



Research Article

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# Hunger: Time is in the Body<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*Steve McQueen's debut feature film, Hunger (2008), focuses on the 1981 Northern Ireland Hunger Strike and depicts the story through the bodies of the activists imprisoned. This corporeal presentation creates a political discourse in the film: The progression of the narrative through imagery allows McQueen to show the fact of the matter rather than saying what is right or wrong. Hunger: Time Is In The Body aims to display the aestheticized corporeality of the film and argue that the film represents inner temporality and carries the marks of Deleuzian time-image. Objective corporeality as the fabric of the imagery manifests itself in the bodily resistance of the prisoners. However, this imagery does not position the picture inside the realm of realism; throughout the film, the causal chain and the spatial line that we are accustomed to in classical cinema are continually broken. The broken timeline is observable within the flow of corporeality, and the experience of dureé emerges by the density of such imagery. The spectator does not follow the narration; they follow the imagery because the timeline and the meaning are built through the bodies' attitudes. In Deleuzian terms, the film can be observed as the cinema of bodies, which is a kind of time-image, and with that, it gets separated from the classical dramatic structure. In conclusion, this article suggests that Steve McQueen places time in the body in Hunger through the critical objectivity of corporeality.*

**Keywords:** Gilles Deleuze, Steve McQueen, time-image, cinema, time.

<sup>1</sup> This article is initially presented in *Resonance(s): Deleuze and Guattari Conference on Philosophy, Art and Politics* (İstanbul, İstanbul Bilgi University 2010).

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# Alık: Zaman Bedenin İinde<sup>3</sup>

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Kaynağından  
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## ÖZ

Steve McQueen, ilk uzun metrajlı filmi olan Alık (2008) filminde Kuzey İrlanda'daki 1981 Alık Grevini konu alır ve bunu hapishanedeki eylemcilerin bedenleri üzerinden anlatır. Bu bedensel anlatım filme siyasi bir söylem kazandırmıştır: Anlatının görüntü üzerinden ilerlemesi McQueen'in neyin doğru neyin yanlış olduğunu söylemek yerine meselenin gereğini göstermesini sağlar. Alık: Zaman Bedenin İinde, bu filmin estetize ettiđi bedenselliđi göstermeyi ve filmin hem içsel zamansallığı temsil ettiđini hem de Deleuze'un zaman-imgesinin izlerini taşıdığını savunmayı amaçlar. İmgenin dokusu olarak nesnel bedensellik, mahkumların bedensel direnişinde kendini gösterir. Fakat bu, filmi yaklaşım olarak gerekçi bir yere taşımaz; filmde klasik sinemada alışık olduğumuz nedensellik zinciri ve zamansal çizgi sürekli kırılır. Bu kırılmış kronolojik zaman zinciri bedenselliđin akışında gözlemlenir ve dureé deneyimi burada kendi içinde yoğunlaşan görüntü ile ortaya çıkar. İzleyici anlatımı takip etmez, görüntüyü takip eder, çünkü, zaman çizgisi ve anlam, bedenlerin tutumları aracılığıyla inşa edilir. Deleuze'un terimleriyle film, bir tür zaman-imge olan bedenlerin sineması olarak gözlemlenebilir ve bununla birlikte klasik dramatik yapıdan ayrılır. Sonuç olarak, bu makale, bedenselliđin eleştirel nesneliliđi yoluyla Steve McQueen'in Alık filminde zamanı bedeninin içine koyduđunu önerir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Gilles Deleuze, Steve McQueen, zaman-imge, sinema, zaman.

<sup>3</sup> Bu makale, ilk olarak *Rezonans(lar): Felsefe, Sanat ve Siyaset Üzerine Deleuze ve Guattari Konferansı* kapsamında sunulmuştur (İstanbul, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Öğretim Görevlisi





## INTRODUCTION

*The body is never in the present,  
It contains the before and the after...*<sup>5</sup>

Gilles Deleuze's books, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (1983) and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1985), create a taxonomy of images on the axiom of "universe as cinema in itself, a metacinema" (Deleuze, 1983 pg. 59). Even though Bergson criticizes cinema as Deleuze cites *rather overhasty*, he also believes that "The Bergsonian discovery of a *movement-image*, and more profoundly, of *time-image*, still retains such richness today that is not certain that all its consequences have been drawn" (Deleuze, 1983 pg. 2). After all, Bergson's *Matter and Memory* and his separation of images inspires Deleuze in his books on cinema. For Bergson, matter and the image are the same, and we live in a world of images. Real-time *duration*, as the undercurrent, flows without any division, unlike the dividable matter. Memory works in this homogenous field, or rather memory is this field. Image with the re-emergence of lost time pushes forward a new present. By the metaphysical movement of the memory, the image becomes temporal. Corresponding to this division, Deleuze finds two types of images inspired by the metacinema called universe: *movement-image* and *time-image*. Hence we can simply argue that his image taxonomy is, above all, Bergsonian. He does not decipher the narrative through visuals; instead, he decodes the nature of the *cinematographic-image* by taking *cinema* as a metaphysical phenomenon and as an entity of its own. Because of this, his taxonomy of images is more profound than the decays of film theories. At the end of these two books, we do not have a film theory but rather *a theory of cinema*. Deleuze investigated the art of cinema through its nature and the way of its being, while breaking the cycle of the structuralist perspective in film theories. He argues that cinema "... is world which becomes its own image, and not an image which becomes the world" (Deleuze, 1983 pg. 57). While the path of structuralism creates a world from the image through referential structures, Deleuze classifies the images in which the world becomes itself through different densities. The preserved density of the image is nothing more than the virtual undercurrent; *duréé*.

