

**Defining Subjective Cinema through
Defamiliarization and Cinematic Excess: A
Neoformalist Approach**

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the idea of defamiliarization and the concept of cinematic excess as two key components in the formation of this paper's definition of Subjective Cinema. Through this, it lays out a certain type of self-reflexive film viewing experience and explicates through cognitive theory the mental processes that facilitate it. It dissects and makes use of the Neoformalist framework and understanding of the filmic structure in order to elucidate how and where Subjective Cinema comes to fruition within any given film. This paper features various films, as case studies, in pointing to examples of cinematic excess and defamiliarization with as much a systematic and categorical approach as possible given the widespread nature of the topic at hand. By the end, this paper intends to present a solid academic avenue through which one can perceive films anew and appreciate alternative modes of film practice that fill the art form with wonder and intrigue.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and background information

This research paper explores the concept of defamiliarization and cinematic excess in Subjective Cinema, as it will be defined by this paper. It uses a Neo-formalist approach to lay bare the filmic structure in order to fruitfully discuss how and where within this structure cinematic excess and defamiliarization occurs. Furthermore, it refers to cognitive theory to explain the effect of these concepts on the viewer and the various cognitive processes when encountering Subjective Cinema. Lastly, this paper comments on the broader value that Subjective Cinema holds in not only the individual film viewing experience, but for film viewing culture as a whole.

Defamiliarization was made famous by the seminal article by Viktor Shklovsky: *Art as Technique* (1917). Shklovsky was part of the Russian Formalist movement in the 1920's, a key influence on the Neo-formalist tradition as it is known today. The dominant post-war evaluations of *Art as Technique* lead to some serious misreadings due to its close relation to literature (van den Oever 2010:33). Revised in today's academic field, it can rather be seen as a radical change in the way art should be studied: from the *perspective of* techniques and their perceptual impact, and not as a form to be interpreted (van den Oever 2010:33). According to *Art as Technique* the purpose of art is to defamiliarize the world from our habituated perceptions and to make us discover the world anew. Defamiliarization always has an effect of estrangement, but not all estrangement is self-reflective (Kovács 2010:178). In other words, there are various types of defamiliarization and these will be reviewed in the following chapters along with a more in depth look at the type of defamiliarization that accompanies cinematic excess in forming Subjective Cinema. In very rudimentary terms, a certain self-reflective defamiliarization is the first step and cinematic excess the next step in forming Subjective Cinema. A brief description of cinematic excess, are those elements that indicate a lack or gap in narrative or stylistic motivation: at this point where motivation fails, excess begins and perceptual salience is created (Thompson 1974:58). Another point to keep in mind is that cinematic excess is always defamiliarizing, but defamiliarization is not always equal to excess.

The general idea of excess in cinema goes all the way back to early writings by the Surrealists and Impressionists, as they tried to form theories around the aspects of the film image that seemed to escape description: the ineffable as it were (Gutierrez 2009: i). With the advent of film studies trying to gain traction in the academic field, theorists like Roland Barthes and Stephen Heath used different approaches in reinterpreting the idea of excess: Barthes with semiology and Heath in terms of narrative. This paper makes use of Kristin Thompson's method of neoformalism in elucidating the concept of excess. Her essay *The Concept of Cinematic Excess* (1977) first appeared in *Cine-Tracts* journal quite early in her career as a film theorist, seeing that her first scholarly book, *Eisenstein's "Ivan the Terrible": A Neoformalist Analysis* was published in 1981. In 1988, she used the same framework of neoformalism for her book, *Breaking the Glass Armor*, solidifying her identification as a Neoformalist. Thompson never revisited the term she coined *cinematic excess* in her later writings and it also doesn't appear in her prolific co-written series, alongside David Bordwell, *Film Art: An Introduction*. However, Thompson's article on cinematic excess has been referred to in numerous scholarly articles in analysing various films and directors, further testifying to its validity and innate appeal.

Taking cognitive theory's role into account is important in exploring the notion of Subjective Cinema because it doesn't entail finding specific meaning in film or concrete interpretation; rather it deals with the psychological and emotional effects that film exercises over the viewer. Evolutionary-Cognitive Film Studies was introduced in the mid-1980's with film scholars such as David Bordwell, Ted Grodal and George Currie all becoming involved in a new interdisciplinary approach to film studies. Although a categorical breakdown will be given of how Subjective Cinema is formed, the variations and combinations of techniques are practically endless and not directly concerned with cognitive theory. Rather, cognitive explanations will be given of the universal effects that occur in Subjective Cinema. It is a general theory of aesthetic perception that allows a larger framework for exercising middle-level, piecemeal studies of specific film phenomena. Therefore, putting forth a universal account of what occurs in the viewer's cognitive experience of Subjective Cinema, not only helps one understand it more clearly, but can potentially elucidate the larger place it holds in cinema and the value of it. Professor András Bálint Kovács at the Institute of Art & Communication at ELTE supports the above paragraph with the following quote:

Now, defamiliarization can be an interesting area of research in cognitive theory since it can be viewed as a psychological effect a film exercises over the viewer: the circumstances, conditions and process of which can be researched or analyzed by a cognitively slanted aesthetic-analytical approach as done by Carroll or Allen...I believe it to be the most unified and virulent theoretical paradigm that presently exists in film theory. I say this accepting that other vast areas of film studies like different disciplines of interpretation, such as cultural studies, political, psychoanalytical or feminist criticism, still provide interesting insights for understanding the meaning of films.

1.2 Theoretical framework

This research paper investigates the phenomena of Subjective Cinema. I will start this investigation by introducing the concept of *defamiliarization*, due to the central role it plays in Subjective Cinema. A succinct definition of *defamiliarization* is the process of taking that which is usually automatically perceived and transforming it through various filmic techniques in order to de-habitualise it, thereby restoring salience to the act of perceiving. The term was made famous by Viktor Shklovsky in his seminal article, *Art as Technique* (1917) wherein he explains,

...art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object: the object is not important...

As expressed in this quote with the phrase, "to make forms difficult", *defamiliarization* puts emphasis on the formal structures at play within a film. As a Russian Formalist, Shklovsky was one of the leading members, and through his writings advocated the formalist view that,

... because we cannot force ourselves to see, to read, and not to "recognize" the familiar word. If we have to define specifically "poetic" perception and artistic perception in general, then we suggest this definition: "Artistic" perception is that perception in which we experience form - perhaps not form alone, but certainly form (Shklovsky 1914)

In making this study relevant and moving from Russian Formalism onwards, the appropriate, broader theoretical framework is Neoformalism. Both these fall under a formalist tradition, as it is a program for the structural analysis and appreciation of films as aesthetic objects. In the mid-

to late- 1980's Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, in a polemic to the strong interpretive tradition that dominated film studies (Thompson-Jones 2009:131-132) , formulated an updated poetic that can be seen as conceptual frameworks, aesthetic approaches, a set of assumptions, a heuristic perspective, and a way of asking questions (Bordwell 2008:20). The key concepts taken from Russian Formalism include defamiliarization, syuzhet and fabula, background and foreground, and the dominant. These are,

...linked to a series of basic assumptions about the nature of the work of art, constructional principles, and the activities of both the spectator and the artist that lead to the "one approach, many methods" governing the analyses elaborated within this framework (Kessler 2010:63) .

This approach also allows one to discover regulative principles within a number of films and constructs a set of general propositions elucidating those principles (Rushton & Bettinson 2010:133) - an apt approach in defining a specific type of cinema.

Further motivation for using the Neoformalist tradition, is its direct relation to the next piecemeal theory used to formulate Subjective Cinema. *The Concept of Cinematic Excess* (1977) was written by Kristin Thompson, a leading figure in Neoformalism. Her article is based on and elaborates from Roland Barthes' essay *The Third Meaning* (1977). The following text puts forth the basic idea from which cinematic excess springs:

Following essentially, I believe, in the direction opened by the Russian Formalists, these critics have suggested that films can be seen as a struggle of opposing forces. Some of these forces strive to unify the work, to hold it together sufficiently that we may perceive and "follow" its structures. Outside of any such structures lie those aspects of the work which are not contained by its unifying forces — the "excess" (Thompson 1977:54).

Throughout *The Concept of Cinematic Excess*, Thompson discusses the relation between content, form and style in terms of where excess can possibly be situated, as well as the interplay between plot and story. Although Barthes was extensively descriptive in his rendering of cinematic excess, he failed where Thompson succeeded: in putting forward a set of general devices where excess tends to occur, but is not limited to. In fact, Barthes' essay focused on the material aspects of film, analysing only still photographs, but his conclusions are still applicable to film (Thompson 1977:55).

The final contribution to this study's theoretical framework moves it into an interdisciplinary approach. An analysis through cognitive theory provides an insightful description of the viewer's emotional experiences and mental processes when encountering excess in a film. A cognitive approach also validates the concept of Subjective Cinema by showing its recognition in more than one field of study. Since Subjective Cinema is rooted in the idea of it falling outside of concrete interpretation and meaning-making, cognitive theory is conducive, seeing that it provides a universal answer as to how it occurs in a logical and scientific way. Though the aim is to create a universal account, even cognitive theory has its own discrete branches. The main article used in this study is *The PECMA Flow: A General Model of Visual Aesthetics* (2006) by Torben Grodal.

