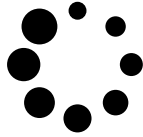


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The fixed image in cinema as a potential altered vision strategy

by Luca Acquarelli

Still image
Photography
Hallucination
Antonioni
Bergman

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→ Altered states

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Abstract

The article intends to propose some analyses of a possible formal occurrence of “altered states” in cinema: the stopping of the flow of the cinematographic image in a still image. Through some theoretical references (Metz, Bazin, Lyotard, Deleuze, Bellour, Barthes, Montani) I will try to understand if this kind of formal occurrence can be constituted as a figure of the altered state. The relationship between cinema and photography will be particularly explored, starting with films such as Antonioni’s *Blow Up* and Bergman’s *Persona*. The hallucinatory effect will thus be discovered not as opposed to that of reality, but a dialectic will be constructed between the two.

[Still image](#)

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Dream as “authentic” absurdity, photography as “true” hallucination

Like hallucinations, dreams are not the far end of the reality scale but rather share some of its features. Metz has argued that dream sequences are always barely credible in narrative films precisely because films struggle to represent the “authentic absurdity” of dreams. Indeed, dreams seem to combine the reality effect with a hallucinatory patina that film dynamics find hard to hold together. The most traditional enunciative shifts introducing the passage between “reality”’s diegesis and that of dreams, such as unfocused borders or images in black and white as opposed to colour, are indeed ineffective expedients for the purposes of rendering this “authentic absurdity”, this double binary between the authenticating effect, like perhaps realist photography, and the game of the absurd, that injection of perceptual intensity that undermines the reality principle.

Weaving a somewhat daring theoretical thread, this oxymoronic terminology does not seem to me to be very far removed from that used by one of realism’s most famous theorists – and therefore a very long way away from Metz – André Bazin who, speaking of the use of photography as a privileged surrealist technique, conceives of photography’s potential for creating “a true hallucination”. While the realist photography ontology has been widely criticised, less space has been given to this hallucinatory residue of photography, which occurs even when it seems to adhere to a realist aesthetic.

It should be stressed that the dream hypothesis introduced with Metz is at the heart of one of cinema’s theoretical paradigms. Without dwelling on all aspects of this dimension, it will be useful here to digress into the dream-cinema relationship before introducing certain analyses of this article’s central theme, namely the presence of the fixed, especially photographic, image within film, which immobilises its movement, as a possible instant of altered vision. Metz has thoroughly enquired into the epistemological

potential of the oneiric vision, through the Freudian prism. In *Psychoanalysis and Cinema. The Imaginary Signifier*,¹ condensation, displacement and secondary elaboration are the main processes of the oneiric “signifier” explored by this French theorist as tools for the interpretation of cinematographic language. For Metz, the image’s “affinity” with the unconscious and its oneiric imagination increases its exposure to these processes as compared to language, without the latter being immune to them. Elements of film grammar such as superimposition and cross-fading – the former being closer to displacement, the latter to condensation – are key examples of this affinity. These elements testify to a survival of the primary process that, for instance, tends to abolish the discontinuity between objects. These are emergencies, aberrations within a product of secondary elaboration, such as the narrative development of a film or the attempt to narrate a dream upon awakening, the latter being forced, at least partially, to favour narrative logic at the expense of the ambiguous and nebulous dimension of the primary process. *Entstellung*, the oneiric deformation caused by the power of unconscious impulses, has thus also become a theoretical paradigm for thinking in images of a sort of energy that is not played out in forms and accumulates in fragments and temporary disfiguration.

Although Freud wrote that “dreams hallucinate”,² the kinship between dreams and hallucinations is anything but close, starting from the fact that the former occurs in a sleeping state and the latter in waking state. Moments of transition between wakefulness and sleep are often the scene of phenomena testifying to the kinship between the form the two experiences take: so-called hypnagogic and hypnopompic hallucinations. This is not the place to go into this matter in depth, but we might say that these two dimensions, dreams and hallucinations, may be the two areas where the fixed image in cinema, as viewed in this article, tends to position itself in dialectical movement.

1 C. Metz, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema. The Imaginary Signifier* (London: Palgrave, 1982).

2 S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. J. Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010): 79.

A few case studies will give us a clearer understanding of the type of visual alterations we are talking about.

