whiteness of your skin. (1997, p. 57)

Thus, whiteness is not so much the objective characteristics of the skin as it is a machine that codes degrees of differences. For example, while Jewish and Irish peoples are ostensibly white, they do not embody the same qualities of whiteness as a white American or white English male. The differing degrees of blackness also operate by a sliding scale that positions the African on a lower rung from that of his Mexican counterpart. In both *The Birth of a Nation* and *Touch of Evil* the presumed natural dyad between black and white forms the basis of these differences in degree through the function of the Faciality machine of White Man and White femininity respectively.

In Dyer’s discussion of whiteness, he addresses it as a general concept that has no singularity; or rather, the air of generality the concept of white inhabits erases its singularities (1993, 143). Referring to the theory of colour learnt in school Dyer notes:

In the realm of categories, black is always marked as a colour [...] and is always particularizing; whereas white is not anything really, not an identity, not a particularizing quality, because it is everything – white is no colour because it is all colours. (p. 142)

Dyer’s formulation of White becomes a transcendent principle that structures race relations on a more singular level. Dyer’s concept of “white” is thus the anthropomorphic substratum that calibrates differences in degree. Dyer analyses how Whiteness is an invisible structure of domination that can be, in a sense, politically “coloured” by treating the category of whiteness as an ethnicity itself. Dyer attempts to “ground” the transcendent principle of whiteness by diverting critical attention away from the conventional object of analysis (the Other as exotic difference) to attend to the relational nature of difference itself. Indeed, this is Helen charles’ feminist intent in her 1992 essay “Whiteness—the relevance of politically colouring the ‘non’” where she seeks to read whiteness as an ethnicity whose invisibility is produced through the differentiation of “coloured” ethnicities (p. 29). Seeking to address the “non-space” of whiteness as a structuring absence, charles asks “My challenge to ‘white women’ is to ask [...] Are you coloured – in any way?” (p. 34). Yet, how does this identification and recognition of whiteness, as an ethnicity, avoid the pitfalls of a politics of location?
How does whiteness change ethnicity as a category of identity? What of the machinic nature of desire which is multiple and not self-identificatory? Is a politics of "politically colouring the non" subsequently a critical process that reasserts the White Man Face at the centre of critique? How can one "see" and "recognise" these transformations in the category of ethnicity without the privilege of historical difference? What of the fact that The Birth of a Nation, and Touch of Evil are films of a different era? Does historical difference alone, enable us to highlight the re-coding processes of the White Man Face or is there a fundamental difference at the heart of thought itself that precludes this reflexivity?

Dyer’s concept of “white” directs critical attention away from the content of images of difference in order to affirm the dynamics of interaction between those who are figured as white and non-white. In this approach Dyer’s work connects with that of Homi K. Bhabha who articulates the need to examine how the identity category of coloniser (or the White subject in Dyer’s terms) depends upon its Other for meaning and power. In this chapter, Bhabha’s examination of the ambivalent hybrid spaces at the heart of the camera obscura mode of perception has been redirected via the counter-narrative of cinema spectatorship offered in the work of Jonathan Crary. Crary’s emphasis on cinema as a social machine that is productive and not representational per se, encourages a new approach to the close analysis of cinema as both a textual and extra-textual practice that explores the logic of relations between images and bodies. This alternative analysis of spectatorship has explored the degrees, dimensions, flows and intensities constituting the hybrid spaces of cultural difference in two canonical film texts. It has asked: what does a hybrid theory of spectatorship look like (its characteristics and its mode of perception) and how does this mode of perception shift the terrain for thinking about the liminal relationship between culturally different identity categories? The chapter has replaced the postcolonial question of “what does a film mean?” with the Deleuzian question “what does the film do?” in order to elaborate upon the dynamics of cultural difference in film. Ultimately the chapter departs from the more “depth” oriented concept of hybridity towards the play between surfaces and depth expressed in the concept of Faciality.

Where Bhabha’s concept of hybridity is a past-oriented concept revolving around the primal scene of identity, this chapter channels the repetitive nature of the colonial stereotype that he quite rightly identifies in a new direction in the discussions of The Birth of a Nation and Touch of Evil. It does this by narrating the significant and productive role that the face and its epidermal schema plays in the production of cultural identity and difference. As the reading of these films illustrates, hybridity is more than a productive splitting of two distinct identities (coloniser or colonised in
Bhabha's case), it is the radical recoding of space and time that involves cultural, semiotic, economic and aesthetic flows whose movements are most significantly expressed through the concept of Faciality. While this chapter has focused upon the way the concept of Faciality accentuates the characteristic movements of recoding and decoding involved in the production of cultural difference, the next chapter examines how Faciality shifts discussions about the dynamics of spectatorship in film theory. This chapter has emphasised the logic of relations enfolding the Hybrid stereotype in two canonical film texts, the next chapter discusses two contemporary expressions of the postcolonial stereotype that dramatise the diverse and differenciating processes of spectatorship itself.
Chapter Three

The Critical Dimensions of Faciality

As the previous chapters have argued, the constant reproduction of racial and sexual stereotypes produce repetitive powers that revisit the coloniser within a postcolonial context in troubling and disturbing ways. However, a deadlock occurs in postcolonial theories that do not address the temporal characteristics of these repetitions. Postcolonial feminist Rey Chow wants to “invent a dimension” of critique that goes beyond “the deadlock between native and colonizer in which the native can only be the colonizer’s defiled image and the anti-imperialist critic can only be psychotic” (1993, p. 53). This use of the word “dimension” holds intriguing possibilities as to what kind of time/space configuration might enable and condition the production of such critical work. The ambivalence Homi K. Bhabha identifies at the heart of the camera obscura model opens up the terms through which one can understand that “third” dimension between self and other, or coloniser/colonised, a dimension where critical thought can grapple with the problem of cultural difference itself. Yet both theorists structure their discussion of cross-cultural encounter using a model of perception that negates the vicissitude of time’s passing. When the meaning of a stereotype is privileged without the necessary second movement of studying what it does, the anti-imperialist cultural critique returns each repetition of the stereotype to similar types of questions concerning identity and representation. This chapter explores the possibility of an “other dimension” of critical production that affirms the temporal qualities of the stereotype’s repetition and the dual powers of interpretation and translation accompanying any repetition. The term “translation” in the context of this chapter refers to the qualitative changes of a sign that occur when rendered from one milieu into another. Two images from Touch of Evil demonstrate the distinctions between these dual powers.

The scene including the didactic sign “Welcome Stranger” conveys the static power oriented characteristics of interpretation while the close-ups that reveal the indeterminate play of emotion on Dietrich’s face demonstrate the act of translation which follows a logic of m xity, permutation and contagion. If one argues that the dynamics of cultural difference involve something more than a dyadic deadlock between two distinct opposite identities, one must consider how the differential powers of time itself effect these encounters. This chapter approaches the diverse and
differentiating processes of cross-cultural spectatorship using two contemporary expressions of the Asian feminine stereotype in *Irma Vep* and *Double Happiness*. The chapter argues that these films demonstrate interpretation as an act that designates a *difference in degree*, while the act of translation entails a qualitative *difference in nature*. The chapter considers how these distinctive types of difference can map the dual powers of the postcolonial stereotype and how one can approach cultural difference as a fundamental act of encounter with otherness using Deleuze’s approach to cinema. It is this Deleuzian art of encounter that poses a possible cultural critical method that can explore the “other dimension” that Chow’s and Bhabha’s writings suggest are necessary for an anti-imperialist methodology.

### 3.1 The “new dimension” of Physiognomy

While Béla Balázs sees the shape of man in the cinematic close-up, he makes an intriguing comment about the nature of this spatial shift in perception when he suggests that the apprehension of the face in close-up is similar to the experience of listening to a melody (1972, p. 61). According to Balázs, while the features of a face can be seen in space, the significance of the relationship between eyes, ears, mouth and nose lose all reference to space. If the close-up brought the human face closer in space to the film viewer, the close-up also “transposed [the Face] from space into another dimension”, that of physiognomy (p. 61). This “new dimension” of physiognomy is not spatial but rather is the realm where “feelings, emotions, moods, intentions, thoughts are not themselves pertaining to space, even if they are rendered visible by means which are” (p. 61).

This is a dimension that is *not* legible in spatial or representational terms and thus suggests a pre-signifying and pre-linguistic domain. Balázs explains this new dimension by comparing Henri Bergson’s analysis of the duration of a melody with the space occupied by physiognomy. According to Bergson the single notes constituting a melody have duration and can be said to be temporal in that they follow each other in sequence. However, the experience of listening to the melody does not occur in objective time. The first note of the melody presupposes the last note that has not yet been played, just as the last note can only be heard as a coherent line of melody in relation to the first which has since died away. Thus, while the single notes may have duration, their relation to each other cannot be said to occur in objective time. Balázs applies this concept to the spatial dimension engendered by the close-up:
Now facial expression, physiognomy, has a relation to space similar to the relation of melody to time. The single features, of course appear in space; but the significance of their relationship to one another is not a phenomenon pertaining to space, no more than are the emotions, thoughts and ideas which are manifested in the facial expressions we see. They are picture-like and yet they seem outside space; such is the psychological effect of facial expression. (p. 62)

While emphasis on the identificatory processes of perception suggests that the unconscious plays a significant role in determining the significance of facial expression, the reference to duration highlights the temporal qualities of this process. If the phenomenon of physiognomy is outside of space, then is it in time that we must look for those strange qualities that the close-up engenders? It is in time that the translatable powers of cinema are found and the affective powers of the close-up express this transformative potential. In *Double Happiness* and *Irma Vep*, both films about the negotiation of ethnic identity via the representational powers of the face, the cinematic close-up produces and transposes these representational capacities by harnessing the temporal experiences of cinematic spectatorship.

*Double Happiness* (1995) is a semi-autobiographical film concerning the intergenerational conflict experienced by a Hong Kong family who have immigrated to Canada. Jade Li is the main protagonist who identifies with Anglo-Canadian culture and aspires to become an Academy award-winning actress accepted by mainstream society. Yet at home, her parents attempt to maintain traditional Chinese values in the displaced context of Canada and are concerned about Jade’s “westernised” ways. According to the criteria set for her by her parents, Jade is a "poor copy" of Chinese-ness in that she is not a fluent speaker of Mandarin, she aspires to a non-traditional form of employment, and she eventually dates an Anglo-Canadian boy. While Jade feels out of place within traditional Chinese culture, the Anglo-Canadian world outside her house is equally alienating. Jade is misrecognised as a non-English speaking generic Asian character, she is type-cast as a Chinese waitress in a screen-test and is excluded from a nightclub owing to her inability to meet the criteria of acceptability determined by the doorman. While Jade aspires to be a normal, average Canadian, these various racist encounters remind her that she cannot transcend the visible differences that her Face represents.

In *Double Happiness*, Mina Shum plays with the overdetermining powers of the Face of Asian femininity to highlight the nature of cultural identity as itself a boundary that shifts and bifurcates under constant contestation. Just as Balázs’s presumption of the truth-function of the close-up relegates his critical thinking to the identity enclosure of humanist discourse, so too is Jade’s face a kind of close-up that overcodes her social interactions with Chinese and Anglo-Canadian characters. Jade is
a walking, talking close-up. While at home her parents complain of her Westernisation, in the public sphere Jade experiences the precarious position of being what Homi Bhabha refers to as "almost the same but not white" (1994, p. 89). That is to say, Jade aspires to a "mainstream" existence that becomes incongruous in relation to her primary signifier of difference - her skin and facial characteristics. It is this position as "almost the same but not white" which suggests that Jade has the potential to challenge the conventional and stereotypical signifiers of cultural difference that define the borders between what can be broadly defined as the East and the West.

Bhabha's distinction between the varying calibrations of whiteness and the concept of white itself suggests that the border defining cultural difference modulates and fluctuates according to changing circumstances. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, this activity of modulation or transposition is not adequately captured by the term "hybridity" which relies upon the presupposition of autonomous cultural spheres prior to the advent of colonialism. Instead, Bhabha's concept of the Hybrid reiterates the functioning of Faciality as the agonistic mix of colonial and colonised linguistic and racial differences that suggests a form of dialectical synthesis. That is to say, the difference posited by the Hybrid colonial text (for example Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*) is triangulated on the plane of subjectification and significance organised by the Face of White-Man. White Man remains the basis for the distinction between different kinds of differences. This movement of triangulation results in binary machines which operate via dualistic units that present a false movement in thought. Indeed, the botanical origin of the concept of hybridity unequivocally links the image of the hybrid to the root logic of the Tree and the Face of Christ that Deleuze and Guattari critique in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987, p. 11). However, Bhabha's reference to the concept of modulation ("almost the same") inflects movement and the possibility of transformation into the concept of cultural identity. Rather than culture understood as a dichotomy between fixed or stable entities, (an approach that reiterates Hegel's dialectical differences) the idea of culture must address how semiotic materials are in constant movement and motion. Yuri Lotman's concept of the *Semiosphere* is a theoretical model which allows him to examine the mobile and heterogeneous characteristics of cultural identity. In Lotman's work, "Culture" is primarily defined as a system for dealing with inputs from the outside and as a mechanism for organising surrounding signs.

While Lotman's image of the Semiosphere suggests that he attempts to conceive of a total and unified theory of Culture, his emphasis on the extra-systematic processes that contribute to the transformation of cultural boundaries gives a dynamic concept of cultural identity that is premised upon continual transformation.
The semiosphere is marked by its heterogeneity. The languages which fill up the semiotic space are various, and they relate to each other along the spectrum which runs from complete mutual translatability to just as complete mutual untranslatability. Heterogeneity is defined both by the diversity of elements and by their different functions. So if we make the mental experiment of imagining a model of semiotic space where all the languages come into being at one and the same moment and under the influence of the same impulses, we still would not have a single coding structure but a set of connected but different systems. (1990, p. 125)

Lotman conceives of culture as a dynamic flux of semiotic acts that include all aspects of communication from sounds, movements, colours and electric fields through to actual utterances and written signs. For Lotman, culture is the organisational mechanism that a collective uses to deal with these inputs which come from outside. The concept of a sphere suggests a form of closure, however, Lotman emphasises the transformative and creative aspects of culture which suggest that the skin of this sphere is of a permeable and porous nature that is sustained and animated by outside forces (p. 140).

Lotman is particularly interested in how the contagious and permeable interfaces that constitute his concept of cultural boundaries create new information. It is this creative fusion of mistranslation that makes Lotman’s semiotic system more than a tool for identifying semiotic content (clear, direct communication) than examining the event of communication break-down. For Lotman then, the focus of examination becomes the interval between inside and outside and the degrees of opacity or resolution that emerge at the surface of this Semiosphere:

Certain parts of the semiosphere may at different levels of self-description form either a semiotic unity, a semiotic continuum, demarcated by a single boundary; or a group of enclosed spaces, marked off as discrete areas by the boundaries between them; or, finally, part of a more general space, one side of which is demarcated by a fragment of a boundary, while the other is open. Naturally the hierarchy of codes which activates different levels of signification in the single reality of the semiosphere will correspond to these alternatives. (p. 138)

Lotman’s system of communication recognizes that binary couplets (such as inside/outside) are in a constant state of movement, negotiation, change and transformation occurring at various levels of the semiosphere. This suggests that a kind of “pulley” system operates between any two binary poles in the system of communication and that attention must be paid to the interpreter who negotiates a semiotic object’s degree of clarity or confusion. One can see this pulley system at play when Vargas moves across the US/Mexico borders. In the final sequence Vargas embodies the powers of the Law on the Mexican side of the border which allows him to undermine Quinlan’s last attempt to distort the truth to his own ends by framing
Vargas for the killing of Pete. Quinlan, as American law enforcer, is the interpreter in this instance, which transforms Vargas from Mexican law enforcer to Heston-American via the pulley system of the face. His attempt to narrate the events of Pete’s murders fail as he occupies the Mexican side of the bridge where the action takes place. This is Vargas’s domain and Vargas makes this clear by saying “How can you arrest me here? This is my country”. Here the Vargas-Mexican assemblage is in sharper resolution than the American persona. Yet Quinlan’s bloated face pulls the American persona into distinct relief. As Vargas delivers his dialogue, a close-up shot reveals Quinlan’s delirious face. In contrast, Vargas’s face is calm, poised, and shown in noble outline by lighting and framing. Vargas’s features are pulled into relief as the American Heston not only by these cinematic tactics, but by the presence of his opposite who represents the contamination of the border town.

According to Lotman, the interpreter is the agent of political and social power. As we shall see in Double Happiness the face of Jade Li plays out the logic of this “pulley-system” in her social designation as Chinese-Canadian hybrid. However, the physiognomic powers of the close-up in Double Happiness disrupt the role of the interpreter within the diegesis of the film as well as the interpreter-spectator that the filmic structure implies. Double Happiness demonstrates Lotman’s affirmation of the creative powers of the boundary or borderland between cultural identities. How social meaning coheres in Lotman’s state of flux must be thought of as an expression of power: an expression that plays itself out through exchanges between bodies, acts and gestures at particular sites and specific historical circumstances. If Lotman's Semiosphere includes the "totality of semiotic acts" from beeps and squeaks to burps at the dinner table, this sphere needs a resonating chamber from which to emit its signals. In Double Happiness, the face of Jade Li acts as such a chamber. In a scene between Jade and her soon-to-be boyfriend Mark, which will be discussed below, Jade's face acts as an amplifier for the hum of Lotman's Semiosphere. Her face provides a temporary territory where social meaning is determined and then diffused by the speech-act that follows. It is this ability to put the terms of social meaning into motion that allows Jade Li to operate the pulley system of interpretation as a system of translation and as a creative act as opposed to one of reflection.

3.2 Interpretation and Translation

The idea of interpretation is one of the first themes Shum introduces in Double Happiness. In the opening shot Shum uses the rotating pedestal of a lazy-susan to
capture the dynamics of a dinner time conversation between Jade, her parents and her sister. Jade's younger sister repeatedly uses the word "fact" in her conversation with her mother, a word that Mr Li interprets as a Western slang-word. He admonishes her on the use of this word until Jade intervenes. In this scene Jade acts as an interpreter between the intergenerational differences that cause a daughter to be misunderstood by her father. This small scene echoes the larger theme of Jade's role as interpreter between the outside world of Anglo-Canada and the insular life lead by her parents. While Jade can take the active role of interpreter in relation to her father, and thus disrupt traditional Chinese paternal power, her agency as an interpreter ultimately fails when she is ostracised from the family home at the end of the film.