1.2.1 Case studies

In terms of providing examples of Subjective Cinema, it would make sense to refer to various moments in a number of separate films that characterise Subjective Cinema in order to give a holistic view. Another reason for examining multiple films is that there are a plethora of devices and techniques which exist within the filmic structure that function as such, and so, referring only to one film would be insufficient in covering these. Jacques Rivettes' *Celine and Julie Go Boating* (1974), will undergo the most detailed analysis and act as the paper's main case study. Admittedly, the reason for choosing this film is to an extent based on personal preference. There are, however, many more cogent reasons for its selection than that. The saliency and quantity of *cinematic excess* found in *Celine and Julie Go Boating* makes it an apt choice. Beyond this also lies the reasoning that it is not a film that easily falls into any category or genre with unique qualities, and attention to detail that still stands today. This contributes to avoiding the possibility of having the notion of Subjective Cinema being held fast to a specific mode of filmmaking. The film as well as the director has garnered much praise from critics and audiences alike over the years. Lastly, the following quote by Rivette (1968) illustrates his thinking behind his films as directly in accordance with that of cinematic excess and Subjective Cinema:

“In films, what is important is the point where the film no longer has an auteur, where it has no more actors, no more story even, no more subject, nothing left but the film itself speaking and saying something that can't be translated: the point here it becomes the discourse of someone or

something else, which cannot be said, precisely because it is beyond expression. And I think you can only get there by trying to be as passive as possible at all the various stages, never intervening on one's own behalf but rather on behalf of this something else which is nameless.”

1.3 Literature review

In studying the notion of Subjective Cinema, as formulated by this paper, there are two key sources used to explain the main characteristics thereof. The first seminal article is *Art as Technique* by Viktor Shklovsky. The ideas put out in *Art as Technique* were already presented in 1913 and was, at the time, a necessary and utterly relevant theoretical answer to the tremendous impact early cinema had on the avant-garde movements in pre-revolutionary Russia, which Shklovsky himself was a part of (van den Oever 2010:11). As a leading figure under the avant-garde group OPOYAZ (or the Russian Formalists), Shklovsky theorized and reflected on how using techniques in art which disturb and delay our perceptual process, made the world visible once again by making the world strange (van den Oever 2010:46-47). Within the broader context, OPOYAZ and other avant-garde groups such as LEF and the Futurists functioned in opposition to the Symbolists, a well-established group in the literary tradition at the time. They dominated the discourse on early cinema, when there was yet a framework to be established around it, with its tenets focusing on giving “thematized” meaning to various medium-specific elements of the cinema they experienced. For example, “death” was given as a theme to images that seemed less animated and “double identity” when a similar looking face was presented again in a different way (van den Oever 2010:39). In opposition to the Symbolist approach of assigning well-known motifs in poetry and literature to cinema, the avant-garde movements responded to the film-specific techniques used and the impact of the perceptual experience itself, thereby putting forward a different kind of poetics. This shift away from meaning-making and towards the perspective of perception as an approach to theorizing about cinema is a strong underlining current of this research paper and therefore worth highlighting from the start.

And so, it is from this background that Shklovsky wrote *Art as Technique* and published it in 1917. The key concept drawn from this article is *defamiliarization* or *ostrannenie*. Although the article was originally conceived with regard to literature, shifting its application to cinema was not difficult and indeed very apt seeing that Shklovsky and his counterparts used literar

texts as empirical evidence to test their theories of art as a practicality and not necessarily due to their specificity to literature (Van den Oever 2010:50). The term *defamiliarization* has an especially wide reach as a general aesthetic principle:

It is used to explain mechanisms of perception and attention as well as the functioning of art with regard to everyday experience, the way in which specific devices operate within a given work of art, and finally, it even opens up towards a theorization of stylistic change (Kessler 2010:61).

All these converging ideas around defamiliarization are far reaching and too wide for the scope of this paper to discuss in detail. An overview will however be given in the following chapters on the main areas of inquiry within the field of defamiliarization, in order to give a more in depth understanding of how Subjective Cinema functions. The next key source used to define Subjective Cinema is *The Concept of Cinematic Excess* (1977) by Kristin Thompson. Her article is based centrally on, and elaborated from, *The Third Meaning* (1977) by Roland Barthes which will also be referenced in conjunction with Thompson's article, in laying cinematic excess bare. Both these texts propose the idea of elements existing within the filmic structure that point to something outside of that structure. Barthes called it "the obtuse meaning". Thompson argues that the term "meaning" causes a misconception seeing that these elements of excess are exactly those that do not add to narrative or symbolic meaning, but that is not to say that they cannot mean these.

The obtuse meaning, then...has something to do with disguise...without one disguise destroying the other; a multi-layering of meanings which always lets the previous meaning continue, as in a geological formation, saying the opposite without giving up the contrary – (two-term) dramatic dialectic...(Barthes 1977:58)

It is then, an opening up of the field of meaning. Excessive elements have an interrogative quality to them with no definitive answer as to what they're signifying. Rather than being intelligible, it offers a poetical grasp that exceeds psychology, anecdote, and function, exceeds meaning without, however coming down to obstinacy (Barthes 1977:53-54). It can be understood in semiotic terms as the signifier without the signified – representation which cannot be represented.

Finally, the obtuse meaning can be seen as an accent, the very form of an emergence, of a fold (a crease even) marking the heavy layer of informations and significations. ... This accent – the simultaneously

emphatic and elliptic character of which has already been mentioned – is not directed towards meaning, does not theatricalize, does not even indicate and elsewhere of meaning (another content, added to the obvious meaning); it outplays meaning – subverts not the content but the whole practice of meaning (Barthes 1977:62).

For clarities sake one should mention that the term “theatricalize” used by Barthes in this quote is referring to highly stylized films or elements in a film that come across as over the top, drawing attention to itself that springs from pure aesthetics. These types of defamiliarization are not self-reflective. Rather they merely have an extreme decorative characteristic to them instead of being more easily subsumed into our general and realistic view of the world. It’s important to highlight this part of the quote, because this, in turn, does not find place in cinematic excess or Subjective Cinema but can rather be pin-pointed as stylistic excess. In the following chapters this will be explicated in more depth with relative examples.

An easy deduction to make from the above mentioned descriptions of cinematic excess is the subjective nature that an encounter with excess entails. Since there is no obvious meaning, and humans are innately meaning-searching individuals, each viewer will perceive and experience excess differently. With subjectivity an irrevocable element in this study, it would make sense to shed light on the phenomena of Subjective Cinema from a scientific (the most objective of approaches) angle. This leads the study towards cognitive theory and my next key source, *The PECMA Flow: A General Model of Visual Aesthetics* (2006) by Torben Grodal. In his book, *Moving Pictures*, Grodal proposed a general theory of the film experience by using a model that explains the flow from perception, through emotional activation and cognitive processing, to motor action, hence the acronym. Another feature of his central model also takes the evaluation of reality-status into account by looking at radical constructivism in conjunction with evolutionary realism. In all these processes there are specific accounts for highly saturated emotional responses in certain circumstances and are explained by Grodal with reference to certain scenarios in which they occur. These saturated emotional responses are exactly those that occur in Subjective Cinema.

1.4 Definition of Subjective Cinema

Now that a few key terms and ideas have been set in place, a definition of Subjective Cinema can be put forward with the knowledge of these in mind. For the purpose of this paper, Subjective Cinema derives from the key characteristics of and between defamiliarization and cinematic excess. Subjective Cinema uses any one of an array of filmic devices and techniques that are firstly *defamiliarizing* and furthermore formally structured in an *excessive* manner. The common and necessary element of these devices and techniques, in order for them to be considered as forming Subjective Cinema, is their self-reflexive quality: they have an effect of opening up the field of possible associations and meanings and hold a salient characteristic to them. This fosters an experience of perceptual, cognitive, and emotional plenitude with a sense of undetermined deep meaning. The success of the phenomena relies heavily upon the existing knowledge, culture, and individuality of the viewer. All these factors contribute in placing the viewer in a highly subjective position in the film viewing process and tend towards allowing more creative interpretation and critical reflection.

1.5 Research questions and aims

This research paper poses the question: How does the concept of defamiliarization and cinematic excess under a neo-formalist approach with cognitive theory's elucidating support, function in defining subjective cinema? With this question in place the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of cinematic excess and defamiliarization by looking at how and where within the filmic structure it occurs. Furthermore, it aims to explicate how these two concepts work in forming Subjective Cinema. It aims to explain this more fully by giving a cognitive explanation of the processes that the viewer goes through in encountering Subjective Cinema. Lastly, this paper aims to put forth an alternative mode of filmmaking and viewing that finds pleasure in those aspects of film that seem to lie outside of clear reasoning or motivation.

Such an approach allows one to look further into a film, renewing its ability to intrigue us by its strangeness: it also can help us to be aware of how the whole film – not its narrative – works upon our perception (Thompson 1974:63).

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

2.1 Neoformalism and its background

In fleshing out neoformalism, first the three broad areas of inquiry used in Thompson and Bordwell's poetic programmes will be given. These are *analytical poetics*, which looks at the filmic structures at play in pursuit of certain effects; *historical context*, taking into account the causality this has on a film's forms and materials; and *effects*, focusing on what responses the film elicits by the viewer (Rushton & Bettinson 2010:134).

