TEMPO E VISIONE FILMICA: ESPERIENZE TEMPORALI DEGLI SPETTATORI

a cura di Stefano Ghislotti e di Elisa Pezzotta

marzo 2016

Jakob Boer

Watching Paint Dry. An Investigation Into Film Style and Time Experience in Viewing Slow Cinema

Introduction

In the context of this special issue of *Elephant and Castle* on 'Time and Film Viewing', this paper deals with the specific temporal experience of watching slow cinema. At the starting point stands my fascination with a viewing experience that is reviled by some part of the cinema audience, on the accusation of being deathly boring, and militantly defended by another section of the audience, for its alleged contemplative quality.[1] In short, I understand slow cinema, following Matthew Flanagan's description, as "a field of cinema that shares common traits and aesthetics: an emphasis on the passage of time in the shot, an undramatic narrative or non-narrative mode, and a rigorous compositional form that is designed for contemplative spectatorial practice" (2012: 5). Rightly so, these characteristics can be considered relevant for understanding the distinctness of slow cinema.

However, the viewer's experience is often overlooked in the debate on slow cinema as a consequence of an overly formalist approach to studying slow cinema.[2] This has lead to an impairment

[1] For example, see the polemic between Kois and Dargis in the NY Times magazine: Kois, "Eating Your Cultural Vegetables"; Dargis and A. O. Scott, "In Defense of the Slow and the Boring".

[2] As visible in most significant contributions to the field, such as: Flanagan, *"Slow Cinema"*:

in our understanding of the particular (dis)pleasures of watching slow cinema. In other words, questions of 'what is cinema?' have largely dominated, whereas this paper will ask instead 'what does cinema?'. I will thus add to the debate on slow cinema by my emphasis on the genre's experiential effects, as it is pivotal to our grasp of the time experience. I take interest in this contemplative spectatorial practice, understood here as a particular viewing mode that foregrounds the temporality of the viewing experience, because it stands out from normal, habitual film viewing that so often goes unnoticed, in Husserlian terms the "natural attitude" of film viewing (Husserl 2012: 5). I thus ultimately aim to describe invariant structures of the temporal experience of watching slow cinema. However, the findings should have wider implications for the temporal aspect of watching film in general.

I will proceed by integrating the study of formal and stylistic features of film with the scrutiny of their effects on the viewer. In doing so, I will follow the framework of the "poetics of cinema", as put forth by film scholar David Bordwell in his book of the same name. He suggests that a poetics of cinema ultimately revolves around the question "How are films made in order to elicit certain effects?" (2012: 54). The assumption is made that the study of stylistics – in addition to narrative structure - is pivotal in our understanding of slow cinema, as this type of film strongly downplays narrative in favour of a foregrounding of stylistic facets such as the long take shot. More importantly, this paper argues for an enhanced focus on the spectatorial effects through a phenomenological description of the temporal experience. In the following, I start with outlining a framework that makes it possible to answer the first part of the central question of the poetics of slow cinema (that of production) - by analysing slow cinema's constructional principles of cinematic stillness - followed by a sketch of a phenomenological framework for answering the second part of the question (that of effects) - by giving an explication of the effect of

....

Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film; Jaffe, *Slow Movies*; Lim, *Tsai Ming-Liang and a Cinema of Slowness*; Çağlayan, *Screening Boredom*.

cinematic slowness.

Stillness

So, what do I mean when I talk about cinematic stillness here? Film scholar Song Hwee Lim writes that "time (or slowness) is, to a great extent, a matter of perception and experience, and it can never merely be an objective temporal (or rhythmic) measurement" (2014: 15). Put differently, in discussing slowness in film, one cannot merely consider the formal properties of a film to understand the experience, but one also has to ponder the typical spectatorial effects they afford. Therefore, I suggest a differentiation between stillness and slowness.[3] With this distinction, I mean to analytically separate the characteristics of the object from the experience of it. I propose to talk of *stillness* of the object that can – but not necessarily so - lead to an experience of *slowness*.[4] Stillness denotes here a heterogeneous set of formal and stylistic features of the film that all stress temporality. Slowness refers here to the consequential heightened temporal experience of the viewer. This is a crucial distinction because even though there is an image or a 'film's body' on screen that is objectively the same for everyone, the subjective experience of it can differ.[5] This is why I have stressed so emphatically from the start to not look only at the objective properties of a film, but at the dynamic interactions of film and viewer. We, therefore, need the notion of subjective time

....

[3] Note that I adopt an auditory biased metaphor to talk about visual aspects here, when talking of stillness. I single out the use of the long take aesthetics, but other artistic techniques deserve attention as well. In addition, one could consider *quietude*, as a form of auditory stillness. To locate a film more accurately on the continuum of filmic pace, both image and sound would need to be taken into account.

[4] Note, however, that the experience of boredom seems close to that of slowness, but that it can and should be distinguished from it by considering that it emerges from other factors than stillness: one can just be distracted and not in the mood, so then it emerges from a desire for the film to end, regardless of the stylistics of stillness. It is, therefore, as I will further elaborate on in the section on slowness, effectively a form of non-engagement.

[5] Cf. Sobchack, in: Williams, *Viewing Positions*, 36–58, for an account of film as an embodied eye or a viewing subject.

to adequately theorize the experience of time and film viewing. I will elaborate on this further in the section 'slowness', where I address the viewer's temporal experience in terms of Husserl's distinction between forms of time-consciousness.

In the following, I will argue that slow cinema is a particularly interesting case in this distinction between objective temporality and subjective time experience: the constructive principles of stillness can lead to an experience of slowness that will be characterized as a form of lingering attention or a heterochronic experience. In other words, the more the image is still, the more the perception of time is foregrounded and the attention to the image is divergent between viewers. By introducing the aspect of subjective time, I hope to problematize the too generalizing and overly essentializing opposition between fast and slow and instead offer a more fine-grained understanding of the temporal dimension of film viewing. Speaking of slowness in general terms, it should be noted, runs the risk of bringing together under one header different practices that spring from different cultural and historical contexts; of heaping together different artistic purposes that filmmakers can aim at with their films. The gratuitous and passive-aggressive accusation of slow cinema as an artistic mannerism (slow for slow's sake) doesn't hold for the genre as a whole.[6] Surely, like in any genre, good and bad films are produced. This is not what I'm interested in here: I leave it to the critics and the audiences to resolve. However, my theoretical framework should break down the monolithic notion of slowness and should thus open up a field for further research: delivering close analyses of different films or oeuvres and describing in detail the possible experiences that these films achieve or the effects to which their constructional principles are employed.

When I speak of the *image* here, I understand it in Bergsonian terms: it "signifies not simply the visual image, but the complex of all sense impressions that a perceived object conveys to a perceiver at a given moment" (Marks 2000: 40). The particular images

6 Cf. James, "Passive Aggressive", for such an account.

of slow cinema, the 'any-spaces-whatever' can be understood as what Deleuze calls affection images: images that lead to affective rather than sensory-motor reactions. In other words, the image is not necessarily relevant for our understanding of the actions pertaining to the narrative progression, but it informs our identification with the film's style. "Those affection images that occur in any-spaces-whatever lead to sublimation; to contemplation, rather than the reaction of movement" (Marks 2000: 73). In short, the stillness of the cinematic image makes that slow cinema replaces sensory-motor reaction with the generation of affect; through the employment of stylistic and formal stillness, the films open up the possibility of a pensive or contemplative mode of viewing in which the viewer identifies with the film's body instead. As Ira Jaffe notes, slow cinema viewers

> *ascribe emotion[s] to the film as a whole rather than to its characters.* Such claims seem consistent with recent reminders that films, not just characters, are felt by us and embody emotion themselves. […] Not just time looms larger as action is displaced or diminished; *cinematic form itself comes to the fore in a new way.* A cut, camera move, slant of light, the texture of a wall, the posture of a character – all become more prominent, and afford the pensive spectator rare insight and pleasure (2015: np, my italics).