Stopping the cinematic flow: intermediality and a-cinema

The hypothesis discussed in this article is designed to examine whether there are other cinematic strategies capable of expressing visual alterity as regards narrating the flow of cinematic images – an alterity whose intensity borders on the hallucinatory – and, in particular, the alterity that is generated by the use of photography in cinema as a standstill in movement. The film theorist Raymond Bellour has, on several occasions, taken an interest in the interruption of movement in cinema, when it is, in various ways, inhabited by the photography *hantise*.

In one short essay, in particular, his aim is to promote an, as yet hypothetical, study, in Bellour's own words, whose interest is the "traitement de l'immobile dans cet art du mouvement qu'est le cinéma".³ Here this film theorist analyses these moments of arrested movement as privileged instants of fragmented time within a cinematic time conceived of as unitary: "des points de transcendance, avérés, reconduits à travers les ellipses, les décompositions, les immobilisations qui les traversent".⁴ Bellour's insistence on privileged movement is also a way of questioning the view that sees cinema as a system of reproduction of "whatever movement", of the "equidistant instant" chosen to give the effect of continuity. In Bellour's analysis, this change of rhythm is also linked to a change in film's narrative dimension. Following and taking up his analysis, this article's aim is to examine cases in which this immobility interrupting the flow of images is, in its various forms, bound up with a hallucinatory state, of a dreamlike or other nature.

3 R. Bellour, "L'interruption, l'instant", in R. Bellour, *L'Entre-Images: Photo. Cinéma. Vidéo* (Paris: Mimésis, 2020): 131.

4 Ibid.: 133.

A fixed camera on a long take where movement is reduced to a minimum can restore this effect of immobility rendered by the emergence of a *virtually* still image in a 24 frames-per-second flow. But in actual fact, as Deleuze explains so well with regard to Ozu's still lifes, this is a completely different frame of mind:

At the point where the cinematographic image most directly confronts the photo, it also becomes most radically distinct from it. Ozu's still lifes endure, have a duration, over ten seconds of the vase: this duration of the vase is precisely the representation of that which endures, through the succession of changing states.⁵

However, when photography's fixity interrupts the cinematic flow, what we are left with is an alternative configuration. As Roland Barthes pointed out in his famous *Camera Lucida*:

The cinema participates in this domestication of photography — at least the fictional cinema, precisely the one said to be the seventh art; a film can be mad by artifice, can present the cultural signs of madness, it is never mad by nature (by iconic status); it is always the very opposite of an hallucination; it is simply an illusion; its vision is oneiric, not ecmnesic.⁶

If this opposition between photography and cinema where hallucination is concerned may indeed seem too general, it seems to me that the French theorist sees a certain specificity in the still image in relation to the moving image.

In fact, this thought seems to be echoed in Barthes' article on obtuse meaning theorised from a few frames of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible (I)* (1944). Barthes realises that the starting point in his analysis is the frame which, although all film originates from it, cinema itself seems

5 G. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson, R. Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989): 17.

6 R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. R. Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

to forget in the amnesia of its 24 images-per-second flow. Paradoxically, frames seem very different in nature from the film they are part of: the possibility to observe a film frame offers a totally different epistemology as compared to when it is lost in the flow of the movement of animation.⁷

In the 1970s, Jean-François Lyotard theorised “a-cinema”, namely a cinema which goes beyond the narrative discourse of diegesis and the normalised image that follows on from it. A-cinema is not intended to be a negation of cinema, but a dimension in which it is the power of the image which takes precedence over its form, giving rise to image “pyrotechnics”.⁸ This French philosopher refers to two ways of complying with the pyrotechnical requirement: immobility and excess movement. He examines John Avildsen’s film *Joe* (1970), comparing the only two scenes featuring this arrhythmia and bound up with the film’s deeper narrative, namely the impossibility of the father’s incest with his daughter:

Ces deux effets, l’un d’immobilisation, l’autre d’excès de mobilité, sont donc obtenus en dérogation des règles de représentation, qui exigent que le mouvement réel, imprimé à 24 images/seconde sur la pellicule, soit restitué à la projection à la même vitesse.⁹

One of the examples of immobilisation described by Lyotard – this paralysis in the image that provokes the most intense agitation – is most effectively embodied by the *tableau vivant*, linking this *dispositif* to the libidinal energy dimension that lies at the heart of his broader theory of the

7 Barthes adds: “For a long time, I have been intrigued by the phenomenon of being interested and even fascinated by photos from a film (outside a cinema, in the pages of *Cahiers du cinéma*) and of then losing everything of those photos (not just the captivation but the memory of the image) when once inside the viewing room – a change which can even result in a complete reversal of values”. R. Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1997): 65-66.

