Always Already Dead:

Death, Representation, and Temporality in the Visual Age

A Cinematic Analysis of Tom McCarthy's Narrative Work

Tom Ruben

5656745

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Supervisor: Dr. Reindert Dhondt

Second reader: Prof. dr. David Pascoe

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"There, there, it will soon be over."

(J.M. Coetzee *Elizabeth Costello* 115)

"I know I was born,

And I know that I'll die,

The in-between is mine."

(Pearl Jam "I am Mine")

"There is a trapdoor in the sun, immortality."

(Pearl Jam "Immortality")

"If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is:

Infinite."

(William Blake *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 14)

"Everything will be as it is now, just a little different."

(Ben Lerner *10:04* epigraph)

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1.Introduction

Literature is, once again, dead. It is dead like a parachutist whose parachute won't open as he is falling to earth. Although he is not dead *yet,* chances of survival are naught. Literature has been locked in realist conventions, despite attempts to drag it out of the dirt, for a while now. Descriptions that work on paper but not in reality, a gesture, a movement, speech which simply does not resemble the way *we* interact in this world. With British novelist Tom McCarthy, we see a new attempt to break literature away from its chains, in an avant-garde approach which resembles a different writing, a different manner of describing similar events, trying to elevate it into the realms of technology, inauthenticity, death, repetition, playing with temporality, constraints, appraising failure and trying to pin down the experience of life as we think we know. Tom McCarthy is fully aware of inauthenticity, yet, unlike many others, does not deny it. In fact, he embraces inauthenticity and it fits him like a glove he bought himself after a long search, and lots of fitting and reassembling. The glove, his work and the theories it lays bare, is hand-made. He has broken ground so his own work could flourish. Tom McCarthy, in his narrative work, is constantly questioning the confines of reality, by testing the function of temporality and how time can expand our reality, and by pushing the notions of inauthenticity (the genericity of human life) and death to their limits. He places death at a threshold in an attempt to see whether it becomes something we can know, understand, and recreate in art.

A question arises: Why did McCarthy choose literature, above all other forms of expression, to announce his ideas to the external? Why does he write in the first place? To materialize concepts unattainable in the mind only? Does the word provide all the necessary elements to verbalise his intentions? Or should he, for example, have chosen for a more visual approach? Films, short clips, images, voice-overs even, perhaps. This paper will try to retrace the steps McCarthy has taken by tearing apart his philosophy, his novels, his whole existence in an attempt to elevate his thought to the realm of vision. Perhaps, in the end, we can call him a visionary.

This paper will tread lightly along the lines of thought gifted to us by thinkers like Jean Baudrillard, Maurice Blanchot, André Bazin and Mary Ann Doane. Their thoughts contribute to thinking about death, temporality, inauthenticity. I will take these to another

ground and let them converse with thoughts in film studies. Intermediality[1], one of the strange terrains which in our contemporary society remains the black sheep, the vague interlocutor between one and another medium, will be a core thought to this thesis. It is in the merger between literature and visual culture in which I will try to redefine not only what it means to be literary, but also what it means to be visual. This counter clockwise approach will shed light on matters posed in the first paragraph; why literature, why visuals, why not?

The cinematic argument that will attempt to drag literature out of its freefall, will come from film critics like Mary Ann Doane and André Bazin. Thinkers that deal with the possibilities and impossibilities of cinema. They discuss temporality, duration and representation in close connectedness to death, repetition and inauthenticity. One of the overarching principles in this thesis is death. Death, that incomprehensible absolute, highlights a problem in both media: how can one depict death, if one is alive. It is a non-space which exists outside of time, outside of the Self, it is unknowable, indescribable, yet inherently present at all times. The concept that is inherent to the problem, but also perhaps the key to its resolve, is time. Time not as an institutionalized rational system, but as a lived time, a time connected to human experience and duration.

First of all, a clear understanding of what these concepts entail and how I want to interpret them needs to be communicated. So there will be a red thread throughout this thesis that will follow, logically, from one concept into another. What existed first: the word? The image? What came after that? This thesis will first outline a theoretical framework, explaining the workings of representation, simulacra and photography. A key theme among these is our human fascination with depicting death. Death, however, has two problems: it is unknowable, and it is an absolute standstill of lived time. Then matters will be complicated by moving from the still image to the moving image, by venturing in a discourse on temporality. Death then, becomes even more problematic, since the moving image has temporal qualities which are in complete juxtaposition to the phenomenon of death. How then, can a moving image, which suggests movement and duration, represent something so rigid and definite as death? The turn in this thesis revolves around literature: Tom McCarthy seems to be adding constructs from cinematic theory into his narrative work, in order to open up the field of literature to enter a new reality; one in which his literary characters can inhabit a space in which time, movement, action, events all become one. This space, I suggest is called the

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[1] My Word does not even recognize the word and underlines it, as if to say, hold on, is this a thing?

impasse: a space which is a new reality, floating above ours, in which anything can be represented, felt, experienced. Along the thoughts of Baudrillard on simulacra, Doane's film theory on duration and time in cinema, Bazin's ideas on representing death on the screen, this thesis will venture into a discussion on the representation of time, authenticity and death in cinema, while trying to critically assess Tom McCarthy's narrative work for its cinematic qualities. In a hermeneutic reading of his novels, and a discussion of his thoughts as proclaimed by his avant-garde society, the International Necronautical Society (henceforth: INS), I will try to show why Tom McCarthy decide to create literature, instead of films.

1.1 Images and Literature

Image, image, image! The infinite exposure to images which depicts the visual age we have found ourselves in, starting with the invention of the camera and currently expanding into the image-driven social media, has, till recently, not fully complied with the progress of literature. Although the experience of literature has always been a trip in one's own mind, in which castles were built out of thin air, and philosophical thought interweaves with complex characters and narratives, it has now come to a point in which it emulsifies with our current visual age. One of the groundbreakers for this confrontation between the word and the image is British author/visual artist/thinker Tom McCarthy. In his works, McCarthy attempts to expand the capacities of the novel by exploring the boundaries between words and visuals. His descriptions often resemble a (moving) image, whilst referring to movement, films, and the repetitive nature of human existence.

Although the film industry often takes literature as a source for screen adaptations, as of yet, the movement has not been counter clockwise: literature adapting to visuals. I am not referring to the Realist conventions in an attempt to resemble common day life, for surely those conventions portray anything but reality. McCarthy makes a case against the assumption that Realist literature resembles life, for the way it describes gestures, moments and the general experience of life do not match with experience as we know it, it takes a step back and provides an interpretation of life, but if the words would be executed in actual action, the acts would not resemble life at all. One does not walk the street verbalising ponderings about the experience. McCarthy, on the contrary, tries to do justice to 'real' human experience. I use quotes for 'real' for reality appears to be a multiplied and subjective experience. Yet, McCarthy attempts to praise the inauthenticity of living. He swells in repetition, failure, and living through accepting death as an absolute concept. Therefore, he has the potential of

moving passed the concept of iconotext, yet finds himself stuck in repetition, floating somewhere between sign and signifier. His attempts to push literature out of bounds and into the visual age might result in a creative failure, yet it provides a new ground on which we can discuss the position of literature in accordance with the visual age.

It is necessary to start off with a theoretical discourse on representation, reproduction and simulacra, since the representation of reality in art lies at the groundwork of this thesis.

1.2 Simulacra

Ever since the dawn of time, people have been preoccupied with representing their surroundings in images (and eventually words). By capturing their environment, they attempted to keep an image of withering flesh and willowing flowers which would last longer than their natural existence. From the wall paintings in the caves in Lascaux, to mummifications of Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs, to paintings by the great painters of the last six centuries kept in museums, to hordes of tourist taking photos of everything, to movies recreating the illusion of reality. Looking at the canvas, looking through the lens, we are always double removed from what is actually in front of us. One recurring theme throughout all of these is mortality and the ever ongoing need to capture death; be it representations of dead relatives or attempts of coming to term with our own mortality, there is always an interest in immortalising our own mortality. Yet, these representations are always already dead. They kill reality with a flash of the camera, with a stroke of the brush, with a line of the pen. This removal from reality, this "duplication suffices to render both artificial". (Baudrillard 9) Reality can be considered obsolete, or at least redundant, if all we live by are representations of it. This repetitive spiral we find ourselves in, always attempting to define the authentic, brings us simultaneously closer to the real as much as it removes us from a certain reality out there. As time progresses, representations of reality take over and become reality. Inauthenticity will reign our memories, our memories are inauthentic. Yet, there is one experience of reality which is truly authentic, yet it has one downside, we will never consciously experience it. The same occurring theme as aforementioned –death– is the one experience we will always be only able to guess at. To imagine death is to seek it, in an attempt to embrace it, and eventually inhabit. To repeat INS.

Representation is but a subjective re-imagining of reality. Simulacra, as Jean Baudrillard discusses the concept, are:

> representations as a dialectical power, the visible and intelligible
> mediation of the real (5) [...] representation stems from the principle of
> the equivalence of the sign and the real. (Baudrillard *Simulacra and*
> *Simulation* 6)

Simulacra are dialectical for they are in a dialogue with outside reality, they correspond to a perceptible and thinkable reality. They are an interpretation of this external reality we call life, in an attempt to equal it and pin a moment down to a standstill, for eternity. It is this notion of pinning down the fleeting moment, the attempt of freezing time (freeze frame, a concept later acknowledge in this discussion when talking about time) is a concept that has temporal and authenticity issues. It asks for a re-evaluation of the real. It contests the real, as Baudrillard claims in his work:

> When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full
> meaning. There is a plethora of myths of origin and of signs of reality—
> a plethora of truth, of secondary objectivity, and authenticity. (6)

Here, Baudrillard concludes a passage in which he discusses the interconnectivity between the sign, signifier and the signified. The sign, the reproduction, the signifier, the mediator, the signified, the physical object or person, the subject of the sign. He states that if the sign is used to address the signified, the signified (reality) becomes the sign and vice versa; the lines between what is real and representation become blurred.

Baudrillard then discusses another concept, closely connected to simulacra called simulation:

> Simulation, on the contrary, stems from the utopia of the
> principle of equivalence, *from the radical negation of the sign as*
> *value,* from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every
> reference. Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation
> by interpreting it as false representation, simulation envelops the
> whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum. (6)

Simulation is a step beyond simulacra, it is a completely virtual world in which a representation in itself is a representation. It is not once removed from reality, but it distance itself twice from reality. It becomes a reality *an sich*, it is a pure simulacrum and has no

longer any relation to reality. In the following list, Baudrillard shows how consecutively a representation is increasingly removed from reality.

> [This] would be the successive phases of the image:
>
> It is the reflection of a profound reality;
> it masks and denatures a profound reality;
> it masks the *absence* of a profound reality;
> it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum. (6)

These steps go from a genuine reflection, to a simulacra to a simulation:

> The transition from signs that dissimulate something to signs that dissimulate that there is nothings marks a decisive turning point. The first reflects a theology of truth and secrecy. [Then, most importantly] The second [it masks and denatures a profound reality] inaugurates the era of simulacra and simulation, in which there is no longer a God to recognize his own, no longer a Last Judgment to separate the false from true, the real from its artificial resurrection, as everything is already dead and resurrected in advance. (6)

Taking a closer look at the last sentence of the quote above, I cannot help but think of death. Everything is already dead *and resurrected.* Re-surrection. One dies but is already alive *a priori.* For the image is taken when the subject was still alive, and is instantly re-*alive* within its representation.

1.3 Death

In answering the question: "What do you make of death?" Baudrillard answers: "Death has passed into either the history of metamorphoses or into metastatic history. [according to Franz Bader] ecstasy is the anticipation of death, a passage into metastatic state of the living subject. Death is replaced by the passage of this point of inertia." (104) By taking Bader's point into consideration, Baudrillard equates ecstasy as living in anticipation of death. Yet, he simultaneously claims that "death is an event that has always already taken place."(104). In doing so, Baudrillard creates a paradox in his argument, a discrepancy between death as something we anticipate towards, yet at the same time claiming it is also

already always present. He claims it is inherent to life, but if one embraces it in life, how can he argue for it to be a necessity of the fatal order? Death as an event which comes from the absolute beyond?

If death is omnipresent, it is always already here, too; it is taking place at any given time. However, he explains the fatality – which is death – as "the 'fatal' order" which he defines as

> an objective order, but of the highest necessity. The question of finality no longer applies. An event – or a being, or a word – resolves all efforts at explanation; it imposes itself with a force which is no longer of the final or causal order. It is more final than final: it is fatal. (107)

Choosing the word necessity as a crucial term, implies that the event is a happening which is a must, a non-evadable resolution to a chain of events. Yet, this implies that Baudrillard sees death as an absolute. He continues by stating that:

> The order of the fatal, on the other hand, is the site of symbolic exchange. There is no more liberty, everything is locked in a sequential chain. [...] Whatever reaches the level of pure appearance – a person, an event, an act - enters the realm of the fatal. It cannot be deciphered or interpreted. The subject has nothing to say about it. Events emerge from any and every place, but from an absolute beyond, with that true strangeness which alone is fascinating. (108)

Agreeing with the idea that this fatality cannot be explained as such (this thought will later be entertained; death can(not) be deciphered or interpreted), the idea that death imposes itself on us at the end of the chain of events extending beyond finality, defies the notion that death is omnipresent. To Maurice Blanchot, death is a given – not something we strive towards, as a final resolution, a fatal conclusion to a sequential chain – but an aspect of life which is always lingering in the present. Eradicating the discrepancy in Baudrillard's thought with Blanchot's notion of death, the event of death becomes not a definite point in time, death is always with time, in time, and within time. Thus it is always already without time. By belonging to the fatal order, it becomes timeless. It happens within time, there is no dying, there is only dying at any given time. By this, death is taken back from the absolute beyond and into the present. It is part of an ongoing contemporary moment.

2.Tom McCarthy and INS

Tom McCarthy had a rocky start as an author; having finished writing the novel 'Remainder' in 2001, it took him a couple of years to find a publishing house prepared to publish this strangely experimental novel. It was the Parisian Metronome Press which dared to publish the novel in an edition of 750 copies, in 2005. Initially it was only distributed to art galleries, interest gradually rose when it received critical attention and the novel earned re-publication by the independent yet more mass-oriented publishing house Alma Books (UK) and Vintage (US). Established author Zadie Smith appraised the novel in her New York Times article "Two Paths for the Novel" in which she says the following:

> [Remainder shows] "an alternate road down which the novel might, with difficulty, travel forward." "Remainder," Smith wrote, "empties out [the] interiority" of its unnamed protagonist by refusing him epiphanies [...] McCarthy's narrator "finds all his own gestures to be completely inauthentic, and everyone else's too." (Smith "Two Paths for the Novel")

It is precisely McCarthy's exploration of inauthenticity which might shed light on the future path of literature. After having published Remainder, McCarthy focused on literary criticism in a book called *TinTin and the Secret of Literature,* in which he shares his views on the function of literature, its restrictions and possibilities. Building on previously published thoughts on inauthenticity through his platform International Necronautical Society (INS), in *TinTin* Tom McCarthy has also shows a deep appreciation for inauthenticity. What does he mean when he praises inauthenticity and claims we need to embrace, discover, and explore it?

2.1 International Necronautical Society

Necronauts, those people who are always dead already, embracing failure, flaws, and the actuality of repetition and inauthenticity in life and in art, are a group of people fronted by Tom McCarthy. McCarthy, a British novelist, thinker, artist, has written 4 novels (*Remainder* (2005), *Men in Space* (2007), *C* (2010), *Satin Island* (2015)), two literary criticisms called *TinTin and the Secret of Literature* (2006) and *Transmission and the Individual Remix* (2012), and multiple reviews. As this thesis will discuss the intermedial qualities of his work, it will take *Remainder* and *Satin Island* as central cases in a comparative analysis, for only these two

novels have crossed the boundaries of literature into the field of visual arts.

Furthermore, Tom McCarthy founded the INS in 1999 which has published a manifesto, statements, held public hearings and readings etc. The ideas of the INS weave throughout his literary oeuvre and therefore deserve attention prior to a discussion of the novels.

The International Necronautical Society thrives on a certain set of key points, describing what they will attempt to research, and value, in literature and art. A driving force is the acknowledgement of death as a vital part of everyday life. It is the concept of death, this inextractable fact that is always lingering on in our minds, they say, has influence in all aspects of creation. Death is as important as life. One cannot learn to live, one lives. One certainly never will know what death is. But, looking for its meaning in life can get one closer to an understanding of death. It is the embrace of death and the inevitable steering towards death that is inherent to the necronauts. Necro nautica, a Latin portmanteau of 'death' and 'sailor' refers to a person who is always floating towards death, already dead. It is this impasse between life and death which is at the core of INS' being. They affiliate death with more technical ideas of literature, and a philosophical understanding of life, in terms of inauthenticity, repetition and temporality. Death as an overarching concept, defining what it means to live. The technical ideas are major points in this thesis, as these are the carriers of death throughout the works of art which Tom McCarthy puts forward, publishes, adheres.