In another scene, Jade tries out for the part of a waitress for television. In this scene, Jade interprets an instruction from the director who has already interpreted her facial features according to racial stereotype. The Anglo-Canadian casting agent and director ask that she read her role with an accent. Jade interprets this invitation to mean any accent whatsoever, and subsequently plays the part with a French accent. The agent and director, who refuse to see the joke, meet Jade's willful misinterpretation with stony silence. Jade goes on to play the part with a Chinese accent. When Jade auditions for a Hong Kong director she is met with the reverse expectations. While her facial features signify Chinese, her failure to read Cantonese fluently, prevents her from getting the part. The Hong Kong director interprets this failure in language fluency to be a failure of cultural authenticity.

However, in a scene that takes place between Jade and her future boyfriend Mark, Jade translates the pulley-system of interpretation into a vehicle for the expression of agency. In this sequence a doorman has excluded Jade and Mark from entry into a nightclub. Anglo-Canadian Mark addresses Jade in English with a rather clumsy come-one that Jade deflects by pretending not to understand him. Mark very quickly concludes that her retiring manner has everything to do with her visibly expressed racial difference rather than any simple aversion to speaking to strange men. He continues to address her but this time using slowed speech and accompanying hand gestures to relay his message. Jade decides to encourage this failed moment of communication by shyly covering her mouth with her hand and lowering her gaze. In this hand-mouth assemblage, Jade performs a generic "Oriental identity" (that is not even particularly "Chinese") in order to play a joke at Mark's expense. Once Mark decides to give up and turn away, Jade pauses for a moment (for dramatic effect) and then responds to him in her Canadian inflected speech. Mark is suitably humbled.

Before Jade speaks, her face and her silence and the accompanying hand-to-mouth gesture of the Geisha, produce an over-determined "Oriental" identity whose
stereotypical features include passivity, mystery and compliance. Yet Jade transforms this apprehension of her identity when she speaks in a Canadian accent. This speech-act undermines the cultural assumptions that led Mark to misinterpret the situation. No stranger to the preconceptions her facial characteristics invite, Jade's masquerade of "Otherness" undoes the fixity of the East/West paradigm of difference. Mark's initial interpretation of her visible difference operates by a binary logic, however, Jade's Canadian-accented speech very quickly shifts this logic to another register. The mobility of this arrangement suggests a state of flux which Papastergiadis terms "an energy field of different forces" where hybridity is "the assemblage that occurs whenever two or more elements meet, and [where] the initiation of a process of change [occurs]" (p. 170). In this scene, the assemblage of Jade's facial features and gestures combine with her Anglo-inflected speech-act to effect a change in the assumptions underlying Mark's interpretation of the situation. In effect, a transformation occurs in the gender roles between Mark and Jade where Mark becomes the passive and duped nerd in relation to the street-wise and socially savvy Jade.

While this state of change suggests a form of agency for Jade, her power to act is of a complicated and provisional nature. Jade's masquerade may menace the terms upon which cultural identity is premised, yet her consequent social assignation as hybrid can also be read as a triangulated third term: as a sign of acceptable deviance which maintains the East/West divide. For once Jade is "recognised" by Mark as just another citizen of the Multicultural mosaic that is Canada, the potential for menacing Euro-American society as the dominant paradigm diminishes. Mark, as the border patroller of dominant Anglo-Canadian culture, has interpreted the extra-systematic semiotic object that is Jade's Canadian accent and has allowed her to pass over into the realm of multicultural Canada. This triangulation calibrates the face of Jade as an acceptable deviation determined by the biunivocal powers of the Faciality Machine. Therefore the question of hybrid agency seems to be a question of how to keep the solidification of social meaning moving and how to undermine the determinative action of recognition, that is, how to maintain the space of translation.

The concept of translation returns us to Béla Balázs's discussion of the close-up where he argues that the apprehension of a face occurs in the "other dimension" of physiognomy which is the realm of emotion, memory and duration. (1972, p. 61). In the sequence just described, Shum frames Jade's "Oriental" performance in close-up so that the audience can interpret the smile on her face as the anticipated pleasure of fooling the white boy. Earlier, the narrative action introduced the audience to the irreverent and ironic way that Jade views her status as cultural hybrid. Therefore this scene does not implicate the audience in Mark's act of misrecognition. The close-up
underscores the fact that this performance is a performance by emphasising the smile on Jade’s face. The close-up also emulates Mark’s attentiveness to physiognomy that serves to fuel his misinterpretation of the situation. However in another sequence, Shum turns the microphysiognomics of the close-up towards the spectator who is projected into an “other dimension”. In this next scene the implied audience now occupies the position that Mark did in the nightclub scene. It is as if these two scenes double each other, with each one facing the opposite direction: one faces the diegesis of the film and its characters, while the other rebounds off the face of the spectator.

Jade aspires to be an Academy-award winning actress and through the course of the narrative, she steals away from the pressures of family life to rehearse scenes in her bedroom. Through the excessive mise-en-scéne, Jade’s bedroom becomes a theatrical stage that mirrors the imaginary world of her mind. In one scene, Jade transforms herself into a Tennessee Williams character who has come to epitomize white Southern femininity in American culture when she rehearses the part of Blanche Du Bois from *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The artificial mise-en-scéne, the framing of her face in close-up and her mannered acting highlight the performative nature of this sequence with the close-up also accentuating the make-up that Jade wears. Her face is dusted in white powder and her eyes have been painted to emphasis their shape in the tradition of Chinese opera. While the close-up reveals these details to the spectator, Jade’s subsequent dialogue emulates a deeply Southern accent that is at odds with this mask of Chinese-ness. This brief delay in visual and aural image enacts the very same set-up between image and spectator that occurs diegetically between Mark and Jade. In keeping with the light-hearted nature of the film, humour is Shum’s calculated effect in this scene. The excessive dream-like setting, the disjunctive synthesis of Southern Belle speech and Chinese Face and the abrupt end of the scene when her sister calls Jade to do the dishes all add to the humour of the scene. Yet there is a troubling excess to this scene that complicates the laughter even as it produces it. For how much is this humour dependent upon the disjuncture between a generic Oriental face and the acoustic simulation of a hyper-Whiteness?

In this “Southern Belle” scene Shum’s use of the close-up has produced a “second face” function that causes the spectator’s attention to fluctuate between hearing and seeing. The close-up reveals the detail of the make-up of a Chinese icon while the poetry of the dialogue (as a sound image) suggests a kind of cultural transcendence in its moving rendition of the plight of a Southern Belle. Shum’s selection of such an excessive form of White femininity conjures up the face of Vivien Leigh as Blanche Du Bois in the 1951 film version of William’s play, a face that subsequently resonates in that supreme image of a Southern Belle - Scarlet O’Hara.
from *Gone with the Wind* (1939). The complications of national boundaries and the image of archetypal femininity continue, in that the actress who comes to represent the quintessential Southern Belle is in fact a British actress. Indeed, this recollection of Vivien Leigh especially transcends the borders of national identity to evoke an ideal concept of White femininity as embodied in classical Hollywood movies of the studio years. Shum’s choice of sound-image places emphasis on the pervasive role played by Hollywood in the production of femininity that has particular implications for non-white subjects. In “The Despotic Face of White femininity” Camilla Griggers notes how the Hollywood star system manufactured “a consumable classed feminine faciality” whose pervasive powers are still with us today in the form of monthly exports to Asia of fashion journals with the face of white femininity (1997, p. 18). While Hollywood conventionally represents American nationality, the presence of Vivien Leigh (or Marlene Dietrich in *Touch of Evil*) in the star system of Hollywood suggests that the Hollywood aesthetic depends greatly on the trafficking in stars and expertise beyond the borders of the US. Accordingly, the “Southern Belle” image in *Double Happiness* draws upon the ubiquitous “despotic face” of white femininity to highlight the transnational nature of gender identification. For Jade wants to be Blanche Du Bois, and the detail revealed in the close-up expresses this desire.

However, while this sound-image conjures up Blanche Du Bois, an actual face on-screen accompanies the audio-visual image. To highlight this schism between sound and image, the camera moves into a close-up of a face whose make-up recalls extreme iconographic symbols of Chinese culture. The microphysiognomics of the close-up accentuates “Chinese-ness” while the audio image that subsequently occurs is one of exacerbated white femininity. Yet there is also a third face in this sequence, that of Jade herself. Through a prior memory of Jade as an aspiring Award-winning actress who is struggling with her hybrid existence, the spectator can detect the features of her actual face below the make-up that simultaneously over-codes this previous face-memory with the apprehension of a generic, traditional Chinese mask. Jade's performance as a Southern Belle therefore produces an audio-visual image whose powers of face and voice engage, exchange and interfere with one another in ways that disturb the spectator's sense-making faculties. This mobility creates an infinite variety of relations between image and sound that posits film spectatorship itself as an indeterminable interface. However one direct expression that is not indeterminate is the laughter produced by the incongruity of a Chinese Southern Belle. This impossible subject expresses the regime of organisation activated by the territorialising powers of the Faciality machine. This impossible subject is a blockage on the grid of signifiance and
subjectification that expresses the differential flows constituting the plane of representation. It is this flow that constitutes a new spectatorial physiognomy.

To recall Balázs's argument, the dimension of physiognomy is outside of space. So too is the significance of the relationship between the "Southern Belle" sound and image as given in Shum's close-up. Instead of a clear and distinct articulation of a cultural identity, the "Southern Belle" induces a reading in time that highlights the spectator's own involvement in the process of meaning making. The spectator must read this image in at least two simultaneous directions. This produces a sense of "reading in time" where a time-lag occurs between the spectator's recognition of the incongruity of an Oriental Southern Belle and the affective powers of the acoustic simulation. This is a moment of incommensurability between sound and image that is suggestive of the physiognomic powers of the close-up discussed by Balázs. This "other dimension" is not spatial but a temporal dimension that registers its effects on the body of the spectator in imperceptible ways. The "Southern Belle" image is a sign that puts the spectator in touch with this temporal dimension.

3.3 The Affection-Image

To summarise the argument so far: Hybridity is a cultural identity that is an acceptable deviation from either Black or White identity in that it is a triangulation of both, thus naturalising the two monolithic terms. This happens through the Faciality machine of interpretation which constitutes the borders of cultural identity as constantly produced and contested surfaces or planes. Yet, as Balázs's work on the expressive language of early cinema demonstrates, the Face also has physiognomic qualities that exceed significatory functions. While the Face is the communication-interpretation machine par excellence (with all the order-words that this Border Patroller implies) the Face is also an expressive device which takes us out of objective time and into a more indeterminate "space". Such is the expression of the Southern Belle" image that traverses the two extremes of Eastern Identity and Western Identity through the disjunctive synthesis of sound and image. However the question remains: how do we account for the difference presented by the Southern Belle image without reducing it to the category of identity? How do we apprehend this image as a body without a Face and as a sign that has not yet been subjected to the rules of resemblance? For Deleuze and Guattari the answer lies not in escape from Faciality but through the accentuation of Face intensities, that is, through the powers of physiognomy.
Deleuze and Guattari develop the concept of Faciality in *A Thousand Plateaus* with reference to the work done by Deleuze on the affection-image in *Cinema 1*, where he draws on the work of Balázs. Deleuze discusses the affection-image in relation to many different concepts in *Cinema 1*. The affection-image is one of a variety of movement-images discussed in relation to pre-war films. It is related to the Face and the close-up and C.S. Peirce’s concept of Firstness and it has a relation to the concept of affect and to Deleuze’s notion of “any-space-whatever” that intersects with Balázs’s attention to the singular powers of the close-up.

Reference to Balázs appears in Chapter Six of *Cinema 1* entitled “The affection-image Face and close-up”. Balázs differs from Deleuze in that he posits a nascent theory of identification that emphasises the anthropomorphic process of perception where “[o]ur anthropomorphous world-vision makes us see a human physiognomy in every phenomenon” (Balázs, p. 92). This approach privileges the representational characteristics of the film image that acts as a substitute for a prior “real”. This approach follows a logic of resemblance that reduces all phenomena to the shape of the human figure or to the psychological processes of the human mind.

In contrast, Deleuze’s theory of difference and repetition approaches the encounter between film image and spectator as an event of fundamental non-resemblance. For Deleuze, cinema is not a metaphoric process that stands in for a prior object, nor is it a representation of “real” objects in the world. Cinema is an art and an experience that gives rise to concepts that follow a strictly defined logic. The signs that cinema gives rise to are not stand-ins or substitutes for a prior real, they are signs that provoke the generation of a new real to come. The cinematic sign is an ensemble of actual and virtual concepts that contaminate and saturate the processes of perception. Where Balázs discusses the close-up as a metaphor for human consciousness, Deleuze defines the close-up in relation to its objective characteristics of deterritorialisation that tears an image from its spatio-temporal co-ordinates. The relationship between the close-up and a face is therefore purely logical and not metaphorical. In Chapter Six of *Cinema 1* Deleuze writes, “there is no close-up of the face, the face is in itself close-up, the close-up is by itself face and both are affect, affection-image.” (p. 88). Thus, while the close-up tears an image from its location in space and time, it also has attributes that express affects at close quarters: that is the close-up as “affection-image”.

The affection-image has a double structure constituting a “reflecting surface” and “intensive expressive movements” that are illustrated with reference to a clock-face (87). The flat surface of the clock demarcates the outline of a face while the hands of the clock constitute the intensive expressive movements that form broken lines on the
clock's surface (87). These are the two attributes of the face that Deleuze can now
apply to any image what so-ever that has these two poles:

Each time we discover these two poles in something – reflecting surface and
intensive micro-movements – we can say that this thing has been treated as a
face [visage]: it has been 'envisaged' or rather 'facified' [visagéifiée]. And in
turn it stares at us [dévisage], it looks at us ... even if it does not resemble a
face. (p. 88)

These two attributes suggest a double movement of organisation in the outlining of a
circle, or surface (visage) and a projection outwards in the expressive qualities of the
face (dévisage). Already, we can begin to see how the double structure of the concept
Face might allow us to distinguish between actual states of things (organisation) and a
expressive movement that might disturb established concepts of identity, interpretation
and representation (projection outwards). Deleuze gives us an example of these two
attributes in a scene from Pabst's Lulu (Pandora's Box, 1929) where Jack the Ripper
encounters Lulu, a lamp and a bread-knife and is stirred by the sight of the blade. The
spatio-temporal organisation of the scene into “states of things” reflects the unity of
the first pole. Jack embraces Lulu but the flicker of light from a lamp distracts him and
draws his attention to the bread-knife lying beside it. The shot and reverse-shot
sequence moves between quick shots of the knife blade and longer shots of the play of
emotions on the face of Jack until the frame of the close-up includes the movement of a
hand that acts upon the “irresistible call of the instrument” (p. 91). These close-ups
narratively link to the final shot of the flutter of a hand as Lulu’s life-force ebbs away.
This causal organisation constitutes the outline of the scene.

The second pole of intensive micro-movements is present in the gleam of the
knife blade, the terror on the face of Jack, and in Jack’s final look of resignation (p.
91). According to Deleuze, the power of the affect in the second pole exceeds the easily
recognised category of feelings, emotions, or thoughts. Affects are singularly expressed
qualities that are outside of spatio-temporal co-ordinates but nonetheless belonging to
the state of things. The gleam of the blade expresses a singular potential that exceeds
the actual knife to become an extracted incandescence, a shard of light in general. This
is the paradox that Balázs refers to when he suggests that the psychological effect of
facial expression does not occur in space but in another dimension. So that, while a
cause-effect logic persists in the extension of a hand into action (Jack reaches, Jack
stabs = Jack the Ripper), the face that registers the gleam of the knife, and the shot of
the knife itself, are intensive moments that transcend a spatial cause-effect logic.
Deleuze cites another example from the work of Balázs to make this point:
The precipice above which someone leans perhaps explains his expression of fright, but it does not create it. For the expression exists even without justification, it does not become expression because a situation is associated with it in thought. (p. 102)

Balázs thus suggests that the sense of fright has an objectivity of its own, a singularity that is in advance of its actualisation in a state of thing (the precipice over which someone leans) and which is also in advance of its explanation. The sense of fright is different in nature to that which expresses it. The sense of fright seemingly transcends the space-time co-ordinates of the precipice as a quality that could be common to several different things. Yet, fright as a transcendent concept does not suggest a return to a Platonic world of Ideas. For the sense of fright cannot be separated from the face in which it is expressed. This is the double structure of the affection-image (its singularity and its expression in a state of things) which is consequently the paradox of sense that animates Deleuze’s exploration of cinema, art and literature:

The affect is independent of all determinate space-time; but it is none the less created in a history which produces it as the expressed and the expression of a space or a time, of an epoch or a milieu (this is why the affect is the ‘new’ and new affects are ceaselessly created, notably by the work of art). (p. 99)

Deleuze dedicates a book to the philosophical elaboration of sensation in *The Logic of Sense* (1969). However, Deleuze introduces the initial concepts that ground *The Logic of Sense* in his earlier book *Difference and Repetition* (1968). To understand the later project of the *Cinema* books it is useful at this point to elaborate on Deleuze’s approach to philosophy and in particular his theory of sensation that posits a form of transcendental empiricism.