Furthermore, *analytical poetics* is divided into *thematics*, *constructional form*, and *stylistics*. Within these three levels of the filmic structure, one finds the age old antithesis of form versus content, and the tension it yields in cinema. *Thematics* is used to refer to a film's subject matter or themes. The aesthetic treatment of these, wherein the formal qualities are transformed through various techniques, is referred to as the *constructional form*. For argument's sake one could refer to *thematics* as the "content" of a film and *constructional form* as the "form". The problem is that by doing this, one implies that form is simply the container for a work's content or meaning, and thereby suitable for independent analysis. Rather, Bordwell and Thompson (1979) refer to a film as an integrated "system" and deny the aesthetic relevance of the split in the first place, contending that content is not conclusively separate from the formal manner in which it is expressed. Along with *constructional form*, *stylistics* also transforms a film's subject matter or *thematics* and therefore, integral to an artwork's form, is its style. The stylistic parameters, such as music, cinematography, and lighting, interact with each other and with other components in the film's construction. It is the amount of interaction that can foreground the style of a film and have it become an object of interest in its own right, or have it subsumed into the narrative. By revisiting the relationship between *thematics*, *constructional form* and *stylistics*, it seems that to a great extent form subsumes content and style subsumes form. It is because of this dynamic interlocking of components that in the Russian formalist tradition the form and content split is substituted with a distinction between materials and devices. Material refers to the content of a

work, and devices the techniques by which these materials are transformed in order to give them a specific form.

Shklovsky also makes a distinction between "material" and "form"; in speaking of music he says, "We have found, not form and content, but rather material and form, i.e., sounds and the disposition of sounds." The process of "disposition" of materials into structures does not eliminate their original materiality. Thus the Formalists seem to have at least approached the realization that excessive elements provide a large range of possibilities for the roughening of form; the material provides a perceptual play by inviting the spectator to linger over devices longer than their structured function would seem to warrant (Thompson 1977:56).

Therefore a work of art can simply be understood as a set of techniques or devices for the Russian Formalists. In this light form no longer becomes an envelope for content as the traditional understanding goes, but a complete thing, something concrete, dynamic, self-contained, and without a correlative of any kind (van den Oever 2010:48). This view, however, would not be very conducive in discussing the specificities of where within the filmic structure Subjective Cinema is formed, because it is too holistic. Analytical poetics' breakdown of the filmic structure allows this paper to discuss how Subjective Cinema is formed in more of an elucidating and constructive way. Stylistic analysis specifically, is then relevant in the formation of Subjective Cinema, since:

one may upon occasion succeed in marrying the differentiating approach to style in groups of motion pictures to the explanatory conception by focusing on the intersection of the generative or explanatory stylistic choices that, at the same time, differentiate the group of movies in question from the relevant comparison classes (Carroll 2009).

Up until now the information laid out overlaps the two poetics programmes. In moving back to neoformalism specifically, Bordwell (1989: 378) describes it as a 'trend within the domain of historical poetics', the poetics that he aligns himself with. Both draw heavily from Russian Formalist methodology and highlight key concepts there from, but Thompson moves away from Bordwell's historical poetics by emphasising two Formalist concepts, the *dominant* and *defamiliarization*, which play a central role in neoformalism, while Bordwell rather downplays them. The *dominant* is described as the primary structuring principle of a film and entails foregrounding certain elements while subordinating others in order to create tension, meaning,

unity and ground the integrity of a work (Rushton & Bettinson 2010:144). This approach solves the poetician's problem that arises when having difficulty in knowing where to focus their attention when thematic, formal, and stylistic objects are so closely related. This study however focuses mainly on the concept of *defamiliarization*, as the *dominant* does not play a central role in defining Subjective Cinema.

The next broad area of inquiry is *historical context*. Any film is viewed in relation to historical norms and conventions. The Neoformalists call this a *background*: the specific circumstances a film originates from. Keeping this in mind, deviations and original recasting of existing conventions become pertinent.

Effects is the last field under the poetics programme and looks at the viewer's perceptual and cognitive engagement with a film in relation to the cinematic structures that elicit them (Rushton & Bettinson 2010:142). In this sense, it is open to taking on an interdisciplinary approach, by incorporating cognitive theory in order to explicate the complex processes at hand in the film viewing experience. For the poetician, an important aspect that shapes these effects is the viewer's knowledge of film and the viewing skills they have access to, through adequate film watching exposure.

With this brief look at a neoformalist approach in analytics, it is clear how the inclusive and systematic framework can be fruitful in an attempt to discuss Subjective Cinema, seeing that it makes it possible to better understand the various components a film is made out of and how they interact with each other. In breaking down these structures, Thompson adopts the Russian Formalist definition of narrative as interplay between *syuzhet* and *fabula*, or in other words plot and story, as a tool in locating excess. The *syuzhet* is the unfolding of events just as they are represented on screen. The *fabula* is then constructed by the viewer from the *syuzhet* by filling in narrative ellipses or by possibly rearranging depicted events into a causal structure, if the film calls for it (Thomson-Jones 2009:39). The treatment of the story through a specific approach to plot can then either carry thorough on-going motivation in driving the story forward, or there can be a lack of apparent motivation, thereby making possibly excessive elements more salient (Thompson 1977:55).

2.2 Motivation as pointing to cinematic excess

The concept of motivation is introduced as a means to make the pointing out of excess somewhat systematic. Thompson goes on to explain four ways in which the lack of motivation can manifest itself within the filmic structure to create excess.

Firstly, excess can be presented in the specific form that a device takes on. Narrative function can easily motivate the presence of a device, but in the case of excess the individual element takes on a form that stands out or becomes defamiliarizing, especially when taking into account the ample alternatives that the form could take on and still fulfill its function sufficiently. Given the inherently large amount of formal possibilities a device could take on, pointing it out as excessive may seem excessive in itself, but this instance of excess will hold an arbitrariness or salience that is easily recognizable for the knowledgeable or interested viewer.

Secondly, excess potentially exists within duration. Using legibility as a rough guide to gauge when duration in a film is motivated or not, one can start to discern when the length of a device on screen becomes excess. Naturally, the amount of time needed to perceive and make sense of what's on screen is different from person to person, but excess will be sufficiently extreme in order to rule this out as something to take into account. When a device's screen time goes beyond the length needed to recognize or understand its function, the viewer becomes more prone to consider it apart from its narrative or stylistic function. This rumination and self-reflexivity takes away from narrative progression and is uneconomic within the filmic structure. Apart from this, the notion of repeated viewings is also worth mentioning, seeing that it has the potential to bring forward excessive elements that are missed in the first viewing of a film. When one becomes familiar with the narrative or progression of a film, other elements are given more attention than they would have been given on first viewing. The function of the material elements of a film can be reached, but that is not to say their perceptual interest stops there. Thompson doesn't elaborate on the idea of a shot showing for an illegibly short amount of time, but it's possibly defamiliarizing effect could also create cinematic excess in the right context.

Thirdly, the use of multiple devices that vary in form, but tend to similar functions becomes excess. Since a once-off instance of narrative motivation can function throughout a film, the use

of many devices that carry the same significance does not drive the narrative forward. Rather, the film is elaborated upon “vertically”: which means it gains conceptual, emotional or stylistic significance based upon its own appeal. This reiteration of an idea causes salience and steers the viewer towards reflecting upon whatever the devices point to.

Lastly, when a single device is repeated and varied multiple times, it leans towards excess. Although one motivation can account for its use, when this repetition starts to overtake the initial motivation it becomes noteworthy. Herby, becoming more significant than its narrative or compositional function needs. This type of excess starts out as motivated, but the excessive use of the device attracts further perceptual play from the viewer.

2.2.1 Cinematic excess and style

In Chapter One under *1.3 Literature review* the term “theatricalize” used by Barthes in his quote was touched on in order to introduce the concept of stylistic excess versus cinematic excess. The four categories of how cinematic excess occurs are more directly linked to the formal and material aspects of a film and easily linked to the question of driving the narrative forward versus distracting our attention from it, but Thompson also comments on the relationship between style and cinematic excess and this is important to note. The essential exercise here is differentiating between that which should merely be attributed to style alone and that which is cinematic excess within a moment of style. Thompson elucidates the topic by stating,

Style is the use of repeated techniques which become *characteristic* of the work; these techniques are foregrounded so that the spectator will notice them and create connections between their individual uses. Excess does not equal style, but the two are closely linked because they both involve the material aspects of the film. Excess forms no specific patterns which we could say are characteristic of the work. But the formal organization provided by style does not exhaust the material of the filmic techniques, and a spectator's attention to style might well lead to a noticing of excess as well (Thompson 1977:55).

As stated in the quote above, the difference to look out for when pointing to cinematic excess is that style necessitates a repeated use of certain techniques or devices while cinematic excess does not. Therefore, pointing to cinematic excess that resides in the style of a film should be approached carefully as to not confuse it with what is merely a certain style and coincidentally

also perhaps theatrical, camp, or defamiliarizing. The following note on style by Susan Sontag (1966) supports that just because something is excessive, it doesn't necessarily make it excess:

Style is not quantitative, any more than it is superadded. A more complex stylistic convention—say, one taking prose further away from the diction and cadences of ordinary speech—does not mean that the work has “more” style (Sontag 1966:15).