In a Sternberg Press publication called *The Mattering of Matter: Documents from the Archive of the International Necronautical Society* one will find all primary articles which seeped into this world as of the birth of the INS till 2012. In this paragraph I will be highlighting several parts of its content, mainly focusing on its fascination with death and inauthenticity. The manifesto, published as an advertisement in the *Times*, declares the society's main bullet points. I will not transcribe them here, but I will pick those points that are important for the prolongation of the argument. The INS declares: "1. That death is a type of space, which we intend to map, enter, colonize, and, eventually, inhabit" for "We are all necronauts[2], always, already." (McCarthy, Critchley, et al. 2012 53) Necronauts attempt to uncover the presence of death in all its different forms and disguises, in fact, they claim it is inherent to all that exists and is created. They want to "bring death out into the world" as they attempt to "tap into its frequencies" in order to construct "a craft that will convey us into

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[2] Necronauts: necro: death nauta: sailor. A dead sailor, drifting towards its end. Sailing the sea of life, aware of its inevitable deadness.

death in such a way that we may, if not live, then at least persist" by letting "us deliver ourselves utterly over to death, not in desperation, but rigorously, creatively, eyes and mouth wide open so that they may be filled from the deep wells of the Unknown." (53)

2.2 Inauthenticity

By embracing death, we might be able to get closest to experiencing in our lives. It is this idea that resonates with the inability to experience death, rendering living as the inauthentic experience of repetition. The repetitive nature of our actions suggests that we are always striving towards an unattainable authenticity, for repetition is the only way how we can cover up the fact that all we do is inauthentic. If you would put our actions in a timeline, the past will affect the present in a way that the actions we value from the past are reconfigured, repetitively, into the present. These present actions replace our idea of how we handled things in the past, without being new or authentic. As if recording a song on a rewritable CD, just to rewrite that CD with the exact same song, over and over again.

Charles Baudelaire wrote that irony, the ability to laugh at oneself, is the dividing characteristic which distinguishes philosophers and artists from other humans. Artists are able to split their Self into two; be the spectator of their fall, as well as the one falling. This metaphysical condition of a man in grip of irony, may plead for salvation from it, but he never gets it and will have to console himself with remembering of inventing a prelapsarian[3] era in which he was not fake. This opens up the field of temporality, being self-conscious of your own irony is a disintegration of the Self as well as a recognition of your own disintegration. Creating a Self that is split up in one that is inauthentic and the other who contemplates about this inauthenticity. However, if you understand inauthenticity this is not to be confused with being authentic. Opening up the field of time, irony as Paul de Man declares "divides the flow of temporal experience into a past, this pure mystification". A mystification which refers to a former Self of which one thinks one has been precisely that, and the future which remains "harassed forever by a relapse in the authentic". By taking a metaphysical perspective to the Self in the past, and as the future is unknown, one will only fall into repetition with the exact inauthenticity which one is observing. Through this, one gets to know inauthenticity, but can never overcome it. You can only restate and repeat it in an increasingly conscious level. So, in a sense, repetition brings you closer to authenticity, because the inauthentic replaces the

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[3] Theological concept, referring to the time before the Fall of Man. The time before Adam and Eve messed up in the Garden of Eden. The time when everything was still innocent and unspoilt.

former idea of your own authenticity. (Does this mean we never learn and are creatures of habit? Set individuals who can only reproduce their own Self ad infinitum) You are observing an inauthentic experience, relive it in order for it to become the norm in the present. You become conscious of inauthenticity by embracing it, by recreating it, repeating it ad infinitum, until you die. Death is the only authentic experience.

In the INS Declaration 'Joint Statement of Inauthenticity', the INS states its perspectives on the inauthentic experience of life: "Art is the consequence and experience of failed transcendence. We could even say borrowing defunct religious terminology, that it produces icons of that failure. An icon is not an original, but a copy. The copy of another copy. Art is not about originality, but about the repetition of the copy." (McCarthy, Critchley, et al. 223)

Inauthenticity: what does one understand by this concept? It has been a topic of discussion in academia for a long time. Where to start? How to proceed? I guess a working definition might reveal my perspective on the matter. The interesting part of inauthenticity is this: As Baudelaire explained it, it is a way of living, of looking back in the past and attempting to re-establish feelings, emotions, actions that have preceded. Past events influence the present and thus the future, so in order to strive for authenticity in the present, one repeats the past. Yet, this presumes the past was 'more real' than anything in the present. However, the past once was the present. So, a person always attempts to recreate something he or she believes is 'real', yet, based on falsity and failure. One never is real, authentic. For authenticity is the utopia of thought, of behaviour, of life. By re-consuming past events, one attempts to live authentically in the present, yet, remains inauthentic at all times for layer upon layer of inauthenticity create an illusion of authenticity. One starts to believe the past is the truth, but one can no longer clearly see that it is inherently fake (a simulacrum of sorts). This repetitive modus can cause one to move towards authenticity, always anticipating a next moment, knowing that authenticity can only be reached in death (a moment one cannot consciously experience, resulting in the fact that one never knows what authenticity entails). It is a premonition without an end.

By acknowledging death as equal to life, the INS attempts to rid the inauthentic experience from its paradox and reach authenticity. Yet, this task is doomed to fail. However, it is precisely this failure which, if recognized, may cause elevation, enlightenment. One is always doomed to fail, the only light at the end of the tunnel is knowing one is failing at it.

The INS has a motto in Latin: 'cras ingens iterabimus ingens', which is a reference to Teucer meaning 'tomorrow we shall set out on the vast ocean'. This refers to the unknown yet repetitive nature of that which has been and will come. The dead sailor can be related to everything in life, it is a metaphor for living realising one is dead. This impasse is a leitmotif in McCarthy's work, take for example protagonist U. in his most recent novel Satin Island. U. (obviously referring to the reader) works as an anthropologist of the contemporary for a company which deals in selling narratives. It is his task to write The Great Report of our times, as he delves into endless streams of thought. In fact, he is lost in the immense vastness of the ocean of information. He jumps into the stream of life, like a salmon swimming up the stream, not knowing where to begin so starting mid stream. As he does, he follows trails of news on a variety of subjects, such as the death of a parachutist, an international problematic oil spill, traffic jams in Africa, zombie rollerskate parades etc. He ponders about buffering and the limits of technology, adding philosophical renditions on some of his anthropological heroes such as Levi-Strauss. The dead sailor encompasses all these ponderings, of which the parachutist is the most significant. The parachutist, as mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, finds himself at an impasse between life and death whilst falling down to earth.

Following from inauthenticity (the word has been repeated too many times, but perhaps it brings us closer to authenticity) there is a need to connect it to death, for death is *the* experience we cannot live. Repeat after me: death is but the absolute certainty of life. It is also the only authentic experience none of us consciously will live to see. There is nothing after death. The inherent conditions of death make the event problematic when trying to convey it in words or images. Words only get us so far, a simulacrum of death too, but what if we are philosophically approaching death in a moving image. The sole thing one can see is a body other than your own lying still, dead like a stone. The experience of dying, the groans of the dying other, the last puff of air, the fading of the pupils, the lifeless body: ok. But then what, you can see someone dying, obviously, but for the deceased, time ceases to exist. What is happening on the other side from the eyes of the deceased? What is he seeing, feeling, thinking? We assume nothing. How do you portray this nothingness on screen? If death is an absolute standstill, an abruption in time, how can cinema, with its immanent fascination with the continuation of time, portray it? A freeze-frame? A fade to black? A hard cut to the end credits? Every time a person dies on screen? Discourses on inauthenticity, the experience of life, the eternal movement towards death, repetition and the (in)ability for art to capture death

as we (don't) know it, are the aspects that will be lingering on throughout the analysis of the works of Tom McCarthy.

3.Cinematic Specificity
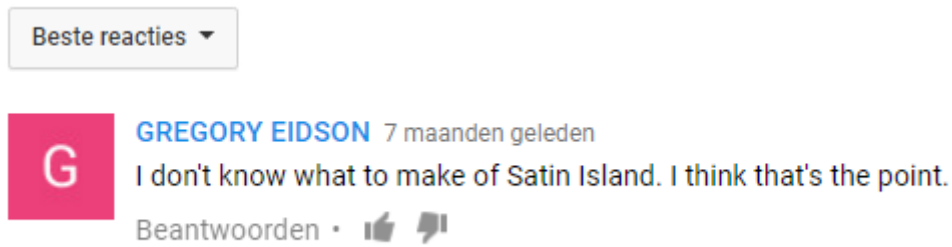
YouTube comment by user GREGORY EIDSON on Johan Grimonprez's film "from: SATIN ISLAND" (2015).

> *Satin Island*, like all books, contains hundreds of borrowings, echoes, re-mixes and straight repetitions. To list them all would take up as much space as the text itself. The critical reader can entertain him- or herself tracking some of them down, if he or she is that way inclined. (McCarthy, "Acknowledgements" to *Satin Island* 2015)

3.1 Analysis of *Satin Island* I

Satin Island by Tom McCarthy centres around the struggle of a cultural anthropologist to write 'The Great Report', a defining compilation of ponderings that would describe the contemporary. The contemporary as a temporal term which is always present. Living in the contemporary means living at any time, tasked with pinning down this fleeting moment, this ever-evolving concept, to which boundaries are non-existent, to which there is no beginning nor end, results in failure. The novel resembles this, not that McCarthy fails to deliver, but failure in summarising our time is precisely what U. (the protagonist) needs to *realise* in order for the 'Great Report' to be finalised. *Satin Island*, ultimately is precisely the outcome of the fictitious U.'s search. McCarthy succeeds through failure. As the perspective this thesis takes revolves around death, temporality, repetition and inauthenticity, the analysis of both *Satin Island* and *Remainder* (2005) will culminate in a philosophical pondering on the (im)possibility of representing death. To discuss this (im)possibility, this thesis will attract theories from the field of film and cinema studies, for in this field the struggle of representation, repetition, illusion, temporality (duration) is key. Furthermore, what has fascinated me, and instigated my research in McCarthy's novels is that he seems to be making

use of cinematic concepts regarding temporality and representation in an attempt to create a novelistic discourse (an ekphrasis of sorts) on the topic of representing death in literature. Thus, there seems to be a bridge by which McCarthy attempts to slim the gap that exists in the intermediality and adaptation of page to screen and *vice versa*. The way language works and the way images work can possibly, at a certain level, be aligned; namely that of the discussion on the (im)possibility of representing such an abstract concept as death.

Death, a concept discussed by philosophers throughout time, is difficult to define. For this analysis, I will be using definitions as provided by Maurice Blanchot on literature and death and Jean Baudrillard on simulacra and reality. Roland Barthes, Mary Ann Doane and Andre Bazin will be brought in while discussing the cinematic notions McCarthy seems to reproduce in his text. Starting from the primary source, there will a discussion of several tropes, recurrences and themes which will be discussed in light of the theoretical framework surrounding the main subjects: time, death, repetition, inauthenticity.

Satin Island reads as if it is a diary of U. It consists of 14 chapters, each split up in fragments called e.g. 5.3, 7.13 and 12.19. McCarthy opens his novel with the following fragment:

> Turin is where the famous shroud is from, the one showing Christ's body supine after crucifixion: hands folded over genitals, eyes closed, head crowned with thorns The image isn't really visible on the bare linen. It only emerged in the nineteenth century, when some amateur photographer looked at the negative of a shot he'd taken of the thing, and saw the figure—pale and faded, but there nonetheless. Only in the negative: the negative became a positive, which means that the shroud itself was, in effect, a negative already. (McCarthy 2015 3)

McCarthy, in his opening fragment, lures in the reader by a brief discussion of a mysterious shroud. In a sort of ekphrastic caption he stimulates the reader to think of the idea of illusion, of make-believe, by stating that the image of Christ on Turin's shroud isn't really visible on the veil. The cloth, a fabric which is used to wrap the body of Christ, which resembles the body of Christ and which is representing the death *and* reinvigoration of Christ; it is

simultaneously representing Christ's death as a martyr[4] as well as representing his miraculous resurrection. Even though the veil does not date back to the year zero, it suffices for believers to remain believers in the idea that Christ has lived, has died and resurrected. In Christianity, there is an absolute believe in resurrection for their is an absolute fear of dying. In the doctrine there is always a haunting fear of death. This drives Christians to believe there is no death, there is an absence of death while paradoxically there is a fear of dying. Dying does not mean you live in either heaven or hell, but in their thought they are always aiming at eternal life after life.

The shroud is thus symbolic for a make-believe. A reading of this could be that McCarthy uses the veil as a metaphor for the way we observe and experience the world. We are always looking at representations, we are always living in reality while also trying to look for distinguishing truth from meta-fiction, yet always fall into believing one over the other: humans are inclined to make believe. If a TV screen can direct our opinion on matters of foreign policy, a 13th Century veil can make people believe Christ was crucified for all of us. The death of Christ, and his resurrection, resembles the impasse which is as present in life as it is in death. Every individual, every singular entity is living in this impasse between being alive and dead. Christ, if believed, is the one who showed us the way. Jesus Christ is Derrida's revenant, the messiah who becomes a messiah only because he begins on his return. It is ontologically a coming back (When? Where? It takes place in space and time). In a discussion of death, his death would be placed somewhere between absolute standstill, embrace of death, and having always already been dead *and* alive. In fact, his crucifixion, represents the falling parachutist. In all its representations, Christ dies over and over again only to resurrect. This infinite loop of life/death is a representation of the impossibility of capturing death. One is never really dead, one is always already dead and alive at the same time, at any time. As McCarthy proceeds in his discussion on the veil, he changes course towards a discussion of make-believe itself. The illusion, which resembles the fundamental offering of cinema, is created through a desire to believe in that which appears in front of our eyes really takes place at the same time at the same, it is more than a resemblance of reality, it is part of reality. The fact that reality is layered does not mean it is not real. We live in paradoxes and aporia; despite the fact that cinema *an sich* exists to create illusion it is a real thing. There is a double bind of reality. One has the thing and what it stands for, and you have

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[4] Jesus Christ's death makes me wonder: if Christ died so all of us could live, saved through his grace from death, and his death is the 'last' death, then why do we fear it still? Why do we have a constant urge to inhabit and possess it ourselves?

the thing and that what it stands *in* for. A replacement, a reproduction, a re-presentation, a presentation of reality. McCarthy:

> People need foundation myths, some imprint of year zero, a bolt that secures the scaffolding that in turn holds fast the entire architecture of reality, of time: memory-chambers and oblivion cellars, walls between eras, hallways that sweep us on towards the end-days and the coming whatever-it-is. (3)

McCarthy explains the world as a house of cards, held together by a belief in the origin. Describing the architecture of reality, of time as a collage of constructions can be deconstructed in a way to discuss the manner in which we base our lives on nostalgia, on illusions, on vague memories that we endlessly repeat in our heads in order to structure our lives so we can hold onto them. A passage in Satin Island describes this generic pattern of recurring memories as such:

> [A] memory came to me: of free-wheeling down a hill as a child [...] It wasn't a specific memory of riding down the hill on such-and-such a day: more a generic one in which hundreds of hill-descents, accumulated over two or three, had all merged together. (5)

The merger of memories, resulting in a generic mental image renders authenticity inauthentic, it is an example of reproduced memories woven into our existence, building our idiosyncratic selves until the point of genericity. We are constantly copying each other, losing our own singularity in the process. What does this generic image mean to our singular experience? It suggests that indeed we are always living simultaneously in the past, present and the future. Nostalgia stimulates our actions in the present which affect the way we live in the future. In an ever-ongoing attempt to grasp our contemporaneity, the moment we are living in, we touch the darkness that encircles us. Never really being able to hold on, but holding on to ideas that are mere representations and repetitions of things we think we have experienced. We fall into repetition by copying the world around us, and making it our own until the point we think we invented the gesture ourselves. An infinite loop of inauthentic repetition which projects us towards our imminent death, or towards the 'coming whatever-it-is' since we do not know death, we cannot know death, except for the fact that is inherent to life. Death, ultimately, is nothing but the inauguration of life. We anticipate it and once it is there, we realise we have lived in anticipation towards death; in an attempt to embrace and know it while living. As the

necronauts (necro=dead, nauta= sailor) call it, we should always look for death within the seams of our human lives, in an attempt to know it, embrace it, [experience it], and eventually, always inhabit it. Back to the start of the novel, McCarthy continues his discussion of the shroud:

> We see things shroudedly, as through a veil, an over-pixellated screen. When the shapeless plasma takes on form and resolution, like a fish approaching us through murky waters or an image looming into view from noxious liquid in a darkroom, when it begins to coalesce into a figure that's discernible, if ciphered, we can say: *This is it, stirring, looming,* even if it isn't really, if it's all just ink-blots. (3)

The veil has another *layer* which deserves discussion: only if one would look at it on negative film, one would be able to observe it. Although true that it does need a negative to be viewed in full, the opening fragment is more concerned with another level of illusion: the idea that there is always a negative through which one sees reality. We are always once removed from reality when watching a screen, an image, TV. This layering of layer upon layer diffuses our experience of reality in such a manner that it blurs authenticity and creates a discrepancy, a gap, which can only be filled with generic imagery of inauthenticity. This inauthenticity, the repetition of memories in order to strive towards understanding reality/life/death, brings one closer to actual experience, but will never fulfil the desire. We contemplate our lives through a veil, as we watch the screen we see ourselves in its reflection, we read our lives into illusory narratives, and then we live on. Paradoxically this makes the incommensurable experience meaningless, yet, it also renders experience the only meaningful perspective onto which we compose ourselves. It is the fundament on which we built our very existence, yet, as we are in doubt, we consume other representations of could-have-beens, of lives we have never led and we always already have led. Without going into nihilistic thought, the notion of inauthenticity drives us forward, it keeps humans striving toward a further understanding of our reality. We seek this in simulacra, imitation of imitations. Subjective renderings of pastime, of passing time, to pass time we contemplate past time in order to anticipate the near-future. Our actions are determined by our past, so we will always fall in repetition. It is not a black and white repetition, it consists of infinite variations, but the misreading of the sign is in the eye of the beholder. We cannot escape our own thought, we cannot break free of our own thinking, we are unable to step outside our own thinking and fly out of the picture. Goya was right when he depicted man flying, only to find himself in another cage. What happens if we think beyond

this? By being alert to these veils, these layers of reality, there should be a possibility of rendering the inauthentic inoperative. All money is counterfeit[5], we have to move past this debate to get somewhere, where do we look? Contemplating about *Satin Island*, the journey U. undertakes seems to be portrayed as a failed journey. Yet, U. is always on the verge of experiencing the messianic moment. This moment is always there, and instead of waiting we have to tune in to the fact that the return is always happening. This is what INS thought basically tells us, we have to tap into frequencies so we can find, among the debris, a shimmer of the impasse, a shadow of the messiah, a glimpse of death, for all of these are inherently always already present. We are simply stuck in the middle, we are "Somewhere and nowhere at once this is where we are left, this is the place that remains" (John Paul Ricco *The Decision Between Us* 2014)

Baudrillard in his discussion on simulacra talks about the function of TV and how the external world; wars, forest fires, death is being brought in our living rooms. We believe we see reality, yet we are merely watching a representation of a representation, that what is screened is but a shadow of reality. The Turin shroud, its materiality, resembles Roland Barthes discussion of a veil; a screen in a movie theatre which shows us images, but is not real: it is make-believe. The Turin shroud, the veil, is thus used to discuss the way we experience the world in our contemporary society. Even though the shroud later proved to be from the 13th Century, believers were not stirred to stop believing. It is this notion, this absolute need to believe, that is foundational to the cinema. The cinematic screen as a veil on which we project our depiction of reality, in which we let ourselves be absorbed as if we live in the movies we watch. Illusion is a powerful tool which keeps the house of cards upright. The bolt that secures the scaffolding could be called cinema. Cinema, the representation of our reality, is what keeps us going.