8 Lyotard takes the idea from Adorno who claimed that the only great art is that of the artificers: “la pyrotechnie simulerait à la perfection la consommation stérile des énergies de la jouissance” and then talking about currents that could meet pyrotechnic needs: “Ces deux pôles sont l’immobilité et l’excès de mouvement. En se laissant attirer vers ces antipodes, le cinéma cesse insensiblement d’être une force de l’ordre ; il produit de vrais, c’est-à-dire vains, simulacres, des intensités jouissives, au lieu d’objets consommables-productifs”. J.-F. Lyotard, *Des dispositifs pulsionnels* (Paris: Galilée, 1994): 60.

9 *Ibid.*: 63.

figural.¹⁰ Immobilisation, immobility, stopping on a fixed image within the movement of the film: these are all effects that come close to the study hypotheses discussed here.

But another aspect can usefully be underlined. When cinema mediates another kind of image, re-mediation and intermediality is generally talked of. This theoretical dimension has been approached from various points of view: Montani's book speaks of intermedial aesthetics as places of "authentication" process activation.¹¹ The term "intermedial" is used here as a philosophical option summarised in the first pages of the book: it is

only by starting from an active comparison between different technical formats of the image (optical and digital, for example) and between its different discursive forms (fictional and documentary, for example), that one can do justice to the irreducible otherness of the real world and the testimony of facts, (media and non-media facts), happening in it.¹²

If doubt is clearly cast on the problem of intermediality by the hypothesis of this article, let us try to focus on the specific case of the still image alone, disregarding authentication but rather proposing it as a case of visual alteration. That is to say, authentication as the result of a montage between different media can – as we shall see in one of the cases of still image cinema shown below – be understood as visual alteration, in accordance with the topic dealt within this journal issue.

10 For an interdisciplinary study of the figural dimension of image analysis, allow me a reference to the collective volume, L. Acquarelli, ed., *Au prisme du figural: Le sens des images entre forme et force* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015).

11 The term "authentication" can be problematic because it resonates semantically with authenticity and, therefore, truth. Montani immediately disambiguated the term, distancing it from this risk of confusion: "Authenticating, from this point of view, is akin to 'rerealizing', rehabilitating the image to the relationship with its irreducible other, with its radical and elusive off-screen". P. Montani, *L'immaginazione intermediale* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2010): 14. My translation.

12 Ibid.: 13. My translation.

The shifting fixity of photography in cinema and its hallucinatory effect. From *Blow Up* to *Persona*

In one of the films most frequently cited in textbooks on the photography-cinema relationship, Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow Up* (1966), it is the dialectic between the photographic medium as authenticating evidence and hallucinatory instrument which plays centre stage. The use of photography as evidence is apparently the main theme, but it is precisely photographic enlargements aimed at visualising the evidence that leads our vision towards hallucination rather than authentication.

The first scene is set in an anonymous park in which the main character Thomas is taking photographs of what seems to be the prudishly amorous games of a couple in the middle of the lawn, with a paparazzo's curiosity and almost for fun. The whole scene is played back to viewers in a sequence in which Thomas, now back in his flat, is hunting out detail in the prints from the negatives he has just developed. The spectator plays the same investigative game as Thomas, scrutinising the black and white images of the scene seen shortly before in the diegetic reality of the film. At a certain point, Thomas ceases to act as the viewer's delegate, and the frame is entirely taken up by the images (Fig. 1 and 2).



Fig. 1. Michelangelo Antonioni, *Blow Up*, 1966. Still from film.



Fig. 2. Michelangelo Antonioni, *Blow Up*, 1966. Still from film.

We leave behind the narrative time frame of the film and move into a space-time otherness in which sound reproduces the background noise of the leaves blowing in the wind. A memory? The authentication of a memory? Or rather a hallucination? This exiting from the film, a sequence made up of 15 shots, lasting just under a minute in total, establishes a further space-time dimension. The succession of shots apparently follows a “detective” logic, but the leaving behind of diegetic time and the photographic texture, in the sense of figurative density – profoundly different from the cinematographic texture preceding and following on from it – and the immobility of the figuration, confer a different iconic nature on this sequence. Not only does it shift viewers into a space and time otherness, but it also seems to position itself within the film as a sequence whose diverse legibility gradually contaminates the rest of the film’s shots, suspending its already weak narrative currents.