Perhaps the most difficult thing to do then would be to find moments of cinematic excess within a film that has an excessive style. Thompson (1977:57) does however state that when style becomes fore-grounded to an unusual degree, and draws attention to the material of the film, it becomes excess. This would also directly link to an instance of defamiliarization. In *The Concept of Cinematic Excess* (1977), Thompson uses examples from *Ivan the Terrible* (Eisenstein 1944) to point to moments of excess that reside in the stylistics of the film. Repeating all these would be unnecessarily tedious for the sake of this paper, however naming a few techniques in a broader sense without reference to the exact example will suffice. These are striking compositions, deep focus, shifting graphic relationships, juxtaposition of space and volume, vertical montage relations of sound and image, repetition of a similar shot with a basic action, salient formal rhythm, odd character movement, peculiar acting methods, and specific use of texture and colour. Once again, all these are not necessarily examples of excess, but can be in the specific context of a film.

2.3 Defamiliarization in context

Now that the various ways cinematic excess can be achieved have been laid down, the following is a closer theoretical look at defamiliarization. Keeping in line with the neoformalist tradition of considering the fact that any film is viewed against a specific “background”, the concept of defamiliarization when also viewed in this light becomes fruitful. This background is further divided into three categories: real life, artistic conventions, and the non-aesthetic uses of film. Having knowledge of all these contributes in comprehending the varying ways that a film can be defamiliarizing (Thomson-Jones 2009:35). The non-aesthetic background of a film is not

relevant to this study, but the background of *artistic convention* (in other words a specific style) is inherent in the concept of defamiliarization.

When Shklovsky describes the purpose of art *in* terms of an opposition between "things as they are perceived" and "things as they are known." he actually introduces a temporality, or diachronicity, which it is important to recognize as being the very foundation of the concept of *ostranenie*, or defamiliarization. While "things as they are perceived" refers in the first instance to an experience that takes place *hic et nunc*, the "being known" of things depends upon a process that precedes that act of perception, and in the course of which the "knowledge" about the object in question has been accumulated. (Kessler 2010:61)

The idea introduced here states that this knowledge is our familiarization, our automatic understanding and doesn't call for any further reflection. Successfully going from the familiar to the unfamiliar in artistic technique, demands an understanding of the dominant practice along with the general manner in which something is usually perceived. Through this one can also locate the specific way in which formal patterns and devices were defamiliarized and how perception was intensified. It is then very important for the artist to be aware of the norms against which she is creating new forms. Furthermore, the formal and stylistic means by which defamiliarization was initially achieved can once again become habitualised with time and recurrent use and no longer have the same impact. There are exceptions however where defamiliarization remains defamiliarizing regardless of how well known the convention might be. András Bálint Kovács (2010:178) explains how:

It stands to reason that rules unavoidably become familiar or automatic after a while. Some defamiliarization techniques remained effective, however, and we could explain this by their self-reflexivity. The main effect in self-reflexivity is that it disrupts narrative illusionism when, for instance, the author addresses the audience directly. This device is always disturbing because it provokes a radical change of attitude in the viewer. No matter how many times I watch *A BOUT DE SOUFFLE*, it always strikes me when, at the beginning, Jean-Paul Belmondo starts talking to the camera. Defamiliarization always has an effect of estrangement, but not all estrangement is self-reflective.

Moving closer, one should also remember that *defamiliarization* is not only achieved in relation to the artistic conventions of the time within which the film is situated, but also in relation to the established conventions within a film itself.

The Nouvelle Vague jump-cut, for instance, would only have been effective for a couple of years before losing its defamiliarizing powers. Is it not also a matter of film genre? A jump cut is no longer disturbing in an independent art film or a MTV music video, it seems, but would it not be disturbing if used in a Harry Potter movie? Kovács (2010:178)

This however further raises the question of what is the general norm that is being defamiliarized against, beyond those rules that the world of the film has set up? The common and most obvious answer to this would be to use Classic Hollywood cinema as a backdrop due to the relative dominance of its stylistic and narrative devices in cinema. This, however, causes a danger in overlooking other systems at work in the construction of a film or group of films (Kessler 2010:65). Rather, Bordwell (2008) states,

By positing alternative norms, our work becomes comparative in a rewarding way. Instead of the couplet norm-deviation, we can posit competing systems of principles, operating at roughly the same level of generality. We find varying norms of narration and style in Hollywood cinema, "art cinema," Soviet montage cinema and other modes.

The value of this comparative approach lies in the fact that one can give equal value to one norm and reciprocally one deviation to another depending on its context. Even mainstream films can be defamiliarizing and carry the ability to renew perception. With this in mind, the fact that ...

...those films we consider highly original either defamiliarize reality more strongly, defamiliarize artistic conventions, or defamiliarize both reality and artistic conventions (Thompson 1988: 11)

doesn't make the degree of defamiliarization relevant in judging whether one film achieves the function of art more strongly than the next. Some other examples to keep in mind that show how defamiliarization works on many levels would be the viewing of a film that is far-removed from your own familiar historical or cultural context which invites a higher state of attention, and perceptual interest. Another example is the argument that the very act of any film viewing is defamiliarizing in itself, because it is separate from the everyday, real life we experience. In terms of *real life* being a background to film viewing, the notion of defamiliarization becomes

less conducive to this paper, however. Once again, one is left with the role of subjectivity in this discussion as an integral player.

2.4 The PECMA flow model

The PECMA flow model provides a relatively easily understood general theory of how the brain processes film. It makes use of the fundamental features of brain architecture and looks at the way...

...films produce inputs that influence, highlight, or impede different stages of the PECMA flow; the filmic input plays with different neurocognitive mechanisms to elicit different types of effect (Grodal 2007).

The baseline from where it springs goes against a common belief in certain strands of cognitive and philosophical film theory: that the images represented on screen are firstly seen as just that, representations. Instead, the PECMA flow model argues that the viewer does not primarily see representations we then refer back to the real world; we merely see the referent even *with* our tacit knowledge of the mimetic nature of film. Our experience of film and of real events functions side by side in terms of cognitive processing, with the ‘reality-status markers’ being the only mental process that differentiates between visual fiction and online fact. This reality-status will be looked at in further detail after the four stages of the PECMA flow model are first covered.

2.4.1 The four stages

The first stage is the process of making sense of the millions of bits of visual information transmitted from the eyes to the visual cortex by putting them into identifiable forms and figures. This is no small task. Furthermore, Grodal (2007) also supports the connection between visual and emotional systems and suggests that the emotional experience in tandem with this process has an intense modal quality to it:

The function of the visual cortex is finding salient forms in the chaos of information that arrives through the eyes and the brain receives a small emotional reward every time it discovers a significant form (Grodal 2007).

This induces closer visual analysis and thereby intensifies the aesthetic experience.

The second stage of the PECMA flow model accounts for the cognitive process wherein neighboring parts of the brain match the analysed forms with schematic representations of objects and events stored in memory (Grodal 2006:4). The concept of cinematic excess functions in this stage when a viewer encounters emotionally salient images outside of a classical narrative, that lack causal function in order for the emotional tension to be released. Instead, they undergo what Grodal has called a *saturated* emotional experience:

Although the build-up of emotionally-charged associations has no clearly focused narrative meaning, such associations may produce an experience of perceptual, cognitive, and emotional plenitude and deep meaning because of the complexity and emotional charge of the mental associations involved. Roland Barthes calls some kinds of salience ‘third meaning’, suggesting that what I call ‘intensities’ and ‘saturations’ have a deeper significance (Grodal 2006:5).

The fact that these meaning-making processes that are dedicated to hermeneutics are activated in the brain, furthermore allows one to understand that film does not only provide us with rather easily interpreted meanings, but also a scope of perceptual, cognitive, and emotional experiences induced by the dynamic activation of our embodied brains. The film experience is a centrally embodied process and not based on decoding set filmic cues or implicit meanings.

The third stage of the PECMA flow model covers the processes where we cognitively assess the film in relation to characters and events, with identification (taking on a character’s goals and concerns) playing a crucial role. It is crucial because it carries the emotional significance and plan-actions that function alongside emotion-based preferences. When the narrative order is rearranged into a non-linear format, then investment will become less tense with action tendencies, and more emotionally saturated. This is where the division of plot and story comes into play with the plot acting as modification of the canonical story form that creates different emotional modes.

The fourth and final stage of the PECMA flow model accounts for the playing out of these action tendencies on behalf of the events on screen. These vicarious experiences can either be afforded by the filmmaker or blocked, as found in a non-canonical case through the use of various

techniques. There are two types of experiences that the viewer can undergo in this case. The first being an involuntary autonomic response such as laughing, crying, or fear as found in typical genre films, and the second an experience of the *saturated* emotional modes that have been mentioned above.

The similarity in emotional tone between melodramatic sequences that elicit negative autonomic responses and films with lyrical associational forms is due to their common strategy of blocking action tendencies, which prevents the viewer from coping with the reality around her and initiates a change in her emotional response (Grodal 2006:7).