Herewith, by not following the path of structuralism, he discloses the true nature of cinema as the concept of *time*. On that account, to understand the fundamental differences between *movement-image* and *time-image*, the concept of *time* must be initially investigated. Therefore, in this paper, our preliminary inquiry will be on the concept of *time*. After tangentially reviewing the different *time* views from the Deleuzian perspective, *movement-image* and *time-image* will be discussed, and as a result, we will clarify why Bergson's concept of *duration* is the sole foundation of Deleuzian *taxonomy of images*. Following the investigation of the concept of *time* and disclosing Bergsonian *duration*, this paper will link the Deleuzian *time-image* to Steve McQueen's film *Hunger* and will argue that, in the film *Hunger*, time is in the body.

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<sup>5</sup> Deleuze, Gilles (1985), *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (H. Tomlinson & R. Galeta, Trans.) University of Minnesota Press, 1997. Pg. 189.





## THE CONCEPT OF TIME

Aristotle described *time* as an account of change between point A (before born) and point B (after death). Thus, he considers man a simple observer who perceives time but has no part in its existence. In this observation, man perceives changes in the object and experiences time due to these changes; which means the experience of change is prior to the perception of time. Aristotle says that we know the time has passed whenever we distinguish between two different 'nows' or instants. In *Physics*, he divides time into parts to investigate it, then questions which parts exist. One of the parts (past) had existed, which means it does not exist anymore. Another part (future) will exist, which means it does not yet exist. Since a thing that only consists of non-existing parts cannot exist, if something exists, even if not all the parts exist, some parts must exist. Then there is only the *present* left for time to exist: Time is the order of continuous present-moments that line up one after another. However, for Aristotle, since all things that contribute to the whole have to be measured and the present cannot be measured, it cannot be a part of the time. The designation of the change between past and future measures the present moment and designates its borders. 'Before' and 'after' designates those changes. Therefore, according to Aristotle, the concept of time can be explained only through change.

Time follows change, which means that time depends on change, and it follows change without a pause. There will be no time if there is no change between 'before' and 'after.' Therefore, according to Aristotle, change must be perpetual and continuous. Present as a border stands between before and after, but it continuously varies; no one can draw the lines of the present. Uncertain borders mean that time can be divided infinitely. There can be another present between every two subsequent presents since the designating borders are not possible. Therefore, like a line can be divided into infinite dots, the timeline can also be divided into infinite present moments; between every two presents, there can be infinite presents. Nevertheless, if we consider time something like a line, then the present moment would be something like the endpoints of the line; between 'before' and 'after,' there is no division, but also it can be divided into present moments infinitely. Since the present moment is an endpoint, the topology of such time would not be a straight line. If this were so, the endpoints would never coincide and there can be no continuity. If only the motion is circular, continuity of time can occur.

Aristotle suggests the cycling motion of the universe, the movement of the sphere, as a standard to measure the change that is continuously repeating: "The other movements are measured by this, and time by this movement" (Aristotle, 350 B.C. pg. 65). The argument follows; since change is the perceived before and after in a place, then the movement of the universe, as the path that change follows, must be prior to time. This movement is also a spatial change, and it is perceived by the designation of two different present moments:

Hence motions may be consecutive or successive in virtue of the time being continuous, but there can be continuity only in virtue of the motions themselves being continuous, that is when the end of each is one with the end of the other. (Aristotle, 350 B.C. pg. 73)





In short, for Aristotle, time is in the movement, its measurement. In Deleuze's lectures on Kant,<sup>6</sup> Deleuze describes such *time* as *circular time*, which points out causality under the laws of nature. In Ancient Greece, it was not only Aristotle; from tragedy to Platonic cosmology, the general public also used circular constellations. In their tragedy, *time* is aestheticized as an already written fate, which means the end is already in the beginning since the first cause, and nothing can prevent the already written future. In the Ancient Greek play *Oedipus the King* (Sophocles, 429 BC), there is the structure of circular time. Oedipus tries to escape from the seeker's prophecy, but his fate will not let him free and catch him; *time* opens up as a cause and effect and brings forth the ultimate fate to the character. This structure is known as the dramatic structure. In Aristotle's *Poetics*, this structure is explain through three unities: action, place and time. According to these rules, a play with its plot as the unity of action, must take place in one single location and no longer than 24 hours. However, the unity of time or the place or the action have nothing to do with the circular time Deleuze was talking about. Dramatic structure is still the spine of classical narrative cinema, but in scripts there are multiple locations, or multiple story lines, or hundreds years of timeline; what that still exist is the circular motion of the temporal model the dramatic structure builds on. For example, the narrative technique *set-up/pay-off* in filmmaking is similar to this ancient structure, and it describes a circular movement within the film. The *set-up/pay-off* technique is pretty common in classical narratives: a dialog or action or any other element of the *misa-an-scene* repeats towards the end. This way, something ordinary creates the uttermost meaning in the end. Therefore, in both the Ancient Greek plays and the classical narrative cinema, we have a closed universe that closes on itself.