The photo designed to “indicate” the corpse, in its exaggerated enlargement, resembles an abstract painting (Fig. 3), showing nothing but its support and its texture and, moreover, the film urges us to compare it with the paintings of Thomas’s friend Bill, an abstract figurative painter (Fig. 4).¹³



Fig. 3. Michelangelo Antonioni, *Blow Up*, 1966. Still from film.



Fig. 4. Michelangelo Antonioni, *Blow Up*, 1966. Still from film.

13 In Fig. 4, the female character in a dialogue with Thomas explicitly says that the photograph looks to her like one of Bill’s paintings.

In an earlier scene, Bill tries to describe his paintings as follows:

They don't mean anything when I do them. Just a mess. Afterwards I find something to hang on to. Like that...like that leg. Then it sorts itself out...and adds up. It's like finding a clue in a detective story.

The abstract picture prefigures the search for evidence in the photo. But what if the picture itself is abstract? Thomas looks for fresh evidence of the murder seen in the photographs, first returning alone to the site of the alleged crime and finding the body. When he tries to convince another friend of his to look for proof of the existence of the corpse, he is not believed. No one seems to care about the possible referent of the photograph, as if the photograph itself was pushing for a return to Lacanian reality within a society hypnotised by fashionable images which no one wants to face up to. When Thomas returns to the park for a second time to photograph the corpse up close, it has disappeared. Initially examined as reassuring ontological realism, the photograph is actually the place where memory and hallucination break through into the reality effect generated by cinematic movement.

Ingmar Bergman's film *Persona* (1966), which Bellour himself included in the above-mentioned article, is an interesting still image in cinema case study. It takes various forms, first occupying the whole screen, then as an image displayed as a photograph within a diegetic action, then as a photograph explored by the camera, and then as a still image juxtaposing close-ups of the two women.

The film focuses virtually in its entirety on the relationship between a patient, Elisabeth Vogler (Liv Ullmann) suffering from voluntary aphasia, and a nurse, Alma (Bibi Andersson). This caring relationship becomes increasingly intimate once the two women go to the beachfront house the clinic's therapist has advised Elisabeth to recuperate in. The central theme of the film becomes the double, in the Freudian sense, as the two women's relationship gets gradually more psychologically complex. While on one

hand Elisabeth's silence forces Alma to confide the secrets of her life, Alma herself, after secretly reading a letter from Elisabeth to the therapist which she feels ridicules her, becomes increasingly irritable and begins to despise Elisabeth for what she sees as her selfish and corrupt nature. At the same time Alma begins to feel guilty for having an abortion and to identify with Elisabeth who seems unable to love her child, having rejected it from birth. Ingmar Bergman builds the film on this progressive identification, in a crescendo that culminates in something close to a mirror image between the two figures before they are juxtaposed into a sort of hybrid face. The dizzying nature of the double is triggered even before the two characters come on the scene when, in a prologue in a morgue, a child gets up and moves towards a close-up of a woman's photograph to examine it with his hand. The facial features of the two women – who we later discover to be Elisabeth and Alma – in this seemingly fixed photographic close-up gradually become less sharp until a subtle transition occurs between them (Fig. 5 and 6).



Fig. 5. Ingmar Bergman, *Persona*, 1966. Still from film.



Fig. 6. Ingmar Bergman, *Persona*, 1966. Still from film.

Although it is the pre-prologue that “disrupts” the linearity of the whole film’s narrative (a tight montage of figures juxtaposed in disparate ways, sometimes following a meta-cinematic theme), the changing portrait sequence is charged with such great power as to expand its reach into the rest of the narrative. The photograph of Elisabeth’s son (Fig. 7) is a further key element, a sort of narrative accelerator, snatched from Elisabeth herself and then kept by her to be reassembled in the scene where the logic of the double between the two women reaches its climax.



Fig. 7. Ingmar Bergman, *Persona*, 1966. Still from film.

But it is a historical snapshot, an emblem of Nazi violence and its humiliation of its victims, the photo of the so-called “Warsaw child” representing the greatest perceptive caesura. In the year *Persona* was released, although knowledge of Nazi atrocities was still generally not widespread, the photo had already been used a decade earlier in Alain Resnais’ *Nuit et Brouillard* (1956) and was already emblematic of the Holocaust, after it was used as a poster for a first exhibition on Nazism’s calculated ferocity in Berlin *Die Vergangenheit mahnt*. The photo as a diegetic object (Fig. 8) casually found by Elisabeth inside a book, and placed under a bedside lamp to make it easier to see, absorbs the entire frame accompanied by a strident note in a crescendo of intensity lasting 30 seconds in which the different shots blot out the photo’s details (Fig. 9).