2.4.2 Reality-status markers

In going back to the concept presented earlier of reality-status markers, the reality evaluation process is integral in disrupting the shift from emotion to action a la PECMA flow model. Understanding that our experience of film viewing doesn't depend on the 'suspension of disbelief' but rather a 'suspension of belief' can be troublesome if not fully comprehended due to its seeming illogical nature. However, if one views it from the standpoint that our brains are simply receiving light waves that cause neural activation and not representations, it becomes easier to grasp. The neurons in the rear of the brain cannot separate representations from the real world in the primary process when watching a film and will be activated regardless. Film viewing then, relies on further processes of evaluating reality status in order to constrict our initial belief in what we perceive. The mechanisms of evaluating reality status outside of film has evolved so that we can function most effectively in the real world and tend to our own personal needs and desires.

A variety of research suggests that our conscious perceptions are soaked with those emotions that serve to guide our actions, so that what we see is not 'the world as it exists objectively or for some god's eye', but rather a pragmatic mixture that reflects our interests (Grodal 2006:7).

Taking this knowledge of how the mechanisms function in the reality status evaluation process and elaborating on it further in terms of its impact on the film viewing experience carries a number of revelations. The PECMA flow model suggests that the mechanisms developed that are responsible for distinguishing between imagery and real events, are also responsible for

feeding information to the stop-go mechanism based on its given reality-status: the stop mechanism being informed by feelings of 'irreality' and the go mechanism by feelings of reality. So something can afford the feeling of irreality whether it is due to difficulty of perception or difficulty in action potential. Film has the power to exercise various techniques that play with reality-status and action potentials. Grodal uses the example of a foggy landscape in a scene which would influence action potential but is not necessarily more 'real' than a sunlit landscape:

The reality evaluation effects on perception represent a kind of top-down flow. If fog was only fog, and did not impede visual control and action, we would have neither the common lyrical-unreal experience of fog scenes in films nor the feeling of unreality when confronted with slow-motion... Visual input would just be visual input. But from an evolutionary as well as a functional perspective, perception is just servant for making adequate actions and thus has to adopt forms and functions that accord with its master, the motor system. The intensity of the film experience is intimately linked to the way in which moving pictures allow for this constant interaction of perception, emotion, cognition, and action (Grodal 2007:8).

This top-down flow going from frontal centers of the mind to the process of perception is part of various other top-down processes involved in film viewing. Neuroscientists have proved that beyond certain neurons in the primary visual cortex constantly processing information from the outside world, many other neurons are only activated when conscious attention is given to an event. Put simply, the top-down processes are based on personal or cultural learning and the bottom-up processes are based on innate algorithms. The four main stages of the PECMA flow have a basic bottom-up direction from perception to action, but Grodal makes it clear that they are at the same time also reverse flows. This is due to the constant feedback given by the linking of perception to memory. Although numerous mechanisms of the human brain are universal, the aesthetic experience remains hugely formed by individual, historical and cultural influences. Cognitive theory supports this notion.

CHAPTER THREE

CASE STUDIES

“The miracle of [Céline and Julie Go Boating] is that all of its disparate elements are mixed into the final cut that the film achieves that rarest of qualities: it creates a world of its own, a world in which everything on screen represents an opening for the viewer.” – Glenn Kenny

3.1 Introduction

Up until now this paper has provided various theoretical terms and approaches that converge and diverge in different ways, but all are essentially geared towards elucidating the filmic structure. These complexities are necessary in order to understand and trace what makes for this paper’s formulation of Subjective Cinema. For the sake of clarity however, the four main points of what constitutes Subjective Cinema within the filmic structure should be revisited, succinctly.

As mentioned in Chapter two, there are four broad categories in which cinematic excess can function. It can manifest in the specific form a device takes on, that would be defamiliarizing and invite further contemplation. Excess can occur when duration exceeds or falls short of narrative and legibility functions. The repeated use of varying devices to serve similar functions which minimises narrative implications and is thereby fore-grounded, expands the film vertically. Lastly, the repetition of the same motif or device, beyond what is necessary for narrative use, becomes excessive.

In the rest of the chapter I will look at instances that form Subjective Cinema in a number of films. Rather than solely focusing on one film, referring to examples that range across various genres, historical contexts, and modes of filmmaking will be much more comprehensive and useful in understanding the phenomena as a whole. This chapter will however favour one particular film by going into the film’s structure in more depth than the other case studies. The reason for this is to also cover how cinematic excess and defamiliarization functions in Subjective Cinema in a more detailed and specific manner along with the holistic view provided

by the other examples. Another criterion is a simple one of making use of films that have some form of previous writing on them that deal with excess, defamiliarization or at least the filmic elements that concern these concepts. Lastly, further motivation that is unique to each film will be given as they are introduced in the rest of the chapter.

3.1.1 Premise for analysis

However, before one jumps into these case studies, a small disclaimer is necessary in order to provide a shared understanding of this paper's assumptions towards defining Subjective Cinema. One could also call this the premise of the paper. The following quote by Thompson expresses the degree of subjectivity in the film viewing experience, while highlighting that if we would like to be fruitful in our dialogue with cinematic excess and defamiliarization, some kind of a common ground has to be established:

To a large extent, the spectator's ability to notice excess is dependent upon his/her training in viewing films. The spectator who takes films to be simple copies of reality will probably tend to subsume the physicality of the image under a general category of verisimilitude; that shape on the screen looks as it does because "those things really look like that." Another spectator, trained to look at films as romantic expressions of the artist, might attempt to see every aspect of every shot as conveying "meaning," "personal vision," and the like; the image looks the way it does because that is how the artist saw the world. At the other extreme, the "art for art's sake" viewer — the "empty" formalist — will tend to ignore motivation in favor of a totally free play of the "aesthetic" elements. All these approaches tend to vitiate the tension in the work between unified and excessive elements. The current study attempts to suggest an alternative (Thompson 1977:58).

The alternative Thompson is referring to is an approach that uses the concept of motivation in order to locate excess in a way that doesn't use the convenient fall backs the above spectators would use by attributing excessive elements to "personal vision" as motivation, for example. Thompson rather takes a closer look at narrative and causality in light of motivation and specifically the moments elements either contribute to narrative or distract our perception from it.

3.2 Detailed analysis of Celine and Julie go Boating

3.2.1 Background and synopsis

All that being said, Jacques Rivette's *Céline et Julie vont en bateau* (1974) is the film that will undergo a more thorough analysis. Rivette is known as a central figure of the *nouvelle vague*, with his many writings in the famous *Cahiers du Cinema* and due to his incessant experimental slant to filmmaking. Translated literally the title reads, *Céline and Julie go boating*. This however, completely misses the significance in French of *vont en bateau*. *Monter en bateau* is to tell someone a rather complicated fib and have them believe you and *aller en bateau* is to be caught up in a story that you're being told. Both of these translations are very relevant to *Céline and Julie go Boating*, a film that centres around two women: Céline the cabaret illusionist and Julie, the librarian and occult enthusiast. The film opens with a title "Usually it began like this." already hinting towards an unconventional plot. Julie is introduced, lounging on a park bench while reading a book that reads, "Magic". Céline walks by in a hurried stride and drops her scarf. An extended chase ensues, that starts with Julie wanting to return the scarf, but develops into a playful back and forth interaction between the two. Eventually, Céline enters a building and Julie, too shy to follow her, keeps her belongings until the next day when she returns her scarf with the same teasing demeanor and actions as the previous day. Céline visits Julie at the library, but keeps her distance, all the while making enough of a ruckus to make sure Julie knows she's there. When Julie returns home, Céline is waiting by the steps with a bloody knee and invites herself into Julie's apartment. From there, an unspoken yet mutual agreement is made with the two embarking on a new found friendship. When Julie tends to Céline's injured knee, we hear the story of how she ran away from a family living in a mansion, where she worked as a nanny, due to some internal drama and ended up on Julie's steps. Julie decides to go visit this mansion and subsequently the viewer is introduced to the main plot of the film and a labyrinth of adventures where hallucinations, fantasy and a film-within-a-film all come together. Celine and Julie take turns entering the mansion, and with every visit they stumble out several hours later with no recollection of the events that took place inside the building. They part with a brightly colored piece of candy in their mouths however, that serves as a trigger for bringing back visions of the experience. These visions come in disjointed fragments, with repetitions and variations, building on their previous vision each time. The viewer along with the two women is left to

make sense of the puzzle and guess what will happen next. This puzzle is a strange melodrama that unfolds as an eternal loop that the inhabitants of the mansion are stuck in. It centers around two women swooning over a widowed man, who has a sickly daughter that is mysteriously killed. With each visit Celine and Julie uncover more of the story, but by the time they find out that the little girl becomes victim to a murder, they decide to intervene and enter the house together in order to save her and re-write its ending. As soon as they step into the mansion together, the film changes into a farce set with the original, melodramatic characters transformed into seemingly unconscious, deadweight versions of their previous selves. Celine and Julie take turns playing the nurse, trying to reenact the story as they've seen it play out in their visions, but mess up terribly with forgotten lines and out of place gesticulation. However, the other characters of the house don't seem to notice in the least and Celine and Julie manage to save the girl. Now that the three have escaped the loop of the mansion, they go on an actual boat trip together. As they leisurely glide across the Seine, they spot the characters from the mansion on a boat as well – still as statues and vacantly staring into the distance, they pass them by. In the final scene of the film we are thrown back to the film's opening scene, this time however, with Celine and Julie's roles reversed and it seems as if the whole ordeal begins again. Now that a synopsis has been given, a closer description of moments that form Subjective Cinema will be given along with frames from the film to act as visual aids.