In agreement with his claim, I understand the image of slow cinema here as the body of the film, its formal and stylistic system that addresses the viewer in a way that calls attention to itself by radically attenuating narrativity and consequentially foregrounding temporality - but more on that later. First, let's continue our exploration of filmic stillness.

So, what are the general constructive principles or *stylistic* and *formal properties* of slow cinema (i.e. its forms of stillness) that might be conducive to experiential slowness? Song Hwee Lim proposes the consideration of both the "narratorial subject and duration" as key elements within the text itself for the understanding of slowness (2014: 16). With this he means that it is both *what* is depict-

ed and *how* it is depicted that can account for the sensed slowness. I propose, similarly, to distinguish between a stillness-in-the-image and a stillness-of-the-image. In short, *stillness-in-the-image* means the represented stillness (eventful uneventfulness), whilst *stillness-of-the-image* denotes a still representation of thematic or narrative content (extended duration). In addition to Lim's distinction, I propose a third category of a *stillness-between-the-images* to describe the typical episodic or serial narrative form of slow cinema, which can also lead to an experiential slowness.[7]

All types can contribute to this experience, but they most strongly account for it conjointly: a still representation of stillness in a narratively still form being the most extreme case. Note also that the presence of just any of these types of stillness does not in itself lead to an experience of slowness. For example, a restless activity (people running, a car chase) can be represented in a stillness-of-the-image (shot in a static long take), but the overall effect can be that it doesn't lead to an experience of slowness. What is important to realise is that the proposed types of stillness interact in complex ways in actual films and their effects might differ between viewers and viewings. In the following, I'll sketch some ideal types that should function as a heuristic tool for understanding stillness.

In slow cinema, the *stillness-in-the-image* is constituted characteristically of tropes such as an emphasis on mundane or everyday action: aimlessly strolling characters as well as ones passing time through everyday activities that do not develop the story, like eating, drinking and smoking. Moreover, the characters don't seem to have a purpose in their lives: inert people waiting for their lives to take a start, muted and stilled characters observing the world whilst being unable to relate to it meaningfully. These features effectively push narrative action to the periphery, while stylistic features move to the centre of attention.

An informing notion for our understanding of stillness-in-the-image is that of dead time or *temps mort*. Mary-Ann Doane defines

[7] Thanks to dr. Julian Hanich for suggesting the notion of 'stillness between the images'.

it as that which is "outside of the event, 'uneventful'" (2002: 159-160). In other words, the moments in which nothing happens and seemingly have no purpose: the Deleuzian aleatory stroll. Now, I argue, that slow cinema is exactly a return to the employment of dead time that, according to Doane, the narrative-driven regime of fiction film has so painstakingly attempted to eliminate, in order to construct "its own coherent and linear temporality" (2002: 161). Slow cinema characteristically creates what I identify as an *eventful uneventfulness* through its use of dead time as main temporal structuring device. However, this is not proper dead time as it doesn't stand out in slow cinema as uneventful against the background of a norm of eventfulness of the film as a whole.[8] In contrast, it elevates the quotidian to the status of the dramatic, and hence, I suggest to call this eventful uneventfulness. In the words of Lim, slow cinema "uses so-called dead time to create *non-events as events* through which a different temporality, meaning, and value can come into being, thereby questioning the notion of "event" or "happening" and unsettling the very foundation of what constitutes a film's narrative" (2014: 30, my italics).

In turn, the second type, that of *stillness-of-the-image,* can consist of, aspects such as the use of (static) long takes, a sparse employment of voice over and non-diegetic music as well as the occasional preference for distanced framing (i.e. the scarce use of analytic or expressive close-ups).[9] A cinema of slowness can therefore pose a challenge for the viewer "not just [in] representing so-

[8] Adopting the terminology used to describe mainstream narrative conventions, therefore, seems inappropriate and might in the end thwart a better understanding of films that work according to different constructional principles. 'In an inverse way, however, this privileging credits the priority of classical cinema'. Margulies, *Nothing Happens*, 6.

[9] Lack of music would be more rightly labelled as quietude-of-the-image, but as I haven't worked that category out properly, I just subsume it, for the time being, as aspects of stillness-of-the-image (as sound is not the focus of this paper in the first place). It is my hunch the quietude-of-and-in-the-image contributes to a major extent to the experience of slowness. It is important, however, to realize as well that sound can also be used as a counterpoint or juxtaposition. Think, for instance, of Derek Jarman's film *Blue* (1993), that consists entirely of stillness-of-and-in-the-image: it's a blue screen throughout. But the soundtrack is restless with a continuous stream of thoughts and ambient sounds. Cf. P. Lovatt, 'Slow Sounds' in: Luca and Jorge, *Slow Cinema*.

called nothingness but, perhaps more crucially and controversially, for representing it for a long (and for some, longer than "necessary") duration" (Lim 2014: 16). The stillness-of-the-image is, in short, representation through extended or hyperbolic duration. As one of the dominant stylistic features of slow cinema, I will focus in this paper more thoroughly on the application of the static long take in specific.

At this point, I should explicate further what I mean with *long take*. In the first place, what matters is how long a take actually lasts. Admittedly, the term long take is a relative one: there is no objective measure of the length of shot that classifies it as a long take or not. Hence, I argue that it can be determined as 'long' when it stands out against a norm and this can be so for two reasons. Either it stands out against a background of the rest of the film - we could call this *intra-filmic* shot length - or it stands out against a conventional standard of cutting rates - this could be dubbed *inter-filmic* shot length.[10] Hence, I speak of hyperbolic duration: it is a means of stressing duration to its extreme; it foregrounds the temporality of a scene. Thus it can lead, as I'll argue in the next section, to an experience of slowness. Moreover, I claim that the long take as a stylistic feature is the connection between these first two layers of stillness. What I mean to say is that through its excessively still representation in the form of the hyperbolic use of the long take, slow cinema places added emphasis on the stillness of the eventful unevents that take place within the diëgesis.

Now, one might object that the use of the long take doesn't necessarily lead to an effect of slowness. To make my claim more convincing, I will therefore outline different types of long takes as types of stillness-of-the-image. There are different varieties of long takes and not all of them can equally be considered forms of stillness-of-the-image. A basic distinction in long-take types is that be-

tween the mobile and the static long take. Mark le Fanu proposes that

> a distinction in Bazin's thinking about the long take that might not be as explicit as it should be, lies between the long take that finds its essence in the properties of the *moving camera*, and another kind of long take that is *stationary*, or quasi-stationary. They are actually two separate things (1997: np, my italics).

As a more extensive delineation of this divide, we might add that there can be different forms of movement of the image: both camera movements and technical effects that are not classified as camera movements, namely zooms. The mobility of the camera entails lateral movement (tracks, dollies) and axial movement (pan or tilt), or a combination thereof. The in-camera mobility consists of zooms, but we might also add racking focus here as it can be understood as a predetermined way of guiding the direction of the viewer through changing properties of the image.