Deleuze compares Aristotle's view of *time* with Kant's and defines Kantian time as *linear* in his lectures. According to Kant, *time* is not the measurement of movement, but rather it is *an a priori* form of the mind that makes all the cognition possible. For Kant, the mind produces appearances, which is the physical world, but time is not something that belongs to the objects of this world either. On the contrary, time is about our point of view and our perception of the object, but it is never a quality that belongs to the object itself. Thus unlike Aristotle, Kant argues that change can be conceivable because of time and not vice versa. Everything that changes becomes a sensible object and is placed in order by time. If we say that the perception of change cannot happen without the concept of time, then time becomes a universal form of the world of phenomena. In Kant's philosophy, the world has two parts: the world of appearances (*phenomenon*) and the world of *things in themselves* (*noumenon*). Since man, as one of the beings on the earth, belongs to the world of phenomenon, he cannot experience the *thing-in-itself*. The appearances are the way we perceive them because of the structure of the human mind, not because of their own reality. All given data can only be experienced

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<sup>6</sup> Deleuze's lectures on Kant (1978) can be found on the internet in English and French. We are using here the Turkish translation by Ulus Baker (*Kan Üzerine Dört Ders*, Ankara: Öteki Yayınevi 2000).





within these forms, and we can only comprehend things within them. While categories help us to understand, forms make the experience possible. According to Kant, time is one of the two *a priori* forms of sensible intuition:

Time is a necessary representation that grounds all intuitions. In regard to appearances in general one cannot remove time, though one can very well take the appearances away from time. Time is therefore given a priori. In it alone is all actuality of appearances possible. The latter could all disappear, but time itself, as the universal condition of their possibility, cannot be removed. (Kant, 1781 pg. 178-179)

Even though time is a universal form, it is also relative to the subject, and therefore it is also subjective. Time has no other presence than being a form of intuition and belonging to the mind's structure, which is the same for everyone. According to Kant, there is only one space, one time, and one timeline. Therefore, time's relativity to the subject does not result in a multiplicity of time: Time series only come about as a successive series in *linear* time, rather than different time series happening simultaneously for each subject. Kant gets close to the multiplicity of subjectivities when he gives the power of opening new series to the subject. However, such series are never temporal but causal series. He says:

Causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only one from which all the appearances of the world can be derived. It is also necessary to assume another causality through freedom in order to explain them. (Kant, 1781 pg. 484)

Kant explains this with transcendental freedom, which emerges if the causality comes up as an absolute causal spontaneity beginning with itself. Nevertheless, his argument relies on a contradiction: If there is a single causality, which is the law of nature, there has to be one initial to start everything. The reason, however, looks for the beginning that exists without a cause. Therefore the statement, which would say that the only causality is through the law of nature, conflicts with itself. If the law of nature is the only causality, there cannot be any progression or beginning since every effect needs a cause. Therefore, there have to be multiple free causes that can start new series. "...transcendental freedom, without which even in the course of nature the series of appearances is never complete on the side of the causes" (Kant, 1781 pg. 484). According to Kant, man can open time series because he is an appearance along with the other appearances in the world, but also has a part of *noumenon* as his *Reason*.

On this account, Kant's philosophy moves from metaphysics to ethics in the *Critique of Practical Reason* because humans can start new unconditioned series without a cause, and by that, they can be practically free. Nevertheless, free will can occur only if there are options to choose, which means being practically free creates possible moral values for the action: right and wrong. Therefore acting upon a free will becomes an ethical choice: "Pure reason is a practical of itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law which we call moral law" (Kant, 1788 pg. 29). Man who can differentiate freely right from wrong, by using his reason, can open up new causal series and makes the future unknown. Deleuze explains this with a quotation from *Hamlet* (Shakespeare, 1603): 'The time is out of joint.' With this quotation, Deleuze cites another





possible causality other than natural law, which means the coming events do not have to be determined by past events. In the play, when they send Hamlet to exile, the free cause is created because, after that point, Hamlet acts in a way that no one expects him to. Hamlet's spontaneity after his exile demonstrates that a man can act using his free will and start the first cause, but still in a single dimension of time; this is why Deleuze defines Kantian *time* as *linear*.

Another way to understand how these two different time perceptions change the narrative is to determine how the character changes. Since the Greeks, classical narratives end up with a visibly changed protagonist. This transformation must be reasonable and significant; thus, the character must have the potential to become more and show it off on a journey. The narrative opens up this possibility through actions and choices resulting from facing something antagonistic in the journey. Heroes risk themselves by taking the journey, and through that, they lose themselves to find back. At the end of the journey, heroes find themselves dilated because their outset peels off and slowly opens up their potential as virtuous or demonic with each action or choice. The universe will still be on the hero's back, following and observing to award or punish them in each case. The story only can be narrated through the justification of every step towards the transformation of the character. Therefore, we again come across a closed system, where the subject is closing on itself by its potential.

Aristotle's man was enslaved by *time* due to the law of nature. On the contrary, in Kant's *time* perspective, *time* is relative to the subject and has a linear vector towards to unknown future. Therefore, the subject would have free will to act upon rights and wrongs that they choose. So, Aristotle's view of *time* suggested fatalism, but Kant's view of *time* suggests determinism; since moral law as the categorical imperative has determined rights and wrongs in accordance with reason.<sup>7</sup> According to Kant, only by the existence of this determination human beings can be moral beings. In other words, humans can be moral beings if only they desire the immoral; if they do not desire the immoral and do not find themselves in a dilemma, morality cannot be an issue. Overcoming the desire is the act of morality. As a result, classical narratives are woven through conflicts and choices; action-image with its perception and affection forms ethical constellations. These narratives give us the Deleuzian *movement-image* because exterior actions and choices, along with the visual obedience to the narration, form a kind of motion that is in order and dividable. As a result, *time* appears in a single series and is merely spatial. This structure works within the *sensory-motor schema* and natural law. Imagery can only manifest itself as the vehicle for a narrative and cannot have its value separate from the whole.