The sustained concern of Deleuze’s work is the critique of traditional forms of philosophy that tend to blur the distinction between thought and knowledge. Deleuze maintains an absolute distinction between the two in suggesting that where knowledge is the accumulation and repetition of established values, thinking involves the creation of new concepts. In his chapter “The Image of Thought” (*Difference and Repetition*) Deleuze argues that a dogmatic image of thought has dominated Western philosophy from Plato’s *Theaetetus*, Descartes’s *Meditations* through to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (p. 134). The nature of the dogma resides in the presuppositions that ground philosophy and which can be largely summoned in Descartes’s proclamation “*Cogito, ergo sum*”. Namely, that philosophy presupposes what it means to be and to think, and that thinking is a natural exercise that proceeds from commonsense, and adheres to a transcendental model of recognition. Deleuze, following Nietzsche, argues that these presuppositions limit philosophy to mere acts of moral judgement “since Morality
alone is capable of persuading us that thought has a good nature and the thinker a good will, and that only good can ground the supposed affinity between thought and the True" (1968, p. 132). Rather than philosophy understood as a search for prior established values (such as the Truth, Goodness or "I") Deleuze posits a fundamental difference at the heart of thought. In *Difference and Repetition* he suggests that the problem of beginning is the most fundamental philosophical problem. He charges Plato, Descarte and Kant with formulating a philosophy based upon pre-philosophical concepts by assuming a similarity between thought and knowledge. Deleuze argues that thought and knowledge are essentially different in nature to one another while traditional philosophy approaches thought and knowledge as a difference in degree. While this reduction of difference between the two concepts leads to a dogmatic image of thought, Deleuze sees the task of philosophy as operating at the limits of sensibility where thinking is primarily understood as "trespass" and "violence":

> Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. (DR 1968, p. 139)

This encounter is precisely the fundamental difference that accompanies all thought. Deleuze gives particular privilege to the role played by sense (and hence the body) in the act of thinking which gives rise to a form of transcendental empiricism where what is sensed is empirically given and yet is that which transcends sense. It is this paradoxical logic that attempts to locate the conditions of a problem rather than proceeding via a method that has been determined in advance of the encounter or by abstract and general principles.

Deleuze’s theory of sensibility approaches each faculty (perception, memory, imagination, and understanding) as a difference in nature rather than as a difference in degree. He does this by drawing upon Kant’s Third Critique of the sublime. According to Deleuze, Kant reduces the singular characteristics of human faculties by presupposing commonsense as a grounding principle of philosophy. Kant posits a difference in degree between the faculties that follows the laws of recognition and resemblance. Yet Deleuze argues that Kant was the first to suggest a discordant harmony of the faculties in his concept of the sublime where reason and imagination reach their limit and this suggests that each faculty is apprehended as different in nature. Deleuze extends this concept of disjunctive synthesis to the apprehension of signs (understood as those sensations that provoke us to think) where each faculty discovers “its own unique passion – in other words, its radical difference and its eternal
repetition” (p. 143). These signs of a fundamental encounter are grasped as intensities that change in nature once reduced to language or signification. They are signs that produce philosophical problems or ideas that stand in a differential relation to the symbolic field in which they are manifest. Deleuze argues that the condition of these philosophical problems can be understood in terms of an order of events and affections. Deleuze and Guattari explain the nature of the event in *A Thousand Plateaus* where they write:

When a knife cuts flesh, when food or poison spreads through the body, when a drop of wine falls into water, there is an *intermingling of bodies*; but the statements, “The knife is cutting the flesh,” “I am eating,” “The water is turning red,” express *incorporeal transformations* of an entirely different nature (events). (*ATP* 1987, p. 86)

In this extract Deleuze and Guattari accentuate the *difference in nature* between corporeal and incorporeal elements and between contents and expression. As discussed in Chapter One, speech is an expressive *act* that intervenes in corporeal elements (contents) as a direct relation of force. Expression therefore does not *represent* contents, it *transforms* them. This is the potential that Deleuze applies to cinema that has the ability to express signs which can impinge their paradoxical force upon the spectator. Rather than interpreting a film as a representation of a prior real (for example the prior concept of identity or subjectivity), Deleuze approaches the cinema as an expressive act that gives rise to intensive moments that compel us towards thinking in different ways.

To return to the affection-image, Deleuze concurs with Balázs that the close-up tears the image away from the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of the narrative. This act of deterritorialisation produces what Deleuze calls “any-space-whatever” (a term taken from Pascal Augé) which is defined as an indeterminate, and disconnected space “grasped as pure locus of the possible” (p. 109). It is a space that has not yet been actualised. It is expressed in the affection-image but its actualisation in states-of-things has yet to occur. Deleuze refers to C.S. Peirce’s categories of Firstness and Secondness to differentiate between expression and actualisation:

Secondness was whatever there were two by themselves: what it is in relation to a second. Everything which only exists by being opposed, by and in a duel, therefore belongs to secondness: exertion-resistance, action-reaction, excitation-response, situation-behaviour, individual-milieu… It is the category of the Real, of the actual, of the existing, of the individuated […] Peirce does not conceal the fact that firstness is difficult to define, because it is felt rather than conceived: it concerns what is new in experience, what is fresh, fleeting and nevertheless eternal […] It is not a sensation, a feeling, an idea, but the quality of a possible sensation, feeling or idea. Firstness is thus the category of the Possible. (p. 98)
Firstness is a barely observed quality, such as the catch of Jack’s glance by the gleam of the knife blade. Secondness refers to Jack’s actual perception of the blade as a knife, and his subsequent movement into action. Peirce also defines a category of Thirdness which he relates to the mental-image and symbolic acts of interpretation (the knife which becomes the murder weapon). It is the category of Firstness however that relates to the affection-image and that expresses a potential change or transformation in the relation between objects, which is the event-space of “any-space-whatever”. This event-space gestures towards the possibility of producing a critical dimension beyond the deadlock characterising identity-based representational approaches to cross-cultural spectatorship. The event-space of the Southern Belle image in Double Happiness dramatises a critical tactic in its repetition of a diegetic cross-cultural encounter between Mark and Jade that subsequently impinges itself upon the spectator. This event goes beyond mere representation to the repetition of a logic of relations which extend beyond the spatio-temporal narrative of the film to enact a mode of address that affirms the temporal qualities of the stereotype’s repetition and the force of time as it expressed in the spectator.

The temporal characteristics of the stereotype’s repetition leave the mode of address radically open-ended which defies easy interpretation. Consequently, to approach the Southern Belle image, the act of spectatorship must be addressed as a diverse and differentiated field of potential concepts. Deleuze’s contribution to a postcolonial spectatorship theory is in his insistence on cinema as an “art of encounter” (a term taken from Italian Neorealist, Cesare Zavattini) with the objective characteristics of space, time and movement (Cinema 2, p. 1) and this concept of encounter or event describes the dimension beyond the dialectical clash between coloniser and colonised privileged in the camera obscura model of perception. This latter structuring device has privileged concerns with identity and the status of the Subject in traditional film and postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theoretical concerns revolve around the recognition of a form of cultural difference given in the structures of the camera obscura model itself. This is the double bind of postcolonial theory which Deleuze’s theory of cinematic encounter challenges in his emphasis on film as an event. He describes spectatorship as an act a radical otherness which privileges the possibility of producing new concepts derived from the body/image interface. Beyond recognition and habitual modes of perception that characterise conventional approaches to the stereotype image, Deleuze’s theory of cinema affirms the differential powers of time and thought itself. The potentials of his concept of the event in relation to postcolonial spectatorship theory is discussed below.
3.4 The Event in *Double Happiness*

An event-space occurs in the Southern Belle scene in *Double Happiness* when the sound image of hyper-white femininity fails to link up in a sensory-motor way with the visual-image of “Chinese-ness”. This event-space is made possible by the extreme repetition of a Chinese stereotype. In the Southern Belle sequence, not only is the actual face of Jade mobilised in this performance, it also involves the virtual “face” of Southern American femininity (the Blanche Du Bois sound image). The spectre of British femininity as it is embodied in the figure of Vivien Leigh also hovers over the Southern Belle sound-image. These various degrees of ethnicity and femininity take place upon the surface of a generic Chinese-ness of the Opera face make-up which pulls the elastic signifying traits of racial identity at differing rates of intensity. This expression of elasticity reveals the concept of “whiteness” itself as a mobile and pliant attribute. The *colour* of whiteness is paradoxically only given in the Chinese tradition of Opera make-up, while a Chinese body performs the gestural and verbal characteristics of whiteness. In this sequence the black-face tradition of minstrelsy found in *The Birth of a Nation* and modified in *Touch of Evil* is reversed to position “whiteness” as an attribute that can be performed in corporeal acts or applied through make-up. No longer a transcendent category governing the determination of degrees of difference, the Southern Belle face *begins* from an immanent form of difference. In *Double Happiness*, whiteness *appears on the same plane* as the plane of racial difference organised by the White Faciality machine. Where the Roman nose of Gus in *The Birth of a Nation* reveals “white” as a foundational premise, the simulacral powers of Chinese difference (always already a difference premised on the degrees of difference from white racial identity) is the basis from which the Southern Belle racial category proceeds. Thus, whiteness is grounded in a difference that is no longer a difference in degree, but a fundamental difference in nature. This form of difference is a provocation to thought itself and puts the spectator in contact with the plane of immanence.

Instead of presenting an easily interpreted image, the “Southern Belle” expresses the possibility of other types of links and connections. Consequently, the spectator must relinquish the possibility of interpreting this scene and enter the flux of indetermination where the intensive micro-movements of Jade’s face (that move from Jade to Blanche to Chinese Opera actor) express a range of affective tones. The spectator experiences these affective tones that suggest potential and imperceptible
linkages that are not imaginary or abstract relations. These linkages are "virtual conjunctions" that are experienced as a real material force. This corporeal experience puts the spectator in contact with that which is in advance of language, actualisation, and the realm of Secondness. This affection-image rents a hole in the sensory-motor schema of habitual recognition so that signs from the virtual dimension might emerge. In Deleuze's first book on cinema he refers to this dimension as the plane of immanence that is composed of matter in movement and which forms the genetic material of life itself. In Double Happiness the dyadic relationship of black and white becomes triangulated through the founding face of Asian femininity, a basis always already constructed upon difference. How the concept of white changes in relation to these faces, presents the possibility of a difference in nature that redirects the vector of critique towards the plane of immanence.

The plane of immanence is taken from Henri Bergson's thesis in Matter and Memory (originally published in 1896) where Bergson argued that "Movement as physical reality in the external world, and the image, as psychic reality in consciousness, could no longer be opposed" (1983, xiv). Bergson's theory of matter and consciousness negotiated the in-between space of materialist and idealist philosophies. In contrast to the Materialist's world of static objects or the Idealist's world of abstract ideal images, Bergson approaches the world as a vertiginous and swirling universe of variation. According to Deleuze's reading of Bergson, all matter resides on the same plane so that the difference between images, matter, movement and perception is a difference in kind and not in nature. This is not the 'natural perception' to which the camera obscura model adheres, where the mind's eye radiates outwards to perceive an object in space. Rather, the eye is an image among other images on a flattened plane of movement. This is more a form of perception that constitutes a non-human milieu which condenses the rhythms and movements of the material realm in relation to a perceiver's capacity for action. Deleuze extends Bergson's insights to suggest that the body itself is an image among other images, which moves between subjective and objective poles. Deleuze proclaims that "the eye is not the camera it is the screen" (Negotiations 1995, p. 54). More specifically however, in order to discourage any metaphorical relationship between film and subjects, Deleuze will say it is the brain that is the screen (1998).

The brain is the surface upon which tumbles luminous matter that impinges directly as relations of force not as substantive and distinct bodies. Accordingly, there is no gap between the real and the image that would buffer the experience of spectatorship, for the cinematic image and the spectating body belongs to the same plane of immanence that constitutes the genetic elements that are the real:
External images act on me, transmit movements to me, and I return movement: how could images be in my consciousness since I am myself image, that is, movement? And can I even, at this level, speak of ‘ego’, of eye, of brain and body? Only for simple convenience; for nothing can yet be identified in this way. 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 of matter 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: there are neither axes, nor centre, nor left, nor right, nor high, nor low .... (CI, p. 58)

This molecular state of matter is acentred and flows in multiple directions in an indistinguishable exchange between actions and reactions. Yet Deleuze suggests that the brain, which functions as a screen that exists on the plane, is a very special kind of image which slows down the movement of light on the plane of immanence and introduces an interval inbetween action and reaction. The brain-image is a special image considered by Deleuze as a living image or living matter that “only receive actions on one facet or in certain parts and only execute reactions by and in other parts” (p. 61). This concept of a living image allows Deleuze to develop a theory of perception that acts as a kind of framing device that subtracts from the chaotic flux of the plane of immanence, “those external influences which are indifferent to them” (p. 62).

Deleuze defines this act of subtraction as the “first material moment of subjectivity” where the brain-image, in the act of perceiving, forms a centre of indetermination on the plane of immanence that now curves around this axis (p. 63). This is the perception-image that Deleuze connects with action and actual states of things. The second material moment of subjectivity involves the action-image that corresponds to space, objects, and spatial co-ordinates. If the perception-image perceives matter in relation to what the brain is capable of receiving, then the action-image is the motor-response that reacts to the visual stimulus. The more complex the form of life, the more delay there is between perception and action. While there is an automatic relation between the perception and action image (what Deleuze refers to as the sensory-motor schema) the affection-image which occupies the interval between perception and action, is the third material moment of subjectivity. The selective processing of matter that occurs in the perception-image and these external movements that fail to be organised under the sensory-motor schema constitute the pure quality of the affection-image. This is not a failure of the sensory-motor schema but is instead a direct result of the “cooling down” of the flux of the plane of immanence through habitual actions and reactions that have restricted the receptive facets of the living-image (p. 63). This is Bergson’s definition of affection which is a form of “motor effort on an immobile receptive plane” where affect is the quality that stirs up the immobile plane
Echoing Béla Belázs sentiments that the expressive capabilities of subjectivity have been reduced to "the little surface of the face [...] sticking up like a clumsy semaphore", Deleuze observes:

> It is not surprising that, in the image that we are, it is the face, with its relative immobility and its receptive organs, which brings to light those movements of expression while they remain most frequently buried in the rest of the body. All things considered, movement-images divide into three sorts of images when they are related to a centre of indetermination as to a special image: perception-images, action-images and affection-images. And each one of us, the special image or the contingent centre, is nothing but an assemblage of three images, a consolidate of perception-images, action-images and affection-images. (p. 66)

Here Deleuze offers a concept of subjectivity that is nothing more (or less) than a synthesis between perception-image, action-image and affection-image that is accomplished through the sensory-motor schema. Percept, affect and action are precisely differentiated faculties or functions that posit a concept of subjectivity based upon immanent differences. However, while the affection-image has one pole that acts as a conjunctive synthesis between perception and action, the affect also has qualities that produce a disjuncture in the sensory-motor schema. The pure singular quality of the affect rips a gap in the solidifying sensory-motor schema to express a little space-time bloc on the plane of immanence. This is the great advantage of cinema as Deleuze sees it, in that the cinema gives us a "model" of subjectivity that is simultaneously torn apart by the same cinematic attributes (movement and time) that give it synthesis. Therefore Deleuze can say that cinema does not give us a body, it gives expression to forces of becoming that are the movements between actual states of things and the genetic plane of immanence that is the realm of the virtual. Accordingly, the "Southern Belle" event does not give the spectator the representation of a Chinese-Canadian feminine subject. The "Southern Belle" event expresses the intensive sign of Femininity in general which transcends the spatio-temporal co-ordinates belonging to the state of things from which it is simultaneously generated. This sign of Femininity is a virtual image that expresses a force of difference that impinges itself as a disjunctive synthesis on the brain-image that is the spectator. This is a force relation that provokes a movement from knowledge to thought itself through the differential powers of time.

The "Southern Belle" event thus induces a "reading in time" that enters the realm of duration and recalls Balázs's invocation of Bergson's concept of the melody and duration in the apprehension of the close-up. Bergson distinguished precisely between measurable objective time and the flow of time as continuous variation. For example, the musical notes of a melody require a movement from note to note in
objective time. Yet the listener can only experience the nature and character of the melody in duration. The concept of duration grounds Bergson's theory of perception and is an integral aspect of his concept of the plane of immanence.

3.5 The Time-Image

According to Bergson's thesis on mind and matter, perception never occurs in the present but is the effect of a splitting between past and future:

It is the same as with perception: just as we perceive things where they are present, in space, we remember where they have passed, in time, and we go out of ourselves just as much in each case. Memory is not in us; it is we who move in a Being-Memory, a world-memory. (Cinéma 2, p. 98)

The subjective experience of a melody involves the anticipation of a future note in relation to the first note heard as well as requiring the memory of the first note that conjoins with the last. This is a serial organisation of elements that follows a logic of linkage and assemblage as opposed to analogy and resemblance. While duration is integral to all sense events, in Cinéma 2 Deleuze discusses an emerging cinema of the time-image that expresses new experiences of durée. In Cinéma 1 he selects examples from American silent film, Soviet montage and French impressionist cinema to develop a system of signs related to movement. His rationale for grouping avant-garde and narrative genres under this system is that pre-war film shared a fascination with movement and space that subordinated time to movement. This is defined as an organic regime where the cause and effect flow of images share a linkage of association that extends organically into action. While our discussion of the affection-image suggests that there can be breaks in this organic regime, he identifies a more pervasive break with the emergence of a cinema of time after World War 2. In Cinéma 2 Deleuze discusses post-war cinemas such as Italian Neo-realism which, he suggests, demonstrates a fascination with time that engenders new forms of perception and new sensibilities. By discussing the two forms of perception that arise in cinema of the time-image, I want to suggest that the affection-image also reveals the virtual dimension of time that ruptures the dominance of the sensory-motor schema.

Deleuze examines two forms of perception in Cinéma 2 that relate to the sensory-motor schema and the affection-image that he discusses in Cinéma 1. The first kind of perception is habitual recognition where the sight of an object triggers an automatic extension into action. Such extension operates by a horizontal movement where we pass from one object to another and link our perception of the object to a
habitual or common-place action. With this type of recognition one knows how to respond to the image and this response distances the viewer from the initial object perceived by triggering sensory-motor mechanisms. Deleuze calls this kind of recognition an *organic* description and he relates this recognition to the movement-image in *Cinema 1*.