The stillness-of-the-image, I propose, is inversely correlated to the mobility of the camera. So, the more movement in and of the camera, the less stillness-of-the-image. However, these are not clear-cut categories, but rather ideal types that serve as heuristics in the analysis of actual forms of stillness as they are employed in films. For example, we can think of the hyperbolically lengthy zoom of Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967) or the extended single tracking motion of the camera in Sharon Lockhart's *Lunch Break* (2008). Even though these examples are not, literally speaking, forms of stillness-of-the-image, both afford a sense of slowness. Remember that stillness is an ideal type, not an absolute notion that is to be found in its purest form in actual films. Rather, it exists on a continuum ranging from stringent stillness to milder forms of stylistic evenness. Therefore, I would still determine these stylistic devices of slow zooms and steady tracks in the examples as forms of stillness-of-the-image, due to their forms of evenness or flow that have the potential to lead to the experience of slowness. Moreover, both examples radically diminish narrative (still-

---

[10] An indication for this historically changing conventional standard of shot length is the measurement of the average shot length (ASL). Cf. the Cinemetrics website. http://www.cinemetrics.lv/database.php

ness-between-the-images), thus adding to their overall stillness. Besides the movement of the camera, what matters as well is how the stillness-of-the-image relates to the stillness-in-the-image. It is important to understand that the interrelatedness of the still-ness-in-and-of-the-image determines the degree of stillness. So, static long takes (stillness-of-the-image) are, in tandem with a rep-resented uneventful eventfulness (stillness-in-the-image), most conducive to the experience of slowness. So, again, the interaction - or dialectics, if you will - of different stillness types should be properly considered. Following Hisn-Ning Chang in his PhD dis-sertation, I discern two types of long take images: those that are "deconstructable into sequences, structurally similar to editing in multiple shots" and those that

> do not focus on different objects or characters through the move-ment of the camera during the take. Rather, they usually combine with static camera, consistent pan or zoom, or long shots and there-fore either direct our attention to one object, or, on the other hand, present no privileged object whatsoever (2008: 12).

The first type of long take thus constitutes, in my terminology, a stillness-of-the-image, but not also a stillness-in-the-image, as there are motions, ruptures or attentional shifts that make for a restless-ness-in-the-image. An example of this first type would be Roy An-dersson's *Songs from the Second Floor* (*Sånger från andra våningen*, 2000).[11] The scenes are all (or better: mostly) static, long take shots. But they are also eventful: with the use of mise-en-scène (notably staging in depth), the director clearly structures the scenes in a teleological sense. As a viewer you're constantly ex-pectant of which unexpected figure might step through that obvi-ously centrally framed doorway – as well as when it will do so (but that it will, we are sure of).
Another useful theoretical notion to describe the second type of

---

[11] Or we could think of the by now hackneyed example of the opening scene of Welles' *Touch of Evil*, but that one is a bit more complicated, as there is motion of the camera (restlessness-of-the-image) as well.

the non-deconstructable long take is i*sochronal time*, coined by structuralist narratologist Gerard Genette. It denotes a similarity between the respective narrative speeds of the story time and of the discourse time. The story time is the amount of time that passes in the diegetic world (the told), whilst the discourse time is the time of the telling. Janet Murphet adapted Genette's term in order to be able to use the notion to study film. In doing so, she not only distinguishes between story and discourse, but also delin-eates a third dimension: viewing time. She understands isochrony as the equaling of the three levels of story, plot and screen time (Murphet 2005).[12] Note, however, that this notion of isochrony is an objective measurement that doesn't explain comprehensively the subjective experience of tempo. What matters here is that rhythm is created by varying with isochrony and its opposite an-isochrony; with regular and irregular temporal ordering; or, in the terms of Yvette Biró, with turbulence and flow (Biró 2008). For example, in Béla Tarr's bleak and pessimistic swansong *The Turin Horse* (2011), the stillness-of-the-image springs forth from the isochronal temporal ordering within sequences. Not only is the structure repetitive (I'll get to that shortly hereafter) and are the events depicted rather uneventful, they also get depicted in lengthy, isochronal scenes. Moreover, the sequences are not bro-ken down by montage: they're shot in long takes, so the film is characterized by a stillness-of-the-image.

The long take always leads to a match between screen time and discourse time, but not necessarily equaling story time. Think of the single long take of Alexander Sokurov's *Russian Ark* (2002) that spans three hundred years of Russian history, or the scenes in Theo Angelopoulos' *The Travelling Players* (*O thiasos*, 1975) in which the film subtly switches between historical times within the confines of a single long take. These instances, in my model, per-tain to a stillness-of-the-image but not a stillness-in-the-image,

---

[12] Instances of entirely isochronal films are not abundant, but some of Andy Warhol's *Stillies* or James Benning's *Nightfall* (2011) come to mind here, as well as 'cheats' like Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948) and Iñárritu's *Birdman* (2014).

Figure 1-4
The eternal retun in *The Turin Horse* (2011).
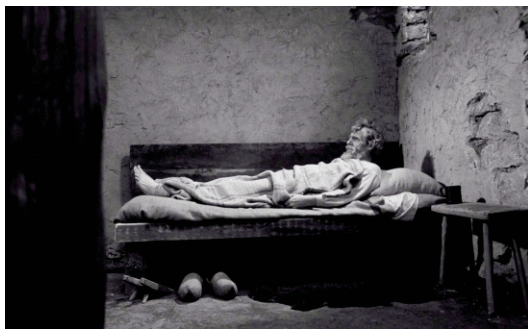
hence they're not cases of isochrony. As I will elucidate in the second part of this paper, stillness correlates to the temporal experience of the viewer. The teleological structuring of scenes that are deconstructable into parts adds to the protentive strength of the temporal vector pointing forwards in time. Therefore, I contend that the second type - the static long take that depicts non-deconstructable sequences (a combination of stillness-in-and-of-the-image) - is most conducive to the experience of slowness: it is the representation of eventful uneventfulness depicted through hyperbolic duration that accounts for the general stillness-in-and-of-the-image.

Lastly, I conceive of a *stillness-between-the-images* as the characteristic narrative form of slow cinema. It is a form of loose, non-teleological narrative that tends towards an episodic structure. This formal stillness comprises an episodic storytelling that is possibly coupled with repetitiveness. This aspect of *repetitive, episodic narrative* can be considered a form of stillness because it thwarts the viewer's expectation of plot progression: the forward thrust of the story gets downplayed in favour of repetition and variation as formal devices.[13] For example, returning to Tarr's film, we can notice that it is structured in seven episodes that each comprise one day in the lives of the two protagonists. What makes for the narrative stillness of this film is that the characters act through the very same mundane activities every day, with minor variations in terms of what happens. So, as the film progresses, the viewer gets to sense that what is to follow will be very similar to what has occurred already (Figure 1-4).

Here again, it should be mentioned that this type of stillness interacts with other types. Besides the repetition of events, the stillness of the film also consists of the eventful uneventfulness of the characters' daily lives: the film merely portrays the characters getting up, drinking a shot of vodka for breakfast, fetching water from the well, running errands, consuming Spartan meals, staring out of a window mindlessly and, after surviving the monotony of another

---

[13] Cf. Bordwell 2013:274-310, for his comparable notion of 'Parametric form'.

empty day, finally proceeding back to bed – only to start from the beginning once more the next day. So, not only does the film have a rigorously minimalist and repetitive narrative structure, but the coupling of this stillness-between-the-images with a stillness-in-the-image adds to the general stillness of the film. The effect is an attention to the variations that stand out against the background of repetition, in other words: a heightened awareness to the films style and temporal structure.