3.2.2 Repetition and variation of a motif

Throughout the film, Rivette incorporates the presence of cats in an excessive manner. This falls under the category of the repetition and variation of a certain motif as explained clearly in Chapter Two under *2.2 Motivation as pointing to excess* in the last paragraph. The specific moments at which Rivette chooses to include the cat motif is important to take note of and is also what takes it to a level of cinematic excess. The initial introduction of cats is already present in the opening scene of the film as seen in *Figure 1*. The film introduces Julie lounging on a park bench. It cuts to point-of-view shots of her surroundings and back to her a total of four times before cutting to the cat, busy getting ready to pounce on his prey, and this right before we see Celine for the first time: a pivotal moment in the plot, being where it all began and also where it will recur. The next few times cats appear in the film, as seen through *Figure 2 to 6* are always

temporally and spatially close to where the mystical elements of the film reside - either on the way to the mansion, outside its steps and eventually inside as well. Sometimes there are two cats, other times only one. The characters on screen never interact with them, neither are they a focal element in these moments. They contribute nothing to the narrative, but one definitely notices them for their own sake at this stage. The last use of the motif is where it becomes more obviously excessive and also acts as a defamiliarizing device. As seen in *Figure 7* and *8*, Rivette puts all focus on the motif by showing a cat in close-up this time and also by the placement of the shot within the sequence. It cuts to the back of the cat's head (*Figure 7*) right after the most mysterious and unanswered event in the entire film – that of the three characters from the mansion now on a boat gliding past Celine, Julie, and the little girl, Madlyn. This shot is defamiliarizing seeing that it comes across as extremely arbitrary and out of place, and hereby draws attention to itself for further questioning. *Figure 8* shows the cat with identical framing, but with a different background – linking it to the shot as shown in *Figure 7*. This is also the very last shot of the film and comes right after the viewer is shown how Celine and Julie's adventures begin all over again, but this time with the role's reversed. Going back to Chapter One, a quote by Shklovsky (1917) was given wherein he states that, "art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object: the object itself is not important". This is especially felt in *Figure 7* and *8*, with the use of the image of a cat taking on a new dimension: through form and structure it is given added power and a sense of meaningfulness. Shklovsky is merely stating that the fact that a cat is used, even with all its historical and artistic connotations to magical powers, is much less important than Rivette's formal treatment of cats within the film. Reiterating this quote is useful in highlighting how integral Schlovsky's conception of defamiliarization is in cinematic excess and is easily seen again in the examples to come when bearing it in mind. What the intention is behind these two shots is very much undefined and open to creative interpretation. What one can agree on, based on all this paper has presented however, is its presence as an excessive element.



Figure 1: 'Cat on bench'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 2: 'Julie walking with cat'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 3: 'Julie and cat on stairs'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 4: 'Celine and Julie with cat on stairs'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 5: 'Celine and Julie with cat in mansion'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 6: 'Cat inside mansion'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 7: ‘Julie and cat on stairs’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 8: ‘Julie and cat on stairs’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).

3.2.3 Multiple devices towards same narrative function

The next example of cinematic excess falls under the category of the repeated use of multiple devices that may vary in form, but tend towards the same narrative function. This is also explained in more detail in Chapter Two under 2.2 *Motivation as pointing to excess* in the second to last paragraph. In *Celine and Julie Go Boating* the image of a red hand in all its different forms is a salient one. Its most prominent features due to the direct correlation to the film’s narrative are the bloody hand found on little Madlyn’s cushion after the murder scene has just occurred (see *Figure 12*) and another mirroring, red hand as a stain found on Celine and Julies’s shoulders after their stints inside the mansion as seen in *Figure 10* and later in *Figure 11*. Much later the bloody hand is shown on Celine’s shoulder again when both characters have entered the house together, but in the shots after it disappears just as inexplicably as it appeared in the first place (See *Figure 15*). These instances of the red hand are narratively motivated, even if in a disjointed and mysterious way, they still follow certain logic and can be correlated to the plot of the story. To expand on the narrative vertically, Rivette introduces the device much earlier in the film before the two women have even properly met, when Celine draws an outline of her own hand with a red marker in one of the library books while she visits Julie’s workplace. See *Figure 9*. One could argue that it foreshadows what is to come. Going even further, the image of a red hand is introduced as a prop in the form of a mannequin’s hand as seen in *Figure 13* and *14*. Julie interacts with this prop extensively. She picks it up, puts it down and intently handles it in a way that draws attention to it. Here the repetition of the device is no

longer correlated to causality and becomes pure perceptual play. Awareness is drawn to the device beyond the narrative and towards its own innate interest. A last repetition as seen in *Figure 16* is in the form of a hand-shaped shadow over a room in a very quick cut. By now the image of the red hand has become salient enough for most viewers to notice a connection. Here, for the first time, the feeling of an immediate presence is introduced behind the red hand and it only adds to the already excessive motif. In Chapter One under *1.2 Literature Review* Barthes(1977) is quoted on his conception of cinematic excess as “a multi-layering of meanings which always lets the previous meaning continue” and “the simultaneously emphatic and elliptical character” and can especially be seen in Rivette’s use of the image of the red hand here.



Figure 9: ‘Celine tracing hand’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 10: ‘Julie finding first handprint’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 11: ‘Celine’s first handprint’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 12: ‘Handprint on Madlyn’s cushion’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 13: ‘Julie with hand mannequin’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 14: ‘Hand mannequin with dinosaur eyes’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 15: ‘Celine with handprint on nurse’s outfit’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 16: ‘Hand shadow’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).

3.2.4 Duration as excess

The medium of film is such that it exists in time: Thompson (1977:58) uses the example of cinematic excess in relation to duration by explaining that a device may appear on screen for much longer than legibly need be. This is explained in full under Chapter Two in *2.2 Motivation as pointing to cinematic excess* as well. The premise of this category however, does not exclude the possibility of excess occurring when legibility is taken away, by having devices appear on screen for much shorter than needed. This is the case in *Celine and Julie go Boating*, wherein Rivette intercuts certain scenes with quick flashes of causally unrelated shots. Repeated viewings of the film could possibly aid in making more sense of these constructions, but on first viewing and without pausing they are outright defamiliarizing. They push the viewer out of the flow of the narrative and into a self-reflexive state of thought around their use. The obscurity of the

device calls for longer screen time, but Rivette only gives the viewer a subliminally quick fragment before going back to the initial set-up. Rivette not only does this with unbridgeable imagery but also intercuts various scenes with split moments of black – at times with barely any noticeable progression in time and other times with obvious ellipses. A cut to black could easily be justified between scenes, but using this device within the same shot calls immediate attention to itself. It is not necessary to illustrate all of these in order to get the point across – for the sake of this paper I have chosen two sequences in which they occur. In a sequence where Celine walks down a road, on her way to an entrance gate of the property where the mansion is located, the scene intercuts with two images. *Figures 17* through *21* illustrate these chronologically. Both quick flashes are shots located in Julie’s flat: the first being a doll of unknown origin and Celine’s scarf on a couch and the second Julie’s pet fish.



Figure 17: ‘Julie on her way to the mansion’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 18: ‘Doll in apartment’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 19: ‘Julie still on her way to the mansion’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 20: ‘Fish in apartment’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 21: 'Julie through gate on her way to the mansion'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).

The next example of this is shown in *Figures 22 to 24*. In this scene Celine and Julie are in humorous conversation around her memories of the first visit to the mansion. The conversation goes on a bit of a tangent and Julie remarks to Celine that, "You're one to talk sweetie, your lot ain't so hot either." after which it cuts to a shot of a clown through an opened door as seen in *Figure 23*. The film then cuts back to the initial set-up and the conversation continues uninterrupted. There is a plethora of ways that the viewer can make sense of this. It opens up the field of meaning to anything from the quick flashes depicting thoughts that pop up into the character's mind or perhaps making commentary of the functioning of our brain processes and memory and so forth. The shot of the clown, unlike the doll and fish in the previous example, is completely disjointed in relation to the rest of the film and doesn't appear again.



Figure 22: 'Julie in conversation with Celine'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 23: 'Clown peering through door'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 24: ‘Julie still in conversation with Celine’. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).