> Fusing a messianic notion of *Jetztzeit*, or time of the Now, with the project of a materialist historiography, Benjamin's concept of actuality sets itself off against any unreflected contemporaneity. [...] For Benjamin, actuality requires standing at once within and *against* one's time, grasping the "temporal core" of the present in terms other than those supplied by the period about itself, and above all in diametrical opposition to developments taken for granted in the name of "progress".

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[5] Derrida's counterfeit money: a concept which discusses how money is only valuable because we attach value to it.

Jetztzeit refers to the living in the moment, in a constant search for meaning in the Now. One is thus constantly grappling with the idea of the contemporary, not only to understand it, but also to criticise it: one is part of it as much as one is outside of it, knocking on its door, testing its viability. Jetztzeit, or the discussion of the Contemporary, implies a gap between what we experience and what we can experience, what is and what could be. It involves itself with anticipation as much as expecting the unknown. The Messiah can appear at any moment and thus one should always be at bay, looking for it, but also letting it happen. It is an eternal struggle between ratio and chance. The messianic moment is always happening, it is always about to happen, it is always lingering on, always present, alike the contemporary, alike its impasse. This impasse can appear in different forms, it is an outward manifestation of something from within the confines of time, it shows itself when it can be represented by something else, it is like a spectre creeping up on you at night:

> [To Benjamin] the cinema came to figure as the linchpin between the transformations of the aesthetic and the impasses of contemporary history. (Hansen Cinema and Experience 75 76)

The cinema, the mediator, the represener of the impasse of the contemporary, the impasse of inauthenticity, the impasse of the messianic moment, the impasse of life and death, the impasse in which truly anything can be represented.

When I discuss we, us, humans, there is a must to make an incision. For generalisation killed the cat. An overall statement should be nuanced and limited: the objective genitive must become a subjective genitive. It is not all of us, it is of concern to whomever it is concerned. Tuning into radio frequencies, INS addresses those who are "modern lovers of debris, radio, and jet streams" inciting them to

> go spread the seed, tune into and repeat it until its signal echoes up and down the balconies, taken up by barking dogs, muttering bums, music traffic down windy streets, across parks and soccer fields. Illusion is a revolutionary weapon. Thank you for listening. (McCarthy, Critchley et al., *The Mattering of Matter* 2012 234)

This is exactly what must be done, one must believe ('realise' as the believer would say to the non-believer) that there are frequencies intertwined with daily encounters, the habitual

unfolding of time, in which one can tune into. It does not deny that some may live and die humbly, but it incites those who are this way inclined, to attempt to take a metaphysical distance and attempt to tune into *other* frequencies. One does not abolish the other; INS merely proposes an*other* way of contemplation. This does not solely revolve around the notion of death and its omnipresence, death is as worthy to life as is life. It is a dogma which requests (albeit pushes) the reader, the listener, the observer to become aware of repetition, genericity, (in)authenticity in order to act upon it. Not only to embrace it, but to inhabit a space in an attempt to live a life away from the boundaries. To escape its boundaries only to be able to reflect, twitch and tune in. To Tom McCarthy, qualities adhered to cinema might be the tools to redirect discourse into a space and time in which one is *able* to tune in. His medium is literature, and it is precisely literature which he wants to push into another direction. To him, literature cannot quite grasp the contemporary. It never resembles actuality, nor immediacy. Cinema, despite its shortcomings which need addressing, might provide the immediacy which is needed for literature to represent representation. It is a question of temporality, it is a strive towards grasping the fleeting moment. The fleeting moment, an ambiguous term, refers to the (im)possibility of freezing time. To freeze time means to stop, it means an absolute standstill, it means to take out a part of life and put it away. Capture a moment is freezing a moment and taking it out of time. Blurry as this 'image' might be, its explanation is two-fold: it is a moment that one anticipated towards, yet it also, inextricably, was always already a past moment. One frame to the next, there is always a considerable difference. Not one moment is identical to the next. Henceforth, there is a need for rethinking (in)authenticity. By critically assessing generic repetition, one might be able to find authenticity within inauthenticity. A terrorist attack kills 912 people, a single heart failure kills one individual. No death is the same yet all deaths are the same. Ages of fascination with representing death are arguably generic, we cannot escape the fact that we never know what it means to experience death. Yet, we can tune into death by consciously seeking failures in repetition, by freezing the moment of death and taking it away from its temporal situatedness. The little nuance is like the little death[6], it seems the same but it consists of a million unique neurons.

U. writing the 'Great Report' is exemplary for succeeding in tuning in to the nuances, by realising he fails to comprehend them in their entirety. Once he starts seeing beyond reasonable doubt, he starts to reason beyond death. For example, when his friend Petr dies, he

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[6] La petite mort…

receives a text message from Petr's ex, sent through Petr's phone. On U.'s screen the text message appears to be coming from Petr himself. For a moment, it seemed that Petr himself informed U. of his death from the afterlife. Petr was alive and death at the same time at the instant U. read the message.

U. fails to write 'the Great Report' for one *can* only fail at writing it. All one has is the capacity of tuning in, realising its immensity, and acknowledging it is incomprehensible. Nevertheless, despite these 'negative' aspects connoted to failure, he succeeds in his failure. His failure is a great success. U. holds dozens of files on a variety of subjects, and many of these show his ability to tune into the right frequency, after which the realisation of failing to grasp the fleeting moment is the success. Or so it seems. The realisation of the impossibility is the only possible outcome. Or so it seems.

3.2 Staging the Impassable

Play upon words, a portmanteau of sorts (since they are not two single words but merged together becoming one); impasse and impossible. Impassable, however, exists and refers to something that cannot be crossed. A threshold. An obstruction stopping something from crossing from one space into another. Stepping over the threshold implies a change of spatial dimensions, which cannot happen without an evolution in time. Progression from one moment in time into another.

Starting from the literary material, McCarthy's protagonist compiles a file on the death of a parachutist. The parachutist has died because his parachute did not open. Further investigation uncovers his death has been intentional; the parachute has been sabotaged. U. then ponders about pinpointing when this man actually died. Was it when he stepped over the threshold into his freefall, or was he already dead but unknowingly?

Where to start when discussing the impasse this always already dead parachutist finds himself in, time and again? To start at the beginning when U. first finds out about his death, to proceed with a discussion of U.'s philosophical ponderings about space/time of death, and thus so building a cage around the concept of impasse? Aporetic rhetoric suggest we should dive in mid-stream yet start somewhere, suggesting wherever one starts, one will start.

Aporia: to be at a loss, negative, impasse. The impasse not only signifies the gap between life and death, it also suggests a break between simulacra and reality, a discrepancy between the sign and the signified. As if the demiurge regulates the correspondence between the realm of Ideas and the Reality. Fleshed out, Platonic images, representations on walls of

caves. What do these signs imply, and how far are they removed from the real? Are signs in themselves not real? And what makes a sign signifying a signified thing to someone less real than its materialised other? Can signs take over the real and become real, as Baudrillard's hyperreal suggests? Reading about a parachutist, seeing him fall on screen, seeing him fall in the air in the same time and space? Are they one and the same thing? What does it matter? What is the substance we are dealing with? An impasse, like that "final spur, the one that carried skydivers across the threshold" (79), what does this tell us about time, duration, negative space, capturing a moment? How do still *and* moving images deal with the problem of freezing a moment? And how does literature encapsulate these imagery capacities, apply them to the word, submit language to the power of the photograph, the moving picture? Passing in front of our eyes at speed that creates the illusion of movement, taking it as it is, thus actually seeing movement? The impasse that is staged in *Satin Island*, the way it unfolds and is captured by McCarthy might, through critical analysis, provide some answers to the questions above.

3.3 The Impasse

An impasse implies a transition, a gap, a cut. It also implies a standstill, a non-space, a timeless eternal moment. Moreover, it implies an event, a rupture between two structures. Folding into time, moving outside of time while being inside of it at the same time. Jumping in water without dissolving in it, an object falling through the sky into negative space. There is a cut, a fold, a representation of the exterior which has been internalized. What does this mean in terms of the impasse? We are our surroundings, yet we are ourselves. As we copy, we are inauthentic and generic. Yet the impasse is a place where authenticity can be found, it is an atemporal space in which anything can be represented. It is not vested in our daily reality, it moves above it alike Plato's Realm of Ideas. It is a space in-between where we can be both dead and alive at the same time. In terms of the impasse, McCarthy describes it best in the following passage in which the jump, the freefall of the parachutist, becomes a metaphor for the way one should deal with defining the contemporary, or the impasse, as "in a perpetual state of passage, not arrival—not at, but between."(*Satin Island* 81)

> The main thing is, I told him, that (unlike a windmill) a parachute
> functions not in a fixed location but rather in transit from a point A (the
> aeroplane) to a point B (the assigned landing-spot on the ground);
> although these two points are in fact anathema—or, at least, exterior—

to its own operation as a parachute: once the ground-target is attained, the parachute stops playing its role, just as, prior to the jump, it remains undeployed. Well, I continued, same thing with the Project: it has to be conceived of as in a perpetual state of passage, not arrival—not at, but between. (80/81)

Stretching this towards life and death, humans are in this perpetual state of passage. It is, in fact, a purely temporal perspective, which transcends the past, present future paradigm and elevates above chronology in a culmination of time. Time then becomes something which is always in flux, never there nor here, never one moment at a time but a flow, an overarching flow surpassing life and death. In this way, life and death can be taken as events, but events that at any time take place. Or, don't take place at all. The impasse, thus, acknowledges death within life and *vice versa*. The impasse, thus, resembles the problem at hand: how to capture the momentary and transform it into something timeless, by taking an object out of time, encapsulating it, embalming it like mummification?

3.4 Bazin I

As Andre Bazin argues in his article "The Ontology of the Photographic Image", there is a "mummy complex" in the process of painting and sculpture (and one could include photography and film as new media still having to deal with the problem). This complex entails the survival of a deceased through a "continued existence of the corporeal body" (Bazin 1960 4). Preserving a body as a "defense against the passage of time [since] death is but the victory of time" (4), the body had to be "snatched from the flow of time". These ancient Egyptian religious practices form the basis of the primordial function of [art], namely, "the preservation of life by a representation of life"(5). Following from the Egyptian focus on statues, drawings and the embalming of a body, one can argue for the same need of preservation when it comes to images. "The image helps us to remember the subject and to preserve him from a second spiritual death."(5) Yet, Bazin argues, images no longer have this purpose, but serve us on another level, that of "the creation of an ideal world in the likeness of the real, with its own temporal destiny"(6). Flowing from the desires that emerge when seeking realism, there is the invention of the image (mechanical reproduction originated with Da Vinci's camera obscura). Since the first mechanical reproductions have become possible, one is able to make a distinction between two ambitions: first, the aesthetic need to express a spiritual reality in which the symbol functioned to transcend the model; second, the desire to

duplicate the external world. It is this latter premise which slowly has taken over the modern plastic arts (visual arts such as photography and cinema). Henceforth, the need for illusion has not ceased, with these 'new' plastic arts, "photography and the cinema are discoveries that satisfy, once and for all and in its very essence, our obsession with realism."(7) As both media satisfy our needs with regards to realistic presentation (higher resemblance is deemed impossible), one can look for other features outside the spectrum of resemblance or likeness, namely: photography renders us to accept that "the real [is] the existence of the object reproduced, actually *re*-presented, set before us, that is to say, in time and space." So, from likeness and resemblance, we can now consider a photograph as the real. The physical object and that what it represents have become the real. Tying in with Baudrillard, the actual photograph has taken over the role of the real. It no longer is but a representation, is has become a reality. Being once more removed from reality, this new real object becomes reality.

Suggesting that representation in film is real, one can consider Baudrillard's hyperreal no longer as a layer on top of reality, but actual reality. It is not connected to our reality, but becomes a reality *an sich*, external to ours. We accept it as reality and handle photographs (and film) as such. As Bazin also argues, "The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it [...] it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model." The photograph is a moment taken out of time, it becomes something which can exist out of time and thus can escape temporal problematic. If photography, the still image, has the capacity to be "the disturbing presence of lives halted at a set moment in their duration, freed from their destiny [forgotten lives, evaporated, as if never existed]"(8) not in the sense art can create eternity, but in the sense that photography can "embalm time, rescuing it from its proper corruption."(8) Then photography represent time, whilst standing outside of its own time.

Moreover, photography, has the capacity to "lay bare the realities" meaning that, through exerting its power, photography has a surplus as an art form, it is able to do more than merely represent "the natural image of a world that we neither know nor can know"(8). It has moved past this and now, because of photography "nature at last does more that imitate art: she imitates the artist."(8) By the absence of a recognisable fingerprint of the photographer, contrary to the subjectivity of that of the painter who attempts to imitate nature, the photograph "contributes something to the order of natural creation instead of providing a substitute for it."(8) So, photography has pushed the arts in a different direction, since a

painting can no longer hold as its highest aim the resemblance to nature. Since a photographer has less of an impact on his final product, he merely documents. [7]

What does this imply for the moving image, the media which deals with movement [a characteristic a deceased person can no longer partake in]? According to Bazin, "cinema is objectivity in time". (8) By this, he means that "the film is no longer content to preserve the object, *enshrouded* as it were in an instant" the film has opened up a new spectrum, in which "the image of things is likewise the image of their duration." Duration, thus, as new key element when portraying the dead. In his article, he leaves it at this and does not push his discussion onwards in an exposition of the power of the *cinematic* image, it strands at a praise of photography and leaves readers with a final notion with regards to cinema: "on the other hand, of course, cinema is also a language." How do we proceed from this, having laid the fundament for a discussion of cinema through an appraisal of the qualities and powers of photography? There is a need to turn to further work by Bazin, in combination with a discussion of work by film scholars, to continue the discussion and elevate from the ontology of the photographic image to that of the cinematic image.

In his article 'Death Every Afternoon', Bazin analyses the montage of the film *The Bullfight*, a documentary on the Spanish tradition of bullfighting in which a matador is faced with a raging bull in a battle of life and death. Most noticeably, it is this article in which Bazin contemplates the capturing of death on the screen. Proper montage tells a narrative, yet "the goal of the editing is not to suggest symbolic and abstract links between the images as in Kulechov's famous experiment" (Bazin in Rites Of Realism, ed. Ivone Margulies "Death Every Afternoon" 28)[8]. Instead of this implied existence of desire, he states that "what counts is the meaning given to the smile by the collision of images". In the case of *The Bullfight*, "the linkage of two bulls in a single movement does not symbolize the bulls' strength; it surreptitiously replaces the photo of the nonexistent bull we believe we are seeing"(28), the power of the montage lies thus not solely in suggesting an abstract correlation between

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[7] Critical note: of course a photograph does not remain untouched, it is never devoid of human interference. Yet, Bazin was right when it comes to resemblance and the lack of the need to achieve likeness (it is inherent to the art). Despite the fact that composition, inclusion and exclusion, post-editing etc do influence the subject of the photograph and our interpretation of it, the photograph still opened up a new field: it no longer sufficed to depict the dead in an instant, in all its objectivity, showing the dead not only preserved the dead, it also indicated the passing of time: inherent to film is duration, the medium's prime attribute. Duration is what makes movement, is what creates the illusion of life. The question still stands, how can a medium which is always attempting to lure its spectator in believing in its realistic illusion of life, able to portray death?