Fig. 8. Ingmar Bergman, *Persona*, 1966. Still from film.

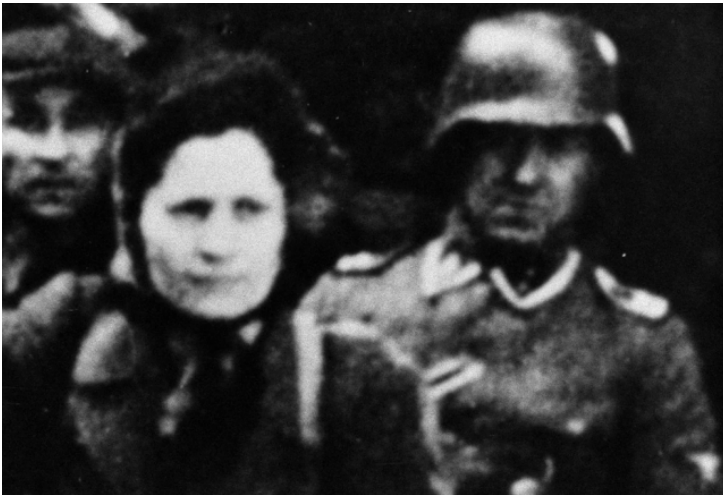


Fig. 9. Ingmar Bergman, *Persona*, 1966. Still from film.

A historical document which was already a symbol of Nazi violence (but also its unrepresentability), then, breaks into the psychological story of Elisabeth and Alma, isolated from the world and the rest of humanity, with its documentary but also anthropological load: the gestures and glances associated with humiliation, the executioners' and victims' faces and expressions standing out around the child's frightened eyes and his condition as a totally defenceless victim. Whilst the rightness of this choice might be questioned, if this intermedial treatment of the archive can more or less "authenticate" the photo itself,¹⁴ there is no doubt whatsoever that this half-minute in which photographic fixity takes over from cinematic movement triggers a perceptive reaction. Not only is the spectator suddenly projected into traumatic memory of Nazism, but the film's photographic standstill triggers a sort of perceptive shock, a dissonance between the flow of diegetic reality and the condensation of the photographic gaze and its details.

14 See P. Montani, *L'immaginazione intermediale*.

Another case of intermediality brings the historical documentary archive into the two women's seemingly disconnected-from-the-world narrative: a televised news extract about the Buddhist monk who committed suicide by setting himself on fire during the Vietnamese dictatorship supported by the American government. In contrast to the photo, this TV montage showing the excruciating image of his self-immolating body remains diegetic, in a first shot because it is framed by the television set and, in a second one, in which it takes up the whole frame, because the television commentator's voice-off preserves the continuity of the film's temporal rhythm. The turmoil in this sequence, both Elisabeth's who, in alternating montage, brings her hand to her mouth and cries out in fright, and the viewer's, who may identify with her feelings, is part of the continuity of filmic perception. The arrest scene in the photo, on the other hand, seems to be charged with excessive otherness, challenging the film's narrative and rhythmic structure.

Moreover, the scene following the photograph of the Warsaw ghetto marks an acceleration in the ambiguity between reality and hallucination in which Elisabeth's husband visits and mistakes Alma for his wife.

The film's last prolonged fixedness (Fig. 10) does not take the form of a photographic support but retains the very nature of the film, suggesting a photographic standstill, first prefigured by a juxtaposition of the two halves of the two women's respective faces. The hallucinatory feel of the exchange of personalities is complete and could only take the form of a final and more experimental freeze-frame.



Fig. 10. Ingmar Bergman, *Persona*, 1966. Still from film.

A cinema made of photographs, the cine-photo-romance *La Jetée*

These two analyses would seem to support my hypothesis that the presence of a photograph in a film – especially when it extends to the entire frame, breaking the rhythm of the moving image – provokes a visual alterity that generates a reality-hallucination ambiguity. It is difficult to generalise this hypothesis because each film has its own complexity and internal structure but it may, in any case, be a valid element of comparison for future analyses. I will bring this article to a close with an analysis of a film that brings us back to the dream considerations I made at the beginning of the article. Although it resembles a film, *La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962) is, as the director declares in the opening credits, a photo-novel.¹⁵

The film is, in fact, constructed around the montage of photographic images only, often juxtaposed by means of a cross-fade, creating overlaps. Dream and memory interpenetrate in reminiscence: a survivor of the Third World War is taken prisoner and subjected to experiments, using his vivid imagination, to open up time gaps with the past and then with the future, in order to obtain the technologies needed to reactivate an uninhabitable world replete with destruction and radioactivity. This apocalyptic environment is the background to a psychoanalytical dimension of traumatic time. The beginning of the film is clear in this sense; the voice over reads: “Ceci est l’histoire d’un homme marqué par une image d’enfance”; later it will be spoken of as a “scène qui le troubla par sa violence”.