According to Deleuze, *attentive recognition* is the second kind of perception where the spectator cannot move into action or reaction in relation to the object perceived because a breakdown has occurred in the sensory-motor schema. This form of perception can be found in Zavattini’s “art of encounter”, the cinema of Italian Neorealism, where the attention given to the banal activities of life gives rise to what Deleuze calls pure optical and sound situations (*Cinema 2*, p. 1). For example, Rossellini’s 1951 film *Europa 51* shows a bourgeois woman shattered by her son’s suicide, adrift in the city where she encounters the slums and factories of the working class. Deleuze describes her experience as that of a visionary or seer:

> Her glances relinquish the practical function of a mistress of a house who arranges things and beings, and pass through every state of an internal vision, affliction, compassion, love, happiness, acceptance, extending to the psychiatric hospital where she is locked up at the end of a new trial of Joan of Arc: she sees, she has learnt to see. (p. 2)

Mesmerised by the objects that she sees, the heroine forgoes the world of habitual recognition and automatic extension into action. The trauma of her son’s suicide has broken her connection with the habitual world of everyday life and she is now able to see the slums and factories in all their singularity. She watches workmen leave a factory and thinks that she sees convicts. In this linking of a factory with a prison she overrides the sensory-motor schema to reveal the whole image without metaphor which “brings out the thing in itself, literally, in its excess of horror or beauty, in its radical or unjustifiable character” (p. 20). For the factory is a prison, literally and not metaphorically. So too with the “Southern Belle” image which is not a metaphor for the impossibility of transcending race but the literal expression of those limits.

In Rossellini’s cinema, characters become seers rather than actors in the world because although they perceive images they cannot link the image to an action image. Where habitual recognition replaces one object with another object (as in continuity editing) attentive recognition constitutes a form of perception where the object remains the same and yet passes through different planes or circuits. This type of perception replaces movement along a horizontal plane with a perception, which plunges into time itself and constitutes an *inorganic* regime of perception where temporal relations are unattributable but no less real. What one perceives in the present is the physical,
objective and real image, which Deleuze refers to as an actual image, while the virtual image is that which sustains the actual: it is the contemporaneous past of the actual image constituting the smallest possible circuit between actual and virtual.

The virtual is made perceptible when we encounter an image that disrupts our sensory-motor logic and when we are left with an excess that cannot be articulated. The virtual dimension thus relates to the sense-event that proceeds in advance of its actualisation. The virtual always remains indeterminate and appears when thought is no longer possible. For instance, in the experience of déjà vu we fail to recognise (if only for a moment) whether we are in the past or the future and we search our memory to discern our location in time. We experience a flux of temporal relations that gives us the experience of an infinite dimension. However, our mental recollection of where we are in time and place destroys this apprehension, although the experience of déjà vu is no less real for having been destroyed. When the actual and the virtual are in a relationship of indiscernibility these signs of time as continuous variation can disrupt the sensory-motor schema of habitual recognition to induce new apprehensions, new sensibilities.

We can now add time to the concept of subjectivity given in the perception-image, action-image and affection-image assemblage. Subjectivity is realised in the acts we perform and the elements we encounter in the space-time pockets cut out of the virtual domain of the pure past. Our acts, and our recollections of these acts, form broad circuits between actual and virtual circuits, which brings into being one of the infinitely possible worlds constituting the virtual. Yet, what is it that makes the extension into action (away from the perpetual exchange of the virtual dimension) possible? What is it that actualises in our bodies the indiscernibility of the time-image and what enables a passage between the past, the present and the infinitely possible future?

As we have seen in the previous discussion, attentive recognition is an aberrant state of trance that highlights the relation between perception and action as potentially incommensurable. To remain a seer held in the trance of an indiscernible time-image means to enter a chaos that signals a breakdown in social relations, discourse and communication. One needs sensory motor mechanisms to impose systems and habits that can regulate the perpetual flow of this chaos which suggests that the extension of a sensory motor schema is itself a subjectivating process. The sensory motor schema is a process that arranges the forces of chaos into useful instruments, apparatus or assemblages for intercourse with life. There is no doubt that social relations of power are a consequence of habitual recognition where we only perceive what we want to perceive by virtue of “our economic interests, ideological beliefs and psychological demand” (20). The sensory-motor schema holds dominion over the apprehension of
the raced body in cinema where the abstract machine of Faciality organises perception into action through the conjunctive synthesis of the affection-image. This gives rise to a dogmatic image of thought where the faculties (perception, imagination, and intellection) are in harmonious relations of commonsense. Yet the temporal dimension of affect has a potential to jam the sensory-motor schema through the differential intensities of repetition that bring the faculties of sense to their limits. It is this disjunctive synthesis that suggests an inorganic regime of thought which draws from the realm of the virtual to scramble the subjectivating machine of Faciality.

To describe this inorganic realm it is first necessary to address the other binary couplet in Deleuze’s oeuvre. Pierre Lévy’s book, *Becoming Virtual: Reality in the Digital Age*, follows Deleuze’s distinction between the creative forces of the virtual/actual couplet while also discussing the couplet of the possible/real (1998, p. 43). The concept of the possible and the real follows the law of self-recognition and differences in degree. The virtual is not a process of derealisation but a problematic concept that is real without being possible. The distinction between the virtual and the possible has to be understood at the level of what is thinkable. The possible is that which conforms to conventional logic: it is a map of that which we already perceive and already think. That which we know always already delimits the problem given in the possible and thus the realisation of the possible is not a creative action but simply involves giving existence to something that conforms to a prior map of the real. However, as Lévy describes the virtual, there is a purely logical distinction between the virtual and the possible in that the virtual is “a kind of problematic complex, the knot of tendencies or forces that accompanies a situation […] and which invokes a process of resolution: actualization” (p. 24). The possible remains abstract and latent while the virtual is linked to the real through the process of actualisation. Yet that which is actualised never resembles the virtual of which it is a part of and Lévy gives an example of the seed of a tree as an illustration of this concept:

The seed’s problem, for example, is the growth of the tree. The seed is this problem, even if it is also something more than that. This does not signify that the seed knows exactly what the shape of the tree will be, which will one day burst into bloom and spread its leaves above it. Based on its internal limitations, the seed will have to invent the tree, coproduce it together with the circumstances it encounters. (p. 24)

The possible is that which is static and already constituted, while the virtual is a “knot of tensions and constraints” that delimit the entity in a manner that allows for the creative evolution of the entity. The creative solutions that an entity fosters in relation to actual constraints are the production of the real as a response to the virtual problematic.
The creative solution a seed finds to sustain its growth in the face of, say, an exposed climate, is a solution that has been generated in relation to the virtual problematic of growth and yet also to the external conditions of wind. Thus, the seed’s actualisation (its solution), while connected to its virtual component, is put into relation with other components that give rise to a new problem: a new virtualisation that generates a new problematic and a new ontological anchor for the entity under consideration. By following the logic of the problematic a necessary change in the terms of reference occurs. This approach emphasises an ontology of the question rather than a question of ontology which produces an ethics of the event. How then, can the problematic of the racial stereotype be approached through the creative forces of virtualisation? For the law of self-recognition, the possible and the real, has dominated discussions of cross-cultural perception through the urgent need for political transformation. Yet, how does political transformation occur if it remains tied to the plane of the possible and the real? The seed of a new problem is actualised in the following film, *Irma Vep*, which addresses the concept of the racial stereotype, femininity and global media.

3.6 The Virtual Observer

Near the end of their chapter “Year Zero: Faciality” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari warn of the difficulties and dangers of dismantling the face at the same time as they acknowledge that Faciality must be resisted:

If the face is a politics, dismantling the face is also a politics involving real becomings, an entire becoming-clandestine. Dismantling the face is the same as breaking through the wall of the signifier and getting out of the black hole of subjectivity. Here, the program, the slogan, of schizoanalysis is: Find your black holes and white walls, know them, know your faces; it is the only way you will be able to dismantle them and draw your lines of flight. (p. 188)

To “know your face” means to examine how subjectivation occurs and what laws of self-recognition are operating to effect subjectivations and reterritorialisations. For Faciality is the binary system of thought itself. However, one cannot escape these binary systems, one must become binary in all directions in order to draw out a “line of flight” or “becoming” that is a state of translation that exists in between actual and virtual dimensions.

A becoming is a matter of inventing new combinations and relations between the surface and depth system of the white wall and black hole system of Faciality. A becoming involves becoming-other than that Face by which one is known, recognised
and interpreted. The directive to become-other does not suggest a process of mimesis nor does it imply a return to a pre-signifying or pre-subjective territory. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari insist that the Face must be the site of battle and used as a tool "for which a new use must be invented" (189). This concept of a politics of the Face necessarily involves a creative practice that does violence to the Faciality machine of clear, direct communication and dogmatic thought. In Irma Vep, the translation between actual and virtual states is both a destructive and productive force which gives a new ontological gravity to the problem of cross-cultural perception.

In Olivier Assayas’s 1996 film, Irma Vep, an aging New Wave director remakes a classic French silent film (Louis Feuillade’s 1915 film, Les Vampires) using Maggie Cheung, an actual Hong Kong cinema star, as the main protagonist. The director (René) chooses Maggie for the role after he has seen her in the Hong Kong film The Heroic Trio (1993) when he was visiting Marrakesh and this narrative structure reiterates the extra-textual conditions surrounding Olivier Assayas’ own casting process. Assayas first noticed Maggie Cheung in Stanley Kwan’s film, Centre Stage (1991) a bio-pic of the Chinese silent film star Ruan Lingyu (Sight and Sound 1997, p. 26). To continue the dizzying layers of textual and extra-textual play that characterises Irma Vep, Kwan’s film Center Stage also involves the conceit of a film within a film and Maggie Cheung recreates moments from Ruan Lingyu’s œuvre. Her performance in this film inspired Assayas to create a film specifically for Maggie and the enthusiasm that Assayas expresses for Maggie’s subsequent performance in Irma Vep echoes René’s impassioned responses to The Heroic Trio. As Bérénice Ryan notes in her article on Cheung in Sight and Sound:

Assayas describes the shooting of Irma Vep as an idyllic experience, because of Maggie’s luminous, almost magical performance. She has an incredible intuition, she knows how to insert herself into a situation, she listens. You tell her one word, one idea, and she immediately assimilates it, makes it more alive, and gives it life with an incredible lightness and grace. (1997, p. 26)

Maggie effectively plays herself in Irma Vep as a contemporary embodiment of feminine mystique in a part made famous by the French silent screen star Musidora. The air of mystery embodied in Maggie and Musidora is continued in the filmic form. The narrative is enigmatic and moments of unmotivated plot and character action disorientate the spectator. The open-ended conclusion is also abrupt and surprising. The film is about the making of a film (itself a remake of an actual cult classic) and includes references to the allegedly dead art of the French New Wave tradition, the current popularity of Kung Fu movies and interviews with Maggie Cheung as Maggie
Cheung. Consequently, *Irma Vep* is a film about the status of the cinematic image in a global economy and a film about the consumption and production of Asian femininity.

To give a brief gloss of the narrative, René begins filming but suffers a breakdown part way through production. Director José Murano, who feels that a French actress should play the part of Irma Vep, replaces René near the end of *Irma Vep*. At a certain point in the narrative, Murano states his position on casting quite clearly when he exclaims, "Irma Vep is Paris. She is the Paris underworld. She is working class Paris. Irma Vep is street thugs and slums! *Les Vampires* is not Fu Manchu!". The film begins with Cheung’s arrival at the film studio, fresh from making a movie in Hong Kong. She appears bemused and disoriented and her confusion is echoed in the reception she receives from the production staff, none of whom recognise her or know quite what to do with her. Filming begins and Maggie is fitted with a latex bondage costume, complete with S and M mask. A French journalist, who mourns the status of contemporary French filmmaking and who prefers the films of John Woo, interviews Maggie. There is also a cryptic scene involving Maggie dressed in latex, creeping into a stranger’s hotel room to steal her jewels, only to throw them from a roof moments later. Near the end of the film the audience is informed of Maggie’s departure for Hollywood where she is to make a film with Ridley Scott, however we never see her actual departure enacted. The final scene involves the cast of *Irma Vep* and the newly appointed director Murano viewing footage edited by René.

*Irma Vep* is a dynamic play between surfaces and depths that reveals itself most fully in the use of Cheung’s face. An unusual feature of Maggie’s performance is her use (and non-use) of make-up. The opening sequence features the natural lighting of documentary stylistics, and reveals Maggie’s initial appearance through medium close-ups of her face, free of make-up. When she does appear wearing make-up it is in a style that emulates the faces of silent cinema stars in keeping with the process of recreating the silent film classic *Les Vampires*. Highlighting the natural qualities of her face downplays the movie star persona of a famous Hong Kong actress while contributing to the fresh and casual style of Assayas’s cinematic discourse. Considering that *Irma Vep* concerns the making of a film, Maggie’s face demonstrates the refusal of artifice and the desire to go “behind the scenes” that the narrative themes examine. Just as Assayas shows the audience the cinematic mechanisms that will reproduce the silent French classic, he also reveals the face of the actress free of the artifice of make-up. Maggie herself downplays her star persona when she reminds René that the film that has so impressed him contains a large amount of action performed by stuntmen and not Maggie. However the actress is central to the conceit of
cinematic production in *Irma Vep* as she embodies the promise of revitalising the dead art of French cinema with her transnational Hong Kong vitality.

When Maggie does wear make-up, it is in a scene where a mysterious man chloroforms her and removes her mask. Prior to this, the spectator sees only the shape of Maggie’s eyes inside the black mask that surrounds her face. Once her mask is removed, a medium close-up of her face reveals the white pasty make-up that adorns her cheeks. While the distinctive shape of her eyes prevails in the scenes where she wears a mask, in the chloroform scene the revelation of her features (accompanied by the release of her long flowing hair) recalls her Hong Kong persona. This revelation clashes with the received French history of Musidora’s emblematic role in *Les Vampires* and the spectator’s own recollection of the original scene that René screens for Maggie. Maggie’s transnational exotic femininity literally replaces the body of the French actress, and the freshness of the film footage contrasts to the old footage screened by René. Accordingly, Maggie is vital for this role because of the promise of the new that she embodies. Yet Assayas also undercuts this seemingly commodifying use of Maggie’s exotic persona. In the chloroform scene the release of her face from the confines of the mask unleashes the powers of feminine Hong Kong sexuality that is re-enacted on Maggie’s own terms in the enigmatic hotel room sequence.

In a hotel room scene that is unmotivated by previous narrative developments, Maggie creeps around the hotel at nighttime, and steals into a room where a woman is caught up in a telephone conversation. The woman is oblivious to Maggie’s presence and Maggie takes this opportunity to steal a handful of jewellery which she takes to the roof of the hotel and drops into a dark alley beside her building. The outdoor scene is filmed using blue filtered lighting that recalls the scene from *The Heroic Trio* that René has previously shown to Maggie. It is as if Assayas’s scene has re-created a moment from a Maggie Cheung movie that reiterates the process of re-making Musidora’s role in *Les Vampires*. It is this process of repetition and reiteration that dominates the cinematic milieu of *Irma Vep*. Accordingly, the narrative theme of revitalising French cinema via the persona of a Hong Kong star suggests that this revitalisation can only occur through the process of repetition, with Maggie Cheung as the primary catalyst.

Given the conditions surrounding the casting process of *Irma Vep* and its reference to various film histories (not only *Les Vampires* but also *Centre Stage*) one cannot address Maggie’s popularity solely in terms of her individual persona. Her fame in Europe and America parallels the popularity of Hong Kong cinema in general (Abbas, 1997). The genre she is associated with in the eyes of René is the kung fu genre featuring artificial stunts, special effects and spectacular action sequences: a genre more concerned with speed and surfaces than with the depth promised by realism or the
art of French cinema. Indeed, an interview scene with a film journalist suggests that it is the newness of Hong Kong that might help revitalise the alleged stagnancy of French cinema. The film journalist expresses his disgust at the navel-gazing tendencies of contemporary French cinema and suggests that Hollywood’s adoption of Hong Kong directors such as John Woo is the way of the future for French cinema. As a Hong Kong actress, Maggie represents a transnational cross-fertilisation of cinematic aesthetics, which reduces her personal attributes to a cultural style that implies a new form of exotica which can replenish the jaded audio-visual archive of French cinema. The superhuman fantasy film, *The Heroic Trio*, embodies this “new” exotic stylistic in its fast paced acrobatic action. Maggie, dressed in latex and creeping through the spaces of *Irma Vep*, reiterates this logic of surface, sheen and glamour. Thus, Assayas intertwines the popularity of the Hong Kong film industry with the excessive image of Maggie dressed in latex as a play of surfaces that might nonetheless hold certain powers of transformation, a potential that is invoked in the final sequence.

René’s first encounter with the image of Maggie is in a suitably exotic setting, that of Marrakesh. He believes that this image of Maggie (as the vampish figure of the ‘Thief Catcher” in *The Heroic Trio*) can fulfil the imaginary role of Irma Vep that René has envisaged. René’s use of Maggie appears to be a simple act of fetishisation, however the final scene reveals this artistic vision to be of a more hallucinatory nature. In the final scene the cast and crew (minus Maggie and René) view the footage edited by René. What appears on-screen is a scratch film that recalls the avant garde traditions of experimental filmmaking. René has inscribed scratch marks on the black and white footage of Maggie’s face in close-up that produce an almost tangible white surface. These “white holes” occupy the spaces where Maggie’s eyes once existed and they coil around the black surfaces of the film footage with a corporeal and primitive quality. In this sequence, René appears to have violently defaced Maggie’s image. However, the white lines over-code this Face with powerfully visceral movements that imbue Maggie’s image with a sense of agency. At one point, these white lines project energetically outward from the holes that were once her eyes. Another factor that suggests that the power of the artist is exceeded by the image he has made, is the genre of filmmaking he utilises. René returns to a more primitive form of scratch filmmaking which is a time-consuming and pain-staking art form that contrasts starkly with the force of movement and the scathing sound track in the final frames. His artistic gestures can only be given life by the movement of the camera projector, and these gestures appear to take on a life of their own with the act of projection. This energies and human labour involved in the act of scratch filmmaking gives the Face a material force that is turned back on the face of those who watch it. The white streams of light
that now replace the eyes of Maggie transform the black hole/white wall system of signifi-
ance and subjectification into a white hole/black wall system. Harsh sonic-based music
accompanies this scene and produces a sharp and suitably abrasive complement to the
visual effect. Here Assayas re-inscribes the signifying Face of Asian femininity with a
seductive force that brings the surface of the film and the surface of the racial stereotype
into an interactive play that defies the depth-trick of interpretation.