[8] Bazin uses the famous sequence of images by Kulechov, in which images of a naked woman are followed by the image of a smiling man; suggesting a desire of the man for the woman.

multiple images, it enhances the illusion of make-believe[9]: "it is no longer the camera eye, but the adaptation of editing technique to the aesthetics of the camera pen"(28). In this particular example, *The Bullfight* makes use of freezing images at critical moments. Although these freeze frames (essentially still images) do direct the spectator's attention to particular instances, they, more importantly, lack the power of the moving image; by seeing a recording of the theatre that is the bullfight, one is "made aware of the role played by real presence [being there in the arena], the photographic image of [the bullfight] only gives it back to us emptied of its psychological reality, a body without a soul", consequently Bazin then questions, that although "[A] photograph of a bullfight might have some documentary or didactic value, how could it give us back the essence of the spectacle?" (29) In other words, despite the freeze frame's value of showing us an instance, it cannot provide us with the reality of the event. The photo cannot make us *feel* the reality of the event. As such, the freeze frame, essentially a single frame from a string of frames normally constituting a moving image, uncovers the power which cinema *does* manage to encapsulate: the essence, or feeling, of the real.

However, film scholar Garrett Stewart does see the potential of freeze frames as he defines it as "as a reproduced, projected individual image that entails the suspension of the sequence and the negation of the filmic image, he considers this form of interruption – with an eye on the narrative cinema – as having the potential of a critical inquiry and the possibility of 'filmic reflexivity' within a narration."(Rossaak *Between Stillness and Motion* 19) Bazin then claims that the film, although it will not be able to trigger the same emotions as the experience of the real event, it does provide him with "its essential quality, its metaphysical kernel: death"(29)[10] To him, "the tragic ballet of the bullfight turns around the presence and permanent possibility of death" (29) Death is omnipresent, always ready to happen. It is inherent to the event. The bullfight, therefore, can be regarded as yet another instance of the notion that *everything* is always already dead. In this case though, this death plays out in a ring, a certain theatre, which consequently is filmed. This filmic layer requires further discussion –death is an event which can justify the term *cinematic specificity.* (Bazin 30) The

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[9] Already with the invention of the moving image did early filmmakers use techniques of montage to create illusions and make-believe. Early cinema, the "cinema of attractions" (Tom Gunning's term), revolves around early ways of using montage to make the spectator believe something magical happened on the screen, such as the disappearance of a person. Montage, the cut and splice of the celluloid, were the first cinematic artificial distortions of the real.

[10] Metaphysical kernel refers to how death cannot be understood in a physical sense, we cannot embody nor think death. Death is thus a phenomenon which floats above both our physical and our mental experience, hence it becoming *meta*physical, it is removed from our physical reality.

term refers to qualities which are specifically attributed to cinema –duration, movement, illusion, and narration through montage. These qualities seem to be present in McCarthy's narrative work too. As such, these qualities will be tested for their literary value in his work.

3.5 Bazin II

Furthermore, the power of the moving image as described in relation to the documentary can be extended to fictitious motion pictures, as both are attempting to portray reality as "real" as possible and thus both function on the plane of illusion and make believe. Both are concerned with duration and rely on montage to deliver a message. They both, albeit documentary feigns the value of reality over fiction, fall into the realm of narrating a story, guiding the spectator into thinking and believing what they see. Although documentary film suggests that it can replace the actual being-there, its experience remains removed from the actual moment. This does not deprive film of its quality to capture and evoke emotions, on the contrary, its repetitive nature sustains and increases a certain emotion with regards to death. Because the last movements of the deceased and the moment of death can be replayed, the death is immanently and infinitely inscribed over and over again. This does not differ between documentary or fiction film, what counts for the actual death of the matador/bull also counts for fictive deaths in motion pictures. How does Bazin discuss death on the screen?

> Art of time, cinema has the exorbitant privilege of repeating it, a privilege common to all mechanical arts, but one that it can use with infinitely greater potential than records or radio [...] cinema time only attains and constructs its aesthetic time based on lived time, Bergsonian *"durée"*, which is in essence irreversible and qualitative. (Bazin *Death Every Afternoon* 30)

Here, Bazin contrasts cinematic time to the use of time in other temporal arts, concluding that the cinematic specificity has a quality which surpasses these other arts precisely because it is intertwined with lived time. This form of time, connected to the duration of a moment of existence, is what makes cinema unique in its ways of representing life. Cinema *is* life *and* is able to surpass it, cinema is life *and* death at the same time:

> The reality that cinema *re*produces at will and organizes is the same worldly reality of which we are part, the sensible continuum out of which celluloid makes a mold both spatial and temporal. I cannot repeat

a single moment of my life, but cinema can repeat any of these
moments indefinitely before my eyes. (30 [emphasis mine])

I emphasised '*re*produces' for cinema is always a step removed, ahead *and* behind lived time.
It reflects on our worldly reality and it *is* our worldly reality. When we experience something
we cannot grasp it before the moment passes –cinema takes a distance, manages to capture the
moment, has the capacity to be repeated indefinitely, yet is also a representation of the fact
after the deed. It is never synchronous to lived time, but it reproduces lived time and therefore
has the capacity to memorise precisely our own lived time. It is asynchronous but its
repetitive character and its quality to match the duration of our own lived time place it both
inside and outside our lived time. It is therefore out of lived time, as well as, simultaneously,
within time and in time. Cinema, thus, could be regarded as the product of the anthropological
notion of *contemporaneity.* Cultural anthropologist Paul Rabinow discusses this concept as
follows:

> Just as one can take up the "modern" as an ethos and not a period, one
> can take it up as a moving ratio. In that perspective, tradition and
> modernity are not opposed but paired: "tradition is a moving image of
> the past, opposed not to modernity but to alienation." *The contemporary
> is a moving ratio of modernity, moving through the recent past and
> near future in a (nonlinear) space that gauges modernity as an ethos
> already becoming historical.* (Rabinow *Marking Time* 2 [original
> emphasis])

The contemporary as a temporal concept, as a metaphysical space which absorbs modernity
as a thread passing through the hole of a needle, in a perpetual state of passage, could be
equated to the impasse, a threshold through which all of time in a non-linear manner passes
through, forming an equilibrium between past and near future. Not defined as the present, but
something lingering above it which holds the strings of the entire construction of time and
space together. This space is inhabited by everything at the same time, it knows and sees all, it
encompasses the world and life at large ad infinitum, it unites life and death. The
contemporary could be a site of inquiry, most suited for McCarthian endeavours in finding the
always already presence of death.

Bazin, then, ties the experience of cinema to death, "[i]f it is true that for
consciousness no moment is equal to any other, there is one on which the fundamental

difference converges, and that is the moment of death. For every creature, death is the unique moment par excellence."(30) Death, to Bazin, is the sole unique experience which breaks up time, "death is nothing but one moment after another, but it is the last."(30) He draws a line, a threshold, between lived time, that time in which we consciously endure qualitative time of life, and the objective time of things. This threshold, the frontier, marks deaths unique character not only in contrast to life, but also to the duration of cinema. Death, although "one moment after another" is ultimately also the last moment. This brings us to an impasse, an impossible aporia, in which death falls in an abyss. It is not lived time, yet also breaks with duration. Death falls into a dead zone, an atemporal instance which falls outside the temporalities of both lived and cinematic time. Its depiction, therefore, reaches beyond the grasp of the medium as well as that of life. Death is a unique moment which does not seem to be capturable. For this reason, McCarthy suggests that one should look for death within life. This search would bring death into the realm of lived time, and therefore gains the capacity to become part of cinematic time too. A simple acceptance of the eternal search in which death can never really be found until one inhabits it indefinitely, does not suffice. An active search and urge to represent death, to reproduce death, on the screen is what drives cinema. Cinema could therefore be regarded as a medium which is always already embracing death, for it represents lived time, and itself. The dialectics between lived time and cinematic time are therefore a dialogue which always seeks to define death, yet, eternally, repetitively and in a loop will never fully embrace it. Cinema cannot inhabit death as such. The closest one *can* get to representing death is then the depiction of the impasse. The impasse, the frontier, the abyss, the gap, then becomes a state of being in which life clashes with death in an eternal battle. It are *these* precise moments which lay at the core of the representation of death in cinema. A falling parachutist becomes an inhabitant of the impasse, the matador/bull inhabits this space too. What cinema does differently from life, is that it captures one singular moment and makes it the norm of that fragment. The way things happen on the screen in that particular moment can never be repeated in the exact same manner. Cinema captures a moment and makes in more unique than an uncaptured moment. Not a single moment is one-hundred percent the same as another. As film places a particular moment on a pedestal, which makes it authentic. The authenticity which cinema can give to a moment by taking it out of time and place, only exists because cinema has the capacity to replay that moment, something our memory or a re-enactment never will be able to do.

"Doubtless no moment is like any other, but they can nevertheless be as similar as leaves on a tree, which is why that *cinematic repetition is more paradoxical in theory than in practice.*" (Bazin *Death Every Afternoon* 30 [emphasis mine]) Cinematic repetition thus seems to negate the idea of representing death in theory, but in practice it is the only way cinema can get into close proximity of a representation of death. The cinematic quality of repetition is thus a key characteristic, perhaps even *the* key to the possibility of representing death on the screen. Cinematic repetition does not necessarily have to be constrained to replaying a video, it can also entail a repetition of sequence, an infliction of montage through which a narrative is retold, a prolongation/extension/edit of duration through which death is repeated because it is taking longer (or shorter) than our worldly lived time. Cinematic techniques such as slow-motion, a chronological disruption of the narrative, a double take, different angles showing the same event are all techniques which elevate death from lived time and makes cinema control death. It does not inhabit it, but through its specific qualities, cinema manages to represent death precisely because it can alter the duration of its event. Death is the "absolute negation of objective time, the qualitative instant in its purest form"(30) In our lived time, as far as consciousness allows it, death must be experienced –it cannot be represented, *unless one violates the nature of death* by, for example, such techniques as playing with duration, montage and repetition, whilst maintaining the illusion of realistically representing lived time.(30)

> This violation is called obscenity. The representation of a real death is also an obscenity, no longer a moral one ... but metaphysical. We do not die twice. In this respect, a photograph does not have the power of film; it can only represent someone dying or a corpse, not the elusive passage from one state to the other. (30)

The metaphysical surpasses our physical reality, it takes a distant position and contemplates about our being. It surpasses the limits of our corporeal capacities. Whereas a photograph remains in the realm of the real, cinema floats metaphysically above us, throwing up a mirror in which we see ourselves in motion, not still, but in motion. Obscene as it may be, morals aside, the humankind drives on the urge of defining death, pinning it down. But there you have it, it cannot be done from our own world of comprehension, it has to be outside of our memory, loaded and represented by an external memory: cinema.

> Before cinema there was only the profanation of corpses and the
> desecration of tombs. Thanks to film, nowadays we can desecrate and
> show at will the only one of our possessions that is temporally
> inalienable: dead without a requiem, the eternal dead-again of cinema.
> (31)

According to Bazin, cinema is thus the only possible way of representing death, not in its obscenity and uniqueness, but in another form; that outside of lived time, fully incorporated within cinematic time. By showing death, cinema thus surpasses lived time and achieves its own form in purity. Death is only representable in pure cinematic time, cut loose from lived time, from reality.

> The representation on screen of a bull being put to death [...] is in
> principle as moving as the spectacle of the real instance that it
> reproduces. In a certain sense, it is even more moving because it
> magnifies the quality of the original moment through the contrast of its
> repetition. It confers on it an additional solemnity. The cinema has
> given death a material eternity. On the screen the toreador dies every
> afternoon. (31)

Taken out of its moral complexity, cinema enhances the emotional burden of death by its capacity of repetition. In lived time a person dies once, in cinematic time a person dies over and over again, imprinting death in a loop. The flexibility of duration thus stresses our own mortality. Cinema does not only have the capacity to make one experience life, it can make one experience life infinitely. On top of that, it has inhabited death by being able to give it material eternity, meaning death 'lives on' in the fabric of the medium.

Le pli, the rupture, the fold is thus how the impasse represents a depiction of duration existing outside of time. It is elevated above lived time and exists in a metaphysical plane in which death is always present, immanent and inherent to all that lives. Cinema's role here is to represent duration and emphasise death's atemporal presence. Through its defining feature of repetition, it stresses death as an absolute, yet it simultaneously extracts death from lived time and makes it a meta-event which can be experienced over and over again. By lifting death out of its absolute stillness into a motion, death becomes depictable as such. Death is therefore no longer adjoined to the absolute, but is a gateway into the ability to look into a gap which encompasses an eternal threshold, an eternal impasse. This impasse does not exist

beyond death, it is not like a heavenly afterlife, but it is death existing within life. The impasse is thus as much about death as it is about life, and it tells (and shows) us how to deal with, search for, depict and represent death as such.

3.6 Doane: Representability of Time in Cinema

In her discussion on cinematic temporality, film scholar Mary Ann Doane introduces the concepts of "contingency", "indexicality", "event" and "chance", and discusses the bipolarity between continuation and discontinuation. She starts her book *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* with a historiography of cinema, and the problems it evokes and raises with regards to the representability of time. Starting off from the emergence of photography, Doane rapidly goes into a deeper discussion of cinema, taking sidesteps into Benjaminian discourse on shock and electricity, and touching upon Freudian concepts regarding desire and the psychoanalysis one could research within the cinema. Yet, aside from these branches, she builds a more general framework concerning the specific qualities of cinema which is flexible enough to bend it towards my own discourse in this thesis. The framework, suspended between the aforementioned concepts, will be discussed here in adherence/juxtaposition to Bazin and in order to analyse McCarthy's narrative work.

Doane displays how early cinema, in its representation of a singular moment of chance and the ephemeral instant, in a time in which rationalization and standardization of time as a tool to fill in the day, managed to question the structuring of time and contingency in the emerging capitalist society. At the core of the book, she discusses cinema's essential paradox: temporal continuity conveyed through "stopped time," whilst simultaneously consisting of the rapid succession of still frames or "frozen" images. Doane ventures in discourse in which she contextualises the role of this paradox, and of notions of the temporal indeterminacy and instability of an image, in shaping cinematic time. In relation to this, she notes how cinema aided in rethinking modern ideas about continuity and discontinuity, temporal irreversibility, and contingency. Doane ties the emergence of cinema with a cultural imperative, "the structuring of time and contingency in capitalist modernity" (Doane *Emergence* 4), often going into practical discourses such as the actual appearance of time in the form of watches etc. on the screen. These practicalities, however, are not how I will be approaching time. Time in this thesis is not made tangible; represented by physical attributes. It is situated on a metaphysical plane in which philosophic discourse is made possible. It does not intend to provide practical answers, it strives to open up the realm of ideas in an attempt to elevate

death into an atemporal event in order to discuss its representation. The way time should be approached is from the idea of the impasse, resembling how Benjamin reacted to Baudelaire's "spleen", as a space in which "time becomes palpable [visible, felt] [...] allied with its new technologies of representation [...] Time was indeed *felt*—as a weight, as a source of anxiety, and as an acutely pressing problem of representation. Modernity was perceived as a temporal demand."(4) Modernity, then, has to be regarded only from the perspective of having put forward new technologies, and urging people to deal with new structures such as rationalization and contingency, both of which demanded a rethinking of how to represent time. Moreover, there was a desire to make time, this 'new' entity which determined people's daily lives, visualizable.

To capture time with technologies such as photography caused a change in perception, since things not visible to the eye became visible. This abstraction in the representation of movement through time externalized time, since it was no longer merely *lived* or experienced in its former ways. It was now a pressing matter, always something to keep on hand, in eyesight. Time got a platform on which it could be contemplated, rethought, envisioned. Cinema, the ultimate time-based medium, demanded a rethinking of time, of duration, of lived experience. It altered the way we memorise and experience events. "The rationalization of time ruptures the continuum par excellence and generates epistemological and philosophical anxieties exemplified by Henri Bergson, in his adamant reassertion of temporal continuity in the concept of durée.[11]" (9) The dilemma between continuity and discontinuity, triggered a philosophical debate about the experience of time: Could time be experienced as a whole, or does time consist of instances, fragments, independent from each other? Or are they linked together from event to event, or is there a notion such as instant time, an all-encompassing vacuum of time? (9)

These questions hint towards the necessity of an epistemological discussion on how time can provide us with knowledge, yet, what if we approach time from an ontological perspective? For this, we would need Doane's explanation of terms such as contingency, chance, indexicality, and (dis)continuity.

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[11] Durée: Concept by Henri Bergson, often translated as duration. Bergson makes a distinction between durée or duration (psychological, internal time, time of active living) and external (objective, chronological, historical) time. With durée, Bergson distinguishes intuition and chance from structured, practical time. Thus, duration becomes the temporal term for the ephemeral moment, a mentally ungraspable moment, yet a moment which cinema and photography attempt to 'pluck out of the air'.