3.2.5 Specific form a device takes on

The last example of cinematic excess which fits into one of the four main categories presented earlier falls into the category of the specific form a device takes on. As explained in Chapter Two under *2.2 Motivation as pointing to cinematic excess*, narrative function can easily motivate the presence of a device, but it potentially becomes excess when it stands out because of its arbitrariness or peculiarity. In *Celine and Julie go Boating* an example of this is the use of ‘baby dinosaur eyes’, as they are referred to in the film, as a mechanism that acts as a safeguard. *Figure 27* illustrates this. It allows them to enter and exit the mansion together and also to free Madlyn from the endless loop of melodrama in the mansion, hereby, duping the original rules of the mystique. The form of the device has another layer of strangeness added in the way that Julie retrieves them. After reading in her handbook on magic about their powers, as shown in *Figure 25*, she very conveniently remembers about a pair she has lying around. One gets the sense however, that the device is never really meant to be actual baby dinosaur eyes; rather the film perhaps comments that a thing becomes whatever we attribute it too. And so the device, takes on the form of obviously plastic, toy-like objects in the shape of eyes. Bringing excess even more to our attention, Julie places these dinosaur eyes on the red hand mannequin discussed earlier – linking two abstract representations and defamiliarizing the somewhat established potential symbolism even further (See *Figure 26*). As a last punch of excess, Celine fashions an eye in the middle of her blouse, as seen in *Figure 28*.



Figure 25: 'Julie reading from magic book'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 26: 'Julie putting dinosaur eyes on hand mannequin'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 27: 'Celine and Julie with dinosaur eyes'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).



Figure 28: 'Celine with eye on blouse'. Screenshot from *Celine and Julie go Boating* (1974).

3.3 Further case studies

For the next segment of Chapter Three, this paper will further illustrate the range of ways that cinematic excess can function in with reference to various other films. In *Celine and Julie go Boating*, this paper's focus was more on cinematic excess explored in the use of material

elements within the film. These examples were obviously excessive and relatively easy to notice, but are a good place to start in unpacking the phenomena of Subjective Cinema. The formal structure of a film is just as important to look at as well as the relationship between style and cinematic excess. It was also neatly illustrated in relation to the four main categories provided by Thompson. Moving on, to allow for a more organic and holistic approach in elucidating this paper's definition of Subjective Cinema, it will proceed with referencing the four categories directly and incorporate any other moments of defamiliarization and cinematic excess that fall outside them. A few examples will also be given when elements in a film could be mistaken for techniques or devices that create Subjective Cinema, or in other words are considered cinematic excess or defamiliarizing, but aren't. Along with these examples, explanations will also be given as to why.

3.3.1 Tarkovsky's Stalker

Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* (1979) is a science fiction film that illustrates the concept of cinematic excess and defamiliarization primarily through its unique combination of temporal treatment and breaking of conventional cause and effect. The film follows the journey of three men through a post-apocalyptic territory they call the Zone. Seemingly natural, the Zone however does not conform to the conventional laws of cause and effect. The three men carefully navigate this world of perceptual illusions, disjointed geography, and irrational progress, trying to get to where they believe the answers to life can be found: the so called Room. Defamiliarization is at the core of *Stalker* with its mise-en-scene having a life of its own: constantly defying our inherent conceptions of temporality and cause-and-effect, hereby drawing attention to itself and creating perceptual freshness. On a superficial level the locations are rather realist for the most part, but these surroundings eventually give way to a highly stylized approach to mise-en-scene and take on a poetic universalism as the film progresses. The characters lacks agency and

...becomes a kind of viewer. He shifts, runs and becomes animated in vain, the situation he is in outstrips his motor capacities on all sides, and makes him see or hear what is no longer subject to the rules of a

response or an action. He records rather than reacts. He is prey to a vision, pursued by it or pursuing it, rather than engaged in an action (Tarkovsky 1986)

To give a single example from the film between many, there is a sequence in the film that opens with an extreme long shot of one of the characters lying in between small sand hills with a well in the background. After he wakes up, he takes hold of a stone and drops it into the well. The sound effect of a thud is given, creating the assumption that the well is dried up. Moments later, however, a different sound effect of a splash is given. This puts space and time into a completely defamiliarizing context and many other variations of this motif are shown in the film in different locations and forms. The use of such poetic narrative devices

thwart the audience's automatic associative processes and provoke the audience to find other ways of making sense of the work of art. (Kovács 2010:177)

The way the space is presented through shot selection and cinematography problematises locating the characters, and hereby you as the viewer, spatially in relation between elements as they are put forth. Instead it gives rise to disconnected spaces with various sensory-motor linkages beginning to break down in an unstable and inexplicable landscape. This also has the effect of emphasising the relationship between character and surrounding, with them almost molded into the image of the environment.

In Chapter 2, under the PECMA flow, there was a section devoted to explaining the mechanisms that function in the reality status evaluation process. Rehashing this in its entirety is redundant, but a short explanation will allow for a continuous read. Basically, the mechanisms in our brains used to distinguishing between imagery and reality are the same ones used in evaluating action potential. So something can afford the feeling of irreality whether it is due to difficulty in action potential or difficulty of perception. *Stalker* exercises the first field into the direction of a feeling of irreality (that is defamiliarization) with Tarkovsky's characters being cut off from their action potential, simply because scientific laws of nature do not apply here. Further he applies the second field of difficulty of perception with his characters being put into a landscape overcome with fog and other visually prohibiting elements. This gives an interesting insight into the reason for the film's heightened, meta-physical feel.

Building from this, cinematic excess particularly comes to the foreground in how Tarkovsky formally renders this defamiliarizing landscape: through radical long takes and languid pacing, throughout. He does this not only with excessive shot duration, but also slow camera movement, giving the film an enhanced alien quality. In *Stalker*, the effect of this slowing of time directly moves the viewer into a self-reflexive space:

Encouraged to search for something beyond the image as an *analog* of reality, allowed to ponder upon the presented events/objects, the viewers engage in their own reflection upon what they perceive on the screen. (Petric 1990:29)

Often the distance of the camera and extended shot length along with the subject who has been stripped of any conventional action, pushes the viewer into concentrating on the image itself and the abstraction imposed on it. When a shot is held for so long, the viewer starts to scrutinize the frame as if it were a photo, looking for more information, but receiving none. This neatly falls into the second category of excess within duration first mentioned in Chapter Two under 2.2 *Motivation as pointing to cinematic excess* where it states that in this rumination and self-reflexivity the audience is taken away from narrative progression and instead perceptual interest is placed somewhere else. And so, the long shot framing coupled with the length of the shot gives rise to cinematic excess, allowing the viewer to connect these images with virtual ones in the mind. The combination of the troubling of cause-and-effect in this indeterminable landscape and the temporal treatment of it with extended duration far beyond legibility makes for a Subjective Cinema, relentless and provoking.

3.3.2 Discerning between style and excess

Now would be good time to comment on the use of the long take in cinema that does not simulate an estranging effect and therefore does not simulate Subjective Cinema. Going back to Chapter Two under 2.2.1 *Cinematic excess and style* we see that the attention to style might very well lead to a noticing of excess (Thompson:1977), but there are other aspects to keep in mind such as Thompson's benchmark of legibility and motivation. Films like Alfonso Cuarón Orozco's *Children of Men* (2006) and Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (2014) or Paul Thomas Anderson's *Boogie Nights* (1997) all make impressive use

of the long take with them ranging between six and fifteen minutes in duration. What differentiates these examples from ones which do form cinematic excess is the content – that which is being filmed. The nature of these shots is such that constant attention is held through an ever changing frame along with action-driven movements. Rather than pushing the viewer out of the frame and into a subjective headspace, it rather pulls the viewer into the visually dense imagery and into the action playing out. The lack of the use of a cut in these instances actually enhances the engrossing effect of a film rather than subverting the narrative. The viewer constantly has new elements to perceive, and legibility is exercised to an appropriate degree. In these cases the long take simply becomes a matter of the style of a work. A plethora of other examples in film can be given where style is excessive but not considered cinematic excess. This has largely to do with the temporary and contextual nature of defamiliarization discussed in previous chapters. One could talk of the intensely stylised films of Tony Scott such as *Domino* (2005) with freeze frames, unanticipated musical cues, variable frame speed, cross-processed film and other techniques that foreground the camera and the materiality of the image. One could mention any one of Wes Anderson's films, such as *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) with his distinctive style made up of obsessively symmetrical framing, thorough and limited colour palettes, detached acting methods and many other devices. The reason why these examples fall under stylistics and not cinematic excess is due to its repeated use throughout not only the film perhaps, but also across a body of work as stated in Chapter 2 under 2.2.1 *Cinematic excess and style*. Its use very quickly becomes familiar to us, especially when it is subsumed under the style of a genre after it's been copied by enough future directors. Artistically unique styles lose their defamiliarizing powers after just a few moments. One could even argue that in today's visually saturated world, very few purely aesthetic estranging visuals are even defamiliarizing to start with. The power of defamiliarization usually lies when it is used sparingly and in the form of a single moment within a film: a moment that then carries weight and jumps out at the viewer in relation to the rest of the film. Often it will also be closer linked to some kind of narrative, emotional association or character rather than the visual style, seeing that these elements have the potential to fluctuate and stagnate while the style of a film is conventionally consistent throughout, whether its hyper-realistic or extremely camp. The following quote elaborates on the above mentioned ideas around the complex nature of defamiliarization:

If, for example, a character shifts identity from one scene to another, this is unfamiliar to us, and we consider the event sequence as not linked causally. If, on the contrary, a rule is set in the film according to which characters often change their identities, the event sequence becomes familiar very easily, and we can now see the causal connections (this is how fantastic films work). Modernist defamiliarization of narratives occurs when event sequences do not elicit causality; and the film does not set rules by which the audience could easily construct causal or other cohesive connections. But most of this kind of defamiliarization inevitably becomes familiar after a while, which is one reason why modernism ended. Defamiliarization is only a temporary effect that just vanishes after a certain time in relation to a specific artistic solution. Incoherence is obviously one way of initiating defamiliarization, but if no new associative rules are proposed by the work of art, it simply becomes uninteresting. (Kovács 2010:178)

Where the use of freeze frames in a Tony Scott action film such as *Domino* becomes subsumed into the style of the film as pure aesthetics, an example where it succeeds in becoming cinematic excess can be seen in New Iranian Cinema over a few films that use it in an impactful manner by freezing on salient moments in the story, often the ending. In Samira Makhmalbaf's *The Apple* (1998), this happens when a blind mother wanders out of her house which she never leaves once during the entirety of the film in an attempt to call out to her overly protective husband and two highly underdeveloped children due to this obsessive parenting. She stands helpless, calling out to them when a little boy dangles an apple in front of her from an above apartment window. The image of an apple is introduced and re-introduced from the very beginning and gains strong symbolism throughout the film. The boy teases the blind woman as she grapples empty air, trying to take hold of the object bumping against her. Finally she grasps the apple and the film ends on a freeze-frame.