In the following section of this paper, we will disclose the difference between *time-image* and *movement-image* in detail, but for now, we can say that the image-being can only manifest itself in the *movement-image* as the part of the whole. Imagery parts, such as shots, are immobile sections; the temporal perspective of the montage mobilizes them and circuits to the whole. Therefore in *movement-image*, time can be only the measurement of movement. For all that, according to Deleuze, the *cinematographic-image* promises a purely temporal experience

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<sup>7</sup> Matthé Scholten, in his article *Kant is a soft determinist*, reinterprets "the unique features of" Kant's solution to the problem of free will. He closely examines Kant's writings and contemporary debates on free will. The article concludes that "Kant should be classified as a compatibilist and more specifically as a soft determinist" (Scholten, 2020 European Journal of Philosophy).







regardless of the narrative. Hence, the *time* he postulates as the fabric of cinema is neither linear nor circular since both views take the concept of *time* as a spatial entity. Where *circular time* makes *the time* a simple measurement, *linear time* confesses itself in the form of space. In this regard, Deleuzian cinematic taxonomy denotes Bergsonian time metaphysics, in which *time* is the un-spatial, temporal multiplicity that preserves itself and endures in many planes. That is why "The material world, the plane of immanence, is the *machine assemblage of movement image*" (Deleuze, 1983 pg.59).

According to Henry Louise Bergson world of matter is the world of images; there is no difference between an image and a matter. He argues that the source of the spatial time is in the registration process of the appearances (which is the matter). The world of appearances registers in the intellect through the perceived movement. Nevertheless, this registered reality is false. In his argument, Bergson uses the cinematic process as an analogy to explain the false movement of our perception. In *Creative Evolution*, he says:

Instead of attaching ourselves to the inner becoming of things, we place ourselves outside of them in order to recompose their becoming artificially. We take snapshots, as it were, of the passing reality... We may therefore sum up... that the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind. (Bergson, 1907 pg. 306)

According to this analogy, the world of matter is registered by the intellect in snapshots as in a film. What is essential here is that, according to Bergson, this kind of movement is a false movement. Like shots on a celluloid film, life consists of immobile sections, and the motion is impossible. Nevertheless, something puts the sections back to back, and even though it is false, the movement can occur. This something is nothing but the memory. Through the memory, the real movement can take place. Bergson talks about intuition as a method to see the real motion. With intuition, instead of revolving around the object and taking snapshots, one can get into it. After all, the intellect can never communicate with reality because its analytical approach resembles the *cinematographic-image* that consists of immobile sections. Therefore, the movement of matter in the physical world is just an illusion. In connection to motion, time, which we know and use as historical beings, must also be an illusion. Mathematical time is just the representation of pure *duration* via space, and it is not *real-time*. Bergson argues that *real-time* is pure intuition and cannot be represented. However, when we want to express such temporal subjectivity, we reflect it to space and call it *time*. Space becomes the vehicle in this representation, and as a result, *time* is read via the motion of space. Since *time* is such a representation and is not real, Bergson's *duration* points out the falsity of *time*. Thus, successive and homogeneous time is not real (Akbař, 2012).

On the other hand, *real and psychological time* is *duration*. *Duration* is related to memory and intuition rather than the structure of the mind. Thus it is particular for every person. The *real-time duration* is not moving from past to present to future; instead, it flows everlastingly in the past, present, and future at the same instant. Hence, it is not simply the passing time; it is the virtual whole that operates through the memory, through the tension of the past, and creates each present in its novelty. Duration is always in flow and constant alteration. Such alterations are not quantitative but rather qualitative; thus, duration is *qualitatively multiple*.







Bergsonian time metaphysics is best described in Deleuze's book *Proust and Signs*, in which he argues that it is the sign that triggers the act of thinking; prior to that, there cannot be any original faculty for thinking. Nevertheless, the concept of memory and time becomes the ground for the arguments he sets in. According to him, there is only an interpretation of the present predicates within different dimensions of time. Bergsonian definition of memory, which Deleuze takes on, is opposed to Platonian transcendental memory. According to Plato, through life, we recognize things on the earth and remember what we have forgotten, what we have already known. Deleuze argues that there is no recognition, instead new memories are created. In his novel *In Search of Lost Time*, Proust does not simply ponder on a memory; he ponders on the search. In search of *time lost*, characters create the essence of what they remember; it is not time remembered from any past, but rather something new. The search of the past in the present, oriented to the future, is the multiplicity of time. There is a ground of temporality within any interpretation, which is the search through dimensions of time to create a new present. It is a constant repetition of different that creates the *present present*. Because of that, the present cannot be one or many; it can only be multiple. For Plato, One and Many constitute each other; only if there is one, then we can talk about many; if there is one table, we can talk about many tales. "We customarily hypothesize a single form in connection with each collection of many things to which we apply the same name" (Plato, 375 B.C. pg. 265).

According to this view, there is a transcendental place for One, for Many to appear in the world. However, multiplicity refuses the One and Many because it offers coexistence of present and past. While the arrow of time heads towards the future, the present takes place, yet we can never describe the passing past or the arrived future. There is always simultaneity of the present, past, and future; time can only be the multiplicity of present and past instants. Therefore the interpretation of a sign as the search of the past towards the future makes the present possible. Nevertheless, since the interpretation occurs in this multiplicity of the temporal field, for Deleuze, there is no limitation but rather infinity; the interpretation is limitless. Interpretation of the past repeats itself as different in each *present-present*, not quantitatively rather qualitatively since there is no limit. In other words, real-time *duration* does not divide and be numerable nor follows a linear path. *Duration* constantly produces a present, where the process of becoming of the subject as the only motion occurs in it. Therefore time preserves itself and endures in many planes of immanence.