The rationalization of time is in direct contrast to the contingent[12], the ephemeral[13], chance[14], since these are beyond, or at least resistant to, meaning. Rationalization is thus also in contrast with technologies that are concerned with representing contingent, ephemeral moments. Doane claims the rationalization of time instigated a synchronous, yet, antisystematic development in the form of photography and cinema, stating that this is "a structuring that attempted to ensure their reside outside structure, to make tolerable an incessant rationalization."(11) Cinema, thus, as juxtaposed to ratio, cinema, thus, as outlet for those humane needs that cannot find a spot in an increasingly efficiently organised society. Connecting this to death, it is clear that cinema is one of the only outlets which has the capacity to explore death, since it is a concept which will always already be outside our ratio. We cannot think, let alone know, death. "Contingency proffers to the subject the appearance of absolute freedom, immediacy, directness. Time becomes heterogeneous and unpredictable and harbours the possibility of perpetual newness, difference, the marks of modernity itself. Accident and chance become productive." (11) However, there is a paradox here, as Georg Lukács claims, chance and contingency are simultaneously necessary and insufficient:

> The key question is: what is meant by "chance" in fiction? Without chance all narration is dead and abstract. No writer can portray life if he eliminates the fortuitous. On the other hand, in his representation of life he must go beyond crass accident and elevate chance to the inevitable. (Doane 12)

Fiction writing, and with that cinema, has a problem of simultaneously needing chance to be alive, but having to determine chance and making it inevitable at the same time. There seems to be some kind of gap, a vacuum, in which fiction thus needs to manoeuvre in order to provide a lively narration, while determining something *is* going to happen. It needs to find a balance between letting chance come and determine the characters' actions, while in its meta-structure making these chances inevitable. Combing freedom with determined action, leaves two things: living and dying. Living in freedom, yet dying is certain. Life and the concrete on

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[12] Contingency: derived from the Latin word *contingere*, meaning "befall", referring to an unforeseen eventuality. An event based on chance. In philosophy: "the absence of necessity; the fact of being so without having to be so. Events that just happen to be as they *befall* upon us.

[13] Ephemeral: derived from the Greek word *ephemeros*, meaning short-lived, transitory, fleeting, passing, temporary, impermanent. The ephemeral moment, in direct line with the fleeting moment photography attempts to freeze. This term is inherently linked to an instant, a durée.

[14] Chance: similar to contingency, derived from Latin word *cadere*, the French word *cheoir*, meaning "befall", enough said.

the one hand, yet a necessity to convey wholeness and totality on the other. Since contingency, the present moment, is indeterminate and has, unlike narration, no relation to the past. Therefore, being concerned with contingency which has no foot in the realm of meaning, photography has gained some antipathy since it displays something that could be rendered meaningless. Any moment, any instant would do, as far as photography's sole task is to capture contingency, the fleeting moment. Yet, photography does more than this, by grasping the meaningless moment, it provides critical reflection on the meaninglessness of contemporary society. Photography has a crucial role in looking for new ways of thinking about the world. It is, in fact, the mirror we need to reflect on our lives. (12) The contingency therefore, becomes "a site of awe and fear, constituted as both lure and threat. It lure is that of the passing moment, the fascination of the ephemeral"(13) whilst it needs to shock to attract attention. Photography, in this manner, has the power "to fix an event for an unlimited period of time." But in doing so, it gives the perceiver time to contemplate about the very instance it proposes, letting something that would have slipped through the cracks suddenly gain attention, "the camera gave the moment a posthumous shock, as it were." (15) This posthumous shock refers to the capacity of a frozen moment to show more than the naked eye could see. To speed this up to normal perception, in the form of cinema, would make this posthumous shock in cinema redundant, weren't it for the fact that the shock is sustained precisely because cinema has the capacity to be replayed. It is this, this outside of time experience of a moment through cinema, which gives the cinema its epistemological strength. Cinema is able to show us things we cannot actively perceive and experience in the moment.

Another aspect of the representation of the moment comes with "indexicality". "The promise of indexicality is, in effect, the promise of rematerialization of time, the restoration of a continuum of space in photography, of time in cinema." (10) The indexical sign of an image (or moving image) refers to "the imprint of a once-present and unique moment, the signature of temporality. As pure indication, pure assurance of existence, it is allied with contingency."(16) The indexicality of an image refers to how the image is a "footprint" of a profilmic event, it is an imprint, which can indefinitely be repeated, reproduced. It is a past event taken into the present and future, it is, in fact, taken out of time (despite cultural connotations and marks such as the content of the photo, e.g. people's clothes etc.). For the sake of the meta-argument, the photo, whenever taken, is taken out of the realm of that specific moment and becomes an eternal moment. It is, in any case, a reconstruction of reality (tying in with Baudrillard's simulacra) which has as main characteristics its atemporal nature in the sense of being taken out of time, and has as such the capacity to be repeated. Repetition

is key in cinema, since cinema is the only medium which can reproduce a lived moment time and again. It is this specific notion of cinematic repetition which recurs in Tom McCarthy's *Remainder* (2005) and which will be discussed later in this thesis as exemplary of McCarthy's narrative work and its intricate link to cinema.

3.7 Cinematic Impasse: Dead Time and the Event

If the impasse would be an archive, it would be like Borges' "Library of Babel", infinitely expanding, always looking for this one pure moment, but never really finding it. It is like this when it comes to defining death within the realm of the impasse. One will always be seeking it. Finding it is no longer the purpose of the search, it is the search which gives the impasse, the gap in which the representation of life/death is possible, meaning. This notion ties in with inauthenticity and the strive for the authentic. The repetitive nature of cinema is in fact a continuous attempt of finding authenticity. The continuous search for authenticity is, in its turn, synchronous to the eternal attempt of defining death. Representation is a tool, or rather a crucial act, a consequence, of this human desire to understand death.

Chance, the unpredictability of an event, disrupts the flow of time. Chances are that the representations of these events, in the sense that they are captured and represented in a format different from the human perception of the moment, say: the cinema, that black box in which one watches over and over again an instant of life which a memory can never reach. Cinema, therefore, is like an external hard drive, accompanying, (even better: enriching) one's experience of life. Doane describes cinematic images' archivability, and cinema's capacity to store events: "The actuality [...] produced continual evidence of the drive to fix and make repeatable the ephemeral"(22) The reception of cinema can be regarded as an appreciation of its capacity to represent movement. Contrary to photography, cinema has the capacity to archive duration, "in that sense, it was perceived as a prophylactic against death, ensuring the ability "to see one's loved ones" gesture and smile long after their deaths. What was registered on film was life itself in all its multiplicity, diversity, and contingency."(22) Film, in its aesthetic representation, could be accidental, opening up a trait which formerly was only attributed to human control. Through this, film became intensively linked to the representation of contingency, of being "the imprint of time itself, a time unharnessed from rationalization, a nonteleological time in which each moment can produce the unexpected, the unpredictable, and temporality ratifies indeterminacy." Film affirms the passing of time and

extracts moments to show their irreversibility, by this, cinema becomes a place of storage of time. What does this entail? Doane answers:

> Once the present as contingency has been seized and stored, it ineluctably becomes the past. Yet this archival artefact becomes strangely immaterial; existing nowhere but in its screening for a spectator in the present, it becomes the experience of presence. [...] What is archived, then, would be the experience of presence. (23)

The ability to press play at any time, makes sure the past becomes present. The gap in time here implies that lived time can become always-living time. This gap, I suggest, is the impasse which has the capacity to show life at any time. Cinema embodies, or rather bridges, this gap. It does not visualize the knowledge of the original moment, it gives insight in a specific passing temporal configuration: duration. Cinema thus always entails the past, yet reconfigures it into the present, making it the only medium which has the capacity and purpose to confront the problem revolving around the representability of the ephemeral. Death, as an ephemeral event, complicates this further, since death is not connected to epistemological incentives. Despite the fact that cinema's indexicality is rendered contentless (25), making it open to anything and everything, being able to film anything makes me question the problem of death. For death, despite its equally ephemeral quality, also constitutes an absolute stillness. Is death as filmable as anything else? Can death, alike anything, stand the test of time? Is the ability of film to "to see one's loved ones gesture and smile long after their deaths"(22) enough for death to be treated equal to the rest of reality?

Death seems to fall outside of knowledge about reality, it is something that happens outside of reality. This paradox, death being inherently part of life yet standing outside of life, needs to be fleshed out in a discussion of the impasse as present in McCarthy's falling parachutist and the ongoing search for defining, experiencing, representing, and inhabiting death. Death becomes the pinnacle of the human drive to know. Yet knowing it we never shall. Therefore, death needs to be placed in the metaphysical impasse in which truly anything can be perceived and contemplated. Practicalities can no longer count here, since death is practically impossible. So death needs to be approached from an ontological stance, it is *to be*, rather than to know. So if death becomes part of being, inherently part of everyday life, we can transgress it from the desire to know to the desire to be, embracing it on a level which goes beyond practice. It becomes something that is present at all times, everywhere, in

everything. Death is always visible, if one knows how to look. In this sense, everything is always already dead. To continue with Doane's theoretical discourse, there is a need to reflect on her concept of "dead time". This will bridge the ideas about death mentioned above to the impasse which McCarthy promotes in his narrative work. Slowly but surely there will emerge a bridge towards Satin Island, or is there a ferry?

3.8 Dead Time[15]

Alike death, film also provides an unthinkable space, since its spectator watches something which is not "a direct reflection of the space and time it records". The spectator no longer is an "onlooker" or "bystander" but he/she is the one who inhabits this space which cinema provides. As spectators take this new space for granted, they enter it willingly, "the acceptability of the reconstruction of an event [through cinema] constituted an acknowledgement of the atemporality of the image, the fact that it did not speak its own relation to time. From this perspective, the temporal aspirations of the cinema would seem to be contained in the notion of making the event "present" to the spectator"(Doane 158), cinema confuses the linearity of time by acting as the carrier of the contemporary: it is always a past being experienced in the ever ongoing present. The fleeting moment, that ephemeral moment which cinema tries to capture, is taken by its tail as it passes our perception and consciousness, and is dragged back into the present. Cinema does not only consist of frozen images, it represents frozen time. However, this time is no longer identifiable. In fact, cinema becomes the presenter of a "generalized experience of time, a duration"(163):

> Cinema's time is surely referential; it is a record of time with the weight of indexicality. But its time is also always characterized by a certain indeterminacy, an intolerable instability. The image is the imprint of a particular moment whose particularity becomes indeterminable precisely because the image does not speak its own relation to time. Film *is*, therefore, a record of time, but a nonspecific, nonidentifiable time, a disembodied, unanchored time. The cinema hence becomes the production of a generalized experience of time, a duration. (162/163)

Film, in its representation of time, falls outside specificity. Through montage and the editing out of sequences which are not needed for the continuity of the narrative, gaps of "dead time"

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[15] Dead Time: time edited out of the final cut of a film. The gaps in between scenes are disruptions in the flow of time, yet, the narrative is sustained.

are revealed. "Dead time", which inhabits an atemporal space, *is* an atemporal space, not restricted nor refrained to anything. It emphasises how duration is an inherent aspect of filmmaking, and how one event actually exists out of a string of sequences. However, this is accepted as such, better, it is appreciated as such since it makes looking at a sequence even more real to the spectator. The gaps in time, the breaks, the fragmentary nature is in line with how people think they experience something. However, cinema has other capacities, such as repetition and the representation of pure contingency, which make cinematic representation differ from reality. This generalized experience of time has a hint of genericity to it; cinema standardizes time, it makes it its own, it embodies duration, yet it does not resemble singularity but a generalized experience: does that mean cinema, despite its specific and unique characteristics and capacities, does not manage to escape the inauthenticity of experience? Does that mean, that, in its urge of representing death, it is indeed simultaneously attempting to escape inauthenticity and is looking for the representation of *the* authentic moment? In this way, like claimed before, death and authenticity align and find themselves on an unreachable plateau; an ideal which can only be sought after. We are always already dead and are fascinated to look for death actively so.

Moreover, films of actuality were enriched with narrative to enhance their realism, through this, the function of narrative turned into a "displacement of unanswerable questions about the ontology of the image. What came to be known eventually as "deception" in the re-enactment was made harmless as "illusion" in the narrative film. [...] from this point of view, narrative would constitute a certain taming or securing of the instability of the cinematic image."(158) Combing narrative (if understood as telling a (fictive) story) with the immediacy (actuality) of film, cinema suddenly had the capacity to address ontological questions about itself. It could now tell a story, without having to be of documentary value. Montage and other narrative techniques gained space to represent something other than mere documentary value; if a precise use of montage could create the illusion of death, then "a camera stoppage is the condition of possibility of the representation of a death."(159) Moreover, "[i]f cinematic narrative develops, in part, as a structuring of contingency, the most intractable contingencies would seem to be those having to with the body and death. [...] Death is perhaps the ultimate trauma insofar as it is situated as that which is unassimilable to meaning. [...] It is indeed impossible to image our own death; and whenever we attempt to do so we can perceive that we are in fact still present as spectators."(163) Perhaps, many films revolve around the phenomenon of death, in an attempt to capture the moment, "in order to celebrate the

contingency of the cinematic image, a celebration that is always already too late, since the contingent, in the face of the cinematic apparatus, has already received a "posthumous shock"."(163) Death on the screen can never be our own death, death thus, from a conscious and individual perspective, can never be experienced, even it is shown to us in all its multiplicity on the screen. We are always removed from our own death, hence, as Freud claims, we do not believe in our own death and deem ourselves immortal. (163) This complicates matters, since, whose death are we then discussing if not our own when contemplating the reflective nature of the image? Ultimately, when in the cinema, we are all narcissus staring into the pond. But do we see an image of our own death when we observe a death on the screen?

In this situation, perhaps montage can become a key instrument in defeating the impossibility of representing death. The impasse, filled with representations ephemeral moments, gains an extra layer with the narrative film: it is no longer tied to a snippet, yet continuous moment of time, it can now entail re-enactments of death and pass them as representations of death (illusion through montage bridges the gap between the absolute stillness of death and the ephemeral movement). Montage thus, as accepted manipulator of a sequence, is *the* tool to push death into a representable position.

The impasse is thus not only a moment taken out of time, it is also a meta-structure, a space, in which all these moments are collected and find a place to be. It is, if you will a cinema of sorts, a continuous archive which plays on a loop. The impasse, which accepts narrative film as representations of the real, provides a space in which the matador can die every afternoon. The matador does not even have to die, there merely needs to be the possibility of death, the recognition as death as such, in order for death to be present. Recognizing the possibility of death, confirms the idea that everything always already is dead. The parachutist falls on and on, and can be declared dead mid-fall. The impasse he inhabits, is the impasse every death on screen inhabits.

So, cinema lives above and beyond life. Through this, time would become a continuous event (and thus non-present), in which cinema plays the role of the representing body on which ephemeral fragments can become pure events, pulled away from their momentariness and placed in a cocoon. This way, the cinematic image becomes "immediate", always accessible, replayable, existing without time, outside of time. You could call cinema the bearer of the Ur-event, which shows a glimpse of a pure event (as a rupture), pure contingency, it unlocks the doors to the impasse; the atemporal zone in which anything is

possible, perceivable, liveable, die-able.(Doane 165) The archive of the impasse, then, is a sequence of events, fragmentary in nature, yet connected through their out-of-time make up.

Derrida, from a structuralist perspective, would deem the event as unanalyzable, "relegated to the epistemological margins"(166), for chance and discontinuity are indispensable. Yet what if we could push aside knowledge (since it is impossible to "know" and to "think" chance (alteration of a deemed deterministic course) and discontinuity (death)), and let the event *be* event, let it be a rupture, an outtake, an impasse, a fragment? (166) Does that mean we can ontologically assess cinema for its possibilities of representation? And does that mean, that if the event is no longer used to get to know, but revolves around the idea of being, that life and death, the continuum and the absolute discontiuum of being, become accessible? That indeed, from an ontological perspective cinema *is* the impasse, the non-time, the dead time, which functions as a plateau on which life and death truly become synchronous, one? Cinema is able to convey knowledge which daily human experience cannot represent. However, knowledge still has its restrictions when it comes to death. Death is in its very essence epistemologically impossible, it cannot be known, and thus there is a need for another perspective: ontology, the theory of being. An ontological analysis of cinema would not research the message it conveys, but what cinema is in all its intractability's.

An analysis of representing time on screen (and in McCarthy's novel for that matter) is imminent. So, any cultural connotation aside, this thesis will not divulge into societal matters nor world history, it will attempt to function in a timeless space. What will be researched, however, is this: instead of looking at classical literary narratology applied in film, I am looking at specific cinematic techniques of narration applied to literature. The comparative analysis will be an analysis of a reversed adaptation. An adaptation of meta-structures regarding techniques remarkable to cinema, such as duration and temporality, movement and illusion, and see how McCarthy uses them in his literature pushing its boundaries.

Let's cross a bridge and move from cinema towards literature. The aforementioned techniques specifically known to cinema, seem to be at play in McCarthy's work too. This implies that it is not literature inspiring cinema, but that cinema can inspire literature. By borrowing cinematic qualities of the celluloid and dropping them in ink blots on the paper, Tom McCarthy might have found a way for literature to incorporate death in literary form and represent it as such. A comparative reading of the capacities of cinema to those of literature as

applied by McCarthy are thus necessary in order to see how McCarthy expands the capacities of literature by incorporating techniques formerly only accorded to cinema.