The common technique of ending a film with a freeze-frame is part-and-parcel of the constant tension between realism and formal self-consciousness in Iranian cinema. The freeze reveals the basic mechanism of the medium – as a collection of animated still images – while also suggesting the random, abrupt or inappropriate nature of such a stilling or ending to these Iranian films. (Danks: 2009)

The image is too ambiguous, too strong, to be reduced to one level of interpretation. The freeze-frame feeds back into and changes the whole preceding narrative.

3.3.3 Final case study

In closing Chapter 3, a final example of cinematic excess in *American Honey* (2016) will be given that I found to be extremely resonating and salient. Once again, to reiterate the subjective nature of this is necessary. Directed by Andrea Arnold, *American Honey* is a teen coming-of-age story that follows a young woman who joins a travelling group of people who sell magazine subscriptions on the road. A tumultuous relationship between Star and another young man, Jake, take part as they have an instant and strong connection, but quickly find that being together won't be easy due to their boss' close affection for Jake, one of her best sellers and personal assistant of sorts. Throughout the film, a motif is presented with Star encountering various animals. She has a strong affinity for animals and this is shown through her interaction with them each time. She either pauses to notice them or interacts with them more directly. She goes out of her way to save a bee from a pool and has a remarkable interaction with a grizzly bear early one morning. The use of the recurring motif builds another layer to her character through these symbolic gestures and interactions. The viewer sees a side of Star she herself can't show often due to her circumstances: caring, maternal, sensitive. However, beyond this rudimentary explanation of how these elements could be understood, there is a sense of deeper significance to it. One of the defining features of cinematic excess is that it cannot be put into words: and so an attempt to try will either fall short or butcher the mystique and wonder around cinematic excess. Instead, a detailed description covering the last scene of the film, which encapsulates the recurring motif and builds it to a zenith of undefined meaning and saliency, will be put forth.

The scene opens with a shot of a frog jumping in the shallow edge of a body of water. It then cuts to a dog running from the bank of the lake towards what we can hear through the soundscape, as the group of young adults cheering and talking amongst each other. The film shows Star and the others around a campfire with rhythmic, modern chant-like music slowly fading in. As everyone starts dancing in circles, the camera flows between moments until we see Jake coming closer to Star for a moment and the camera steadying on her after he leaves. She looks down into her hands, and we see Jake has given her a tortoise. Star looks in Jake's direction, also trying to discern the meaning of his action. Star walks to the lake to free the tortoise and we see it making its way back into the water, even stopping for a

moment to look back before it continues and is finally submerged. Star follows right after despite not being able to swim as previously revealed in the story. Steadily she gets deeper and deeper as the music crescendos accordingly, and in one last quick action she disappears under the water. For a few seconds we just hear music and stare at the surface of the water before she emerges again with a powerful throwing back of her head, at which point the music abruptly stops as well. The film ends with fireflies seen in the night sky and then the title across the screen. This method of abstraction doesn't attempt to remove the everyday; it rather opens it into an experience that feels heightened from the everyday. The possible symbolic meanings related to the narrative are there undoubtedly, yet the image remains resistant to any closed or single correspondence between sign and meaning.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In Chapter One the history behind the concept of defamiliarization was laid out. A look was given at the paradigm-shift from art as interpretation, to art as technique and to the perceptual impact where defamiliarization took centre stage. The concept originated from a time where film was still making its way through the world of theory, and the fact that it is not only still relevant today, but also revisited and re-theorised in the current academic field speaks volumes of the revolutionary character of defamiliarization. The word “revolution” comes from the Latin *revolvere*, to turn. And so the gesture that gave rise to it is found in the word itself. Shklovsky also speaks of art as the rebellion of things. The metaphor of a log in a fire is given: we need to turn the log in order for it to burn better. (Tsivian: 2010) And so with art, we need to turn it on its side so that it can truly stay alive. Chapter One also tracked defamiliarization from its Russian Formalist roots to the Neoformalist use of it today within the concept of cinematic excess, showing its malleable and far-reaching nature. Then, shedding a different light on the subject, cognitive theory is brought in so that the effect of these two main concepts can be understood and vicariously the concepts themselves are better grasped as well. With all this in mind, a definition of Subjective Cinema is given: not specifically as a certain style or genre of filmmaking, but rather as a phenomena possible within all types of cinema.

In Chapter Two a detailed look is given of the filmic structure under Neoformalism, Thompson’s way of pointing to excess is laid bare, with the four main categories that excess can be found in along with other defamiliarizing techniques, and cognitive theory via the PECMA flow is explicated. This functioned as the theoretical flesh necessary to point to specific moments of excess in the various case studies while having sufficient knowledge of how, why and where they function in the bigger picture.

Finally, Chapter Three takes these somewhat abstract ideas and concretizes them with hard and fast examples in relation to the theory laid out in Chapter Two. First quite rigorously and then with a looser approach in order to allow the scope that Subjective Cinema holds. An example is also given of a filmic moment that resonated with me greatly in *American Honey*. It is

encounters like those that stay behind in my mind and heart, and that served as the original inspiration for the topic of this paper.

Thompson concludes her paper with a discussion on why audiences find it so difficult to deal with excess by explaining the overarching arbitrary of the filmic structure in the first place. The only thing that has made it seemingly rational is the power of convention. This convention consists out of strong narrative and the cause and effect chain that supports it in order to give it certain logic. However, these structures of motivation and naturalization are used to mask the underlining arbitrariness of the structure in its conception, progression, all the way through to its ending. Thompson goes on to explain this by saying,

A narrative is a chain of causes and effects, but, unlike the real world, the narrative world requires one initial cause which itself has no cause. The choice of this initial cause is one source of the arbitrariness of narrative. Also, once the hermeneutic and proairetic codes are opened in a narrative, there is nothing which logically determines how long the narrative will continue; more and more delays could prolong the chain of cause and effect indefinitely... Narratives are not logical in themselves; they only make use of logic.

(Thompson 1977:62)

The value of internalizing this concept of narrative also being random, to a large extent opens up the viewer to question the structures at play beyond narrative, past strictly functional aspects and to do so without having the affect of traditional cause and effect dictate finding meaning within a film. When doing so, the viewer becomes aware of the overall power that cinema has to create abstract meaning that goes beyond what the narrative is constructing and further than symbolic signification.

At this abstract level the film is released from its link to sheer perception, released also from the specific story it tells, and allowed to play freely with our highest imaginative faculties. (Dudley 1975:7)

An awareness of the excessive elements that accompany these abstract domains can change the way one views, talks about and interprets films. Once an audience can not only accept, but embrace the fact that not all films fit neatly into a unified and congruent structure, they can start to find pleasure in its ability to renew and revive the viewing experience and film as an art form. The assumption that all films fit neatly into a pre-ordained whole is obviously not taken up by every single film viewer, but it is definitely the dominating disposition of mass culture today.

Most viewers will leave with a sense of irritability, confusion or pure boredom after watching a film that shows all the signs of Subjective Cinema. Even likelier, most people won't ever view such a film in the first place. If the concept of cinematic excess can somehow maneuver its way into main stream culture, the spectator can hopefully stop fretting over trying to dissect what each element of a film means or what the film is trying to say and find comfort in letting the mind wander into a multitude of interpretations and possibilities, or perhaps not doing so at all, and just pleasurably perceiving and feeling.

In concluding this paper, it would be valuable to state something about the idea of Subjective Cinema in a more philosophical sphere. When writing academically on topics that carry an inherent feeling of ineffability, one runs the risk of diminishing that very mysterious quality which held its appeal in the first place. Here is a final quote in an attempt to rectify this tendency.

It's only modern vanity which supposes that everything can be known or that only what is knowable has a claim upon our interest. The artist and the priest know that there are mysteries beyond anything that can be done with words, sounds or forms. If we want to live without this sense of mystery, we can of course, but we should be very suspicious of the feeling that everything coheres and that the arts, like everything else, fit comfortably into our lives. (*The Arts without Mystery* 1982)

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