Deleuze re-conceptualizes Bergson's duration and re-names it as *duréé*. "Duréé the flow of time whereby that virtual past passes forward into the actual present towards an open future" (Bogue, 2003 pg. 16). Therefore it is the invisible process of actualization of the virtual and never in rest. Against the deterministic spatiality, *duréé* is like a passage from moment to moment. Before and after always exist in the present, and the present is always past, and there is always becoming. However, for Bergson, since it is internal time and never resting, cinematographic-image –that is in snapshots- can never represent *duréé*. Nevertheless, Deleuze, despite Bergson, creates his taxonomy of images. In this taxonomy, Deleuze finds cinematic *duréé* in the whole of the film (*movement-image*) or in its time perspective (*time-image*), and the experience of real-time occurs as becoming in cinema. Thus he explains cinematographic-image as the flow of the present:





It is not quite right to say that the *cinematographic-image* is in the present. What is in the present is what the image 'represents,' but not the image itself... The image itself is the system of the relationships of time from which the variable present only flows. (Deleuze, 1985 pg. xii)

This temporal designation of *cinematographic-image* is the effect of *duréé*. Therefore *direct time-image* appears “...in a becoming as potentialization, as series of powers” (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 264).

## MOVEMENT-IMAGE AND TIME-IMAGE

Deleuze separates *the movement-image* of pre-war cinema into four: *American-organic*, *Soviet-dialectic*, *French-quantitative*, and *German-intensive*. Their differences come from their tendencies to relate *movement-images* to the whole of *duréé*, i.e., from their montage techniques. Frames and shots are immobile sections, in other words, closed-systems. Such close-systems can only be mobile and open to the whole of *duréé* by montage's temporal perspective. It creates the relationality of every image within themselves, as well as with the whole. These spiral movements towards the whole of *duréé* move forward as fatalistic resolution. In these spiral movements, *time* is considered nothing else than measurement of movement, and the natural law is taken as the only causality. In this regard, there must be a first cause, which starts the time series and let the chain of cause and effect unfold; the beginning sets up the ending. As another possibility, spiral movements towards to whole of *duréé* unfold an unwritten ending; nonetheless, the natural law would be taken as the only causality, and the events would come about as the cause and effect reaction again. *The perception-image*, *the affection-image*, and *the action-image* are *movement-images* because they follow the sensory-motor schema trajectory. Therefore, regardless, there is only a representation of the real-time in the movement-image, not the real-time itself. Circuiting with the whole happens by either small or large movement: an action creates a situation, and the situation causes an action again (*small form*), or the opposite happens, and a situation causes an action first, and then action creates a situation (*large form*) (Deleuze, 1983 pg. 141, 160). In any form, montage's power to open a closed-system, such as a frame or a shot, by connecting them to the whole *duréé* does not make the image jump out of *the sensory-motor schema*. The viewer is stuck with the actual image regardless of the action; the *sensory-motor schema* relationality can only have the actualized *movement-image*. The perspective of the narrative can depend on a character, and there is *linear time*, or it depends on an observing universe that is after the hero, and there is circular time. In the end, these single mental realities always had translated themselves as morality and absolute rights and wrongs.

If we cite fundamental distinctions between Deleuze's *time-image* and *movement-image*, we can say the former is virtual, and the latter is actual; the former is subjective, and the latter is objective. Aside from these differences, the most fundamental distinction is the difference in *the view of time*. In *time-image*, movement will not be measured by time because time is "in its own sphere" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. xi). According to Deleuze, such a perspective came out in cinema after World War II. Deleuze explains,





Why is the Second World War taken as a break? The fact is that, in Europe, the post-war period has greatly increased the situations, which we no longer know how to react to, in spaces, which we no longer know how to describe. ...Situations could be extremes, or, on the contrary, those of everyday banality, or both at once: what tends to collapse, or at least to lose its position, is the *sensory-motor schema* which constituted the action-image of the old cinema. (Deleuze, 1985 pg. xi)

After this break, in cinema, *time* gives itself in *false movement* as *false continuity*, where cuts are irrational and discontinues. The linearity of cause-effect temporality breaks, and in Italian neo-realism and French new-wave, *optical-sound situations* show themselves as dismiss to *sensory-motor schema*. An immobile section can be experienced as the *direct time-image* through such de-framings.

By neo-realism, "real was no longer represented or reproduced but aimed at" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 1). It was a new form of reality. Instead of representation, it was the aim to replace its object. Against classical realism's distinction between real and imaginary, neo-realism breaks the reality and passes to the imaginary as an *optical-sound situation*. There are *opsigns* (visual imagery) and *sonsigns* (sound imagery) of *optical-sound situations*; both make *time* and thought perceptible by giving them visuality and sound. Before action takes place, they enclose by the senses and action shapes within them. Image of such situations is lack of metaphor, and the *thing-in-itself* comes out "...in its excess of horror or beauty in its radical or unjustifiable character, because it no longer has to be 'justified'" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 20).

French new-wave follows neo-realism. In Goddard's cinema, his critical objectivism becomes the most intimate subjectivism, "... because in place of the real object it put visual description, and made it go 'inside' the person or object" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 11). *Opsigns* come about as *any-space-whatever*, or *everyday banalities*. The first one refers to disconnected or emptied space; the former refers to autonomy. *Everyday banalities*, *any-space-whatever*, *opsigns* & *sonsigns* form the film's narration because, unlike *movement-image*, the narration is not already given in *time-image*. In such signs, the actual image cuts off from *the sensory-motor schema* and forms a circuit with its virtual image.