4.The Impasse and "*Cinereal*" Represented

Although *Satin Island* has been briefly analysed before, with the knowledge of Mary Ann Doane's and Andre Bazin's film theory, we might take another look at McCarthy's novel. *Satin Island* seems to be constructed as if it were a video diary, in which McCarthy uses a language which seems to embed a specific visualization of moments, as he manages to capture and evoke strings of images, sequences, short passages of clips of videos which, through language, come to life (yet, not in the ekphrastic sense). The novel consists of short passages, often not even a page long, instances, inscriptions of findings, daily habits, snippets of research. Altogether they constitute the novel, yet, moreover, they also form The Great Report which the protagonist, U., is trying to compose. This multi-layeredness of the novel, the novel being the final product of the search of its own protagonist, could be regarded as a post-modern trick, a joke even, yet, it hints towards something else. This novel is not your usual novel about a novelist writing a novel, this novel is about a cultural anthropologist trying to define the *contemporary*, finding out it is an impossibility, essentially failing, and finishing the novel as it is. Tom McCarthy becomes U., U, becomes you, you become Tom McCarthy, the reader becomes a cultural anthropologist of the contemporary, thrown into the deep abyss of information, of buffering, of overload, into a continuous, endless, infinite stream (contemporaneity) in which one needs to pinpoint and define. Holding on to several subjects, U., in an attempt to grasp what this impasse (perpetual state of passage) we live in constitutes, starts composing files on oil spills, parachutists, traffic jams etc. U., at one point feels like he is miserably failing in compiling the Report, yet, simultaneously he realises this failure is key to understanding what it means to define the contemporary. The contemporary cannot be defined by such and such subject, it embraces failure and encompasses all attempts at defining it. In truth, the attempt at searching for a definition *is* what matters. Similar to what McCarthy writes as Chief of the INS, one should always look for death in every seam of reality. It is not about pinpointing it down to a single definition, it comes down to realising that both, the contemporary *and* death, are overwhelmingly present at all time. It is the task of us, followers of the thought, to seek this space of death "to map, enter, colonize, and, eventually, inhabit" it. (McCarthy, Critchley *Mattering of Matter* 53) However, there is more to the contemporary, for the contemporary as a concept has traits similar to those of the impasse. They both are a meta-physical space standing out of time, they both can be researched, both attempt to describe (and grasp) the fleeting moment, and both realise there

are other tools needed to capture this. Cinema inhabits the space since it takes reality out of time, contemporary *is* the space since it hovers over time. Like a helicopter (or a parachutist) hovering over a floating (or a dead) sailor. They are two sides of the same coin.

It is necessary to look at U.'s (McCarthy's) attempts at seeking and entering this space, in order to not only understand the technique behind it for future endeavours, but more importantly, in order to draw similarities in his narrative techniques to those of cinema. For cinema is the sole medium which, on a metaphysical plane, manages to capture this impasse, this space which McCarthy attempts to map, enter, colonize and inhabit.

Impasse, death, threshold, contemporary, they are all the similar concepts and they all seem to be making use of media to embody themselves. Only question is, why did McCarthy reside with literature over cinema? Did he deem the word stronger than mere cinema, if the word would be empowered with cinematic techniques. Through this, it might be suggested that in fact, he found a new genre, the cinematic novel.

In his essay 'Recessional, or the Time of the Hammer'[16] McCarthy describes the concept of recession, a temporal notion which implies a gap, a pause, a stop. He discusses the use of time in novels, through an analysis of Modernist novels such as Joseph Conrad's *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, Marcel Proust's *A La recherche de Temps perdu,* Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*. Although these Modernist novels deal with time in the way they discuss it as lived time, institutional time and narrative time, I argue that McCarthy, in his own writing, attempts to seek and display another level of time. He synchronises lived time with narrative time, as a recollection of instances, fragments, yet, in doing so, he extracts narrative time, purposefully and consciously from lived time, creating an impasse in which he can openly discuss time, or rather *durée*, and toy with it to expand it beyond death, beyond the novel. Novelistic time stands outside of actual time, and thus can be altered in every possible direction. The novel, *Satin Island*, then, adapts cinematic time as an agent of illusion, of duration and of repetition.[17] By repeating instances, by prolonging moments and by recurring to similar scenes throughout the book, McCarthy stretches, contracts and expands time. All of this is in name of being able to toss around with the notion of the 'contemporary', a notion which is always in flux and cannot, in any case, be pinned down to a specific moment. The contemporary thus, becomes the gap, the ephemeral, fleeting moment, the representation of

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[16] Published in Tom McCarthy *Typewriters, Bombs, Jellyfish* a 2017 collection of essays.

[17] Later I will argue that Tom McCarthy already applied these techniques in 2005, in his novel *Remainder*, which will be subject to analysis in Chapter 5.

what is and was and will be, the contemporary becomes the mirror in which Orpheus[18] steps only to get to know death (he literally needs to step over a threshold to enter the space in which he can get to know death, Orpheus thus enters the impasse). To McCarthy, the novel has to exhibit, inhabit and breathe time. Not only does the protagonist have to live within time, he has to be conscious of time, handle time and be in battle with time alike the wrestle Jacob has with God on the banks of the river. Moreover, the reader has to endure time. By cutting the novel up in fragments, and recurring over and over again to several threads, McCarthy manages to compose a mosaic of instances of time, sometimes progressing, sometimes being put to a halt, sometimes transgressing lived time, sometimes reversing within time, folding back into the construct of time. The reader's experience, alike that of the spectator in the cinema, becomes intertwined with the experience of time. Time, in the way McCarthy uses it, promotes/breathes *durée*, duration. How? Let's look at the dossiers U. compiled and see how their meta-structure resembles cinematic specificity.

By expanding the notion of time, he is, alike film theory on cinema, constructing a space in which he can let events take place without having to account for their temporal harness. Releasing events from their temporality, which is directly in line with his protagonist's task to define the contemporary, begets an atemporal space. Placing Ur-events in this space lies at the core of what his novel is trying to achieve: building the, what I call, impasse and letting events inhabit this space. The events, then, all have the necessary ingredients in common: they are generic, they are placed outside of time, they are chance, they represent duration, they are contingent, ephemeral, and embody death. At the core, one could say, McCarthy's protagonist is thus looking for death within life, for death is the only instance which surpasses the present and functions on the same level as the contemporary.

4.1 "Cinereal"

Satin Island, the book's cover covered with ink blots, starts with protagonist U. waiting at airport Torino-Caselle, contemplating his surroundings. As he is stranded in Turin due to a private jet circling above London (intertextual reference to his novel *Remainder*, which ends with a scene of a circling private jet), U. watches the news coverage on multiple screens in the terminal. Besides a football match and images of a bombing in the Middle East, there is report on an oil spill. After having seen this, the entire first chapter is used to describe

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[18] Orphée, film by Jean Cocteau from 1950, referenced by Tom McCarthy on multiple occasions for its play with time, death, threshold, impasse and repetition. The mirror stands for the passage of life to death. See a clip here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9PvyiEL6hw Death is omnipresent in this film.

the effect of the images on his own surroundings. For example, U. receives a message stating: "We won." Simultaneously he is looking at a goal being scored in the football match, "this sequence now aligned itself with these words sent to me by Peyman: We won." (*Satin* 7) He is actively describing images, moving images, and blending them with lived time, making sequences from all over the world enter his own private space, the way Baudrillard discusses the TV and its competencies. But what is more, he describes these sequences so vividly, that one can only recall them as visual interpretations. There is something in the way McCarthy describes sequences, that makes them more vivid than 'usual', this, I argue, due to the immediacy he applies to his writing. Trying to write 'in the contemporary about the contemporary', he has set himself the task to write actions as immediate as possible. Despite the use of flashbacks etc. he manages to place the events U. encounters within lived time, having several things happen at the same time, coinciding and colliding with each other, merging and overflowing in one another, creating a constellation of events that all align and influence each other. A constellation as made out of particles and atoms in which if one is moved, the entire system reverberates. In his *Tintin and the Secret of Literature* (2008), McCarthy discusses the role of time in literature, and how he reconsiders describing events in a 'more realistic' sense. Instead of writing within the former Realist conventional way of in which characters e.g. ponder about what they see and how they think about this, articulating this in ways which are literary, but not true to reality. McCarthy attempts to push literature in a more real domain, in order for it to become more real than real. Surpassing Realist conventions, Tom McCarthy seems to have opened up the field of literature to a new branch of literature, one which is not realist but hovers above it, out of time and therefore precisely in accordance with the time of the moment. It becomes something else than Baudrillard's hyperreal, it is not a simulation which no longer has anything to do with reality. Perhaps, since it makes use of cinematic techniques, the new path of the novel, this new genre or movement of the cinematic novel should be called: "cinereal".

4.2 Analysis of *Satin Island* II

4.2.1 Buffering and Present-Tense Anthropology™

U. uses the concept of buffering to go into a stream of thought critically assessing the duration of time. McCarthy uses these fragments of discussing time because he is constructing an image of time which is malleable, he discusses how experience and the reality surrounding us revolves around the ephemeral moment, and our eternal attempts at capturing it:
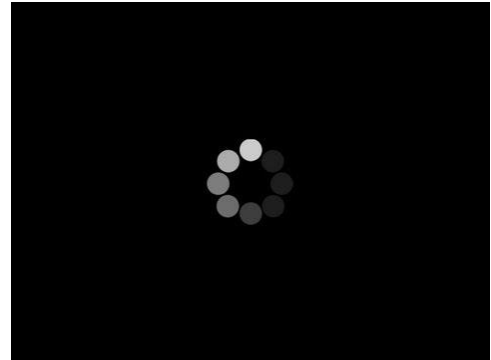
> it dawned on me that was I was *actually* watching was nothing less than the skeleton, laid bare, of time or memory itself. Not our computers' time and memory, but our own. This was its structure. We require to say ahead, if only by a nose, of our *consciousness* of experience. [...] But when the narrating cursor catches right up with the rendering one [...] we find ourselves stuck in limbo: we can enjoy *neither* experience *nor* consciousness of it. Everything becomes buffering, and buffering becomes everything. (69)

Moreover, he is discussing time for he attempts to grasp the ephemeral moment by positioning events in their temporal confines. He places an event in the present, as it happens in front of U.'s eyes, and let's his protagonist not only enter that space, but also makes the duration of the moment endurable in that very presence. By describing it as is, getting close to representing a moment in its authentic duration, he captures the moment in language in a similar manner as cinema is able to grab a moment and elevate it out of the stream of time and onto a repeatable display. Furthermore, he lets his protagonist metaphysically assess the duration of the moment, by going into philosophical rethought. This adds a layer of to the moment, as it not only happens in real time, it simultaneously is placed in a space in which it *can* be assessed. This space becomes atemporal, since reflecting on duration by a discussion on the functioning and working of time takes the moment out of its time and places it in the impasse. The moment then simultaneously exists in reality, but also in this new space outside of reality. This other space, the impasse, then becomes a reality of its own where time can be assessed without having to think of the fleeting moment passing by and the moment fading

into oblivion. McCarthy thus, in two layers of description, manages to not only discuss an event in its lived time and duration, but also from its atemporal perspective. This implies that McCarthy manages to place time outside of time and recreate, and represent, an event on a repeatable plane. A plane which is no longer restricted to the perpetual state of passage, but can be accessed at any time. He solidifies the ephemeral, alike filmmaking grabs a moment out of time and makes it repeatable. A clip of a moment can be watched at any given time. Through this, he is continuously building a framework around the impasse, in order to be able to place death, the fleeting moment and the contingency of life in a timeless framework.

U. in his contemplation about capturing the contemporary, thinks about a moment in the following manner:

> Where previously I would have made a mental note of all these objects and then *a la* Malinowski, written them down later so that each could, when analysed, yield its semantic content [...] now I simply looked at them, blurring my vision till my own gaze became soggy and I lost myself among them. And as I did, I felt a fragile, almost epiphanic tingling of *what-if*-ness come across me. What if...? What i just *coexisting* with these objects and this person, letting my own edges run among them, occupying this moment, or more to the point, allowing *it* to occupy *me*, to blot and soak me up, [...] what if all this, maybe, *was* part of the Great Report? What if the Report might somehow, in some way be lived, be *be*-d, rather than written? (71)

U., in this fragment, realises he does not need to pin a moment down to be able to know it, he realises the moment needs to be viewed, reflected upon, inhabited in order for it to *be*. This way, McCarthy makes the impasse something that can be found everywhere, as long as you realise how to look at things. The contemporary, as such, becomes something that is not just ephemeral, it is through recognition that it can be lived. Trough this, one places oneself *in* the moment, and becomes the moment, lifting it from its ephemerality and incorporating it in the very structure of being. Ethnographers, or in INS thought necronauts, would have to

> place themselves *inside* events and situations *as they unfolded*— naively, blithely and, most of all, *live*—their participation-from-within transforming life by bringing its true substance to the fore at every instant, in the instant, not as future knowledge but *as* the instant itself

> [...] Then the Great Report would not be something that was either to-come or completed, in-the-past: it would all be *now*. Present-tense Antrhopology; anthropology as a way of life. [...] an anthropology that bathed in presence, an in *nowness*—bathed in it as in a deep, bubbling and nymph-saturated well. (72)

U. goes on wondering about the practicality of his new finding, and comes up with an idea which is very similar to the way videographers grasp the fleeting moment and place that moment in a film, surpassing its presence making it always present. The way he thinks of the execution of Present-Tense Anthropology, and the way it would be presented as such, is as follows:

> [I]t had to find form. [...] What fluid, morphing hybrid could I come up with to be equal to that task? What medium, or media, would it inhabit? [...] How could I elevate all these secondary sources to be quantified, sucked dry, then cast away, to primary layers in this story, non-story? Above and beyond this, how could life *as lived* become transmogrified from field-work into work, *the* Work? [...] Ethnographers [...] triggering unusual events, specific situations [...] Could that kind of stuff, that kind of practice, be applied to modern life? And then, *as* Present-Tense Antropology*, could it be somehow passed on, communicated to (or even replicated by) collaborators who might, through the very act of recognizing it, cause it to be simultaneously registered, logged, archived? (73)

U. openly contemplates about how to placed the extracted now onto a media in order for it to be communicated. My answer would be cinema, and I am of the opinion that McCarthy's view would also be of cinema, or at least, he finds his answer in the cinematic specificity. In fact, he uses the cinematic specificity to make *Satin Island* as a novel a similar kind of outlet, a similar platform on which these moments can be contemplated, reviewed, repeated, shown. In fact, *Satin Island*, in the way it represents these ideas is both the how-to manual, as well as the prime example of its own constitution. In this way, McCarthy does not only communicate which way the novel should go, *Satin Island* becomes the prime example of such a novel. A few more examples, less contemplative and more exemplary for this solidification of Present-Tense Anthropology might be necessary to illustrate the idea.

4.2.2 Oil Spills

Oil spills are a *recurring* theme, already an indication of the application of cinematic specificity, yet, moreover, McCarthy describes them by ekphrastic accounts of images on a newspaper's website on his laptop

> [T]he oil spill, with a sequence of photos showing tugs, oil-covered men wrestling with grips and winches, those black-ringed outlying islands, the giant oil-flower and so forth. The editor had chosen a "fade" effect to link the shots together, rather than the more abrupt succession that recalls old slideshow carousels. It struck me as the right effect to use, aesthetically speaking. (8)

U. follows the description above with descriptions of other instances which deal with time, doing so, McCarthy creates a complex layer of time upon time upon time. Whilst U. is contemplating the images on the screen of events that appear to happen 'live' elsewhere in the world, or at least incidents that happened that day, presented in pictures on his screen, as well as in moving images played in a loop within a news programme on the airport's TV screens, he adds a layer of time as he describes the events that happen within U.'s actual time, such as the repetition of "the same two boys ran past me. Once more the small one's feet slipped out from under him" (8) Furthermore, linearity and sequence is realised, actualised as he is in a Skype call, literally connecting him 'online' in the actuality of time. However, this call is hampering, when "Madison asked once more when I'd be back. ... Her face froze in mid-sentence too ... buffering"(9). This buffering, a sign of both downloading and loading and re-establish connectivity, as if a machine is at work to place one within time with the other again, is also an indication of a certain impasse, a gap in time, a momentary disruption of the flow of time. At the same time, it is an indication of what it means to chase a fleeting moment. However, simultaneously U. continues contemplating his surroundings, and lets the images on the screen overflow with his surroundings. He is looking at a shop's window, on which the news footage is reflected:

> the market bomb-aftermath replayed across the pattern of a shawl, oil flowed and *reflowed* on a watch's face. The overlap between these various elements, and the collage-effect it created, was constant—but, as the hours wore on, the balance of the mixture changed. The luxury objects and their cases *stayed the same,* of course—but little by little,

football highlights and truck bombing faded, clips of them growing
shorter and less frequent; while, conversely, the oil spill garnered more
and more screen time. (9)

McCarthy adds different layers of time to create a contrast between actual lived time and
other experienced time, and by doing so, actualising the events of the protagonist and vesting
them in a flow of contemporaneity, a presence which anticipates the very near future and
aligns it with actual time, instead of an enduring description which surpassed the fleeting
moment and is always stuck in describing the past, a trait known to 19th C. realist novels.
McCarthy embeds cinematic immediacy to drag the novel out of past-tense representation and
into a more actual, 'real' time. By letting U.'s lived time be actualised and influenced by
screen time, McCarthy enhances the lived time and makes it more immediate. It, through this,
expands onto a meta-time which converges into a display of contemporaneity; events that
started in the past, flow through the present, and determine the future. The oil spill not only is
ongoing, it is doomed to influence the future of the world as an actual event, moreover, it
influences U.'s actions in the present, a supreme example of how contemporaneity works. U.
is chasing the fleeting moment as it passes by his eyes. The ephemeral in its turn, is an
indicator of the use of filmic characteristics.