It is an interesting example also because isochrony and ellipsis work together in a distinct way. Formally speaking, these are opposed forms of narrative speed. Isochrony is a conjunction of plot and story time, whereas ellipsis is a reduction of plot time to zero whilst the story time can be in theory almost infinitely large.[14] In the film, however, ellipsis is cleverly combined with isochrony to achieve a formal stillness, working effectively as a subversion of the widely used Hollywood standards for temporal economy. In a twisted inversion of Hitchcock's catchphrase we could label *The Turin Horse* as life with the exciting parts cut out.[15] So, again, what matters is the interaction between types of stillness. Through the film's real-time approximation that is "stressed by its excessive length, the framing makes us attentive to details and micro-events of inscribed motion. […] Through this slice of time, the represented everyday activity suddenly becomes charged with new significations" (Wahlberg 2003: 148).

Other means of understanding this specific formal ordering (the stillness-between-the-images) of slow cinema are Gilles Deleuze's concepts of the time-image, seriality and the autonomous interval. A crucial distinction that Deleuze draws is between the movement-image and the time-image. The organic regime is dominated by the *movement-image* which is characterised by a subordination

---

[14] Consider the most famous example of ellipsis in film history from Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968): through a match cut the time of the Neanderthals until a point far in the future with elaborate forms of space travel is compressed into one narrative cut.

[15] The original quote by Hitchcock reads "life with the dull parts cut out" (Horton 1994: 127).

of time to movement and is thus an indirect representation of time. In other words, as a sign it represents time though movement; through a process of identifying movement with action; or through an interval that comprises a rational division of sequences into the whole of the film; through forming a logical time-space continuum of movement linked through montage. The crystalline regime, in contrast, is a way of thinking-through the *time-image* which is a direct representation of time. This image is formed through an irrational division that links the elements of the film; the interval is autonomous; sequences are self-contained units of pure duration; time no longer derives from movement anymore; it is a serial rather than an organic or linear formal ordering (Rodowick 1997: 3-17). What I extract from this, for the purpose of the argument in this paper, is how instead of linear, teleological ordering of the narrative characteristic of the movement-image, a serial or episodic form is typical of the time-image. I propose to call the narrative formal structure of slow cinema, which has the properties of Deleuze's time-image, a *serial narrative* structure: it is ordered episodically, and time is evoked directly through pure duration. Song Hwee Lim similarly argues that the actual subject of slow film is no longer action (as was the case in the movement-image) - but time itself (2014: 18-19).

To sum up my argument in this section, stillness found within film can be divided into largely three different categories: stillness-in-the-image, stillness-of-the-image and stillness-between-the-images. Both the shot (the framing) as well as what is within the shot (the framed) are significant for the sensed experience of slowness. Moreover, the incorporation of these aspects in the whole of the formal system of the film influences the sensed slowness. These three types of stillness can interact in a number of different ways and slow cinema heavily relies on the constructional principles of stillness to achieve its particular effect of slowness. I've mentioned that slow cinema often depicts quotidian life or what could be called dead time or eventful uneventfulness. Moreover, slow cinema features a serial narrative form wherein the linear, teleological

plot structure is downplayed in favour of episodic storytelling or autonomous intervals. And lastly, slow cinema is stylistically characterised by the use of hyperbolic duration in the form of the static, isochronal long take. Now, in the second part of this paper, I'll draw the correlations between these stylistic and formal features of slow cinema and their experiential temporal affordances, more precisely what I'll call an experience of slowness.

Slowness

The viewer's relation to film generally speaking, and by implication slow cinema in particular, can occur in three ideal typical modes: an immersive mode, a contemplative mode, and a last possibility of boredom or non-engagement with the film. Of course, these forms of engagements are common for film in general, but I'll argue in the following that the stillness of slow cinema demands from the viewer a more active contribution than merely following a story or interpreting a film's meaning, thus it affords the second, contemplative viewing mode. Slow cinema's formal and stylistic system are a way of implicating the viewer through a deliberate attempt to make his engagement with the film the phenomenological foreground or centre of attention.

In the first instance, the viewer engages with the film itself. In Bordwell's terms, this form of engagement could be understood as acts of *comprehension* and *interpretation* (2009: 2-3). The viewer can relate to a film, firstly, on the level of its diëgesis or filmic world; the typical mental processes in this instance are, amongst others, spatial, temporal and emotional *immersion*.[16] This results in what Bordwell calls forms of referential and explicit meaning that are both acts of comprehension. Or, secondly, he can engage with the film on a meta-level of interpreting the film's 'hidden' meanings, Bordwell's implicit or symptomatic meanings (2009: 8-9). It is crucial that the viewer when interpreting a film, like in the act of comprehension, still contemplates on the stylistic, thematic and/or

---

[16] Cf. Ryan (2003), for her tripartite division of immersion types.

narrative features of the film itself.

The second possibility is that the viewer enters a state of *contemplation* as a consequence of a mode of sustained attention to the image that I propose to call slowness.[17] To reach this level of engagement typically involves a frame-breaking or a frame switch, that is to say, the viewer adopts a different mental frame and an according viewing mode.[18] The viewer's attention shifts from the level of the story world to a metalevel of contemplating the film as artefact (i.e. its form and style) as well as a reflecting the act of viewing itself; he switches from watching what could be described as film-as-fiction to film-as-film. The second form of engagement is more free-floating than the former, but, crucially, is still triggered by the film itself, and therefore it should be distinguished from mere daydreaming and boredom. It can entail loose, unnameable affective states that the film induces within the viewer, or associations that do not necessarily pertain to the film itself, but are still triggered by the image. Put differently, the viewer still adopts an aesthetic attitude in which he is receptive to the image: he allows himself to be touched by the image, he is willing to give himself over to the temporal structure of the film. In the rest of this section, I'll further elaborate on this contemplative viewing mode, specifically reflecting on its temporal dimension.

Lastly, there is the possibility of *boredom*. In this case, the viewer is daydreaming or has his mind occupied by different matters altogether and he's likely reflecting on his own state of boredom rather than on the film itself. In short, it is *not* about the film. Scott C. Richmond describes this as a 'vulgar boredom'. It "casts my attention and awareness neither to what is on the screen, nor to the scene of the cinema, but rather to my actual and literal bodily presence *in* a cinema – and to my *psychic non-presence*" (2015: 27, my italics). Note that I refer to boredom as a type of non-engage-

---

[17] A possibility, but not a necessary or inevitable consequence. Hence, I've preferred the use of the term slow film over another label of 'contemporary contemplative cinema' that is in use.

[18] Cf. Korthals Altes (2014); Wahlberg (2003), for their respective notions of 'frame switch' and 'frame-breaking event'.

ment, whereas others have distinguished different types of bore-dom of which some are, on the contrary, types of deep engage-ment. For instance, Siegfried Kracauer's 'legitimate boredom' or Richmond's category of 'profound boredom' - which originates from Martin Heidegger – are, by and large, comparable with my category of contemplation that, again, relates to the film directly or indirectly, whereas my category of boredom, like Richmond's 'vulgar boredom', does not (Svendsen 2005; Kracauer and Levin 1995; Richmond 2015; Misek 2011). I settled on this specific use of the term boredom because I wish to avoid using the term with-out a proper definition and without an *a priori* assumption of boredom as a default mode of engagement with slow cinema. That is, I wish to circumvent the confusion over the use of the term, because it has been averted mostly in a normative sense - or worse: in a condescending way. Contrary to popular discourses on slow cinema, I therefore think that boredom is not the default mode of cinema viewing.