15 It is curious that Barthes, who wrote his text on the photogram and obtuse sense in 1970 (already quoted extensively at the beginning of this article), does not mention this film, especially if we consider a note in his text referring directly to the photo-novel, on popular culture magazines: “Here are other ‘arts’ which combine still (or at least drawing) and story, diegesis – namely the photo-novel and the comic-strip. I am convinced that these ‘arts’, born in the lower depths of high culture, possess theoretical qualifications and present a new signifier (related to the obtuse meaning). This is acknowledged as regards the comic strip but I myself experience this slight trauma of *signifiante* faced with certain photo-novels: ‘*their stupidity touches me*’ (which could be a certain definition of obtuse meaning)”. R. Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*: 66. If we are dealing here with an entirely different kind of photo-novel (surely not touching for its stupidity!), it seems to me that Barthes’ reflections on obtuse sense could also apply to *La Jétée*.

The gap between image and scene explains the problem of the difficult figuration of childhood memories. An image affecting a child, then probably forgotten and stored away in the unconscious then emerging once again in a dream, in the film's narration, in a memory of the past heterodirected by the executioners' experiments.

The key to the heterogeneity of the traumatic time grafted onto the images is once again present in the words recited by the voice-off:

Rien ne distinguent le souvenir des autres moments. Ce n'est que plus tard qui se font reconnaître, à leurs cicatrices. Ce visage [Fig. 11] qui devait être la seule image du temps de paix à traverser le temps de guerre. Il se demanda longtemps s'il l'avait vraiment vu ou s'il avait créé ce moment de douceur pour étayer le moment de folie qu'allait venir.



Fig. 11. Chris Marker, *La Jetée*, 1962. Still from film

Memory becomes image only *après-coup*, re-signifying certain moments, reabsorbing them around images. The *La Jétée* images indeed seem to have this patina of *après-coup* re-signification. The sharpness of their black and white with vivid contrasts is only opacified by cross-fade transitions. In any case, even in their transparency, all the images seem to be inhabited by this traumatic time, somewhere between memory, dream and hallucination. A very brief moving sequence suddenly breaks

into the montage of still images when, in the intimacy of her bed, the woman in the memory wakes up, opens her eyes and directs her gaze into the camera (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12. Chris Marker, *La Jetée*, 1962. Still from film

It is a sudden enunciative change that seems designed to awaken us from the torpor induced by this story told through salient points, fixed images where the forces of the image in movement converge, as if absorbed, in an oneiric iconology that barely opens up a gap in traumatic time.

This *douceur scene*, immersed in a distant childhood memory in the context of the children taken onto the *jetée* at Orly airport to watch the planes take off, is none other than the image preceding the trauma: the child who, on the *jetée*, sees the murder of his adult self, having been followed through time by one of his executioners to kill him (Fig. 13 and 14).



Fig. 13. Chris Marker, *La Jetée*, 1962. Still from film



Fig. 14. Chris Marker, *La Jetée*, 1962. Still from film

While it is clear that the *La Jetée* theme lends itself to a hallucination rhetoric, it seems to me that the decision to use still images may make this film an extreme case corroborating this article's thesis.

Conclusions

This short paper suggests that the boundary between the transparency of the reality effect and the opacity of hallucination is labile and porous. We have seen that cinema, which immobilises 24-frames-per-second movement in favour of the fixed image, is one of the artistic strategies that seem to bring in the complexity of this boundary and this dialectic. As we have seen, this hypothesis is difficult to generalise, but it seems to me that it deserves further study in the broader field of intermediality and its effects. The three case studies analysed here bring in some additional elements, differentiating in particular cases in which photos are inserted into the film's diegesis (in *Blow Up* in the various scenes in Thomas's studio, in *Persona* with the photo of the child but also, in a certain way, with the large portraits of the two women) and when they replace the film's diegesis itself. The latter seem to highlight the hallucinatory power of the still image in cinema with greater intensity.

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