4.2.3 Parachutist: Impasse Embodied

Another example, one which encompasses the impasse and the position of death within life in
its entirety, revolves around U. researching an incident of a parachutist's death. The
parachutist, whose parachute has been sabotaged, is suggested to be a dead man walking even
prior to the event, this determinism of death can only be represented by placing his death in a
zone in which it can be contemplated, rethought, repeated:

> That final spur, the one that carried skydivers across the threshold, out
> into the abyss, was faith: faith that it all—the system, in its boundless
> and unquantifiable entirety—worked, that they'd be gathered up and
> saved. For this man, though, the victim, that system, its whole fabric,
> had unraveled. That, and not his death, was the catastrophe that had
> befallen him.

A final spur implies that every skydive has the capacity of being the last one. There is always
the possibility of failure. Moreover, it is faith in a failing construct, something that has to

work, a rationality which does not account for chance, that places the death of the parachutist in an impasse. In fact, the very moment of death, the space in which the parachutist falls when tumbling down towards Earth, is the impasse. The impasse as such, becomes a place in which death can be discussed, since it embodies both life and death at the same time. Death, in itself is nothing spectacular, "we're all going to die: there's nothing so disastrous about that, nothing in its ineluctability that undermines the structure of our being." (79) However, the moment of death, the actual dying itself, is a moment which can barely be understood:

> He'd have looked around him, seen the sky, and earth, its landmass and horizon, all the vertical and horizontal axes that hold these together, felt acceleration and the atmosphere and all the rest, the fundamental elements in which we hang suspended all the time, whether we've just jumped from an aeroplane or not—and yet, for him, this realm, with all its width and depth and volume, would have, in an instant, become emptied of its properties, its values.

For the parachutist, the moment of death comes as an instant. A fleeting realisation of the moment that indeed, he is dead. Falling to the Earth then, already dead but conscious of it, is a unique moment. In fact, by using a parachutists realisation of death, and then rendering meaningless everything he ever trusted in, is a sign that we can find death in life, only if we think about it in a way that we embrace it, acknowledge it, no longer live in denial and believing in immortality. McCarthy does not suggest that we should then, in all our actions, be afraid of dying, quite the contrary, we should inhabit the contingency of our own death, only to be able to live. The space through which the parachutist falls, the sky, becomes an atemporal zone as soon as McCarthy contemplates about it:

> The vast font at which he prayed, and into which he sank, as though to re-baptize himself, time and again, would, in the blink of a dilated eye, have been voided of godhead, rendered meaningless.

The parachutist falls into the similar pool in which the protagonist of *Remainde* moves himself in his search for the feeling of authentic, real experience. The parachutist sinks into this space, and as McCarthy records it in word (although it might as well have been in visuals, since both have the capacity of repeating it to the beholder, at any given time) he makes the parachutist fall into this space time and again. The repetitive nature of cinema is used to let the parachutist die time and again. Alike the matador in the documentary *The Bullfight*, the

parachutist dies upon every reading, time and again. Reading, in the way McCarthy writes the ephemeral, becomes similar to the experience of seeing someone die on the screen over and over again. It is this cinematic specificity which McCarthy manages to apply in his work that makes his narrative work become part of the atemporal impasse.

> Space, even as he plunged into it, through it, would have retreated— recoiled, contracted, pulled back from its frontiers even though these stayed intact— withdrawn to some zero-point at which it flips into its negative. Negative world, negative sky, negative everything: that's the territory this man had entered. Did that then mean he'd somehow fallen through into another world, another sky? A richer, fuller, more embracing one? I don't think so. (80)

McCarthy describes the space that the parachutist enters, and attributes to it specifics which are in line with the impasse, the zone in which death becomes a possibility, the zone in which death becomes conscious of itself and thus can be represented as such. The parachutist falls through a negative world, negative sky, negative everything, because time and space do no longer matter. He has reached the zero degree space in which anything is possible, even being alive when at the same time being dead. However, McCarthy argues, he does not find himself in a richer world, he simply realises death is inherent to life. The impasse, alike the negative world, the zero degree, then becomes a zone which is a reality which is present at all times, but only one which can be entered through chance. The ephemerality of the moment is elevated from the moment itself as soon as McCarthy describes it, by describing the space as such, McCarthy makes use of the capacities and qualities of the impasse only because it is there that he is able to contemplate about death. Moreover, this is the space where the genericity of death, becomes a singular experience. It becomes authentic in the sense that it *can* be represented, though. The parachutist, through McCarthy's account *becomes* death in all it ineluctability. The parachutist, and with that McCarthy's account of his death, embodies the impasse, gives it a surface to be represented on.

5.Analysis *Remainder:* Repetition, Inauthenticity, Death

Tom McCarthy's first novel *Remainder* (2005) revolves around a protagonist suffering from memory loss due to an accident in which "something falling from the sky" left him estranged from the world. The protagonist, as the back-cover synopsis reveals "spends his time and money obsessively reconstructing and re-enacting vaguely remembered scenes and situations from his past. ... But when this fails to quench his thirst for authenticity, he starts reconstructing more and more violent events, as his repetition addiction spirals out of control." (McCarthy *Remainder)*

The hero of the novel is driven to re-establish his memories and reconstruct them as realistic as possible, yet in fact, he replaces reality with a notion of this reality, rendering reality obsolete and resulting in this new reality becoming reality. This theoretical idea stems from Jean Baudrillard's concepts such as simulacra, simulation, hyperreality and, in fact, the remainder. These concepts need flesh on their bones, before discussing them in relation to the novel. However, first and foremost, this novel is key to understanding the relationship between cinema, death, (in)authenticity, repetition and reality. As much as *Satin Island* can teach us about time and death, this novel takes as its prime concepts repetition, illusion (replacing the real for another reality) and, alike *Satin Island*, duration. Discussing both novels thus gives a broad yet thorough overview of how Tom McCarthy manages to extract cinematic techniques from their media specificity and places them in a new mold: literature. The "cinereal" is a new reality, a path which brings cinema closer to literature and vice versa, and which can be seen as a gateway, a looking glass, through which to observe both media and their interplay. By leaving classic literary narrative analysis aside and solely focusing on cinematic traits within literature, this thesis attempts to establish tighter relations between the two in order to be fruitful in future endeavours of intermedial analysis.

Maurice Blanchot, in his work *Literature and the Right to Death*, discusses the role of sign and signifier, the role of repetition and inauthenticity, the role of death itself in relation to literature. Adding to his analysis, is my analysis of cinematic techniques applied by McCarthy in his literature. What follows here is an analysis of the novel on grounds of the presence of cinematic techniques in the novel, discussing and analysing McCarthy's use of

repetition, duration, illusion, death and treatment of time, in order to establish a relational status in which McCarthy indeed shows, as Zadie Smith dared to call it, "a new path for the novel". Furthermore, this analysis will look for the overarching concept of the impasse, the already established metaphysical framework or space in which all temporal qualities and death can find a place.

5.1 Baudrillard's 'Remainder'

Baudrillard dedicates a chapter to the concept of *remainder* in his "Simulacra and Simulation"(1994). He writes:

> It is through the subtraction of the remainder that reality is founded and gathers strength [...] what is on the other side of the remainder exists, it is even the marked term, the powerful moment, the privileged element in this strangely asymmetrical opposition, in this structure that is not one. [...] Positive, but only the negative gives it the force of reality. In a strict sense, it cannot be defined except as the remainder of the remainder.

By ridding reality of its surplus matter, its remainder, its non-communicated, one can reach a pure event, a pure reality. However, this does not allow for failure: everything needs to happen exactly and precisely as it should go. This strive for perfection is what in *Remainder* becomes a search for authenticity, this intangible moment in which the protagonist will feel real again. The remainder once the remainder is shaken off, as Baudrillard explains it, seems to exist when our reality is perfected, round, streamlined. IT is this notion which re-appears time and again in *Remainder*; the protagonist searches for a moment in which everything flows according to his desires, exactly how he imagines it. Taking an imagination and trying to re-enact it to perfection seems to be in line with how filmmaking works: one has a script and films several takes until everything appears just right. There are rarely any mistakes in people's gestures and actions, speech etc. in filmmaking: it is a polished version of reality. I will return to this notion later in my analysis.

Baudrillard continues attributing different elements to what the remainder entails, he compares it to a mirror because "perhaps only in the mirror can the question be posed: which, the real or the image, is the reflection of the other? In this sense one can speak of the remainder as a mirror, or of the mirror of the remainder." (143) However, a mirror is static, it

is a direct representation of reality, it still contains all shortcomings daily life beholds, it is not polished. Only in the very moment, contemplating the reflection one can see movement happening in pureness, yet, the mirror lacks the capacity to capture this movement and eternalise it in some other form than itself. A mirror never seizes the fleeting moment, it merely shows it in its presence. Thinking of it like a mere reflection, non-existent in some other realm/archive, "the remainder traverses the whole cycle, since it has no opposite, and runs infinitely after its own slash, after its own double. The Remainder is obscene, because it is reversible and is exchanged for itself." In this sense, the remainder remains the mirror, yet I believe the remainder exists because the debris that is stripped off leaves something pure behind. Not that there is no purity in the debris, there certainly is, one should research this debris for its own authenticity, yet in this case, the other half of the remainder becomes the polished perfection, a moment in a film, the object of contemplation in my research.

Lastly, Baudrillard states that "All of the real is residual, and everything that is residual is destined to repeat itself indefinitely in phantasms." (146) Phantasms, fantasies, imaginations tend to be repetitive since one cannot think outside of the real, out of the known, out of the ordinary, regular, generic, and inauthentic. The real is what remains, after it is separated from a version of the real which hovers in the realm of representation. In this realm, let's refer to it as the impasse, anything becomes more real than real.

5.2 Creation and The Remainder

McCarthy's novel *Remainder* embodies the ideas put forward by Baudrillard and Doane; it struggles with the question of authenticity/artificiality/reality, and it incorporates duration in the form of ephemeral moments and reproduction of snippets of life. First, it is interesting to see how the novel is prefaced, since the preface discusses a perspective on the matter of (re)creation which gives an angle to the way I will be approaching the novel in my analysis. The edition of the novel I will be using (Alma Books 2015) is prefaced by Professor of Media McKenzie Wark, in which he provides a minute, yet not insignificant, overview of representation, reproduction, creation and the role of the remainder from the Renaissance era, through the Romantic, the Realist, the Modern, the Postmodern and into the era of the Anthropocene. Starting with the idea of the creation of the Earth by God, in which He was the sole creator and human could only imitate creation—mimesis. But then Wark questions: "Might there be special methods via which human work of a special kind might have access, not just to the imitating effect of God's creation, but to His ideas themselves?" (McCarthy

Remainder VII) This question suggests that there might be a way, an act of creation, which would surpass imitation, step over it, and enter a space in which one could access His ideas. Is Wark suggesting there is some metaphysical space which one could enter and find pure events/thoughts? He continues by discussing the different periods and the reigning stance of those days towards creation: Renaissance concerned itself with the formulation of an "idea of beauty, an idealization of nature as God's art, and [...] imitating a hidden divine reality" (VIII), from then onward came the idea that humans could create something too. The Romantics, in their turn had *imagination* as a form of creation, which coalesces between imitation of nature and a new creation of forms, which instigated the thought that humans could be in a state of "perpetual reimagining and reinventing". (VIII) Because of this new idea of the position of human creation, a transition from religious to humanist creation, Realist art emerges: describing nature as it appears, forensically, ordering "the non-artist's natural vision ... with scientific precision". But then the Modernist era arrived, "where the non-artist's natural vision can see reality, but only the artist's superior vision sees Art", the artist becomes "special" and so does art. (IX) In the Modernist creation of art, art loses its communicability. To Wark, "*communication* is a kind of unacknowledged remainder of art", with that the "mimetic echo of creation, the remains or reverberations, bounce back and forth and become indistinguishable. Art collapses into the reverb of communication, lost in the noise of the commodity and spectacle." (X) This then became significant to Postmodern art, in which art got infected with the remainder of communication, of mimesis. Wark relates this notion to *Remainder's* protagonist, since he acts out of mimesis, all he attempts is "to make a double of a pure moment of creation", yet this is not what the novel is fully about, it is only semi-Postmodern, since it imitates the old methods of Modernism making it a novel not about mimesis per se, but more about the remainder of mimesis, the reverb, the noise that communication produces. It sheds light on traces and marks that are left behind once the ephemeral has passed. The act of capturing this moment, and the idea of cinema as a footprint (a trace, a leftover, an indication of "what-has-been"), then suddenly becomes heavily intertwined with the notions McCarthy attempts to address in his novel. Cinema as a remainder of that what we experience daily; events taken out of reality and stuck on a piece of celluloid, a mere visual memory of a lost time. These then, in their turn become timeless and repeatable: that is what *Remainder* attempts to convey in its very structure and narrative. To show the marks that instances leave behind not only in our memory, but also in the representation of our memory: art.

5.3 Cinematic Movement: Artificiality and Perfection

What makes McCarthy produce literature instead of cinema, then, is still difficult to say. Perhaps it comes down to personal preference, yet he does (manage to) insert cinematicity in his narrative work. Thus, I would claim, since he is a writer, he decided to pursuit pushing the boundaries of literature, by incorporating techniques of "what might as well have been" cinema.

For example, the protagonist, has to re-learn everything (from walking to eating) after the accident. The very act of relearning this requires lots of repetition, and thus McCarthy writes: "Understanding this, and picturing yourself lifting the carrot to your mouth, again and again and again, cuts circuits through your brain that will eventually allow you to perform the act itself. That's the idea."(19) The protagonist is supposed to create a mental image of a motion, which will be imprinted in his brain, alike how in filming a motion is imprinted onto the celluloid. The action will eventually be performed by the self; the filmed moment will eventually become the only existing trace of the moment itself. When the moment arrives that the protagonist is going to attempt to pick up the carrot, he thinks of it as "a no-thing – a hollow, a carved space for me to grasp and move." The carrot, as the object in the motion, becomes redundant, it becomes a 'no-thing' a space that one has to reach out into and try to grasp. The carrot as a metaphor for an imaginary object, a memory which needs to be activated to become real. The carrot, in fact, as a representation of process in which one needs to believe in a possibility. The coordinated movement becomes a contingent, ephemeral moment which can only happen if its visual image is placed in a hollow space, and one believes in this space to have the possibility to be real. The carrot, thus, alike a passing moment (a motion picture) that is taken out of time and placed in an impasse in which make-believe and illusion become a reality. Eventually he manages to grab the carrot, and learns to move again. However, the protagonist never gets back to his old state. Because of this, he feels like his movements are 'plastic', and not flaccid, so not real, but artificial. Alike Wark writes, he cannot feel real any more, thus he "wants to create the real: "I wanted to reconstruct that space and enter it so I could feel real again."" (XI) Creating the real, a reproduction of his memory, a life-like project in which he will reconstruct everything to its very details, only to be able to feel real again. The protagonist thus wants to reconstruct a *space* and *enter* it. I'd argue that he wants to reconstruct the impasse, a timeless space in which he can lose himself in his own imagination, only to feel real again. He wants to produce a simulation of reality, for the reality around him is no longer real to him. Alike his movements, he can no longer

find authenticity in the daily world around him, he sees all gestures and actions by anyone as generic and once removed from the real thing. To him, the only real movements are the movements Robert De Niro makes on the screen as he watches him in Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets* (1973) in the cinema. As he goes to the cinema, the protagonist declares there are two strange things to this: "One was watching moving images. My memory had come back to me in moving images, as I mentioned earlier – like a film run in instalments", since these are his only memories, to which he feels detached since they later need to be reproduced in order to experience reality, he feels detached to the movie too. The other thing was "how perfect De Niro was. Every move he made, each gesture was perfect, seamless. [...] he seemed to execute the action perfectly, to live it, to merge with it until he was it and it was him and there was nothing in between." This description suggests that a moving image appears more real to the protagonist than reality around him, for the movement is captured indefinitely and is static in the sense that it has to b perfect since every time you watch it again it remains the exact same movement. There is no differentiation between one movement or the repetition of the movement, De Niro's movements are taken out of time and become the singular example of how a movement is done, they simply cannot change since they are imprinted like this forever. The fact that the event captured on camera happened to be as they are, make them the only truth. Since there is no flexibility in how De Niro would do the movement another time but slightly different (the cinema does not allow for that since only that specific moment can be repeated precisely as it is/was), the movement as it is *has* to be perfection. Due to this, the protagonist finds this the most authentic way, since it is made timeless and since it is placed in a space in which no-one can alter it anymore. Therefore, it becomes realer than reality. In a discussion with his friend Greg, the protagonist says this: "He's natural when he does things. Not artificial, like me. He's flaccid. I'm plastic."(22) To which Greg replies: "He's the plastic one, I think you'll find, [...] being stamped onto a piece of film and that." (22) To the protagonist, this is not true, for he thinks of the film not as a piece of celluloid, but as a space to inhabit in which anything is possible, and in which anything is more real than his surrounding reality. "He doesn't have to think about them because he and they are one. Perfect. Real. My movements are all fake. Second-hand." This is, I argue, because cinema finds itself in the impasse: out of time, contingent, duration, ephemerality, archive. Cinema becomes the embodiment of the hyperreal, the ultimate simulation of a new reality detached from reality, the space that is more real than real and thus the sole place where truly anything is possible. For De Niro *is* what he is on that screen, and nothing more. He is true only because he can never appear different from how he was captured on film in that very moment.