Recapitulating, I've suggested that the three characteristic types of engagement with film – immersive, contemplative, non-engaging (bored) - can be understood to exist on a scale with at its ex-tremes deep immersion and utter boredom. Note, however, that the actual viewer can move between these poles within a single viewing, and that different viewers can also tend more than others towards either side (i.e. the difference between a slow film snob and a hater). A variety of issues can be relevant here: personal dis-positions, level of attention, generic knowledge, and so forth. In Marks' terms we could pose that "whether these thin images [of slow cinema] merely annoy or engage the viewer depends on what stakes the viewer has in the image. [They] would prompt deeper reflection on the part of viewers who feel acutely the dis-turbance they create" (2000: 53-54).

To understand the experience of slowness - which, again, I under-stand to be an experience of the second, contemplative type of viewing - demands first and foremost an understanding of the hu-man experience of time in general, as well as the experience of time whilst watching a film in the cinema more specific. With the help of the philosophical descriptions of time experience by Henri Bergson, we are able to distinguish between objective, measurable clock-time and subjective, experienced inner-time (Bergson 2012). The former category of *clock-time* is discreet, with equal intervals (seconds, minutes, hours etc.), whereas the latter *inner-time* is ex-perienced as a continuous flow. The latter category of inner-time can, in turn, be understood in the Husserlian terms of now-con-sciousness, retention and protention (Husserl 2012).

The category of *now-consciousness* entails an awareness of the here-and-now of the experience: it is a fleeting and ephemeral sense of being, as it is always infused with protentive and/or reten-tive tendencies. In a philosophical sense it is hard to pinpoint: it seems to exist always seemingly within our reach but is, in fact, be-yond our grapple; it is in the imminent future and once we are there, it immediately and inevitably recedes into the past. In the words of Julian Hanich, the two categories of protention and re-tention can be defined as:

> on the one hand, *retention*, (the 'past-of-the-present-moment') points to what has passed: it retains the primal impression just elapsed. […] On the other hand, *protention*, (the 'future-of-the-present-moment') implies what is about to come: it provides the anticipatory horizon of ongoing, present experience (2010: 189).

This division naturally also goes for the time experienced whilst watching a film within the cinema context. "Duration is unthink-able beyond any acknowledgement of consciousness and lived ex-perience. […] [It] depends equally on strategies of quantitative measurement, and of our experience of time passing, our sensory judgment of a demarcated slice of time", writes Malin Wahlberg (2003: 135). In other words, the temporal experience in watching a film is necessarily a subject-object relationship: it is structured by both the objective temporal ordering of the film and the subjec-tive, lived-experience thereof that is contingent upon both cultur-ally and physiologically determined psychological givens. The for-

mer category of clock-time of film can be further broken down, following Richard Maltby's distinction into film time and movie time (2003: 419-420). *Film time* refers to the time it takes to see a film for the audience, so the length of the feature. *Movie time*, on the other hand, is the time of the diëgesis, which can itself be further subdivided into plot and story. The plot (or syuzhet, in (neo)formalist terms) is the actual, on-screen presented time in the film, whilst story (fabula) refers to the total of the implied story time as it is (chronologically) constructed in the viewer's mind. Husserl's aforementioned distinction between retention, now-consciousness and protention is relevant here, as it helps to better understand the latter category of subjective time experience of watching film, more particular that of watching slow cinema: the present-time is not an experience of discrete intervals that only move forward in time, but rather an ever-flowing present-passing that is permeable to different tenses; a transitory moment infused by both memory and imagination; a Janus-faced sensation of both anticipation and recollection. The temporal vectors of the present moment in slow cinema, conversely pointing towards the past and the future, are relatively small. To understand how filmic stillness can lead to these various forms of engagement (i.e. immersion, contemplation and boredom), I will elaborate further on the specific form of time experience that watching slow cinema involves. As I'll argue later on in this section, I conceive slowness as a particular form of now-consciousness that isn't so much structured by the temporality of the film as it is contingent upon the viewer's own mental, associative thought patterns. That is, I propose to make further refinements of the experienced inner-time of film, based on the notion of now-consciousness, arguing that the viewing experience is governed by a prolonged or protracted time. I propose to call this lingering. We could say that in this case the experienced length of the inner-time far surpasses the clock-time in this form of consciousness. Moreover, this inner-time shall be characterized as heterochronic, or a vertical, multi-layered temporality inducing a form of pensive or contemplative spectatorship,

that means that the film deeply implicates the viewer through his associative and affective involvement.

The temporal dimension of *lingering* can be understood in terms of its vector (a variable quantity defined by its direction and magnitude or length). Lingering is a form of temporality that plays in the here-and-now and that has a vector pointed ever so slightly forward in time. In the latter case, there is Husserlian protention present, however weak it may be.[19] Even though there is no forward narrative thrust to the image - that is very low in narrativity itself in the first place - there can still be a sense of expectancy. Therefore, it hoovers between now-consciousness and protention. This temporal experience of lingering is an experience of time that can hardly be called anticipatory, if the stillness-in-and-of-the-image is embedded in a stillness-between-the-images. That is to say, if the narrative structure of the film isn't conducive to an anticipatory form of consciousness, because it lacks a strong sense of teleological ordering. In sum, we can say that this lingering experience concerns a sense of the "time of the what now", instead of the "time of the what next", or in other words a "lingering time that finds each moment as a point of intersection of many line of actuality and possibility" (Perez 2000: 370). Because the film has no immediately apparent, inherent temporal ordering, the viewer is left to contemplate the here-and-now of the image; to be very attentive to every visual and auditory detail of the image. Time seems to be moving slowly, thus it transforms into an experienced time that is prolonged, or what Michael Flaherty calls *protracted time* (Flaherty 2000).[20]

---

[19] Another important element of the aesthetic stillness or restlessness of a film is the use of music. This also clearly has a forward temporal vector. I have not been able to address this issue in this paper. The absence of (non)diegetic music generally contributes to an experience of slowness. Cf. Lim (2014) for an account of the use of sound and music in the films of Tsai Ming-Liang.

[20] Note that protracted time could be further divided in a kind that is still anticipatory, even though it is moving slowly (the emotion of dread, as explained by Julian Hanich), and an empty kind that is not anticipatory. However, contra Hanich, I argue that the empty, protracted time that I call slowness does not necessarily lead to boredom. (Hanich 2011: 192).