This final sequence acts as a virtual image to all that has come before it, in that it
puts into translation the use made of Maggie in the earlier scenes. In this final sequence
Assayas expresses the violence done to Asian femininity through racial stereotyping
while at the same time he provides the conditions for a violence to be enacted on the
part of that very racial stereotype. This refusal of closure performs a tactic of absolute
deterritorialisation that refuses to reterritorialise in dogmatic and representational
thought. The possibility of fetishisation is both affirmed and renounced which provides
a new ontological gravity to the question of Femininity in general by asserting the
powers of the Face of Asian femininity as both a demonic and a damaged facade. The
return to the past in filmmaking techniques suggests the production of a future-image
that actualises the status of Asian femininity in the global market of cinematic signs
while simultaneously expressing a virtual force that undoes the fixity of Asian
stereotyping. In this sense, the final sequence of Irma Vep brings into existence an
audience that is as actual as it is virtual. The mode of address through which Irma Vep
“speaks” calls into becoming a people who do not yet exist, a people who are both
complicit with and exempt from the fetishisation of Asian femininity. The final
sequence opens up an event-space where the idea of the spectator (a generality) enters
into a becoming with the event of spectating at the point where the rhetorical force of
the image impinges on the embodied spectator (the particular). The movements between
the poles of habitual and attentive recognition twist the problematic knot that is
“spectatorship”, and consequently enter this problem into a new becoming where the
body/image encounter becomes a serialised event that follows a logic of connectivity
and iterability. Spectatorship is thus a becoming-other in thought that simultaneously
invokes the same and the possibility of remaining open to difference, variation and the
new. It is this paradoxical logic that forms the basis of a cultural politics of Faciality.

3.7 Cultural Encounters as Relations of Immanence

This new “cultural politics” operates on the plane of immanence, and the
scratch sounds on the final footage demonstrate the logic of this politics. These sounds
recall the phenomena of white noise, a term used to describe all possible sound frequencies available to the human ear. White light is a similar principle and denotes the spectrum of light from which different colours emerge. While the word “white” seemingly refers to a colour, white noise and white light denote modulations in intensity and frequency rather than any substantive element. The scratch sounds in Assayas’s final sequence combine with the play between the surfaces of celluloid producing images made of black and white light to foreground this phenomenon of white noise and white light that form a continuously varying foundation from which cinematic sounds and images arise. The squeaks and scratches that emerge from this cluster of white noise enter a differential relation with all other possible noises to produce a singular arrangement.

Accordingly, the images of black and white (the face of Maggie and her scratched out eyes) also emerge from a differential relationship where black and white occupy the same plane, the plane of immanence based on the fundamental movements of time as a force of change. From this perspective, the concept of cultural difference is distinguished by an immanent difference where “white” is a colour that emerges in relation to other colours of the spectrum. Thinking from the viewpoint of the phenomenon of white light replaces the substantive entity of White Man as the foundational premise from which critique conventionally begins. From the viewpoint of immanent difference, the productive activities of the coding machines of Faciality extract differences in degree on the plane of representation to mask the fundamental differences in nature that cultural differences pose. To apprehend the singularity of cultural difference one must think from the viewpoint of difference itself, from the genetic plane of immanence embodied in the idea of white light. This is a mode of critique that seeks to ascertain the movements of translation across the territories erected on the plane of immanence. While interpretation is the modus operandi of the Faciality machine par excellence, Faciality also wields powers of transformation. By following the logic of these movements one can invent new directions for thinking the dynamics of cultural difference. This process of creative transformation is both an ethics and a politics.

To remain trapped in the logic of dogmatic thought and the latent realm of the possible is to commit oneself to the endless perpetuation of differences in degree that mask the differential conditions of thought in favour of the tyrannical and territorial processes of knowledge. One needs creative solutions to actual constraints that examine the ontology of the problem given in an event. The reduction of questions of cross-cultural differences to pre-existing and monolithic identities adheres to the realm of the possible and negates the encounter with difference as an event that is actualised on the
immanent plane of continuous variation. One needs to follow the logic of the event and the decodings and recodings that occur in that milieu. A cultural politics of Faciality not only examines the geopolitics of the White Man Face, it involves the creative production of lines of flight from this anthropomorphic substratum through the temporal forces of repetition. A line of flight does not entail the possibility of freedom or escape from the machines of recoding or the White Man Face machine. What is possible is the extrinsic constraint that produces a line of flight. Without constraint, there can be no creative solution. Yet to address this constraint through an oppositional force, the White Man Face differs in content alone (becoming the Face of White or Asian Femininity) while the outline of the face remains stable. One must scramble the lines of the Face through the intensive movements of minoritarian-becomings where major and minor modes battle over the possible and the virtual. This battle constitutes a cultural politics of Faciality where actual and virtual images become indistinguishable so that one must make a move of one’s own by becoming-other in thought.
Chapter Four

A Cultural Politics of Faciality

The banality of skin colour and facial traits represented in the colonial stereotype has been the point of departure for this thesis. The obviousness of racial difference extracts the particular instance of a stereotype's repetition and places it on a plane of generality that reconstructs the image as an ideological sign pointing to a prior "real". Obviously implies a commonsense understanding that abides by the laws of generality and recognition and this common sense channels the iconic and metaphoric characteristics of the stereotype in the direction of a prior "real" that in effect has already past. Habitual recognition returns the stereotype to a plane of generality where the ontological question of Being, identity and agency restrict and reterritorialise the stereotype. This "real" (in this work it becomes the anthropomorphic substratum of representational thinking) is the model against which each repetition of the stereotype is measured, evaluated and interpreted. This "real" produces fixed postures and positions from which minority subjectivities speak or express themselves, and in that speaking, these utterances reiterate the very grounds that perpetuate their subordination to the rules of representation and resemblance. This is the dialectical double bind that postcolonial media theorists attempt to untangle, intervene in and deconstruct. The constraints surrounding how one can speak about the cinematic stereotype when restricted to a representational regime also exists when considering cultural differences outside the realm of cinema. The debates surrounding Once Were Warriors demonstrate the reductive vocabulary available for thinking the specificities of that cinematic event, as well as gesturing to the larger issue of how one can discuss the bicultural politics of Aotearoa/New Zealand that is structured by the dialectical opposition between Maori and Pakeha. The thesis begins and ends with this specific socio-cultural milieu to demonstrate how a Deleuzian postcolonial media theory shifts the terrain for thinking about the colonial stereotype solely in terms of representational and identity-based politics to one that maps the movement and circulation of the stereotype as a profound encounter between difference and repetition. The exhausted dialectical oppositions between spectator and stereotype privileged in the camera obscura model of perception are most urgently played out within the bicultural social context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, an exhaustion already inscribed in the term I have used to identify the country. The title Aotearoa/New Zealand has developed out of a
growing sensitivity to the history of colonisation and figures most prominently in academic writings dedicated to New Zealand’s culture and society. However, as Donna Matahaere-Atariki has argued, the term itself disguises another form of colonisation in that it is a Maori term denoting only the North Island of the country which effectively effaces the existence of Maori in the South Island (1999, p. 104). These complicated networks of historical, social, cultural and racial differences inform this exploration of cultural difference approached as an event with radical otherness, and as an immanent form of difference occurring within the repetitive structures of identity and representation.

The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi is the contentious and yet nonetheless founding document of Aotearoa/New Zealand’s bicultural society. The Treaty was signed between the earlier inhabitants of New Zealand (Maori) and the Europeans who journeyed to settle in what became a British colony. According to some Maori nationalists, the Treaty guarantees descendants of its Maori signatories the rights of citizenship, sovereignty and self-determination. The Treaty serves as proof to some indigenous nationalists of the contemporary rights of Maori to claim historical recompense for lands and resources lost through subsequent European settlement. Pakeha (New Zealand Europeans) such as Member of Parliament for ACT, Stephen Franks argues that the Treaty is merely an historical document, and not a legally binding one. In a televised public debate he argued that Treaty payments made by the New Zealand government to historically disenfranchised tribes are in effect a form of reverse racism (Waitangi Day Special, TVNZ, 2001). In the same debate Chris Trotter argued for a new constitution that can represent a more multicultural and democratic nation-state that includes Maori, Pakeha and all those social groups who have since immigrated to New Zealand. In making these claims, these Pakeha rely upon an equally historical concept of democratic expression that derives from Enlightenment and liberal humanist thought. Both parties follow the depth model of cultural difference in their claims for social justice based upon their cultural differences (the Treaty has a deeply cultural significance to some Maori) or cultural similarities (the homogenising sameness of democratic freedom based upon Eurocentric principles). As the discussion below suggests, the reduction of the differences between Maori and Pakeha to questions of identity merely shifts the dialectical form of difference across the anthropomorphic substratum of the White Man Face. The reliance upon consensual politics or a recourse to restorative justice illustrates how such identity postures and positions reiterate the logic of dialectical difference that reproduce the messy entanglements of colonial history and the double bind of postcolonial cultural politics.

The following discussion argues that one can see the depth model of the camera
obscura of perception play itself out in a recent media event where Pakeha and Maori speak to each other across the great divide of cultural difference. While no resolutions to these conflicts occur in the actual media event (a televised discussion between a Maori nationalist and Pakeha liberal democrat) this final chapter argues that other images in the audio-visual archive of Aotearoa/New Zealand’s media sphere expresses a more immanent form of cultural difference. As this thesis has argued, the solution to the problem of cultural difference is not to attempt an escape from this double bind, but to make it twist and turn by moving through the becoming-same of identity based politics to a form of becoming-other that addresses cultural difference as an encounter or event. This thesis attempts to insert movement into the double bind of postcolonial discourse by affirming the differential powers of the stereotype’s repetition as it is found in cinema and in cultural spaces beyond cinema. From a critical politics of representation to a cultural politics of Faciality, this work examines the concept of cultural difference as an immanent form of difference given in the paradoxical forces of spectatorship and postcolonial stereotypes.

Difference addressed as purely dialectical and absolute is premised upon laws of recognition and resemblance, and yet, as Kierkegaard reminds us at the beginning of this work, “that which is is in another mode” (1983, p. 2). Any given reality is tied to another plane of existence in consciousness, that is the realm of the virtual and the general, so that, that which appears the same, is also always another. It is this immanent form of difference that constitutes the paradoxical force of the colonial stereotype that actualises a real to come at the same time as repeating the real that has past. To neglect the differential force within repetition is to constitute a false movement in thought which is the case in the concept of the Hybrid utilised in postcolonial theory. However, by extending Homi K. Bhabha’s insights into the liminal relationship between coloniser and colonised, using Deleuze’s approach to cinema as an art of encounter, this thesis examines the representational nature of the concept as well as the logic of hybridity. To do this, the thesis asks, what is a hybrid mode of perception? While Bhabha’s concept expresses the uncanny and repetitive powers of the stereotype that returns to destabilise the ontological sanctity of the colonial subject, this hybrid image is still too anthropomorphic, too human. The thesis therefore transforms the logic of hybridity into the concept of Faciality which is conceptually mobile enough to chart the dual powers of the colonial stereotype. Faciality emphasises the Face as a partial object which expresses the anti-anthropomorphic processes that occur under the geopolitical coding of space that is colonial desire. Jonathan Crary’s model of the nineteenth-century observer exemplifies this matrix of force relations where man, machine, labour and capital enter into rhizomatic flows and assemblages that simultaneously constitute
and "tear apart" the embodied spectator. This experience of becoming torn and ruptured is primarily a temporal effect that reiterates the concept of subjectivity as a fundamentally temporal process. Cinema, as more than a representational medium, dramatises this logic.

The representational and metaphoric powers of the cinematic image in *Once Were Warriors* are compelling and emotive, invoking strong identificatory processes that either alienate or engage the spectator. These iconic powers, as a representational force, invoke a becoming-same in spectatorship that is particularly powerful in relation to the cinematic stereotype. For banality and habit, as well as inducing a form of recognition and identification, also involve the empirical experience of time. Habit and commonsense include both repetition and similarity and draw upon memory, forgetting and boredom as well as automated and involuntary movements. This sense of recognition is primarily a temporal process in that one reaches into the past to recall the present image. This is precisely the case in the "Southern Belle" image in *Double Happiness*, where the spectator enters into a reading in time through the layering of iconic feminine faces that recall myths, celebrities and literary moments from a by-gone Southern era, distilled and reiterated in the context of multicultural Canada. This repetition conjures up the metaphoric and allegorical powers of the stereotype in a manner that repeats the indexical nature of the image which follows a habitual leap to an ideal concept of femininity in general. Yet, as the image enfolds the spectator into a reading in time, the duplicitous and errant nature of this ideal concept slips and falters in relation to the particular instance of the film's screening where a burst of laughter erupts and breaks the link. Thus, while becoming-same through habitual recognition, the spectator also enters into a becoming-other through the temporal forces of repetition and similitude that impinge upon the ideal of femininity in general.

The temporal nature of the stereotype is suitably dramatised in the film within a film structure of *Irma Vep* where images of Maggie Cheung as Hong Kong starlet, repeatedly twist and turn between surfaces and depths to confuse the concept of what is real and what is false. While the "behind the scenes" narrative purports to show a self-reflexive style of filmmaking, this self-reflexivity is double edged and undecidable and demonstrates how self-reflexivity is an open-ended and vicious circle. Accordingly, *Irma Vep* gives us a model for thinking about the practice of critical production as well as an open-ended framework for considering the dynamics of spectatorship. Rather than a form of self-reflexivity or the concept of a spectator as such, the repetitive structure of the stereotype in *Irma Vep* gives a logic of relations where one follows the serial assemblage that is produced at the point of the body/image encounter. As a model of critical self-reflexivity, this serial formation involves following the logic of the
assemblage rather than chasing the tail of an ever-elusive subject who initiates action. Instead, the logic of the event is an action involving two (or more) elements that enter into rhizomatic relations that are in a constant state of movement. Again, it is time that enters the assemblage to divide the sense of "self" against itself, by highlighting the repetitive nature of time passing. This critical model emphasises not so much truth, identity, or a politics of location that can "frame" a critique. Rather, critical production becomes more concerned with establishing the conditions that can generate a movement in thought. This is not the depth-trick of the camera obscura model of perception, but a Deleuzian theory of postcolonial spectatorship that accentuates the relationships between the shifting surfaces of the body/image encounter.

As an image that mobilises the dynamics of spectatorship, the colonial stereotype has iconic powers of recognition that replicate the metaphorical powers of the human face. By posing the concept of Faciality as opposed to the camera obscura model of spectatorship, one can chart the iconic movements of habitual recognition that move horizontally and vertically across the anthropomorphic substratum that is the plane of representation. Accordingly, the face as partial object allows for an anti-anthropomorphic approach to the cinematic image that follows the logic of serial relations induced by the powers of movement and repetition that characterises film. An anti-humanist approach to spectatorship is more productive than the camera obscura model of perception in that it shifts the terrain for critically thinking about cross-cultural encounters from the question of subjectivity or identity (questions such as, who is looking at this image? who is trapped by this image?) An anti-anthropomorphic approach emphasises the partial-objects that connect and engage in flows which give rise to the more pragmatic question of what does this image do? what flows does it enter into or interrupt? Treating the face (and the close-up) as a machinic and affective entity highlights the event-space of spectatorship as the expression of concepts and personae that might describe the dimensions beyond the dialectical clash of opposites premised in the camera obscura model of perception. Brian Massumi reminds us of the potentials that Deleuze's writings on cinema invoke when he states:

The reader's learned responses and habits of thought are interrupted, her/his situation is misplaced. Any attempt to choose from a familiar position of strength, aided by a return to comforting criteria, founders in confusion, or disappointment in the result, only a shadow of a thought. A painful "crack" opens in the framing of the situation, and through it wafts the reader's potential. ("Deleuze" 1998, p. 562)

In this thesis it is this painful crack opened up in the event-space of spectatorship of the various films discussed which examines how particular
actualisations of the colonial stereotype transform the general concept of cultural
difference. From the canonical film texts of *Birth of a Nation* and *Touch of Evil* to the
more contemporary expressions of Asian and Oriental stereotypes as found in *Double
Happiness* and *Irma Vep*, each film is treated as a singular expression of the repetitive
and differential powers of cultural identity and cultural difference. However, this painful
“crack” suggests that the event-space of spectatorship opened up by the repetitions of
the stereotype does not provide soothing democratic liberal humanist expressions of
peace, justice and the certainty to identify what is good or bad in the world. This
“crack” is a more antagonistic potential that is undecidable and future-oriented,
harnessing the diabolical powers of repetition as the return of the same. These are more
errant and creative potentials of the event-space of spectatorship where the cultural critic
must affirm or deny the force of difference and repetition. Those who follow the
camera obscura model of cross-cultural encounters examine the role of the powerful
and the subordinated, and they choose from these pre-given categories accordingly. A
cultural politics of Faciality poses a practice of making Faces, constructing territories,
creating temporary abodes from which a line of flight might emerge. There are no
certainties in this practice, only a will to become-other and to affirm the future powers
of the colonial stereotype’s return.