What is a *virtual image*? Neither Deleuze nor Bergson defines, but according to Deleuze, Bergson developed the notion of the virtual to its highest degree. In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze asks, "What is the nature of this one and simple Virtual? How is that... Bergson's philosophy should have attributed such importance to the idea of virtuality at the very moment when it was challenging the category of possibility?" (Deleuze, 1966 pg. 96). He begins the answer by designating the opposites: possible is the opposite of the real, and the virtual is the opposite of the actual. Therefore *virtual* is distinguishable from the *real*. "The possible has no reality (although it may have an actuality); conversely, the virtual is not actual, but *as such possesses a reality*" (Deleuze, 1966 pg. 96). Virtuality does not need to be realized, but it has to be actualized in some way to be recognized. Deleuze explains it with the different natures of realization and actualization. He says that the rules of realizations are resemblance and limitation, whereas the rules of actualization are difference or divergence and creation. Difference is a fundamental concept in Deleuze's philosophy, and while interpreting Bergson's philosophy, it is still the key. Deleuze finds the difference in two ways between virtual and actual and between the





complementary lines of actualization. “In short, the characteristic of virtuality is to exist in such a way that it is actualized by being differentiated and is forced to differentiate itself, to create its lines of differentiation in order to be actualized” (Deleuze, 1966 pg. 97). Nevertheless, these oppositions are not like body-soul opposition of the Cartesian duality: they are not two different substances. Instead, virtual and actual works as two magnitudes of tension within the never-ending process of being; as well as virtual needs actual to be experienced and expressed, actual needs virtual. This opposition acts as a constitutive necessity for actual to emerge because nothing can be only actual; it needs the virtuality to be actualized.

Bergson's virtual can be identified at best with his concept of duration. Duration is not simply the passing time; it is the virtual whole that operates through the memory, through the tension of the past, and creates each present in its novelty. Even though the actual is given in the present, the present is not a defined unit since it constantly falls onto the past's domain. As a result, different amounts of pastness as the formation of different planes have persevered in the actualized present. The *time-image* preserves that kind of density, and it deploys the spectator's past in motion; it would affect the spectator's memory by the mutual present between the image and the spectator. All these metaphysical movements are the variable present Deleuze describes. In the film *Hunger*, we experience the *time-image*, but strangely, we experience it by corporeality; in the film, we experience bodies' deterritorialization from spatiality towards being a felt temporality.

## HUNGER: CINEMA OF BODIES

Steve McQueen's first feature film, *Hunger*, tells us or rather shows us the actual resistance story taken from the near past. The 1981 hunger strike culminated in a five-year protest by Irish republican prisoners in Northern Ireland. The republican prisoners called the Troubles were from the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA). In 1976, they started to lose their political prisoners' status and were required to wear prison uniforms like ordinary criminals. The prisoners refused to accept wearing the prison uniform; instead, they used blankets. This protest was called the *blanket protests*. The *no-wash protest* followed, in which the prisoners refused to leave their cells to wash and then covered them from wall to wall with excrement. After these two protests, the hunger strike took place. When the strike was over, the government recognized them as political prisoners because it ended with ten dead bodies while the whole world watched in silence (Beresford, 1987). As a result, Irish nationalists followed more radical paths, but also it became the driving force behind Sinn Féin, the Irish republican and democratic socialist party.

More than the political view, the director McQueen seems driven to the vicious protests of the prisoners. He meditates on the resistance that is done only using their bodies. Prisoners refused to become any other prisoner, any other uniformed body despite the annihilation of themselves. In order to not to be counted only as a body, they use their bodies to resist. Such factuality and the concreteness of their giving away themselves is the directorial underline of the film *Hunger*. Bodies are decoded both in the film and in the actual event; herewith, space is deterritorialized. Prisoners, their bodies, are decoded within the territory of a prison, the territory that the bodies





forcibly relate. Making spectators witness the bodily resistance gives the political approach to the film, and it discloses the possibility of the new regime of norms.

*Hunger* is the first feature film of award-winning video artist Steve McQueen. His works, those exhibited in major galleries and museums, could be defined as "the pull of such self-referentiality to autonomy and abstraction is countered by the signifying potential of McQueen's black body."<sup>8</sup> Since he emerged in the mid-1990's, his works were marked by spatial, temporal, and narrative ambiguity. Nevertheless, his black body is always in the physical act. He uses his body to represent race and sexuality and always stands in the middle of the disjointed reality he creates. Therefore corporeality is a vivid subject in his videos. For example,

McQueen's preoccupation with corporealized cinematics can well be seen in *Bear (1993)*, as the physical act of filming, the constantly moving and shifting camera angles parallels the physicality of the wrestling bodies filmed. ...Lit from above, the bodies keep blocking out the light or are blocked out by the light. (Durden, 2000)

Alternatively, in *Five Easy Pieces (1995)*, "...five "pieces" are united as experiments in cinematic form—the rhythmic exercises of the bodies..."<sup>9</sup> Such attachment to man's corporeality, in the film *Hunger*, becomes McQueen's way of aestheticizing "1981 Hunger Strike" and rejecting the classical dramatic structure of narrative cinema. In classical dramatic structure, the hero (the protagonist) is always an ego pole and always moves under the force of the universe connected with his ego. Thus in the classical dramatic structure, we meet the hero immediately in the opening sequence, and the plot circles around them from the start. In the film *Hunger*, we finally meet with the protagonist, Bobby Sand (Michael Fassbender), towards the end of the first act. The protagonist is presented as a factual being, not an ego pole; until we meet him, we only know his antagonist and environment. How we meet him is not heroic or glorious but instead violent. For the first time we see him, a few guardians drag him to the bathroom, and they forcibly cut his hair and wash him.

This protagonist also has a different character arc from the classical version in dramatic structure. In dramatic structure, the protagonist starts a journey by choice, and throughout the storyline, they change to become a larger version of the same self. In the end dilated hero always turns back. Therefore classical heroes are an accruing subject, and they are the ones who write history; in historical temporality, heroes risk themselves by taking a journey and losing themselves in return to find themselves again; hence the subject is always the same self but larger.