Now, this lingering experience of the here-and-now can lead to a heightened awareness of the passing of the time in two ways. The sense of here-and-nowness concerns both a heightened awareness of the onscreen depiction of time and an attentiveness to the temporality of the activity of watching a film. Film phenomenologist Malin Wahlberg writes about Ozu's cinema – and this is also relevant to contemporary slow cinema - as a time-image "which stressed duration appears to invoke a transgression between the time of the image and the time of film viewing" (2003: 47-48). "The relation between the camera and our gaze becomes utterly stressed. [...] Isochronal representation draws attention to the act of viewing, to the camera, as well as our own gaze," she writes (2003: 162-164). Yvone Margulies, writing on the work of Belgian experimental filmmaker Chantal Akerman, notes how "the insistence on simplified forms, or on seriality, makes the experiential time and space of the spectator's confrontation with the work as obdurate as the forms presented; the work "works" solely through the viewer's persistence in time" (1996: 51). Following Schoonover, I claim that, through its stylistic and formal stillness (the stressed duration or the obdurate forms), the film draws attention to the activity of watching a film. An important invariant of the experience of slowness in watching slow cinema is thus a heightened time experience:

> the [slow] art film encourages its spectator to acclimate him- or herself to slow time and remain open to its potentialities. The restlessness or contemplation induced by art cinema's characteristic fallow time *draws attention to the activity of watching* and ennobles a forbearing but unbedazzled [sic] spectatorship (2012: 70, my italics).

In other words, the principles of stillness afford that the viewer enters a state of heightened awareness of time, as shots lack any external durational demarcation in the form of causal, teleological ordering and because the viewer is left uncertain about the internal durational structure of the shot due to the hyperbolically lengthy takes. So once more, the three types of stillness that I've mentioned earlier all add to the sense of slowness.

Another decisive characteristic of the temporal experience of watching slow cinema is that its quality is more determined by the viewer's mental and affective processes than by the temporal ordering of the film; this is the contemplative viewing mode that I shortly introduced earlier in this section. Using a spatial metaphor, we could say that time experience is not so much ordered horizontally, following a teleologically ordered chain of events over the duration of the film, but is rather arranged *vertically*. That is to say that, as a consequence of the breakdown of the forward drive of the narrative, different temporalities are inscribed simultaneously in the subject-object relation of film and viewer. So, the stillness-between-the-images correlates to the experience of slowness. In yet other words, we could say there is a palimpsest-like layering of different temporalities, occurring synchronously rather than being modulated diachronally. 'The optical image provokes evocative contemplations whose temporality takes a spiral path through the circuits of memory rather than the forward motion of action', Marks (paraphrasing Deleuze) notes (2000: 48). The spiral path that Marks talks of, I gather, circles in and out of the film: through both the film's time and the viewer's affect-induced memory (retention), selective attention (now-consciousness) and projective imagination (protention). The time-image thus results in what we could call a *heterochronic experience* of time. Margulies calls it a "nondirected field of spectator response, [...] committed to engaging the spectator's awareness of his or her own physicality and perception" (1996: 50). "[It] forces the viewer to contemplate the image itself, instead of being pulled into narrative", Marks writes. "Those images are so "thin" and unclichéd [sic] that the viewer must bring his or her resources of memory and imagination to complete them" (2000: 163). "Because the viewer cannot confidently link the optical images with other images through causal relationships, she is forced to search her memory for other virtual images that might make sense of it" (Marks 2000: 47). This is similar to what Bergson calls 'attentive recognition': "the way a per-

ceiver oscillates between seeing the object, recalling virtual images that it brings to memory, and comparing the virtual object thus created with the one before us" (Marks 2000: 48). Slow cinema invites the viewer to close in on the film; to make his own mind and body a place of reflection. This means that the viewer invests a large degree of his own self into the film, employing personal disposition, idiosyncrasies, and psychological traits for the meaning making process. This necessarily involves some form of hetero-geneity and difference, hence I call this temporality heterochronic. The next step in my argument is then to further specify how this particular temporal relation of the viewer to slow cinema can be constitutive of an experience of slowness rather than giving way to boredom, because stating that lingering or an experience of protracted time dominates in viewing slow cinema doesn't consti-tute the whole of the explanation. What matters as well is the *appraisal* of that present-tense experience, or the lived experience of that here-and-now. Adapting Robert Misek's account of bore-dom in film, I argue that an experience of slowness occurs as a consequence of a "mismatch between our time and an object's time" (2011: 137). To understand the temporal experience slow cinema requires to take into consideration that it has its own characteristic structuring of time; that it orders time through a particular extended duration; that it has the effect of a phenome-nological foregrounding of the passing of time. Lim muses that the

> cinema of slowness invites us to form a different relationship to the images we see, to relish them as self-contained units of time and space, and to see them unfold at a pace that allows time to take its own time (2014: 18-19).

Likewise, Laura Mulvey, referring to the work of Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, describes his films as examples of Deleuzian time-images. She writes that

> this cinema of record, observation and delay tends to work with elongated shots, *enabling the presence of time to appear on the screen.*

> The duration of the shots draws attention to time as it passes on the screen, the film's present, but the lack of action confronts the audi-ence with a palpable sense of cinematic time that leads back, from the time of the screening, to the time of registration, the past (2006: 129, my italics).

This peculiar stylistic feature of hyperbolic duration in slow cinema is what leads to this mismatch of the temporal orders of film and viewer.
Slowness can only exist as a relational property, as a subject-ob-ject relation. That is to say, it is always relative to viewers' *expecta-tion* of temporal duration: it's not that time moves slowly, but that it moves *too slowly*.

> Isochronal representation alone does not evoke real-time approxi-mation as a frame-breaking event, because it is a device that is imma-nent to cinema. […] Hence, the relative quality of real-time approxi-mation is dependent upon the viewer's expectations, the formal and genre-related standard which may be taken for granted (Wahlberg 2003: 143).

So, the appraisal that is related to expectation strongly relies on conventional, generic knowledge. A slow film is only slow in com-parison to a norm of a faster pace that one has grown accus-tomed to. This also partly explains why one man's boredom with a film is another one's engagement with a pleasantly paced film. Time seems to be proceeding slowly - sometimes pleasurably so, leading the viewer to contemplatively savour the passing of time, sometimes tediously so, running the viewer into boredom. I argue that boredom is oftentimes a consequence of a lack of under-standing that comes with a lack of knowledge of the genre's con-ventions. The natural reaction against the sense of a lack of com-petence is then to blame the other who, in the case of slow cine-ma, is supposedly guilty of the act of over-interpretation (hineinin-terpretieren) of something that is not present in the film itself. I call this the 'emperor's clothes argument', after the famous fairy

Figure 5-8
The eight and a half minutes long take from *Birdsong* (2008). The three magi start in the middle ground, walk to the horizon, disappear behind it, only to walk back in the direction they came from.

tale by Hans Christian Andersen. In this way, the divided appreciation of slow cinema can thus be understood as positions in a debate that is fed by normative positions.

Looking at the documented experiences of viewers of slow cinema viewers immediately brings to light the aspect of expectation and the consequent differences in the experience of time. One IMDb user recounts his experience of watching Albert Serra's *Honour of the Knights* (2006): 'Although "only" around 1 hour and 47 minutes in duration, the pace of this film is so slow that, if you survive watching the whole thing, it feels as though you have sat through *Gone With the Wind* twice over'.[21] Another user, discussing Tsai's *Goodbye, Dragon-Inn* (*Bu San*, 2003), writes:

> It was tedious beyond words. I was looking forward to a pleasant evening. I made popcorn. I turned down the lights. I waited and waited and waited. Absolutely nothing happened. What a waste of time and money. I gave it 40 minutes then I got up and did housework. I found that far more exciting. The director should be ashamed of boring people to death.[22]

As I indicated in the previous section already, when discussing the long take, the temporality of slow cinema stands out as a figure only against a ground of habitual engagement with differently structured time in film. Sticking to this particular stylistic device as an example, it becomes clearer how the constructional principle of stillness-of-the-image correlates to this sense of mismatch of the times of the film and the viewer. For instance, Spanish director Albert Serra's film *Birdsong* (*El cant dels ocells,* 2008) contains a much discussed sequence that well illustrates my point. The long take that keeps running for no less than eight and a half minutes features nothing more than three characters walking towards the horizon, disappearing behind it for a few seconds, only to come back in the opposite direction they headed in the first part of the shot (see figure 5-8).