The focus of this thesis has been to consider what cinema has to teach
postcolonial media scholars about the dynamics of cross-cultural encounter in more
general terms. The camera obscura model of spectatorship is more concerned with the
cognitive and interpretative processes of the spectator that privilege knowledge over
thought. A model of spectatorship based upon Faciality considers how the image
simultaneously affirms the past-oriented nature of knowledge with the future-oriented
characteristics of thought as an experiment in learning, as a pitching forward into the
unknown, or a vertiginous movement in unexpected directions. This chapter harnesses
the future-oriented characteristics of the stereotype images found in the previous films,
and connects them to a recent expression of South Pacific postcolonial stereotypes. The
discussion that follows considers a Deleuzian approach to the postcolonial stereotype
of the South Pacific and how this method can map the logic of relations expressed by
the stereotype and which demonstrates a cultural logic immanent within the bicultural
socio-cultural environment of Aotearoa/New Zealand.
4.1 Neocolonialism and Immanent Relations of Power

In Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1999 the transnational coffee company Nestlé reached into the archives of Pacific colonial cultural memory to reproduce the Dusky Maiden stereotype in an advertisement for their Nescafe' brand of black expresso coffee (Metro 1999, p. 40). The face that loomed large in this advert belonged to the discus throwing athlete Beatrice Faumuina who appeared dressed in what at first seemed to be a traditional “Maori” cloak, and which in fact was a simulated image of a packet of coffee wrapped around her body. The caption for the advert read “Express Yourself” ironically invoked the brand of coffee for sale while drawing upon the popular sentiment of self-expression (as embodied in the Madonna pop song of the same name) and accompanying concepts of individuality and freedom of self-determination. Reduced to the basic components of the image, the advert featured a naked brown girl clad in a food product whose assemblage of features conjured up a mythic and timeless colonial and pre-colonial past. The advert involved an intriguing mix of attributes that ranged between different registers of femininity, South Pacific ethnicity, a coded masculine subtext, and the rhetoric of Pop culture that produced a constellation of differences reduced to the commodity logic of advertising. A particularly striking aspect of this media event is the expression of a neocolonialist sensibility on the part of the Nestlé company which appropriates aspects of indigenous Maori culture in order to brand their product. For the “cloak” that is simulated in the advert draws from Maori weaving traditions and a culture where food and clothing have strictly demarcated areas of belonging. The spiritual and social taboos of food, clothing and women’s bodies are transgressed in this advert by the literal conflation of “cloak” with “coffee” and the figural conflation of the coffee wrapper with the body of Faumuina.

In addition, Faumuina’s Samoan identity is conflated with the Maori costume to present a generic South Pacific femininity that draws on the racial and sexual stereotype of the Dusky Maiden. Jacqui Sutton Beets identifies the attributes of this stereotype as including large eyes, oval jaw, flowing dark hair, olive skin, and sweet, passive vulnerable gazes (2000, p. 18). While Faumuina’s direct gaze, smile and her status as a celebrity figure complicate the supposed passivity of this stereotype, her pose and the draped cloak conjure up a nostalgic image of a by-gone era, a past-ness that presumes passivity. The subsequent invitation to “express” her individuality is situated in dramatic contrast to the constraints of the stereotypical image. The difficulty of self-expression experienced by women of colour is also compounded by gender difference
in the case of Faumuina whose pursuit of the more "masculine" sport of discus-throwing has produced a muscular body whose size, shape and strength is actively feminised in publicity shoots. The "cloak" of the highly feminised Dusky Maiden stereotype thus contributes to the regulation of Faumuina's "errant" femininity and aids her transition from the public sphere of athletics to the private sphere of individual expression. Yet it is this very invitation to self-expression that characterises the immanent power relations of neocolonial Aotearoa/New Zealand.

This media event exemplifies the cultural politics of Faciality active within the neocolonial context of a small Pacific nation, where the invitation to self-determination (express yourself!) is simultaneously an instrument of cultural reterritorialisation which conflates the language of democracy with the ambitions of consumer advertising culture. Such a cultural politics manipulates the duplicitous characteristics of the media image in two simultaneous directions, producing deterritorialising and reterritorialising cultural flows of meaning and significance. This is the modus operandi of neocolonial capitalist power and any minoritarian intervention in these cultural flows becomes a matter of recirculating such images at different rates and intensities. The basis of a cultural politics of Faciality involves two simultaneous movements that are open to both majoritarian and minoritarian becomings. Know your Face and scramble the outlines of those features. Asserting the duplicitous nature of the media image is a tactic that is not solely the domain of transnational corporations, advertising industries and other forms of majoritarian assemblages. The powers of the false image are also open to the forces of minoritarian becomings. This chapter describes the immanent force relations of neocolonialism in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the possibilities of minoritarian becomings as figured in a recent mock documentary.

A cultural politics of Faciality operates as a reterritorialising force in the case of the Nestlé advert where the invitation to self-determination simultaneously mobilises a racial and sexual stereotype. In this particular instance, the principles of liberal democratic politics are invoked within a neocolonial context where the language of universal rights and freedom are a form of imperialist reinscription. The very presupposition of liberal democracy (which strives for voice, autonomy and agency) actualise and perpetuate the rhetoric of capture that is the contemporary Faciality machine of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Consequently this advertisement betrays the dynamics of neocolonialism and the immanent lines of force that traverse the audio-visual archive of a post-settler nation. Neocolonialism operates in the language of sovereignty used by indigenous and disenfranchised movements, while the rhetoric of democratic freedom is used by socialist and leftist liberals to further the fight for social justice. In Aotearoa/New Zealand the political contestations over cultural difference are
played out in terms of rhetorical force and the conscious practice of ethnicity where Culture becomes less what Pierre Bourdieu calls a habitus (1990, p. 52-3) than an arena for affirming the duplicitous characteristics of the media image.

One such staging of cultural encounter occurred in 2001 when Television New Zealand screened a media debate entitled, *Issues 2001: Waitangi Day Special*, on the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand. Where the critical reception of *Once Were Warriors* implicitly demonstrates a reductive and limited vocabulary for dealing with issues of race, violence and cultural differences in New Zealand, this televised political debate made these tensions explicit. The debate demonstrated the absolute gap between Maori and Pakeha world views as they were embodied (albeit only partially) by two key players, Moana Jackson and Chris Trotter. While a banal exercise in the theatricality of politics and television public debates, *Issues 2001: Waitangi Day Special* was significant in that it provided one of the few mass mediated public forums dedicated to Treaty issues. This media event also highlighted the deadlock that occurs when Maori compete, debate and communicate with Pakeha within neocolonial social structures. Entangled in the discursive webs of liberal humanism, both Jackson and Trotter dramatised the similar dynamics of cultural confrontation and cultural confusion that accompanied the critical reception of *Once Were Warriors*.

The debate occurred on Waitangi Day itself and featured Chris Trotter (political commentator and editor of the *New Zealand Political Review*), Stephen Franks (a Member of Parliament representing ACT), Maona Jackson (Maori Lawyer), Annette Sykes (Maori Lawyer) Mai Chen (Constitutional Lawyer), Margaret Wilson (Treaty Negotiation Minister), Tahu Potiki (Ngai Tahu Development Corporation), Wiri Gardiner (Consultant). Hosted by television breakfast show host Mike Hoskings, the programme was the first in a series of public debates that went some way towards upholding the principles of public broadcasting that are currently experiencing a renaissance under the incumbent Labour Government. The arena for the debate was a television studio where four tables were placed facing one another with two guests seated at each table. A notable feature of this setting was the New Zealand flag covering three of the four tables and nondescript blue material that covered the table occupied by Maori nationalists Moana Jackson and Annette Sykes. This visual display of a philosophical and political rejection of Crown sovereignty was also enacted in Jackson’s argument where he repeatedly stated that one cannot understand contemporary New Zealand society without understanding the basic tenets of the 1840 Treaty.
Jackson maintained that the fundamental gap in worldview between Maori and Pakeha stems from the historical misunderstandings around the Treaty and that one must return to this document before an analysis of the dynamics of cultural politics in New Zealand can be pursued. This gap in understanding was subsequently played out in the verbal cross-fire between socialist commentator Chris Trotter and Moana Jackson. Trotter’s initial remarks were addressed to constitutional lawyer Mai Chen who argued that “numbers do count” and that 16% of the population were Maori and that this percentage would rise in future years. Chris Trotter responded to Mai Chen’s call for a pragmatic approach to Treaty issues by arguing for a new constitutional document that could be signed by present-day New Zealanders and that could replace an outmoded historical object signed by colonialists from the “Mother Country”. In his call for a new constitutional document that could be signed by “all” New Zealanders and that could subsequently represent a more multicultural New Zealand State, Trotter drew upon the principles of liberal democratic politics to contend that New Zealand is a democratic nation and that the majority rules. Implicit in his argument was the claim that special recognition of indigenous rights was not democratic. Trotter did not go so far to say that the recognition of Treaty issues was inherently racist against non-Maori (an argument made by ACT MP Stephen Franks). However, his defense of democracy drew upon the norms of universal rights to representation and freedom of expression, which effectively obliterated the history of colonisation that characterises present-day New Zealand.

This is the point that Jackson made when he reminded Trotter that in 1840, the majority living in New Zealand was Maori and that to throw out the Treaty as a contract undermines the very tenets that Trotter now upholds. Trotter’s recourse to present-time universal rights thus erases the history of violence underpinning such norms and demonstrates how the language of inclusivity can act, not so much as a force of repression, as a machine that incorporates and overcodes difference. While Jackson argues for the recognition of historical differences, Trotter advocates a democratic process based upon the presuppositions of liberal humanism which reiterates the practice of domination identified by Deleuze and Guattari as operating through inclusivity:

European racism [...] has never operated through exclusion, or by designation of someone as Other [...] Racism operates by the determination of degrees of deviance in relation to the White-Man face, which endeavors to integrate nonconforming traits into increasingly eccentric and backward waves [...] From the viewpoint of racism, there is no exterior, there are no people on the outside. (*ATP* 1987, p. 178)
Rather than an argument that recognizes the historical and dialectical differences between Maori and Pakeha, Trotter seeks a form of social justice that would place Maori and Pakeha on a similar plane in time (the endlessly recurring and essentially pragmatic “present”). Maori would then appear, on this plane, as placed in equal relationship to Pakeha and those New Zealand citizens from other cultural domains. As Deleuze and Guattari identify in their analysis of racism, this process operates through a radically horizontal logic. Trotter enacts this logic by invoking the tenets of a radical leftist humanitarianism (the sovereign rights to democracy and the duplicitous “good” image) that simultaneously reinscribe conditions of domination by obliterating the historical conditions enabling that humanitarianism. When Jackson attempts to “ground” or historicise the transcendental claims to democratic justice made by Trotter (ostensibly attempting to make a horizontal cut through Trotter’s “plane of the present” by arguing for historical differences) Mike Hoskings dismisses his approach as a “dead-end” solution, presumably because it reiterates the vicious circle of blame, gain and divisiveness between Maori and Pakeha that characterise discussions of the Treaty. The privileging of this “present-time” pragmatism positions Jackson and his colleague Annette Sykes as “nonconforming traits” in this televsual debate whose eccentricity is measurable against the plane of present-time pragmatism (the White Man Face that haunts all questions of justice). Jackson’s recourse to history as a silent witness to justice, and his assertion of an exclusive and dialectical historical difference between Maori and Pakeha fails because such rhetoric is thoroughly contained within the system. As Deleuze and Guattari state, “there are no people on the outside” and Jackson’s argument for historical redress (and the exclusive differences between Maori and Pakeha) is thoroughly recuperated by a rhetoric of justice that includes Maori as merely “one of the many” in the democratic process. The task of a deterritorialising politics of Faciality is to map the diverse and divergent processes of coding that these immanent systems of inclusivity produce.

It is the question of the organization of time and space that is of relevance to a cultural politics of Faciality. When Trotter argues for consensus in his elaboration of a democratic politics, he suspends the past and ignores the agonistic and immanent relations of power that traverse the public face of New Zealand society. He invokes a present and future-oriented logic in order to ensure a democratic space through which all “people” can be represented. Jackson’s emphasis on the veracity of historical truth also ignores a certain sheet of time, that of the present and the changing terms of cultural identity defining the cultural politics of a neocolonial nation, a suspension of time that is unquestionably enacted for political purposes. In each case the issue of representation is key. What will the “face” of Aotearoa/New Zealand look like and
who will express power within this territory? The task of a deterritorialising cultural politics is to keep the elements of the audio-visual colonial archive constituting the face of New Zealand in perpetual motion, so that the debris and detritus of our shared histories are in constant states of becoming. Such is the case in a mock documentary *Velvet Dreams* where the filmmaker dips into a past in general to activate the colonial image of the Dusky Maiden.

### 4.2 The Dusky Maiden's Eternal Return

In 1998 a mock documentary examining the image of the Dusky Maiden screened on the New Zealand network of Television One. Directed and written by Samoan woman director Sima Urale, *Velvet Dreams* also screened at various international film festivals, receiving a particularly warm response from kitsch art aficionados. The film examines the recent resurgence in the kitsch art of velvet painting, (termed Tiki Art), the history of the art form itself, and the painters who created them. The narrative is framed as a search for a mysterious “lady” lost by the film’s narrator (a voice-over persona who recalls the hard-boiled detective genre of film noir). This “lady” is in fact a velvet painting of which the narrator has only a reproduction. He desires the original and the narrative follows his search that takes him from the retro lounge bar culture of Auckland to the art galleries of Seattle where Tiki Art is experiencing a renaissance, to the islands where the “Maidens” and painters first met. Framed as an ironic take on the fetish object that is the velvet painting genre, Urale’s mock documentary expresses the director’s own fascination with the legacy that is bound up in the Dusky Maiden image. Urale herself admits to enjoying the Dusky Maiden velvets and this pleasure often shines through in her documentary (Rose *The Seattle Times*, 1998). Yet, the constructed artificiality of the documentary results in an extremely ambivalent work that leaves an uneasy residue for the spectator. This residue is the most intriguing aspect of her film that explores the exhausted aesthetic of irony within a neocolonial context.

The opening sequence immediately highlights the concept of velvet paintings as a fetish-object when the narrator introduces the theme of a search for his “velvet lady”. The extreme excess of the narrator’s voice (whose timbre is deeply masculine), suggests a form of obsession that, coupled with convention of the film noir genre the narrative draws upon, suggests that this search is doomed. Thus, from the start, *Velvet Dreams* presents an ironic and parodic take on the stereotype of the Dusky Maiden as a fetish of a white male gaze. The spectator is necessarily wired into this persona
through the narrator's voice which saturates the film's diegesis, and through the camera point of view. The film begins in a junk shop where close-up shots of dressmakers dummies and bric-a-brac are intercut with a staged re-enactment of a bare-breasted Pacific Island woman with flowers in her hair. This introduction aligns the Dusky Maiden image with the trash of history, with the debris and detritus of a by-gone era. The opening sequence also includes extreme close-ups of a painting of a Pacific Island woman (vahine) whose pose and costume echo those of the “live” model. This juxtaposition of artwork and model seem to trace a relation of object-hood between painting and female body that perhaps reminds the viewer of the continued existence of the Dusky Maiden stereotype in the contemporary milieu of the postcolonial Pacific (as the Nescafé advertisement illustrates).

The initial introduction of the Dusky Maiden fetish as an object imbued with sexual intensities is conveyed through the subsequent linking of images of velvet paintings to the seedy underbelly counter-culture of lounge bars, tattoo art and men’s magazines. Images of bare-breasted Pacific Island women litter the contents of the film. The poses and expressions are indeed those same attributes found in men’s magazines, page three of British newspaper’s and other soft-porn media: poses and expressions that can be traced back to the annals of High art (Pollock 1992). Interviews are intercut with shots of cigarette smoke and spirit glasses and the occasional seedy looking Euro-American man who expresses his love for velvet paintings. The texture of the brushed velvet and the luminous quality of the paint technique where light is applied to the black backdrop further the notion of the velvet Maiden as a fetish object. The tactile quality of the medium gives a sensuous or at the least, a haptic form of vision that is corporeal in character. The intensities that surround these velvet paintings of Dusky Maidens can also be linked to the qualities of kitsch that they embody, and indeed, it is the artificiality and excess of kitsch in these paintings that become the modus operandi of Urale's cinematic style. The characteristics of kitsch include a heightened sense of artificiality, a mechanical look of serial reproduction, which produce a vicarious experience that is none the less intense. The narrator who embodies what Gillo Dorfles terms “the kitsch-man” loves these kitsch qualities. According to Dorfles, the kitsch-man is a kind of fake adventurer who longs for the “familiar exotic” and whose psychological condition “is rather similar to his caravan or his camping equipment where there is no shortage of supplies from home” (1969, p. 170). The kitsch-man longs for the second-hand spectacle that can fill him with sentiment without the risk of shock.

*Velvet Dream*’s narrator is a tourist who journeys through the cultural milieu of kitsch art aficionados. While we never see him directly, his presence is implied in the
off-screen space to which the interviewees direct their responses and to whom is advanced invitations to attend exhibition openings, to meet with experts and, in one sequence, to sleep with two Papeete sex workers. The kitsch-man is the consummate consumer who collects around him objects and souvenirs with a heightened artificiality that produces intensive and yet vicarious experiences. The intensities of colour contrasts in the velvet paintings and the exaggerated feminine poses and excessive facial and racial traits stimulate the senses of the kitsch aficionado. These paintings are insistently material and yet imbued with such intensities of affect and sentiment that their status as objects become complicated. For instance, towards the end of the film the narrator does find his “velvet lady” in her original velvet medium. Her absence has been the motor force of the narrative and when she finally does appear (in flashes, or lingering at the periphery of vision) it is as if she has the power to “look back” at the kitsch-man who loves her. This is due, in part, to the kitsch qualities she embodies as well as the filmic discourse that produces her presence. Repeated close-ups of paintings and live re-enactments of their poses, as well as the aural presence of the narrator, transfer the insistent materiality of the velvet painting medium to the medium of cinema. These techniques produce a haptic quality to the film that impinges its force upon the spectator. While this return look directly targets the kitsch-man/narrator, the withering gaze also implicates the spectator.