The fact that the protagonist wants to build a specific space in which he can feel real again, like he wants to hide in a movie, suggests that he actually is searching for a space like the impasse in which his own artificiality can become authentic. McCarthy's hero declares that "I'd always been inauthentic"(23) giving an example of how he had "been walking down the street just like De Niro, smoking a cigarette like him, and even if it had lit first try, I'd still be thinking: *Here I am, walking down the street, smoking a cigarette, like someone in a film.* See? Second-hand."(23) First of all, he states that "even if it had lit first try", which shows how film is perfected towards presenting gestures that succeed, failure of lighting the cigarette first try is like characters going to the toilet in films: it doesn't happen. Then, he comments on how people are always re-enacting and behaving in the way they *think* they should act. Yet , "the people in the films aren't thinking that. They're just doing their thing, real, not thinking anything."(23) Moreover, our hero adds how the accident and his recovery had proven that there always has been a "layer of distance between me and the things I did.", suggesting that his actions are always once removed from genuine, authentic behaviour. We are always copying, however, we keep thinking that what we do is true and authentic, yet precisely because we copy we will remain inauthentic and generic. Next, our protagonist wants to break this space between him and his actions and become one with them, become pure contingency. He wants to become a film, live in a film in order to become more authentic than his self in his present reality. Therefore, he decides he wants to re-enact his memories in an attempt to reach authenticity as close as possible. This space he wants to design for himself has a lot in common with the features of the impasse. The impasse, thus, functions as the meta-space in which anything is real, possible, and authentic. Relating this to the impossibility of death, one could say that the impasse is the only space where death can be represented, reproduced in order to find its own authenticity, and become a reality. The impasse, and with that the cinema, is thus the only space which can actually function as a place where death can be represented. Because of its specific qualities, the impasse makes the impossibility of representation of death possible.

Remainder's hero tries to think of a moment in which he felt most authentic; he describes a moment in which he felt the least self-conscious as possible, in which he moves in the moment and does not think. A moment in which he *was,* rather than a moment in which he had to *think.* Epistemology, thought, is in this instance replaced by ontology, the theory of being. This is once again expressed in his contemplation about a fantasy he had; which always failed and in which "*something* always came along and short-circuited these imaginary

seductions, fucked them up. Even my fantasies were plastic, imperfect, unreal." (25) His imagination, as well as his memories, need such a precise re-enactment, a detailed perfection (in the sense that they happen once without thought, as a pure event).

5.4 Moving into the Impasse

The moment our hero finds out what he needs to do with the money he got as a settlement for his accident, is the moment he discovers what kind of space he needs to create in order to feel authentic. It happens in a bathroom at a house party, a room which he stumbles upon by chance, as if he suddenly found an extra room, a space, in which he forgets time and realises how to reach authenticity. The bathroom is thus one of the allegories of the impasse, or rather the crack on the wall in the bathroom is the instigator of, or inspiration to, what the impasse entails:

> Then it happened: the event that, the accident aside, was the most significant of my whole life. [...] looking away from the mirror above it – because I don't like mirrors generally – at this crack that ran down the wall. [...] looking at this crack in the plaster I had a sudden sense of déjà vu. (58)

He then recalls all the attributes of his memory which later will be re-enacted such as the smell of liver cooking and piano music. Remarkably, McCarthy let's his character dislike mirrors. Why? Because mirrors are one-on-one reflection of a fleeting reality, they cannot capture the moment and replay it, they don't show pure movement as such, they instigate self-consciousness for one looks at oneself.

> I remembered all this clearly –crystal-clear, as clear as in a vision. I remembered it all, but I couldn't remember *where* [...]. Or when. [...] I couldn't place this memory at all. (59)

During the rest of his search for this place, *where* is what matters. *When* is dropped completely, since the space he is looking for does not to be temporally embedded.

> Most of all I remembered this [...] –that in these spaces, all my movements had been fluent and unforced. Not awkward, acquired, second-hand, but natural. [...] I'd merged with them, run through them and let them run through me until there'd been no space between us.

> They'd been *real*; I'd been real – been without first understanding how
> to try to be: cut out the detour. I remembered this with all the force of
> an epiphany, a revelation. (60)

The movements recur here, since these are an indication of pure, singular, momentary chance and ephemerality. The movements are locked in one take, one moment, not revised, not rehearsed, once experienced precisely so and this precise moment is cut out, making it perfect.

> I wanted to reconstruct that space and enter it so that I could feel real
> again. I wanted to; I had to; I would. Nothing else mattered. (60)

Time does no longer matter, space is all that mattered. Space, the impasse, the archive of fleeting moments, the contemporaneity, death; they all culminate in this one space which encompasses pure contingency, the pure real. McCarthy makes his protagonist look for this space because he knows this is the only space he can become himself, without connotation of external factors. The protagonist wants to take himself out of time to become pure duration. Pure event. The crack then, like the rupture and the fold, becomes representative of a space in which a déjà vu turn into a space for storing memory, externally, outside the self, outside of consciousness, outside of thought, outside of time. Cinema.

> I stood there staring at the crack. It all came down to that: the way it
> ran down the wall [...] That's what sparked the whole thing off. I had to
> get it down somehow – exactly, how it forked and jagged. Someone
> was knocking at the door. [I] started copying the way the crack ran. I
> copied it really carefully. Meticulously. The knocking came again. [...]
> [I] carried on copying the crack. I had to start again two times. [...] I
> copied it, meticulously [...] After I'd finished copying the crack I stood
> there for a few more moments, letting the whole vision settle down
> inside me [...] I needed it to settle deep enough for it to stay. (61)

As he is trying to copy the crack as *meticulously* as possible, his timeless zone is interrupted by people trying to go to the bathroom. Making this space a double-sided space, for the external it remains the bathroom, for the insider, the one looking for the space, it becomes a safe haven, a cave, a vacuum in which time does not exist. McCarthy, cleverly, disrupts this timeless zone by having people, in a recurring pattern indicating lived time, since time clearly passes between knocks, knock on the door. These characters function as time-bearers, as

indicators of how the external reality keeps living on in its own temporality. The space the protagonist inhabits falls outside of this reality, for that specific moment. By placing this timeless space in a space where the passing of time is urgent (the longer one waits, the more necessary the toilet visit it), McCarthy contrasts and thus enlarges the importance of duration and time outside of time. The ephemeral moment our hero goes through does not know time, yet he is disrupted by other's lived time. This close togetherness of two different zones indicates how the impasse can be found in anything, as long as one looks for authentic experience, or death, for that matter.

Further in the novel, the protagonist already busy with re-enacting[19] his memories, reaches a feeling of the real. In these moments he relives an experience, he *feels* the experience taking possession over his body as he feels tingling and "[a]gain I felt the sense of gliding, of light density. The moment I was in seemed to expand and become a pool – a still, clear pool that swallowed everything up in its calm contendedness."(131/132) To him, the purity of the impasse feels like a clear pool, a space in which time seems to expand, and no longer matter. He continuously is looking for a feeling, a sense of being, suggesting that this space is indeed more about being than thinking. As the narrative progresses, the re-enactment of similar moments does no longer suffice, leading him to go on an increasingly drastic search for this intense feeling, resulting in the re-enactment of a bank robbery and culminating in re-enacting a bank robbery in an actual bank (Baudrillard's bank robbery in full[20]). Only when the re-enactment collides with reality, blurring the lines between artificiality and reality can he find atonement.

Like the pure object, the building he finds to re-enact his memory needs to be cleaned

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[19] Having contracted a company called the very fitting "Time Control, to execute his ideas.

[20] This needs the following quote by Baudrillard, discussing the feigning of a bank robbery, to analyse the discrepancy, the gap (if there is any), which lies between the artificial and the real:

"But the difficulty is proportional to the danger. How to feign a violation and put it to test? Simulate a robbery in a large store: how to persuade security that it is a simulated robbery? There is no "objective" difference: the gestures, the signs are the same as for a real robber, the signs do not lean to one side or another. To the established order they are always of the order of the real.

Organize a fake holdup. Verify that your weapons are harmless, and take the most trustworthy hostage, so that no human life will be in danger (or one lapses into the criminal). Demand a ransom, and make it so that the operation creates as much commotion as possible—in short, remain close to the "truth", in order to test the reaction of the apparatus to the perfect simulacrum. You won't be able to do it: the network of artificial signs will become inextricably mixed up with real elements (a policeman will really fire on sight; a client of the bank will faint and die of a heart attack; one will actually pay the phony ransom), in short, you will immediately find yourself once again, without wishing it, in the real, one of whose functions is precisely to devour any attempt at simulation, to reduce everything to the real—that is, to the established order itself, well before institutions and justice come into play." (Baudrillard *Simulacra and Simulation* 20)

of surplus matter "all that extra stuff needs to be carted away", there is no space for the remainder in the building of an authentic event. Cinema gets rid of the surplus matter too, and gets straight to the point of purity. In cinema, there is a specific drive for perfection, one that surpasses reality and shows a polished reality, one in which nothing goes wrong. This is exactly what the protagonist of the novel is also looking for. However, to go into an analysis of the film adaptation would be redundant, it would not add anything to the argument since the film itself is, as constituted, a perfected reality. An analysis of a novel like this would only show how the protagonist re-enacts his memories, it does not add anything to McCarthy's narrative. A comparative analysis would only result in looking for differences and similarities, something this thesis does not allow for in length, but mainly not in importance. Whether Omer Fast did a proper job adapting the film to the screen is beside the point, since the point is to analyse McCarthy's application of cinematic specifics in his narrative work regarding time, duration, representation, and the struggle of the real and the (in)authentic.

Taking a step back, this authentic experience through re-enactment is relevant since it shows how cinema is the medium in which any action *is* real and genuine. McCarthy thus applies cinematic theory and techniques, to instigate and emphasise this illusory authenticity. The use of cinematic techniques by McCarthy is the way to open up the form of literature and to let it encompass authenticity. In doing so, he opens up language to be able to, alike cinema, enter and inhabit the impasse in which a representation of reality is possible. This new reality then, *can* include death for it is not restricted to consciousness as our daily reality is. Cinema is thus a space which is less self-conscious and can represent anything as real, including death. As it takes anything it displays out of time, out of the rigid rationality that reality requires, cinema can represent beyond our own capacities of consciousness. Therefore, it becomes a space in which the impossibility of thinking death becomes the only possibility of representing death. Death's remainder in real life is grief, death's remainder in film is an acknowledgement of death as inherently part of life, and thus a more embracing one. Death becomes more real than real on the screen, because it is allowed to *be* without thought.

6.Conclusion

A conclusion to a piece like this is never fully conclusive, for one might be left with more questions than answers. Nevertheless, through an extensive discussion of theory and an analysis of McCarthy's work for its cinematic qualities, I am able to conclude that indeed, McCarthy manages to break through the presumption of the impossibility of representing (or thinking) death. He manages, through the use of different ponderings and practical technicalities to create a space for himself to show death. Although death remains a phenomenon which cannot be known in our reality, it can be contemplated on the page or on the screen. These encompass a different reality, a representation of our reality which is taken out of its temporal confines and placed on a metaphysical level in which their pressing duration no longer matter. Death can happen repeatably, at any moment, to anyone, before them on the screen, in the word, in their imagination. Moreover, this impasse, this new reality, this cinereal, has the capacity to show death, and anything else for that matter, out of thought, out of time, making it a space through which we can reflect our own lives.

In my analysis of both *Remainder* and *Satin Island,* I have shown how McCarthy not only manages to construct a space in which he can freely discuss events, both novels embody this impasse in their metastructure. Moreover, they both deal with the question of reality. What is real? What is authentic? Can we be authentic? What does it mean to live, or die, and how can both, in their ephemerality be represented? Through this, I think one could say that indeed, McCarthy is paving a new path for the novel, by breaking through realist conventions which distance the characters from their surroundings and their actions, into characters which are actively looking for immediacy and the experience of the real. Repetition and an extensive pondering about movement, the urge to grasp the fleeting moment and to reconstruct a reality, only to understand and inhabit it, are what makes McCarthy a cinematic realist. He pushes the boundaries of literature towards that of the field of cinema, or *vice versa*, and in doing so he blurs the lines between both media. Using the one to enrich the other, he creates a hybrid, an impasse in its own right, in which he actually can truly represent the world as it is. The once removed reality of the screen, becomes more real than reality. Therefore, the once removed reality of his novels, also become more real than reality. They become realities in their own right. As this way of writing is a hybrid between cinema and literary realism, I think it is fair to say he invented a new movement called the *cinereal*.

I acknowledge the lack of critical discussion with regards to the transition from celluloid to digital cinema and all possibilities of altering, manipulating the image. I did not venture into this on purpose, for the argument tends to surpass technicalities and practicalities such as this. Whether a moving image is recorded on film or digitally is beside the point. This thesis regards film from a philosophical perspective, beyond tangibility.

Furthermore, McCarthy's work, although presented as one of a kind, is one in a dozen when it comes to this new shift towards the cinereal. For purposes of length I could not go deeper into others. Neither other works by McCarthy, nor a discussion of other more 'visual' novels, or novels which have at their core a discussion of photography, death etc., yet, what does stand out in his work in particular, however, is the minute use and awareness of his project. He meticulously uses time, duration and repetition to bring across his point, to build his case, to, in fact, present death as an overarching meta-problem which needs to be addressed. Death as a vehicle for literature not to die, but to live.. Regarding death, he is indeed a unique voice among the crowd, not stating he is authentic, but he surely is, albeit among others (those unnamed authors whom I will not list, for a list is obsolete in matters of innovative ideas), paving a path into new directions for the novel.

In hindsight, this thesis represents a search for an answer that exceeds it. Thinking about the representation of death encompasses a rethinking of authenticity and reality too. Moreover, analysing a literary work for its cinematic qualities not only brings about a rethinking of literature, it also stimulates a rethinking of what it means to capture a moment. In our contemporary society, in which a camera is always at hand, this rethinking of images revolves around subjects that touch upon all forms of life (and death), but above all they are concerned with reality, ethics, justice, truth and the experience of life.

The celluloid, or the digital pixel, represent something more than a mirror image of reality, it begs to be stepped into, embraced, inhabited, through a research of, and from within, its own time and space. The image which beholds the impasse is an image which attempts to freeze a moment or duration, a fragment of life. The image, whether still or moving, reflects but also invites us for further inhabitation. In fact, it needs another dimension of reality for itself to become reality. The idea that De Niro lighting a cigarette in one try *is* perfection and pure, does not mean that when we in our own reality light a cigarette cannot fail to do so, it only tells us that film, in its own right, has created a reality for itself which is restricted to a single reel, a single take, a singular perfection, which, even (or especially) when replayed does not become our reality. It exists outside our reality as an archive of what-could-be and

what-has-been. A further research, or even more practical question could be: life is not scripted, so should cinema be?

We should regard the cinema as an external archival reality to which we sometimes can turn to in order to reflect on our own lives, failures, successes, our own happiness and sadness. To turn to cinema is to re-appreciate one's own life; to laugh about cinema is to humorously reflect on our own shortcomings and accept failure, death, life as it is, as inherent to reality. To escape into cinema and attempt to reproduce it in real life, is only logical when one regards cinema's authenticity to reflect on our own inauthenticity. This does not have a negative connotation, quite the contrary, it aids us in understanding ourselves. In that sense, cinema is a mirror; but it is a mirror which talks back to us from beyond mimicry. Cinema exists for us, before us, in us and after us, but what should be borne in mind is that the image of the represented is always encapsulated in its own cocoon: pure yet restricted to the confines of the screen, of the duration of the moment, of the length of the tape. When the tape stops rolling, we live on. We should not forget that ultimately, cinema is here to serve us, not to direct our behaviour. We are the directors of our own lives. We can let cinema influence us, but only to reflect on inner thought; do not let it become your self-conscious, and whatever you do, don't attempt to mimic the mimicry.

When it comes to literature, this thesis has shown that there are signs, exemplary in Tom McCarthy's work, that literature has the capacity to move into an intermedial direction. The notion of the cinereal, a term I coin here, is not yet whole, it will never be, and therefore invites for further discourse. Moreover, the impasse, a metaphysical structure/notion/concept which has an atemporal capacity to make the seemingly impossible possible, the representation of death, is a framework which is always already present. We just need to find it; it might be found in the debris of that what is left not-communicated in this thesis, for all that is not communicated deserves further research. Advice: ride high amongst the waves, tap into different frequencies. Thanks for tuning into mine.

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8. Acknowledgements