[21] eyyoup, "The Longest Film Ever Made".
[22] JillieKate, "The Most Boring Film Ever".

The shot barely provides any narrative information – other than that the characters are apparently lost – and doesn't present the viewer with any salient events, actions or emotional expressions to process. This narrative draining and stylistic rigour leaves the viewer on his own, opening the film up to either his contemplative engagement or, in the negative case, to his utter boredom. Rather than ''gradually discovering what is in the image'', slow cinema viewers are ''coming to the image already knowing what it is'', only to be gradually estranged by and distanced from it (Marks 2000: 178). Through serial representation (stillness-between-the-images) of eventful uneventfulness (stillness-in-the-image) in extended duration (stillness-of-the-image), slow cinema shifts the attention from actions and psychological motivations (as in Deleuze's action-image) to textures, visual details and ambient sounds; to the film's body as whole as it unfolds in time before the viewer in a heightened state of awareness (a time-image).

Another important factor besides expectation that leads the viewer to boredom rather than contemplation is a sense of time being imposed by the film (and the viewing context) upon the viewer.[23] The time of the object, that is to say the fixed duration of a film, itself doesn't lead to an experience of slowness – as every film has a predetermined duration. It is the additional sense of *imposition* that matters here; the feeling of being forcefully out-of-sync with the temporal structure of the film. 'This frustrating effect of the optical image seems to account for the anxiety [...] for a clear plot line, for history, for causality', Marks writes (2000: 47). This experience of slowness is therefore not very likely to occur in watching a classical Hollywood film - its formal and stylistic system is designed to prevent exactly that, through omitting dead

[23] This is where the cinema *dispositif* comes into play. The cinematic institution, with its normative practice of the 'quiet-attentive' mode of viewing (Hanich), can also contribute to this sense of imposition: it creates a threshold to leave the theatre and it also downplays expressing one's negative opinion of a film (which, I think, might be a source of (temporary) relief). Cf. Frey (2012), for an account of certain thresholds that encourage complete watching of a film. Moreover, he points out that this contemplative viewing mode is not to be mistaken for the most 'cinematic' viewing mode, as it is historically and culturally bound (2012: 98-99).

time as well as its teleological, time-economical narrative form. Looking at some user reviews on IMDb indicates the strength of this sensation of imposition for viewers. For example, one commentator described sitting in the theatre watching Lisandro Alonso's film *Jauja* (2014): 'Many were fidgeting, myself included, and you could see screens of phones lighting up every now and again to check how many more *painful minutes* we had to spend watching the film'.[24] Viewers frequently describe how slowness can feel as a test of patience or endurance. An IMDb user talks about Tsai's *Journey to the West (Xi you*, 2014)*:

> Dull, slow moving and tedious. Shot in a series of long takes, this minimalist film from Taiwanese director Tsai Ming-Liang (Stray Dogs, etc) will surely *test the patience* of many in the audience, even with its mercifully brief running time of 56 minutes.[25]

Also, consider this remark about another film of the same director, *Goodbye, Dragon-Inn*: ''on this occasion the director strays too far, the film *demands too much from the viewer* and offers scant return for this time''.[26] Yet another clear expression is found in this user review of Lisandro Alonso's film *Los Muertos* (2004)*: ''The slow pacing can easily *get to the nerve of the toughest film watcher*''.[27] These examples all provide negative experiences of a sense of imposition, most likely resulting in non-engagement, in giving up on the film, and thus of being bored or drifting of into daydreams.

However, more appreciative accounts also exist. The sense of foregrounding of the film's time can also be understood to form a possibility for entering a state of contemplation. As such, it is better understood in this instance not as imposition, but rather as *flow*. These experiences of imposition and flow share the facet of the finitude of the viewing experience; the sense of a block of

[24] crissgidas, ''Disappointingly Awful''. My italics.

[25] gregking4, ''Dull, Slow Moving and Tedious''. My Italics.

[26] burckhardt, ''Hard Work Even for the Most Committed Movie-Goer''. My italics.

[27] The Big Combo, ''...''. My italics.

Figure 9-12
One such confrontational long take from *Journey to the West* (2014). It takes the characters (played by Kang-sheng Lee and Denis Lavant) eleven minutes to traverse the street walking in meditative slow motion from the right-hand side of the frame to exit on the left.

time that is carved out of ordinary life; a bubble in time - but they differ in their opposing appraisal as either disturbing or pleasant. Exactly because the pace of slow cinema stands out as highly different from normal viewing experiences and everyday life experiences, one needs time to become accustomed to the flow of the film, one needs to allow the film unfold in duration in order to get attuned to its pace. Viewers describe the temporal experience of slow cinema with various words, like meditative, immersive, contemplative, or hypnotic. For example, one reviewer wrote of Tsai's *Journey to the West* (see figure 9-12):

> This movie *makes you stop for a moment and meditate* about your very everyday life.[…] This movie came to remind us about our loss of serenity in our very everyday lives. It tests you to the point of you feeling uncomfortable before the long, looong, loooooooooong [sic] takes. It's not only just a movie, it's a deep experience within our own selves, our sanity, our capacity of taking a seat, stop for a moment and look beyond the environment that surrounds us, for us to enjoy the little simpler things, to ignore the noise, the problems and everything, stop going so fast and face the view, the silence and face our own existence, our moments, to make our peace with our own time again.[28]

The reviewer literally describes the ways in which the film forced him to adjust to a different tempo, to take a halt and reflect or meditate on the default fast pace of normal, everyday reality.
Another user remarks about his experience of *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone* (*Hei yan quan*, 2006):

> "I Don't Want to Sleep Alone" took me a little longer to get into than any prior film by the director, but by about the half-hour mark I *was fully absorbed*. Thankfully, "I Don't Want to Sleep Alone" rewards patient viewers by reserving some fantastically humorous, mysterious, and even *hypnotic moments* for its last acts.[29]

[28] ricardopthomaz, "Wow!". My italics.
[29] erahatch, "Another Strong Piece of Work". My italics.

Here, again, the review informs us that it required the viewer to work through a period of adjustment, a time to 'get into' the film that was followed by absorption and hypnotic moments, rendering the experience rewarding on the whole.

Conclusions

Wrapping up, I shortly summarize that in this paper I have claimed that slow cinema is formally characterised by three constructional principles of stillness, functioning as a set of affordances that are conducive to the experience of slowness. This stillness consists of stillness-in-the-image (eventful uneventfulness), stillness-of-the-image (extended duration) and a stillness-between-the-images (serial narrative). The dialectics between the three types of stillness place slow cinema on the stillness end of the stillness-restlessness continuum, I've argued, and it is therefore highly conducive to the experience of slowness.