For some, *Velvet Dreams* is not an easy film to watch in its repetition of naked women and the representation of desire as cliché and as exhaustion. For others, the ironic and parodic tone of the documentary allows one to comfortably consume the images of naked women that are paraded before their eyes from a distanced and ironic position. Accordingly, the performative logic of this text, (the unrelenting repetition of the stereotype) opens up a gap between the text (and its formal characteristics that designate a particular meaning) and the context of its reception. In *Velvet Dreams*, the who of the mode of address becomes an indeterminate spectator who is actualised in relation to the documentary’s screening. Indeed, Urale scatters the bodies of Dusky Maidens throughout the film in ways that repeat the commodity logic of mass-reproduced velvets made by artists of the 1940s and 1950s. This excessive repetition destroys all claim to the sanctity of context as that which can alleviate the proliferation of image’s meaning. The force of repetition in *Velvet Dreams* vanquishes the categories of meaning, judgement and critique. One particular interview portrays this repetition of a clichéd and dehumanised image when an artist of the 1950s discusses his technique. The artist (Geoff Everett) sits in his living room surrounded with pink flowers that appear to be made of paper or plastic. These flowers suggest an air of artifice and romance that recalls the simulacral effects of the South Sea island
destinations of tourist brochures and advertisements. In this setting, the small, elderly gentleman sits on a couch and describes how he used to reproduce his images of Dusky Maidens. In this genre, painters approach the female figure using art historical conventions of the nude as well as the less explicit conventions of pornography. This generic approach allows the painter to use an archive of body postures that need only have individual heads attached to them to differentiate one painting from another. The postures themselves derive from the camera obscura technique of projecting an original image on to a large piece of paper where the painter can trace the outline of the pose. Urale shows a shot of the painter doing just that, as well as involving his wife in the discussion of the history of velvet paintings in subsequent shots.

In this sequence Urale neither condones nor condemns the artist for his fascination with the female form, or his status as a Western artist in the South Seas in the tradition of Gauguin. Following the logic of kitsch, this sequence “just is”. Indeed, Urale indulges her own visual fascination with the Dusky Maiden by repeating Geoff Everett’s “cut-up” technique in her own close-ups and re-enactments. This suggests a play on the mechanical reproducibility of the image and seems to “speak back” to that quality of presence of originality that Walter Benjamin mourned due to the advent of reproduction technologies (Illusions 1936, p. 231). One sequence directly links this celebration of the superficial to the kitsch qualities of the artworks when an art critic rejects the velvet painting genre as pornography. While some of the interviewed curators, collectors and academics treat the velvet Dusky Maiden tradition as a serious expression of culture, the art critic T. J. McNamara dismisses velvet painting as nothing more than pornography. He argues that the Dusky Maidens lack character and personality and that this illustrates a “sloppy and sentimentalised ideal” of beauty and erotica. For McNamara, true erotic art reveals the presence of an individual and has personalised aspects that capture and express erotic affects. Yet it is precisely this absence of personality that Urale’s documentary explores. Rather than enacting a judgement on the properties of the Dusky Maiden, Urale affirms their vapid qualities as an antidote to the cult of transcendental beauty and Orientalist values that McNamara’s comments presuppose. Where Benjamin’s “loss of aura” treats the work of art as a historical and therefore a “natural” object, one can not help but recall Edward Said’s investigation into the role played by Orientalist works of art in aiding and abetting the work of empire. The notion of an original presence is particularly difficult to those bodies preserved as timeless in such works of art and whose contemplation by Euro-American spectators might best be shattered. Instead of an aura, the repetition of the Dusky Maiden produces an artificial build-up that evokes the “spell of personality” that Benjamin found so factitious (p. 231). An artificial effect that in fact might disrupt
that sense of the stereotype as frozen in an eternal and unchanging past. The phony spell of the commodity is exactly that quality desired by the kitsch-man who longs for the stimulus of artifice, the familiarly exotic. The “spell of personality” is exactly that which the spectator must identify with due to the presence of the narrator.

The persona of the narrator relays all action, imagery and sound in *Velvet Dreams*. Consequently, the centred perspective of the narrator invites the spectator to occupy the same space, and his grotesque excesses (the quality of his voice, his lecherous personality) make this centripetal perspective increasingly untenable. The voice gives an unwanted intimacy that is intensely corporeal: it enters the ears and submits the viewer to an excessive sentimental nostalgia that seems to flood the narrator’s virtualised body. The narrator’s voice is an aural evocation of the same seedy mise-en-scène paraded before the viewer’s eyes. The images of nude and nubile women produce an exhausted sensuality that ultimately turns into banality. This excessive artificiality provokes a corporeal response from the spectator whether it is shuffling restlessly in the chair, sighing repeatedly, or gazing distractedly about. Rather than cinematic identification with narrator or image or the spectatorial eye as a detached and distanced observer, the experience of watching *Velvet Dreams* provokes feelings of contagion and mimesis. The tactile and visceral images foster both a corporeal and conceptual disturbance that exceeds the already “known” of a cliché stereotype. Its involvements of aural, haptic and visual sensations decentre the presumed beholder of a centralised perspective and disrupt the dialogic relation between subject/object privileged in the gaze dynamic of Homi Bhabha’s fetish. The fetishistic nature of this vision goes beyond lack, to a disturbing excess produced by the force of the Dusky Maiden repetition. However, this is not a repetition of the Same Subject (a timeless Native image which is a copy of some prior “real” Pacific Island woman); it is a repetition of a fundamental difference based on time as continual change. *Velvet Dreams* produces a corporeal form of perception that has several advantages for considering the contemporary status of the Dusky Maiden stereotype.

4.3 Repetition and Difference

The first advantage concerns the exhausted debate over good and bad images, in that the repetition of naked Pacific Island women becomes a laboriously banal phenomenon in *Velvet Dreams* that moves the function of critique beyond one of judgement or interpretation towards a more Nietzschean directed question of force
relations. Through the excessive repetition of the stereotype, the body’s surface forms a mimetic relation with the image of perception that frustrates a precise cognitive mapping of the image as a representation of a prior real. A noise appears in the perceptual relay between subject and object that makes the Dusky Maiden image less and more than a cliché representation. Consequently, the fetishistic powers of the image introduce a fullness and excess through its capacities of attraction and repulsion that attack the concept of an originary lack (a prior known identity). These powers of repetition invoke a force of time suggest a second advantage in considering the stereotype in *Velvet Dreams*. Rather than a snap-shot image of a Native frozen by the structuring gaze of the camera obscura model of perception in a time that has past, the Dusky Maiden fetish becomes a mobile and errant expression of present-time. The excessive repetition of the stereotype and the kitsch qualities of the images draw out two forms of recognition: habitual and attentive. The habitual recognition that the kitsch-man engages in (the familiarisation of the exotic – the “camping equipment” he brings with him), is driven to the periphery as Urale repeats images of nubile and naked women. These compulsive returns send the kitsch-man back to the object of his attraction until the repetitions achieve a delirium of perception. The spectator’s recognition of the parodic take on Dusky Maiden imagery is also habitual and yet the sustained repetition of these stereotypes and the close-ups of bodies also implicates the spectator in a compulsive return that goes beyond recognition and habit. Instead, an attentive form of recognition operates, and highlights the objective characteristics of the Dusky Maiden that no longer resemble the representation of an original desire but is the pure force of production itself. Harnessing the forces of time as continual change, Urale’s Dusky Maiden becomes a radioactive fossil from the colonial imaginary that enters the postcolonial sphere as an image from multiple planes of time that have the potential to disrupt the coherence of the present. For the kitsch-man this involves a material expression of the passing of time: for the spectator it involves a destabilisation of how one might “read” the racial stereotype.

Consider the affect of nostalgia experienced by the kitsch-man in *Velvet Dreams*. It is a present-time sensation that evokes a past that never was. In one scene the narrator wistfully identifies with Charlie McPhee and Edgar Leeteg who have the enviable task of painting naked women. He ruefully acknowledges that this is only a fantasy, and yet the palpable force of sentiment and yearning remains. The narrator longs for the simulacral image of the South Seas that Leeteg and McPhee presumably had access to. Nostalgia is a momentary affect that relates to the present time more than to the past. Nostalgia conjures up a past that has never existed. As the narrator gazes in longing at the velvets that parade before his eyes, the nostalgic excess of the kitsch
images from another time, and another place, plunge the narrator into a recollection of a time and place that has never been actualised before. Urale progressively plays upon this sentimental encounter until the pure force of time (the virtual realm from which the narrator reaches in to grasp the object of his desire) threatens to overwhelm the narrator, and by implication, the painters he identifies with.

The final sequence performs this revenge of time in the most compelling way. The documentary ends with the encounter between the virtualised narrator and the painter, Charlie McPhee, who is responsible for having brought to life the Velvet Lady of the narrator's dreams. The narrator has tracked him to a bar where he finds McPhee dancing with younger women in a scene that attempts to recall the roguish exploits of early European male painters in the South Seas such as Leeteg and Gauguin. Yet this bar scene features the tacky disco lights of a contemporary public bar and the figure of an elderly man dancing in uncomfortable rhythm to contemporary hit music fails to evoke the nostalgic aura of the past. In the next scene McPhee himself, refers to his life as an adventurer, and when the narrator attempts to get information on his Velvet Lady, McPhee is more interested in demonstrating his strength of limb. Charlie retrieves an old barbell from the garden and hoists it above his head as the narrator attempts to interview him outside his house. Photographs of McPhee as a young man flash upon the screen as McPhee recalls his youthful strength. His aging body (as well as those of other paintings and collectors) appears in sharp contrast to the eternal "beauty" of the velvet paintings that he has created and which he has imbued with a fetishistic beauty. As photographs recall his past we see a virile McPhee busy in the act of painting. The next scene features the present-day McPhee standing next to a Dusky Maiden painting. The contrast between McPhee's youthful body as it is captured in the black and white photograph, and the aged body represented in Urale's documentary parallels the effect of the contrast between old McPhee and the eternal beauty of the Dusky maiden painting he stands beside.

The paintings maintain the fetishistic intensities that McPhee once imbued them with. However, these intensities are now part of a series formed by the accumulated effects of the preceding footage. Urale has taken these intensities and connected them to a new milieu where the force of the naked image now returns to overpower its original creator. The velvet paintings from the past now enter a contemporary sheet of time that registers time's passing and the fading of McPhee's youth and virility. While the stereotype as fetish is presumably fixed in an eternal past, here the Dusky Maiden appears to emerge from a past which expresses time as a fundamental force of change, transformation and decomposition: effects which are registered in the withering of Charlie McPhee's potency. The evolutionary qualities of kitsch and the eternal youth of
the paintings combine to embody a revenge of time upon the painter that reveals life as continuous variation. This image of time and movement by-passes the snapshot logic of a static and timeless stereotype to affirm a temporal form of subjectivity that exceeds the symbolic realm of representation that attempts to contain the Dusky Maiden as a poor representation of a prior ideal. These paintings are powerful in their objective characteristics not their lack – they are powerful in their artificial postures, contrived sensuality and superficial affects. Beyond the realm of identity enclosures and proper names, these paintings “speak” of other powers of agency than those inscribed by anthropocentric colonial discourse.

4.4 Dusky Maiden-becomings

Not interested in the judgements of what constitutes erotica, good art or exploitation, *Velvet Dreams* constructs a fabulation that affirms the powers of the Dusky Maiden image. Art critic McNamara subscribes to a mechanistic world of truth judgements (this is not real erotic art!) through the recourse to an ideal image of erotica. Urale’s work does no such thing. Through the constant repetition of topless Pacific Island women, Urale asserts the powers of differentiation. As a Samoan woman surrounded by a history of such sexualised images, she does not attempt to re-claim them, deconstruct them, or re-interpret them. She harnesses their proliferating forms and puts them into relation with forces that go beyond erotica or judgement. The throw of the dice is an image used by Deleuze to discuss the affirmation of chance so central to a Nietzschean counter-ontology. To bet on the throw of the dice is to embrace any outcome with all its implications – it is the refusal of control. This means to play with the forces on hand as a pragmatic mode of living that aggressively embraces the potentials of the moment. The throw of the dice affirms difference and multiplicity. Resentment and ressentiment as the negative will to power is that which must be eradicated at all costs and indeed it is envy and resentment which perpetuates the becoming-same that dominates modern political philosophy. Nietzsche’s ontology, as read by Deleuze, is an ethics of becoming-other that affirms difference, change and transformation. The becoming-other of Urale is an active force that affirms the kitschness of the Dusky Maiden that raises it to the level of the sublime: a force of aesthetic power that communicates beyond the realm of the commonsensical, or the Same. Urale’s film refuses to rage against the tyranny of history and the Proper name assigned to her as “Samoan woman filmmaker”. Rather than condemning white male sexual fantasies or the violence perpetuated through colonisation and tourism, Urale
destroys these reactive forces by affirming her own power to act. She affirms the powers of the simulacral Maiden as an image of fundamental difference. If the Maiden is a false image (and this is in no doubt throughout the film) there is a power to this falsity that expresses a becoming-other that propels the spectator into making a move of their own. This power of the false is actualised in the persona of the narrator.

Those who are interviewed seemingly give up their knowledge with no prompting from the interlocutor. They gaze off-screen into an empty space where the voice-over narrator presumably stands. For this hyper-masculinised voice links each section of the documentary as it travels from Auckland to Seattle, to Tahiti and back to Auckland and he implicitly participates in all the events of the film. He is invited to go to the opening of an exhibit of velvet paintings, he drinks with the proprietor of a bar in Tahiti who provides him with a lead to the whereabouts of his “dream lady”, and he finally meets Charlie McPhee in a bar where he watches him dancing. This narrative device, this persona, yearns to be in Leeteg’s shoes as he paints his topless models. He identifies with the men who have found Polynesia so seductive. He sleeps with two sex workers in Papeete who are nonetheless unable to provide him with additional information for his search. Finally, he envies Charlie McPhee his lived experience of “the velvet dream”. Lecherous, or romantic, this persona dominates the narrative of Velvet Dreams in a manner that allows the spectator to laugh with and at this caricature of white male desire.

This “narrator as avatar” directs the narrative flow of Velvet Dreams by linking each segment, each location and each individual Dusky Maiden image within a constellation traversed by two planes of organisation. The first plane consists of the actual sounds and images that appear on screen (the paintings, the artists and the narrator’s voice) and which are organised by the libidinal economies of hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity as well as the narrative drive to solve a puzzle. Here, the over-sexed aural quality of the voice expresses an excessive masculinity suggestive of the same simulacral powers as those of the Dusky Maiden stereotype. However, while this is the most overt mode of organisation of the documentary, the mock nature of the film invokes a more virtual space. This space is created by the ironic tone of Velvet Dreams which presupposes in advance of the actualised Dusky Maiden image, a particular virtual sensibility that can read these images in a reflexive (and thus a virtualised real) mode.

This second plane is the virtual image invoked by the off-screen space to which interviewed characters address their remarks. The off-screen space that the narrator presumably occupies is also a space that Sima Urale herself inhabits as the maker of the film. Thus, when the interviewees respond to unheard questions, they are
responding to a Samoan woman who is asking about their interests and involvement in the velvet painting tradition. Urale disperses her own authorial presence throughout the body of the film into a collective utterance that goes beyond personal identity by emphasising the disjuncture between what is seen (the faces of the interviewees looking off-screen) and what is heard (the narrator who introduces us to the interviewees). The persona who directs the narrative action is only one aspect of an interlocutor who simultaneously organises the visual field. A kind of “double-brain” is in operation here where the interlocutor is more than one, more than a single bounded body, and rather a collective assemblage of enunciation. This strategy allows Urale to expand her own identity beyond that of a Pacific Island female filmmaker (as inheritor of a history of victimisation) to embrace a becoming-other of white male desire that affirms the possibilities of minoritarian becomings.

Yet, this is an expression of agency that goes beyond the language of liberal democratic political principles, in that Velvet Dreams is a collective utterance that affirms the history of entanglement between white men, dusky maidens, tourism, art and economic exchange. By repeating the fetishization of the Dusky Maiden to a point of exhaustion, and by inserting herself into an off-screen space already inhabited by the narrator, Urale produces a collective utterance that breaks down any clear articulation of judgements. Who are these images for? What are Urale’s motivations? These answers remain imperceptible and suggest, instead, the need for new sorts of questions: questions that address the implied audience of Urale’s cinematic address and the kind of cinematic subject that the off-screen space gives rise to. By raising the stakes on what critical questions are possible in relation to the Dusky Maiden stereotype, Urale’s film also challenges the assumed grounds for understanding the dynamics of cross-cultural differences within the neocolonial context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Urale invokes a becoming of the spectator that simultaneously invokes a people yet to come that urges us to expand our vocabulary for discussing the possibilities of agency within a neocolonial context. Ultimately, Velvet Dreams delivers the concepts necessary to elaborate upon the duplicitous powers of the neocolonial audio-visual archive that moves in two simultaneous directions.

Central to the organisation of Urale’s cinematic thought is the parallel process of reterritorialisation and deterritorialisation and two distinct treatments of time. The first plane organised by libidinal and narrative economies affirms the kitsch attributes of the velvet paintings by placing them in relation to art galleries in the 1990s and retro chic cocktail lounges. The editing sequences that link the Dusky Maiden with alcohol, cigarettes, bar scenes, late-night neon lit street scenes and men’s magazines reassert the exploitative aspects of the painting genre. The timeliness of the velvet painting is
renewed as a repetition of the same old stereotype that can be recognised, consumed ironically and revalued as an art object precisely through this logic of identity and recognition. This is the reterritorialising power of the Dusky Maiden image which leaps into the past to connect the present object with its colonial and heteronormative past and which, accordingly, asserts the reactive powers of repetition with its attendant neocolonial consequences.

The other form of time expressed in the velvet paintings is an affirmation of time as passing. This is the force of time that Urale’s off-screen space opens up. As the narrator directs the spectator’s perception along an unfolding vertical plane which links the paintings to male desire, the off-screen space of the interlocutor connects the velvet paintings to an unseen body. The actual bodies that appear on screen express the potentialities of this unseen body. These are the old and wrinkled bodies of the wives and former models of velvet painters who occupy a close proximity to the paintings that embalmed their youth. These bodies are spatial signs of time that passes which is an accumulation of past experiences that do not reactively return us to the past and to the history of victimization endured by native women. Instead, the faces of these women affirm the transformative and potential forces of time. These bodies as spatial signs are linked to the implied presence of Urale herself, whose ventriloquist powers as narrator and woman alike, affirm a machinic assemblage of the formally imprisoned reactive image of the Dusky Maiden. Through her harnessing of the powers of kitsch and through the repetition of the Dusky Maiden along a plane of consistency that interrupts the narrator’s trajectory, Urale’s unseen body (her cinematic double-other) expresses a new form of subjectivity that is an affirmative will to power. Consequently, *Velvet Dreams* presents a becoming-other in thought that is a prelude to becoming-other in the audio-visual archive of neocolonial New Zealand.