Nevertheless, there is a recurring subject in *Hunger* before such retrograde action. A recurring subject's temporality is different from accruing subject; the interruption creates this subject. There is no chronological unfolding, and the only experience that can occur is disruption. Experience of such temporality cannot be written in any history book because one can never grasp it. However, a trace is left in the consciousness, another temporality other than the told

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article-1G1-30496549/viewing-positions-steve-mcqueen.html> May 26, 2010

<sup>9</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art presents Steve McQueen's Five Pieces in their web archive. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/663239>





history. It is the temporality of interruption. In such temporality, "I" never has the luxury of returning to itself. The ego repeats itself because it is trapped in itself; it begins in each instant without any stable origin. Therefore, "I" is not a loss or recovery; instead, "I" rises again and again for a response. "New " occurs as an event without an origin; it is a pure difference. There is restlessness in such motion, but there is not any unfolding. Temporality folds within the subject, time folds on the body. Such temporality gets left out when someone is writing the past. What we can contemplate in this case is only the trace of disrupted temporality. In *Hunger*, McQueen traces the unwritten history of the disrupted body in resistance. If there is an arc in *Hunger*, it is on the body, and it is towards its annihilation. Unlike classical heroes, Body Sand, as the recurring subject, responds to the oppressor with his bodily resistances in *everyday banalities*, even though such banalities are limit experiences. Director explains it as "an extraordinary world that has become ordinary" (Lim, 2009 The New York Times). In this unordinary ordinary, we watch the daily protests of prisoners. They pour urine under cell doors, smear excrement on the walls, beaten up for the reason of not taking a shower and not cutting their hair. In the film, the everyday banalities of the prisoners consist of bodily resistance, and in this everydayness, they expose time in their attitudes.

McQueen explains this as "If you see a drop of rain on someone's knuckle, you feel it because you know that physical sensation, ...That sensory experience brings you closer to an emotional one" (Lim, 2009 The New York Times). The scene McQueen is talking about is where we see one of the guardians (Stuart Graham) smoking outside, in an empty place, while it is snowing. In this any-space-whatever, in this empty, disconnected place, the image of the guardian becomes more intensive than any explanation of his emotions. His attitude contains all the density of pressured time; thus, internal time becomes the most actual and readable on the body. Guardian stands there with the density of time and timeless because there is a break in continuity. At the beginning of the film, male hands are soaking, and a wetting ring is placed on the edge of the sink. Soon, we learn he is one of the guardians, the main antagonist. Later we see his hands soaking in the sink again, but with a difference; there is a scissor on the sink, and his hand is bleeding. Only after the protagonist has seen we guess for the real-time of these past visuals through the deformation of the body; we encounter the facticity of the character, and his corporeality gives us the sense of time. Because "Even the body is no longer exactly what moves, the subject of movement or the instrument of action, it becomes rather the developer [révélateur] of time, it shows time through its tiredness and waitings" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. xi). Postures render what is written on the body while moving through space, and the series of time get generated and expressed in the body. Furthermore, the body is not solely in the present but contains past and future, before and after in its attitudes; the body becomes the 'developer of time' (Deleuze, 1985 pg. xi). Another simple example is right at the beginning of the film when a young militant (Davey Gillen) enters the prison and refuses to wear a prisoner's uniform, a uniform of a criminal for him. Guardian (Stuart Graham) does not say anything, looks at the young militant, and the young militant gets naked as a protest. Next, we see him with a couple of guardians walking naked and with a big bloody pound on his head. Without seeing the action, we see the past on his body.

Deleuze describes two different attitudes of the modern cinema of post-war: the cinema of bodies and cinema of the brain. On the one hand, there is the intellectual cinema of the brain,







and on the other hand, there is the physical cinema of the body. Nevertheless, their distinction is not defined by one being more abstract or concrete than the other; the body comes up with a thought, and the brain comes up with shock and violence. Deleuze argues that Kubrick and Resnais are the ones who created the cinema of the brain. In their films, there is an inside and an outside. World and brain together do not "... form a whole, but rather a limit, a membrane which puts and an outside and inside in contact, makes them present to each other, confronts them or makes them clash" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 206). While inside is psychology, the past, and involution, the outside is the cosmology, the future, and evolution. Regardless, there is a connection between the brain and the body. Either body gives an order to the brain, or the brain gives an order to the body. The difference is the attitude that is produced in the end. In *Hunger*, there is violence on the body, but also, "The body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 189). As a result, we are forced to think about life; "thought will be thrown into categories of life" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 189), and attitudes of the body, its postures, will show that. In the *cinema of bodies*, "characters are reduced to their own bodily attitudes" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 192), but also they are raised to being the life itself by putting time in the bodies.

In this sense, by strictly following such critical objectivity of corporeality, the film shows the fact of the matter, meaning the truth of the situation, and yet never tells what is right or wrong regarding an actual past event. McQueen treats the memory of the actualized historical event as the virtual past, and by taking the 1981 Hunger Strike as his subject, he brings forth the memory of the suffering bodies' resistance. Such aim is present even in the opening scene: the film starts with a black screen and the sound of something hitting the ground again and again. Then the subtitles start to explain the actual event:

Northern Ireland, 1981. 2,187 people have been killed in 'the Troubles' since 1969. The British Government has withdrawn the political status of all paramilitary prisoners. Irish Republicans in the Maze Prison are on a 'blanket' and 'no wash' protest.