Stillness can lead (but not necessarily so) to an experience of slowness or lingering (protracted time) that I've described as a form of heightened temporal awareness; a foregrounding of time. Moreover, it entails a transgression of film time and viewing time and it is characterized as a heterochonic or vertical temporality. Furthermore, I've noted the role of expectancy and related to that the appraisal or evaluation of slowness as an important experiential quality to analyse: the sense of mismatch between temporalities of the film and viewer can be qualified as either imposing, possibly leading to boredom, or can be experienced as a flow, potentially leading to contemplation.

What is more, with this exploration of the correlations between stillness and slowness, I hope to have shown that a reliance on solely formal analyses misses the required theoretical finesse to adequately account for the temporal experience of watching slow cinema. The introduction of subjective time problematizes contentious ideas of fast versus slow and by contrast it offers a more fine-grained understanding of temporality. Conceptualizing slow-

ness as a subject-object relation, allows one to take into consideration heterogeneous aspects of both form and style as well as contextual issues such as viewers' dispositions, their generic knowledge as well as the viewing context, insofar as it co-determines the viewing mode through its technological, discursive, social and institutional features. These are all interesting fields of inquiry that can enrich the comprehensiveness of the conceptualization of time and film viewing. All these contextual matters relate to our attention or consciousness in general and our perception of time more specifically. One mode of viewing stands out as the default mode of many slow cinema viewers: watching a film in a "quiet-attentive mode" in the cinema (Hanich 2014). Investigating this default mode, like in this paper, should thus have its implications for our understanding of temporal experience in various other viewing modes in different viewing situations, such as video installations in a museum, or watching a film on a small screen on a mobile device.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BERGSON H. (2012), *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, Courier Corporation, New York.
BÍRÓ Y. (2008), *Turbulence and Flow in Film: The Rhythmic Design*. Indiana University Press.
BORDWELL D. (2009), *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
Id. (2012), *Poetics of Cinema*, Routledge, New York.
Id. (2013), *Narration in the Fiction Film*, Routledge, New York.
BURCKHARDT (2003), "Hard Work Even for the Most Committed Movie-Goer", *The Internet Movie Database*, November 4.
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0377556/reviews?ref_=tt_urv.
ÇAĞLAYAN O. (2014), *Screening Boredom: The History and Aesthetics of Slow Cinema*, University of Kent.
CHANG H. (2008), *Viewing the Long Take in Post-World War II Films: A Cognitive Approach*, PhD thesis, Ohio University, 2008.
https://etd.ohiolink.edu/.
CRISSGIDAS (2015), "Disappointingly Awful", *The Internet Movie Database*, April 2.
DARGIS M. - A. O. SCOTT (2011), "In Defense of the Slow and the Boring", in *The New York Times Magazine*, March 6.
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/05/movies/films-in-defense-of-slow-and-boring.html.
DOANE M. A. (2002), *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
erahatch, "Another Strong Piece of Work", *The Internet Movie Database*, September 22, 2006.
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0855824/reviews?ref_=tt_urv.
EYYOUP (2008), "The Longest Film Ever Made", *The Internet Movie Database*, June 2.
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0799772/reviews?ref_=tt_urv.
FLAHERTY M. (2000), *A Watched Pot: How We Experience Time*. NYU Press, New York.
FLANAGAN M. (2012), *"Slow Cinema": Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film*, PhD thesis, University of Exeter.
GREGKING4 (2014), "Dull, Slow Moving and Tedious", *The Internet Movie Database*, August 22
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3521442/reviews?ref_=tt_urv.
FREY M. (2012), "Tuning Out, Turning in, and Walking Off: The Film Spectator in Pain", in GRØNSTAD A. - GUSTAFSSON H. (edited by), *Ethics and Images of Pain*, Taylor & Francis, New York.
HANICH J. (2010), *Cinematic Emotion in Horror Films and Thrillers: The Aesthetic Paradox of Pleasurable Fear*, Routledge, New York.
Id. (2014), "Watching a Film With Others: Towards a Theory of Collective Spectatorship", in *Screen*, 55: 3, pp. 338–59.
HORTON A. (1994), *Writing the Character-Centered Screenplay*. University of California Press, Los Angelos.
MURPHET J. (2005), "Narrative Time", in HUISMAN R. - MURPHET J. - DUNN A. (edited by), *Narrative and Media*. Cambridge University Press.
HUSSERL E. (1991), *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, translated by John Barnett Brough, Springer, Boston.
Id. (2012), *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, Springer Science & Business Media, New York.
JAFFE I. (2014), *Slow Movies: Countering the Cinema of Action*, Columbia University Press, New York.
Id. (2015), "Slow Cinema", *Four by Three Magazine*, 2015.
http://www.fourbythreemagazine.com/slow-cinema.html.
JAMES N. (2010), "Passive Aggressive", in *Sight & Sound*, BFI, London.
JILLIEKATE (2005), "The Most Boring Film Ever", *The Internet Movie Database*, December 14.
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0377556/reviews?start=20.
KOIS D. (2011), "Eating Your Cultural Vegetables", in *The New York Times Magazine*.
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/01/magazine/mag-01Riff-t.html?_r=1&.

KORTHALS ALTES L. (2014), *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation: The Negotiation of Values in Fiction*, University of Nebraska Press, 2014.

KRACAUER S. - LEVIN T. (1995), *The Mass Ornament: Weimer Essays*, Harvard University Press, 1995.

LE FANU M. (1997), "Metaphysics of the 'Long Take': Some Post-Bazinian Reflections", in *P.O.V.* 4.

http://pov.imv.au.dk/Issue_04/section_1/artc1A.html.

LIM S. H. (2014), *Tsai Ming-Liang and a Cinema of Slowness*, University of Hawaii Press, 2014.

LUCA T. M. DE - JORGE N. B. (forthcoming), *Slow Cinema*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

MALTBY R. (2003), *Hollywood Cinema*, Wiley, Hoboken.

MARGULIES I. (1996), *Nothing Happens: Chantal Akerman's Hyperrealist Everyday*, Duke University Press, Durham.

MARKS L. U. (2000), *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, Duke University Press, Durham.

MISEK R. (2011), " Dead time: Cinema, Heidegger, and Boredom", in VASSILIEVA J. - CONSTANTINE V. (edited by), *After Taste: Cultural Value and the Moving Image*, Routledge, London.

MULVEY L. (2006), *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, Reaktion Books, London.

PEREZ G. (2000), *The Material Ghost: Films and Their Medium*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

RICARDOPTHOMAZ (2013), "Wow!", *The Internet Movie Database*, December 1.

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3119416/reviews?ref_=tt_urv.

RICHMOND S. C. (2015), "Vulgar Boredom, or What Andy Warhol Can Teach Us about Candy Crush", in *Journal of Visual Culture,* 14: 1, pp. 21–39.

RODOWICK D. N. (1997), *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, Duke University Press, Durham.

RYAN M. (2003), *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

SCHOONOVER K. (2012), "Wastrels of Time: Slow Cinema's Laboring Body, the Political Spectator, and the Queer", *Framework*, 53:1, pp. 65-78.

SOBCHACK V. (1995), "Phenomenology and the Film Experience", in WILLIAMS L. (edited by), *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*, Rutgers University Press, New York.

SVENDSEN L. (2005), *A Philosophy of Boredom,* Reaktion Books, London.

THE BIG COMBO (2004), "...", *The Internet Movie Database*, October 13, 2004.

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0407021/reviews?ref_=tt_urv.

WAHLBERG M. (2003), *Figures of Time: On the Phenomenology of Cinema and Temporality*, PhD thesis, Stockholm University, Stockholm.