4.5 The Two Faces of Neocolonial Aotearoa/New Zealand

In the Treaty of Waitangi Debate media event, Chris Trotter and Moana Jackson represent two characteristic faces of Aotearoa/New Zealand society, that of the bicultural dyad of Pakeha and Maori. While Trotter takes on the rhetorical force of democracy to make an implicit argument about reverse-racism in New Zealand, Moana Jackson implicitly relies upon the language of victimisation to argue that justice must be sought through redressing historical misunderstandings. Both positions demonstrate the paralysis of a bicultural politics based upon identity categories derived from the colonialist and imperialising mission of Europe in the nineteenth-century. When Trotter
calls for a new constitutional document that can unite the diverse social groupings of present-day New Zealand, he relies upon an implicit teleological trajectory which supposes that New Zealand’s cultural identity can proceed and progress once a consensus has been reached. Jackson reminds Trotter that consensus and unity holds its own implicit form of violence, and that one must live with the agonistic differences between Maori and Pakeha. Yet, the tendency to acknowledge and affirm these differences as absolute reasserts culture as static and unchanging concepts. What Urale’s mock documentary offers is the possibility of considering the dynamic differences between Maori and Pakeha as a matter of becoming-other.

Urale’s documentary is fundamentally political in that she experiments with the powers of the false to affirm a becoming-other. Her ventriloquist powers allow her to become White, Male and Western, and in this guise she offers up a compassionate (and at times a masochistic) perspective that conveys the complexities of male/female and North/South relations in the South Pacific. More specifically, as a New Zealand citizen of Samoan origin, Urale’s film expresses the dynamic becoming-other of bicultural New Zealand by splitting the dyadic logic of biculturalism into a complicated nexus of cultural flows that operates in two simultaneous directions. Her status as Samoan allows her to remain within the territory of identity politics where her multicultural “difference” is measured (Urale cannot escape her face!), while this same assertion of identity is incessantly repeated in order to affirm the “other” history of New Zealand’s bicultural society (the missing multicultural aspect). Beyond a politics of identity, Urale constructs a cinematic constellation that conjures up a new potential body politic based upon an affirmative will to power and the fundamental desire for differentiation. For Urale’s Velvet Dreams refuses to “come out” as a specifically “Samoan” deconstruction of colonial stereotypes in the Pacific. Nor does Urale speak the Proper name of “Woman filmmaker” as another form of identity-enclosure. Urale’s avatar technique refuses the juridical model of rights, responsibility and conscience in a manner that repeats and reiterates a disciplined and constrained subjectivity. To speak in one’s Proper Name is to rearticulate the name given to and enabled by anthropomorphically designed discourses of Modernity. It is to speak again one’s own subjectification and subjugation. However, through the narrator as kitsch-man, Urale takes on the persona of White, Western Man and causes him to stutter a becoming-other that affirms the beauty of the Dusky Maiden as a power that cannot be totally dominated by the sexual desires of white men. Thus, Urale constructs a temporary abode that can express particular dynamics of neocolonial cultural differences.

The narrator is an avatar who expresses a political will. The frailty of white masculinity that emerges near the end of Velvet Dreams is a self-overcoming of
resentment by Urale to a more expansive understanding of the entanglements of subjectivities that make up the histories of the South Pacific. The narrator avatar expresses an affirmative will to power that traces a line of flight across the sedentary plane of the cliché stereotype. From this expression of desire as a machinic and depersonalised force, Velvet Dreams produces an image for a people to come, a collective subjectivity that is at once a multitude and a multiplicity, an open-ended framework for pursuing differentiation. In this approach, Urale’s assemblage echoes the model of political justice posed by Michael Hardt who argues:

Perhaps the most important single tenet of liberal democratic theory is that the ends of society be indeterminate, and thus that the movement of society remain open to the will of its constituent members. (1993, p. 120)

To maintain a radically open and yet functional framework for understanding the dynamics of cultural difference is the function of a minoritarian cultural politics of Faciality. Thus, the grounding “desire” of a politics of Faciality is not for consensus or a form of justice that appears in advance of the event that calls the political assemblage into becoming. Just as Velvet Dreams is not a parable of human tolerance and understanding, a minoritarian cultural politics of Faciality affirms acts of duplicity and falsity as much as it affirms the desire for an indeterminate form of social justice. Know your face! And scramble the outlines of those features. It is a call not only for those who are inscribed within the structures of neocolonialism as Native and other, it is also an incitement to consider how those social groups identified as dominant are also implicated in the dizzying logic of immanent difference.

The indeterminate mode of address that operates in Velvet Dreams dramatises the potential to consider the cultural politics of Aotearoa/New Zealand in terms of becomings and deterritorialisations. The documentary does not give us a new image for thinking about cultural identity in the Pacific. It gives us a new assemblage of images that calls into becoming a spectator to come. Velvet Dreams is not so much about the history of a colonial stereotype than it is an essayistic exploration of South Pacific (and Aotearoa/New Zealand in particular) becomings. By tracing the history of linkages between white men, artworks, dusky maidens, commerce, scholarship and tourism, the film illustrates the rhizomatic logic of colonial, postcolonial and neocolonial capital. Consequently, this rhizomatic mapping expands the conceptual realm of identity politics beyond the simple encounter between coloniser/colonised, Pakeha/Maori or Self/Other. These relations and exchanges are more complex and singular than any dyadic form of logic can grasp. Urale’s temporal repetitions of the stereotype make these connections clearer as the Dusky Maiden image moves across the symbolic field.
of historical identity to effect a collective memory of contagion, implication and involvement. These repetitions reveal Self/Other distinctions as a false difference: as a difference whose force folds in upon itself. The task of a cultural politics of Faciality within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand is to trace these complex networks of interdependence that constitute the becoming-other of cultural identity and to sustain the experience of virtuality.

In the media event discussed earlier, Chris Trotter’s reliance on consensus politics and Moana Jackson’s recourse to restorative justice illustrates how identity politics reiterates the logic of dialectical differences that reproduce the same conditions. These restrictions and reterritorialisations repeat themselves in the camera obscura model of perception where the critical field of questions is redirected toward concerns of who a particular spectator “is”. The solution to this problem is not to attempt an escape from this double bind, but to make it twist and turn by moving through this becoming-same to a becoming-other which is simultaneously given in the event. Rather than questions concerning identity, this thesis has considered problems given in the cinematic event which consider such things as “who does Irma Vep think ‘we’ are”? Or “what is a hybrid mode of perception?” This thesis contributes to the intellectual lineage of postcolonial theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha, Rey Chow and Robert Young by attempting to insert movement into this double bind through Gilles Deleuze’s work on cinema. Where postcolonial theory conducts the necessary work of historicising and contextualising the development of racialised discourses of cultural difference and the messy discursive entanglements characterising neocolonial societies, this thesis argues for a necessary second movement towards self-problematising questions. As Moana Jackson’s experience in the televised debate and the critical reception of Once Were Warriors illustrates, the Native cannot “speak” in terms other than those given in the language of liberal humanism, and this speech is always already interpreted to his disadvantage. While Jackson relies upon the language of historical injustice to pursue a political form of biculturalism, Urale’s film affirms the diabolical forces of history and time and poses self-problematising questions: what does an immanent form of cultural difference look like? Subsequently, one could ask: what does a bicultural-becoming look like? To pose this question is to accentuate the logic of relations that occur between Maori, Pakeha and the infinite forces of the outside. To pose this question is not only to acknowledge the pastness of New Zealand’s neocolonial society, but also to affirm its potential future-oriented becomings and its immanent differences.

As Velvet Dreams reminds us, the affirmation of an immanent force of difference is a fraught and risky business that involves speaking in collective
assemblages that become equally as open to the forces of reterritorialisations as they are to the possibility of deterritorialisations. In the case of the repetitive image of the Dusky Maiden, the eternal return of her image transforms the ideal of passive, sensuous Pacific Island women into a tyrannical force of repetition that asserts a form of agency that is paradoxically given in a kitsch and clichéd representation. Thus, the more general idea of social justice is not a search for truth but an affirmation of the powers of the false, and a commitment to the sustained experience of virtualisation. The possibility of a cultural politics therefore becomes one of open-ended strategies that can take advantage of the forces on hand at any moment in time. A cultural politics of Faciality requires nothing more (or less?) than remaining alert to an event that might be susceptible to an intervention, to a repetition and to a twisting of a becoming-same in thought into a becoming-other in action.
Conclusions

This thesis has developed a conceptual framework to address the dynamic interchanges and interactions that occur when two faces of ostensibly different colour meet face to face. These encounters have occurred within the narrative structure of canonical and international art house cinemas as well as between spectator and image and actual political opponents encountering one another in a televised public debate. They have generated problems and potential concepts that challenge the conventional concept of cultural difference as one structured by an oppositional consciousness and these limits are the productive constraints that urge an affirmation of the differential nature of repetition itself. These events have helped to elaborate a concept of cultural difference as a fundamental cultural encounter that remains (in the words of Sam Weber) "open to the trace of the other in repetition even while confronting the same" (Weber 2000, p. 10). Conducting a Deleuzian theory of spectatorship in particular relation to the colonial stereotype has enabled the affirmation of an immanent form of difference that enfolds all elements of a cross-cultural encounter into mutual becomings. The ethical dimension of such encounters is to affirm thought over knowledge and to remain open to the vicissitude of chance. Mutual becomings do not erase the differences between social groups such as Maori and Pakeha in Aotearoa/New Zealand or Chinese and Anglo-Celtic Canadians; they affirm the future-oriented forces of immanent differences that animate each specific aspect of the socio-cultural assemblage. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p.188) and Frantz Fanon (1967, p.114) remind us, one cannot escape the Face, or the epidermal schema structuring such encounters. One must go through the Face and through the banal and repetitive forces of habitual recognition in order to affirm the potential seeds of difference immanent to those encounters. This conclusion outlines the contribution such a cultural politics of Faciality makes in the field of film, media and postcolonial studies.

The initial discussion of Once Were Warriors demonstrates how the critical reception of a film expresses the operative episteme which limits and enables what is possible to see and say about film, media and other cultural objects and their relations to the social world. This method elaborates an understanding of how an individual film circulates within a larger regime of signs than those of formal and aesthetic concerns. This practice is also a necessary part of how one approaches disciplinary fields such as film and media studies or postcolonial studies. Chapter One maps approaches to cultural difference given in postcolonial theory by using a model of perception derived
from film scholarship in order to examine the presuppositions determining the kinds of questions that structure the field. Chapter Two updates spectatorship theory in film using the postcolonial concept of hybridity to likewise examine the constraints of conventional close analysis of canonical films such as *Touch of Evil*. As my discussion of Crary’s work on the camera obscura model of perception demonstrates, the discursive regime of film studies is a constantly mobile and shifting terrain due to the revisionist practices pursued by contemporary theorists. This thesis contributes to such work by re-reading canonical film texts such as *Touch of Evil* and *The Birth of a Nation* through the contemporary concerns of postcolonial theories of hybridity. Alternatively, this work revisits the concept of colonial discourse using the counter-narrative of cinema’s emergence found in Crary’s work. In this approach I follow the work done by contemporary theorists such as Jonathan Crary who revisits the terrain of canonical film theory to re-read these discursive regimes from the point of view of present-day concerns. These current trends suggest how an interdisciplinary approach can examine the presuppositions framing critical questions in one field to consider how these concepts impact on work done in other areas. As this thesis demonstrates, the concept of hybridity given in postcolonial studies helps to reframe theories of spectatorship while the structuring model of perception utilised in postcolonial approaches to cross-cultural encounters can be destabilised by the contribution that Gilles Deleuze and Jonathan Crary make to the study of film. Understanding cinema as a social machine connecting seemingly disparate elements together in an assemblage of relations shifts the boundaries of genre, history and aesthetics structuring contemporary film and media studies. More specifically, the concept of Faciality and the event-space of spectatorship approaches cinema as a machinic assemblage that has particular implications for feminist and postcolonial film and media theory.

Cinema as a social machine examines the many modes of perception invoked by the logic of relations that are both textual and extra-textual. For example, the discussion of *Touch of Evil* approaches the interconnected relationship between race and gender as it is embodied in the figure of Charlton Heston by discussing the film character he portrays as well as his celebrity status and his role in other films. The discussion of *Irma Vep* takes a similar approach by examining how the film-within-a-film structure reiterates the logic surrounding the actual film production when Olivier Assayas’s infatuation with Maggie Cheung echoes that of the director within the film. This elaboration of a wider context out of which the film emerges allows a method of close analysis that places film aesthetics in a serial relationship with larger socio-cultural elements that complicate traditional formalist approaches to cinema. While this is nothing new in itself, the concept of Faciality as both a reterritorialising and
deterritorialising method of analysis emphasises the creative forces of interpretation and urges the cultural critic to consider how film aesthetics might contribute to vocabularies and concepts that can describe world-becoming-text and text-becoming-world processes. The challenge to think from the viewpoint of the swarming multitude that is spectatorship unsettles the more formal textual analyses of cinema that have aided its academic institutionalisation as a discipline. These creative efforts enable the elaboration of multiple modes of perception that can open up the dimensions of discussion concerning cultural differences by traversing the more general categories of gender, race, sexuality and class. The urgent need to open up new spaces from which to take up the problem of cultural difference motivates the logic of this thesis.

When one constructs a persona, or territory or when one takes up and extends the logic of relations given in the event-space of spectatorship, one is involved in experimentations with the real that shift the terrain of cross-cultural difference away from the language of personal responsibility, guilt and restorative justice. This tactic is deployed in the discussion of Double Happiness where the logic of relations given in the diegetic encounter between Mark and Jade extend into a discussion of the virtualised spectator invoked in the “Southern Belle” scene. This tactic allows a critical analysis of the interconnecting forces of race and femininity that produce the stereotype of Asian femininity. This tactic of highlighting the logic of relations over their representational and social effects may appear to be only possible for those anti-imperialist critics who have the luxury of an epidermal schema that allows them to shift and slide through this terrain. Indeed, Richard Dyer acknowledges this charge in his work on the concept of White (1997). Nonetheless, this thesis argues for less personal politics and more cultural critique. By constructing depersonalized territories and abodes, the anti-imperialist cultural critic provides the conditions necessary to shift the terrain of debate from recursive identity-based questions of “who can speak” to the more pragmatic concern of “what do ‘we’ do?” Because, as Dyer’s work makes explicit, the “responsibility” to engage with issues of cultural difference is not restricted to those who are figured as culturally different. More importantly, the deadlock between coloniser and colonised is no longer the most significant feature of images saturating the every-day spaces of contemporary culture. Can a dyadic theory of cultural difference address the local and global complexities between indigenous cultural iconography and transnational capital? As Gayatri Spivak (1988, p.273) points out, the international division of labour scrambles the colonialist logic of a centre/margin dyad. The question is, how does one respond to this challenge? Could such a theory address the recent Adidas advertising campaign featuring the New Zealand national rugby team (North and South December, 1999) that draws upon
Maori Warrior iconography without recourse to the language of authenticity or to discourses of the nation-state designating local identity? The seductive aesthetics of this campaign champion the expression of Maori masculinity as much as they play upon a particular form of violence which echoes the alcohol abuse and domestic violence attending any large-scale rugby match. Its mode of address crosses gendered, racialised and nationalistic boundaries that do not follow an easily decipherable dyadic logic. A cultural politics of Faciality might examine these different social, cultural and economic flow between race, gender, nationality and capital by considering who the campaign thinks “we” are as a national and international identity.

Less personal politics and more cultural critique, this is the catch-phrase of a cultural politics of Faciality. Not “who can speak?” but “what do ‘we’ do?” A cultural politics of Faciality privileges part-objects and connects these elements to disparate terrains and domains to build working assemblages that can decode and recode the spaces left by the more monolithic categories of race, gender, sexuality, nationality and class. Who is the “we” and what do “we” look like in representational and logical terms? This posing of self-problematising questions has implications for how one addresses national cinemas and Hollywood aesthetics. A cultural politics of Faciality might examine the Faces of places and nation-states that become disorganised bodies of signs when put into relation with more global forms of aesthetics such as Hollywood cinema. A cultural politics of Faciality might examine how a national cinema connects to global and international aesthetics and economic flows and how these flows transform the concept of a nation-state into a local-becoming-global nexus of relations. What of the new subjectivities invoked in the global aesthetics of Hollywood and how might they express the becoming-woman of contemporary gender relations? A similar Deleuzian approach which concentrates more specifically on the disorganised body of signs designating gender, race and national identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand would be a timely project given that women play a significant role in that country’s mediated public sphere. One can not help but wonder what a cultural politics of Faciality might make of the public persona of this country’s current woman Prime Minister as she is filmed and photographed visiting national and international sites that commemorate the nation’s intensely masculinist Anzac Day celebrations.

Faciality, as a conceptual framework linking elements from diverse fields, also highlights the role played by the body in acts of perception. This embodied theory of spectatorship, while simultaneously acknowledging the sometimes banal and sometimes violent effects of epidermal differences, affirms the potential of this painful “crack” to highlight the play of surfaces and depth accompanying any cross-cultural encounter. If
this painful crack produces a certain sense of self-reflexivity for the cultural critic, it is reflexivity as reterritorialisation which simultaneously produces deterritorialised flows exceeding the event. Faciality affirms a surface politics that follows the logic of relations to produce actions and assemblages from which virtual images of thought might be actualised. A cultural critic who pursues a cultural politics of Faciality does not follow the goal of Truth or justice and is not concerned with being simultaneously duped and non-duped. A cultural critic of Faciality follows the disorganised bodies of signs given in the colonial stereotype to affirm new social assemblages that simultaneously express the past and future oriented forces of difference and repetition. To affirm the dual powers of this stereotype is to enter into new becomings in cultural criticism and in thought itself.


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Filmography