After the explanation, the source of the sound fades in on the screen; people are protesting by hitting metal lids to the ground. In other words, the sound is the result of the action of somebody. There is almost no dialog through the film, but we have sounds made by the bodies as a fact of their being in that place. The sound of bodies is crucial for the film to the point they have become an image. Deleuze says, "...body is sound as well as visible" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 186). In the film objective corporeality of the sound as a *sonsign* represents the undercurrent density and circuits the image to its virtual image. In *sonsigns*, as the mere observer, spectators find themselves in the image; they are surrounded with nothing but the raw sound produced by the bodies on the screen. As the extension of the body, sound becomes capable of pushing the story forward. This ability to structure the story turns the sound into a kind of an image. We need to distinguish here; action-images, for example, are actualized images; they are motions measured by time. However, *sonsign* or *opsigns* cannot be fully actualized because they turn themselves to the virtual. In the film, subjective remembering of the memory circuits with its virtual image when the source of the sound can be seen on the screen. In this *sonsign*, the spectator is not forced to remember via image; instead, the image aims at by opening to the whole as a potential of possibility. It is not the resemblances but the difference that makes the image lead towards the virtual. The density of the sound, as its tension layouts in the non-spatial character of the







sound and justifies itself with the written explanation fading in the image of the body making the sound. Although the film's opening is an excellent example for a *sonsign*, such images are used particularly in the film. Like the beginning, the event with no return also progresses through the sound of bodies. This event is the riot of the prisoners. In the film, guardians give prisoners clownish clothes instead of uniforms, and their contempt triggers the riot. First, we see Bobby Sand in a soundless cell, but while sitting on his bed and looking at the funny clothes, he starts to shake his leg in wrath. The sound of this action increases with other prisoners' actions and ends up with the riot. The following sequence is the reaction of this riot: special forces come to prison with their special gears, and after they line up, they start to make sounds with their shields and sticks. One of the cops gets carried out and yells, and the whole scene flows with the sound that the special team makes. Once again, by using the sound of the bodies, the director treats the event with objective corporeality.

The scene between Bobby Sand and the Catholic priest (Liam Cunningham) is the only scene with the actual dialogue in the film. In this scene, we witness a *sonsign* in the form of a dialogue. In the scene, Sand lets the priest know that he will start a hunger strike; *sonsign* forms a circuit with the virtuality of the image, which is the dualism of beliefs and ideals. The scene is almost twenty minutes long and filmed in a single, static shot. Both sit around a table across from each other and smoke while talking the entire time. Both are Catholic and wish for better days but choose different paths. While the priest (the believer) believes that a higher power forbids suicide (hunger strike), Sand (the idealist) only takes on what is present as a fact. This *sonsign* in the shot of the long take<sup>10</sup> also becomes a *crystal-image*, which is another form of *time-image*. It is the "internal disposition of a seed in relation to the environment" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 69). Thus, *crystal-images* are formed by colliding the actual and the virtual. In *crystal-image*, "actual optical image crystallizes with its own virtual image" (Deleuze, 1985 pg. 69) but forms the smallest internal circuit. In the end, the image cannot be reduced to the actual or the virtual. In the case of *Hunger* and the long take shot, there are two tendencies, two sides; this shot has the density of two tendencies as the two magnitudes. Nevertheless, unlike other shots or scenes where we experience violence, this shot and the scene are quiet and still. The seed of the virtual undercurrent flourishes in tranquility; the real movement and the real action are in the dialogue. This shot shows the protagonist's refusal of transcendence while defending his corporeal protest to come. In the following scene, Bobby Sand goes on a hunger strike.

In the hunger strike, Sand uses his body as a tool to protest. Thereof in the film, imagery folds on the protagonist's collapsing body. Towards death, hallucinations from Sand's childhood take over his mind. Regardless of referring to the past, it is not adequate to read the present as an already written future; instead, his past becomes a *mental-image*. The *mental-image* 'finds its most adequate representation in relation' (Deleuze 1983, pg. 197). Relations take place as the process of thinking and understanding. Therefore, *mental-image* is a *movement-image*, but it is also the opposite of the *perception-image*, the *affection-image*, and the *action-image* since there are only the mental relations of perception, affection, and action in this new trajectory. As a result, *mental-images* do not follow the sensory-motor trajectory of the world of images, and

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<sup>10</sup> The long take is a filmmaking term used for a single shot that is longer than the conventional duration. Long takes are usually used in action while the character moves in space. In *Hunger*, this technique is primarily used to concentrate on the dialogue.





it is the body that gives the order. At the end of the film, it is still the body that thinks on life and its posture of resistance that talks to the spectator on the screen.

## CONCLUSION

In *Hunger*, the usage of corporeality built by the nakedness of facticity and the bare violence towards bodies brings out the most inner feeling, *time*, but does not make it an actual image. Instead, it forms a circuit with the virtual image. Because of this metaphysical movement, *Hunger* becomes a Deleuzian *time-image* as *the cinema of bodies*; the corporeality of the film carries *optical-sound situations* towards *direct time-image*. In this regard, *Hunger*'s narration is built by its imagery, and the *direct time-image* is confessed in the body, that is, the mere spatial feature. Therefore, we only have the factual existence of the characters within a space through their corporeality. In this spatial representation, we find time as temporal subjectivity. This spatial and temporal shift is the act of deterritorialization. Regarding this concept, the relation of the territory and the bodies' abilities in that territory is crucial. It is territory that writes the codes on bodies as physical or psychological actions. However, when space is deterritorialized, codes break, and bodies become unstable. New norms come as the result of such an unstable state. In the same way, corporeality becomes a temporal field in the film *Hunger*, bodies are decoded, and the new regime of power is instituted. The spatial feature of corporeality is decoded as subjective temporality due to its critical objectivity.

As the result of the film's tactic to show and not to tell, *Hunger* promises a new structure that is free of fate or any transcendence. In addition to that, the same reason makes the film a *direct time-image*; the body's usage is not there for mere realism but rather to aim at the virtual via actual. McQueen puts time into the bodies, and the spectator becomes internal to time because "time is the affection of self by self" (Deleuze, 1989 pg. 80).

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